

## Terrorist attacks and Europeans' attitudes towards immigrants: An experimental approach

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**Abstract.** Over the past several years an increasing number of terrorist attacks committed in the name of Islam and targeting civilians have taken place in many Western democracies, calling for more research on the impact of these exogenous events on citizens' attitudes towards immigrants. Using a quasi-experimental design, this study examines the short-term effect of the Paris attacks of the night of 13 November 2015 on the attitudes towards European Union (EU) and non-EU immigrants across 28 EU countries. Employing Eurobarometer 84.3 survey data collected in 28 European countries between 7 and 17 November 2015, the design allows the testing of individual attitudes before and after the Paris attacks and the spillover effects of this event in all European countries. It is found that the Paris attacks had a significant negative effect on attitudes towards immigrants, especially among educated and left-wing individuals. Moreover, the negative effect was stronger in countries where the national political-ideological climate was more positive towards immigrants. These findings are explained by theorising that first emotional reactions to the attack are the results of coping mechanisms whereby individuals are confronted with disconfirmation/confirmation of their previous beliefs: individuals who experience stronger stereotype disconfirmation are the most negatively affected by the terrorist attack. Overall, the study holds important implications for understanding the short-term impact of terrorist attacks on public attitudes towards immigrants.

**Keywords:** terrorist attacks; attitudes to immigrants; stereotype dis/confirmation; political climate; experiment

## Introduction

In recent years, several deadly terrorist attacks targeting civilians have been carried out in major European cities – Paris and Brussels in 2015, Nice and Berlin in 2016, London and Manchester in 2017 – committed by individuals of migrant background claiming a connection with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The intensification of terrorist attacks and other overlapping major European challenges, including the economic, refugee and the European Union crises, seems to have driven a public radicalisation against immigrants, with the most visible outcome being the rise of extreme right-wing populist parties in many European countries (Kriesi & Pappas 2015). This particular context has stimulated more research on the impact of terrorist attacks on individuals' attitudes and behaviours as coping mechanisms, especially in Europe (Brouard et al. 2018; Castanho Silva 2018; Vasilopoulos et al. 2018).

Since the attacks on New York's Twin Towers in 2001, studies on the impact of terrorist attacks on individuals and societies in Western democracies have indeed flourished (Huddy et al. 2002; Small et al. 2006). One feature that emerges from the literature is that terrorist attacks can have a significant impact on public opinion. However, the existing studies tend

to be restricted to single cases and are conducted over convenient small samples (for exceptions, see Castanho Silva 2018; Legewie 2013). Most importantly, due to the fact that terrorist attacks are unpredictable and data are normally lacking immediately before and after the events, research has rarely been able to disentangle the short-term effects of terrorist attacks on attitudes toward immigrants from other, potentially more long-term, effects deriving, for example, from the economic crisis. It is precisely the aim of this article to fill this gap.

Using a quasi-experiment, we examine the impact of the coordinated terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on 13 November 2015 in the name of ISIS (hereafter the ‘Bataclan attack’) on Europeans’ attitudes towards immigrants. The Bataclan attack is particularly relevant in the European context as it was the deadliest attack in a European city since the 2004 Madrid attacks. To do this, we employ the Eurobarometer 84.3 survey data which was collected in 28 European countries between 7 and 17 November 2015. The survey offers an unprecedented opportunity to observe not only individual attitudes towards immigrants but also the spill-over effect in European countries, in addition to the targeted effect *before* and *after* the attack. We are consequently able to answer three questions: (1) Do terrorist attacks have an immediate impact on Europeans’ attitudes towards immigrants? (2) Who is most likely to be influenced by terrorist attacks? and (3) Where are terrorist attacks most likely to have the strongest impact on public opinion?

Building on political psychology studies and on the previous literature on attitudes towards immigrants, we develop a theoretical framework to address these three research questions. We theorise that unfavourable reactions by individuals are results of their experience of disconfirmation of previously held beliefs. We thus introduce a new variable to understand the moderating effect of context on the potential impact of the Bataclan attack: the political-ideological climate. While other contextual variables, such as the economic situation or the number of immigrants, have been considered in the recent literature, no previous study has incorporated the political-ideological climate as a factor moderating the impact of a terrorist attack, especially from a comparative perspective (for an example that takes into account the media climate and a single context, see Boomgaarden & De Vreese 2007).

Our findings show that the Bataclan attack had a significant effect on European public opinion towards non-EU immigrants. This was particularly the case among the most educated and left-leaning individuals: this group of respondents reacted most strongly to the attack and became more negative about non-EU immigrants. We also find that the effect of the attack was stronger in contexts where the political-ideological climate was initially more positive towards immigrants. Furthermore, we find that disconfirmation mechanisms acquire more leverage when we consider the interaction between the individual and contextual levels: individuals who experienced strong disconfirmation both at the contextual and the individual levels were more likely to be affected by the Bataclan attack than individuals who experienced no or weak disconfirmation. Thus, in contexts where the political-ideological climate was relatively positive toward non-EU immigrants the highly educated and the left-leaning immediately became more unfavourable towards these immigrants after the Bataclan attack. We discuss the implications of these findings in the conclusion.

## **Terrorist attacks and citizens' attitudes towards immigrants**

In the literature, there is strong evidence of the impact of several terrorist attacks on individuals' attitudes towards immigrants. For example, immediate post-attack reactions following 9/11 influenced the levels of tolerance towards individuals with an immigrant background among American citizens (Skitka et al. 2004). Canetti-Nisim et al. (2009) also find that exposure to terrorism in Israel increased psychological distress and exclusionist attitudes towards Palestinian citizens (also see Bar-Tal & Labin 2001). Anti-Arab and anti-Semite prejudices intensified after the 2004 Madrid attack (Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede 2006), as did anti-immigrant attitudes in general after the assassination of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands (Boomgaarden & De Vreese 2007; Finseraas et al. 2011). Attitudes towards immigrants also became more negative in some European countries after the Bali attacks in 2002 (Legewie 2013) and the 2015 Paris attacks (Castanho Silva 2018). As a possible explanation of these empirical regularities, scholars have hypothesised that dramatic events such as terrorist attacks provoke anger, fear and anxiety among the population and increase citizens' perceptions of threat (Skitka et al. 2004; Small et al. 2006; Vasilopoulos 2018; Vasilopoulos et al. 2018). The activation of these feelings in turn affects the way in which individuals interpret and evaluate reality and the process of simplifying the causes and dynamics of a traumatic event. People thus tend to employ simplifications of the perpetrators of attacks by relying on stereotyping (Wilder 1993; Bar-Tal & Labin 2001).

Immigrants are particularly exposed to negative stereotyping because they are the most recognisable representation of the perceptions natives have of the *outgroup* (Bodenhausen 1993), and terrorist attacks are a powerful detonator of stereotyping (Bar-Tal & Labin 2001). There is, however, no unique perception of the outgroup (Blinder 2015) and negative stereotyping tends to be related to the characteristics of immigrants, such as their country of origin (Brader et al. 2008; Dustmann & Preston 2007; Hitlan et al. 2007) or their skill level (Hainmueller & Hiscox 2010). Presumably, even after a terrorist event, not all immigrants are likely to be identified as potential terrorists and therefore to be exposed to negative stereotyping. Evidence from the German case indeed shows that only attitudes toward Muslim immigrants changed after the 2015 Paris attacks (Jungkunz et al. 2018; see also Bar-Tal and Labin (2001) for the distinction between Palestinians, Jordanians and Arabs in the Israeli case). As a result, we expect that non-EU immigrants will be the primary target of prejudice after a terrorist attack as it is likely that they will be identified as the outgroup.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence:

*H1:* Attitudes towards non-EU immigrants become more unfavourable after terrorist attacks (through stereotyping) than attitudes towards EU immigrants.

## **Terrorist attacks and stereotype dis/confirmation**

Individuals are not uniform in their reactions to terrorist attacks or in their pre-attack dispositions toward immigrants. The literature points to two main individual characteristics as determinants of individuals' stereotypes of immigrants: education and ideology. High levels of education are related to positive immigrant stereotypes, whereas the least educated tend to hold more negative stereotypes (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010; Hainmueller & Hiscox

2007, 2010). Ideology is also strongly linked to attitudes towards immigrants: whereas left-leaning people tend to be more positively oriented, right-leaning people are in general more negative (Pardos-Prado 2011; Rustenbach 2010). As a consequence, individuals face the emotions provoked by terrorist attacks from different initial predispositions towards immigrants. When a terrorist attack occurs, 'major information related to the target group, ... will either strengthen or weaken the existing stereotypes, depending on whether the information confirms or disconfirms them' (Bar-Tal & Labin 2001: 266). According to the literature, therefore, less-educated and right-leaning individuals are likely to experience confirmation, while left-leaning and highly educated people are likely to experience disconfirmation, but how does this affect their attitudes toward immigrants (especially non-EU immigrants)?

There is little evidence on whether and how terrorist attacks produce dis/confirmation of individuals' predispositions toward immigrants (for a few exceptions, see Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede 2006; Onraet & Van Hiel 2013; Schüller 2016). The literature has mainly investigated how terrorist events influence individuals' perceptions of threat and levels of authoritarianism, depending on their initial predispositions (Brouard et al. 2018; Vasilopoulos 2018). According to this line of research, individuals – who need to manage uncertainty in the context of threat – tend to embrace conservative and authoritarian attitudes when exposed to shocking and extreme situations (Jost et al. 2003, 2007). However, whereas some studies conclude that the effect is generalised among all citizens independently of their predispositions (Bonanno & Jost 2006; Brouard et al. 2018; Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede 2006; Vasilopoulos et al. 2018), other studies show that perceptions of threat have a stronger impact among citizens scoring high in authoritarianism (Greenberg et al. 1992; Jungkunz et al. 2018). On the other hand, the so-called 'reactive-liberal hypothesis' (Nail et al. 2009) posits that conservative people tend to feel chronically under threat and are psychologically more prepared for shocking events. Therefore, the attitudes towards authoritarianism of this group of people remain relatively stable even after a terrorist attack. This predisposition leads to the 'ironic' outcome that liberals, who are less predisposed to manage threats and fear and are more positively predisposed towards immigrants, tend to display higher levels of authoritarianism after a terrorist attack (Hetherington & Suhay 2011; Nail et al. 2009; Sharvit et al. 2010; Van de Vyver et al. 2016).

Considering that authoritarianism tends to be related to negative attitudes to immigrants, we rely on this latter line of research to develop another hypothesis. Although diverging in their main conclusions, the studies mentioned above find that there is a general increase in authoritarianism in periods of high threat – such as after a terrorist event – as compared to periods of low threat (Jost et al. 2003: 366). The open question concerns whose attitudes to immigrants are likely to change to a greater extent after an attack. Right-wing and poorly educated individuals, as noted above, are expected to be already negatively predisposed toward immigrants before terrorist attacks. This group of citizens is, in some way, prepared to tackle the information and the emotions provoked by a terrorist event, which will confirm their initial stereotypes. Consequently, even if they have some margin to become even more negative toward (especially) non-EU immigrants after an attack, it is probable that 'such events ... consolidate their existing priorities, making them resistant to change' (Van de Vyver et al. 2016: 175). For right-leaning and poorly educated citizens, a terrorist event is

more likely to influence the *strength* of initial negative stereotypes than the *degree* to which these become negative.

On the contrary, left-leaning and highly educated individuals tend to be positively (or neutrally) predisposed towards immigrants. This group of people are less prepared to respond to a terrorist attack (Nail et al. 2009) as it produces disconfirmation of their initial stereotypes. The terrorist attack is therefore a comparatively stronger source of stress and uncertainty for them than it is for right-leaning and poorly educated people as they are not prepared to deal with such uncertainty.<sup>2</sup> Thus, for left-leaning and highly educated people, a terrorist event is more likely to shake previous stereotypes and thus to affect the *degree* to which non-EU immigrants are perceived as positive. We hypothesise that:

*H2: After terrorist attacks, attitudes towards non-EU immigrants become more unfavourable in general, and especially among individuals who experience disconfirmation of their previous beliefs.*

### **The role of context: Framing immigrant stereotypes**

So far, we have focused on the moderating effect that individuals' characteristics can have on the likelihood of changing their perception of immigrants after a terror strike. However, we should also consider that contextual factors can be as determining as individual characteristics in moderating the effects of an attack. At the contextual level, there are two main arguments used to explain citizens' attitudes towards immigrants, both based on intergroup competition theory. The first relies on perceived group deprivation as a driver of hostile attitudes towards immigrants (with respect to both economic interests and symbolic issues, such as collective identity). The second argument focuses on the number of immigrants in a given territory: the size of the immigrant group tends to be negatively correlated with favourable attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, although the effect is mediated by actual individual contact with immigrants (see Ceobanu and Escandell (2010) for a review of the main explanations of attitudes toward immigrants). A recent study combines both arguments and examines the impact of the terrorist attack in Bali on citizens' attitudes towards immigrants in several European countries (Legewie 2013). Legewie's results are enlightening since they provide evidence that context matters. To date, however, no research has incorporated the political-ideological climate as a mediating factor in the impact of a terrorist attack, especially from a comparative perspective. The only example that introduces the media climate in a single context is Boomgaarden and De Vreese (2007). Nevertheless, the current European context is a breeding ground for political contestation on immigration issues.

In recent years, many European countries have undergone changes in their party systems due to the entrance of radical parties and, more specifically, populist right-wing parties (Mudde 2014). This group of parties is relevant to our research since a common characteristic of European and, in general, Western right-wing populist parties is that they embrace a 'master frame' of ethno-nationalist xenophobia which focuses on the preservation of national character and promotes a strong anti-immigrant discourse (Rydgren 2005). This type of narrative is very successful in activating and reinforcing negative stereotypes of immigrants, and consequently general unfavourable attitudes towards them (Arendt et al.

2015; Igartua & Cheng 2009; Schemer 2012; Valentino et al. 2004). Muslims in particular have been defined as the main ‘threatening others’ and this idea has become a major issue in the political mobilisation of extremist right-wing parties (Wodak et al. 2013; Yılmaz 2012).

The impact of negative messages on attitudes towards immigrants has been extensively tested by means of experiments (Brader et al. 2008; Valentino et al. 2002). As for the impact of right-wing extremist discourses on citizens’ attitudes towards immigration, the general evidence is that negative attitudes towards immigrants are more frequent in contexts where there is a higher representation of extreme right-wing parties (Raijman 2010; Sarasin et al. 2012; Semyonov et al. 2006; Van Assche et al. 2016; an exception to these findings is Dunn and Singh (2011)), and especially in those contexts where culturally racist discourses are generally accepted (Wilkes et al. 2007).

What is the impact of terrorist attacks on attitudes to immigrants across different contexts? And how does the context moderate the relationship between individual characteristics and terrorist attacks? We argue here that dis/confirmation plays a major role in both relationships. As the immigration issue is normally owned by extreme right-wing parties, the literature shows, in fact, that in contexts with a high right-wing climate, individuals’ outgroup attitudes tend to converge towards lower levels of acceptance, regardless of personal ideology, whereas in low right-wing climates the relationship between a person’s ideology and outgroup attitudes is highly significant (Van Assche et al. 2016: 15). In other words, citizens exposed to a right-wing ideological climate are already more likely to be negatively predisposed towards immigrants, independently of their personal orientations, than in contexts with no or a weak presence of extreme right-wing parties. We might therefore expect that a terrorist event will have a stronger impact in contexts where the political climate is generally neutral/positive about non-EU immigrants, as citizens in this context are more likely to experience disconfirmation since they are, on average, more likely to be positively predisposed towards immigrants. *H3* is therefore as follows:

*H3:* After terrorist attacks, attitudes towards non-EU immigrants become more unfavourable in general, and especially in countries where there is no presence or a weak presence of extreme right-wing parties (disconfirmation).

Different levels of contextual openness/closedness to immigration might also catalyse the reactions of disconfirmation experienced at the individual level in the context of a terrorist attack (Van Assche et al. 2016). As hypothesised above, we expect left-leaning and highly educated people to be more strongly affected by terrorist attacks than right-leaning and poorly educated people. However, the more people’s belief systems are ‘trained’ to be threatened by the outgroup (and thus to be prepared for a real threat), the less they will be affected by an actual event perpetrated by the outgroup. Therefore, the impact of a terrorist attack on attitudes should be smaller for left-leaning, highly educated individuals who live in a context where there is a strong right-wing ideological climate than in contexts where there is no or a weak presence of the extreme right, with this context representing some sort of collective pre-treatment that frames people exposed to it. *H4* therefore reads:

*H4:* After terrorist attacks, attitudes towards non-EU immigrants become more unfavourable among left-leaning, highly educated individuals than among



right-leaning, poorly educated people, especially in contexts where there is no presence or a weak presence of the extreme right (double disconfirmation).

## Data and methods

To test our hypotheses, we use Eurobarometer 84.3 data. Eurobarometer is a large-scale cross-national project that administers periodical surveys based on representative samples in all the 28 member states of the EU. For every Standard Eurobarometer, the sampling procedure is based on a multi-stage random selection. Interviews are conducted using the CAPI (computer-assisted personal interview) mode. The dataset that we use contains 27,574 cases (about 1,000 cases per country; see Table 1 for descriptive statistics of the data). This dataset is particularly useful for our purpose since it contains variables on individuals' attitudes towards immigration and it was fielded when the Bataclan attack took place.

### *Experimental design*

This study is based on a before-after natural experiment. In political and social science, natural experiments allow the effect of exogenous events on perceptions, opinions and political preferences 'in the face of a real world event[s]' (Van der Brug 2001) to be examined. For our dataset, the survey fieldwork was conducted between 7 and 17 November 2015. Because the Bataclan attack occurred on the night of 13 November, it offers a unique opportunity to assess the impact of the terrorist event in all the EU member states. The Paris attack of 13 November is thus used as an exogenous source of variation which allows us to define the control and treatment groups of the experiment (for a similar design, see Boomgaarden & De Vreese 2007; Legewie 2013; Perrin & Smolek 2009; Van der Brug 2001). The control group comprises all the respondents who were interviewed before the attack, whereas all the respondents interviewed after it are assigned to the treatment group.

Such a before-after design implies two main assumptions that guarantee that no other individual or collective characteristic in the survey is correlated with the treatment – namely that the treatment is really exogenous (an *ignorability assumption*) and that no other time-varying covariate affects the treatment variable (a *temporal stability assumption*). The ignorability assumption requires that the timing of the single interviews during the fieldwork period occurred by chance: in other words, every individual must have the same, *a priori*, probability of being interviewed before or after the exogenous treatment. In this way, the treatment assignment is randomised. This assumption presents at least two potential biases that must be taken into account. The first is the so-called 'reachability bias' (Kohler 2007; Legewie 2013), according to which respondents who are easier to contact are more likely to be interviewed at the beginning of the fieldwork, altering the randomness of the pre-post design. For instance, younger people could be more prone to being reached immediately (thus becoming over-represented in the pre-treatment group) while it might be more difficult to interview older individuals. A second source of bias is represented by the sampling strategy adopted in the Eurobarometer survey, as in many other cross-national surveys (see Legewie 2013): one could hypothesise that dealing with a multi-stage sampling procedure can lead to a 'regional sampling bias', since the fieldwork could start later in

*Table 1.* Descriptive statistics of all the variables employed in the study

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Positive/negative immigration	0.32	0.47	0	1
Bataclan treatment	0.28	0.44	0	1
Left-right self-placement (centred)	0	2.2	-5.2	5.6
Years of education (centred)	0	4.8	-18.0	58.9
Extreme right-wing parties share	6.7	7.0	0	20.7
Age	51.1	18.1	15	98
Gender	1.5	0.50	1	2
Employment (employed)	0.53	0.50	0	1
Employment (unemployed)	0.08	0.28	0	1
Employment (not in labour forces)	0.39	0.49	0	1
Difficulty paying the bills (Ref: Hapens)	0.62	0.49	0	1
Rural-urban (rural area)	0.32	0.47	0	1
Rural-urban (towns, small cities)	0.30	0.46	0	1
Rural-urban (cities)	0.37	0.48	0	1
Attachment to country (not much)	0.06	0.24	0	1
Attachment to country (fairly attached)	0.31	0.46	0	1
Attachment to country (very much)	0.62	0.48	0	1
Rural-urban area – Aggregate (normalised)	67.5	23.6	0	100
Education years – Aggregate (normalised)	19.5	2.2	14.9	27.5
Average left-right of the national political supply	5.1	0.72	3.2	6.3
Pro-/anti-immigrant supply (expert coding)	4.5	1.4	1.6	7.2
Multicultural/ethnic policies (expert coding)	4.3	0.99	2.2	5.9
Manifestos on immigrants (expert codings)	0.23	0.59	-1.0	1.8
Number of immigrants in 2015	4.0	3.5	0.20	14.7

sampling units that are more difficult to reach. These two potential sources of bias can, however, be resolved by controlling for covariates that have been shown to influence the level of reachability of respondents (see Ares & Hernández 2017; Kohler 2007; Legewie 2013).

The second assumption in the before-after experimental design, the temporal stability assumption, requires that people's characteristics and attitudes only change in the time-span considered because of the exogenous event. In our case, we have a great advantage with respect to other research designs because the survey fieldwork we use was compressed into about ten days and the exogenous event is approximately in the middle of this short time-span, with the result that the subjects had a very reduced amount of time to change some of their attitudinal characteristics because of any other exogenous event than the Bataclan attack.

To ensure that our before-after design is truly experimental, we have to test whether we can plausibly assume that the treatment is actually exogenous. To test the ignorability



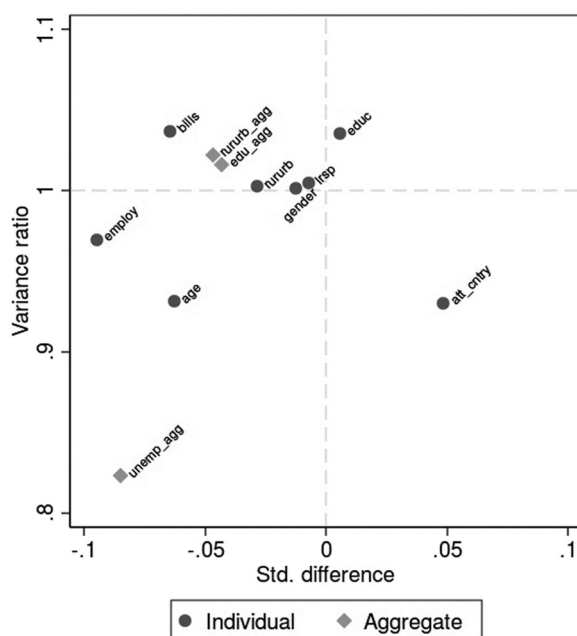


Figure 1. Imbalance between treatment and control groups.

assumption, we perform an imbalance analysis (see Legewie 2013; Rubin 2001). This aims to test whether a number of both individual and regional aggregated covariates change significantly between the treatment and the control groups – namely if the subjects are sufficiently similar in terms of a number of characteristics before and after the exogenous shock/event. Figure 1 presents the imbalance between the treatment and the control groups calculated for the whole dataset in terms of the standardised difference in means (x-axis) and the variance ratio (y-axis) of eight individual covariates (age, gender, years of education, employment status, left-right self-placement, rural-urban municipality of residence, attachment to the country of residence, ever having experienced difficulty paying bills) and two variables that are derived from the aggregation of individual data (aggregated regional level of education and rural-urban region) in order to control for a possible regional sampling bias.

Both aggregate (diamonds in the figure) and individual covariates (dots) are tested for imbalance. Considering that the absolute standardised differences in means should not be greater than 0.25 and the variance ratio should be between 0.5 and 2 (see Imai et al. 2008; Legewie 2013; Rubin 2001), none of the covariates present problematic values. Additional country-specific analysis shows that only a few cases exceed these critical values (these anomalies are largely due to the reduced sample size for those who received the treatment – see Table 2), which suggests that these differences are likely to result from a random process. Overall, these results support the ignorability assumption for our data. We can thus be quite confident that assignment to the treatment group is not affected by the sampling design, and that we can interpret the experimental effects causally.

Table 2. Imbalance coefficients by country

Country	Variable	Standardised difference
Austria	Left-right self-placement	0.26
Austria	Rural-urban	-0.32
Bulgaria	Education (Agg.)	0.31
<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Rural-urban</i>	<i>0.46</i>
Bulgaria	Rural-urban (Agg.)	0.31
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Difficulty paying bills</i>	<i>0.37</i>
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Years of education</i>	<i>0.41</i>
Denmark	Employment status	-0.33
Estonia	Education (Agg.)	0.29
Estonia	Rural-urban (Agg.)	0.32
Finland	Age	-0.26
France	Years of education	0.27
Greece	Rural-urban (Agg.)	0.31
Italy	Rural-urban	-0.31
Luxembourg	Attachment to country	-0.28
Luxembourg	Employment status	-0.28
<i>Luxembourg</i>	<i>Rural-urban (Agg.)</i>	<i>-0.36</i>
Latvia	Rural-urban	0.29
Latvia	Rural-urban (Agg.)	0.34
<i>Malta</i>	<i>Difficulty paying bills</i>	<i>-0.38</i>
The Netherlands	Age	-0.26
The Netherlands	Gender	0.28
<i>Poland</i>	<i>Education (Agg.)</i>	<i>0.66</i>
<i>Romania</i>	<i>Education (Agg.)</i>	<i>0.41</i>
Romania	Left-right self-placement	-0.31
Slovakia	Age	-0.29
Slovakia	Employment status	-0.32
Country	Variable	Variance ratio
<i>France</i>	<i>Rural-urban (Agg.)</i>	<i>2.5</i>
Luxembourg	Rural-urban (Agg.)	2.0
<i>Malta</i>	<i>Years of education</i>	<i>5.3</i>
Poland	Rural-urban (Agg.)	0.35
Poland	Education (Agg.)	0.41
Romania	Education (Agg.)	0.47
<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>Years of education</i>	<i>0.36</i>

Notes: In order to clarify readability, italicised lines represent imbalance coefficients that largely exceed the boundaries (0.10 points for standardised differences and less than 0.4/more than 2.5 points for variance ratios).

### *Variables and models*

We use **two dependent variables** in the analysis: the respondents' attitudes towards EU immigrants; and the main one, the respondents' attitudes towards non-EU immigrants. Eurobarometer data contain two questions that aim to measure respondents' general feelings about immigrants 'from other EU member states' and immigrants 'from outside the EU' (responses are chosen from: 'very positive', 'fairly positive', 'fairly negative' and 'very negative'). The original variables are dichotomised so that 0 represents 'negative or very negative toward EU/non-EU immigrants' and 1 'positive or very positive toward EU/non-EU immigrants' (see Appendix).<sup>3</sup>

The treatment variable, our key independent variable, takes value 0 for respondents who were interviewed before the Bataclan attack (i.e., before the night of November 13) and 1 for respondents interviewed after the attack. The average causal effect of the exogenous event is estimated with a set of logistic multilevel random-intercept regression models (Gelman & Hill 2007; Snijders & Bosker 2011). Employing multilevel modelling gives us the advantage of providing an unbiased estimate of the average treatment effect by controlling for the clustering of the respondents within each country.<sup>4</sup>

In order to test whether individual and national characteristics moderate the size of the experimental effect, as *H2*, *H3* and *H4* predict, an interaction term is added between the treatment and the moderator variables. To test *H2*, the level of education and left-right placement are used as moderator variables.<sup>5</sup> Following other comparative studies (see Baker 2005), we centre these two variables on the country means so that the results reflect differences in the domestic political environment. In other words, when interpreting how education and ideology mediate the differences in the experimental effect, we refer to people who are more/less educated (or lean more to the left/right) with respect to the mean in their national context. At the context level, the political-ideological frame is operationalised as the percentage vote share of extreme right-wing parties competing in the election prior to the Bataclan attack for each of the countries. 'Extreme right' is defined according to the ideological position of parties on a left-right scale as in the ParlGov dataset (Döring & Manow 2019). Parties with the most extreme positions ( $> 7.75$  on the left-right scale) are coded as extreme right (see Table 3).<sup>6</sup>

## **Results**

### *Individual analyses*

As a snapshot of the emotions triggered by the Bataclan attack, Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents in the two groups (control and treatment) who consider that terrorism is a major problem both for their country and for the EU. Figure 2 indicates that the percentage of respondents in the treatment group who perceive terrorism to be a problem is significantly larger than that in the control group (the differences between the two groups are significant at  $p < 0.00$  for the three variables). Interestingly, this affects three different levels – the individual, country and EU levels – but perceptions of the problem for the EU as a whole are the most enlarged. This preliminary evidence provides an indication that the Bataclan attack had a spill-over effect and raised Europeans' consciousness about terrorism.

Table 3. List of parties coded as extreme right

Country	Party name <sup>1</sup>
Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs Bündnis Zukunft Österreich
Belgium	Debout Les Belges!
Bulgaria	Natsionalen Front za Spasenie na Balgariya
Cyprus	Dimokratikós Sinayermós Ethniko Laiko Metopo
Germany	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands Alternative für Deutschland
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti
Estonia	Eesti Reformierakond Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit
France	Front national extrême droite
United Kingdom	Ulster Unionist Party United Kingdom Independence Party
Greece	Laikos Syndesmos – Chrysi Avg Anexartitoi Ellines Laïkós Orthódoxos Synagermós Laikos Syndesmos – Chrysi Avg Anexartitoi Ellines
Croatia	Hrvatska stranka prava dr. Ante Starčević Međimurska stranka Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije i Baranje Živi zid
Hungary	Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom
Italy	Lega Nord
Luxembourg	Aktionskomitee Rente – Comité d'action pensions   Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei – Parti réformiste d'alternative démocratique
Latvia	Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK
Netherlands	Partij voor de Vrijheid Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij
Poland	Kukiz'15
Slovakia	Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko
Slovenia	Nova Slovenija – Krščanska ljudska stranka
Sweden	Moderaterna Sverigedemokraterna

Notes: 0–10<sup>1</sup> scale mean value in left/right dimension with data from Castles and Mair (1984), Huber and Inglehart (1995), Benoit and Laver (2006) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2010 dataset (see Polk et al. 2017).

Source: Döring and Manow (2015).

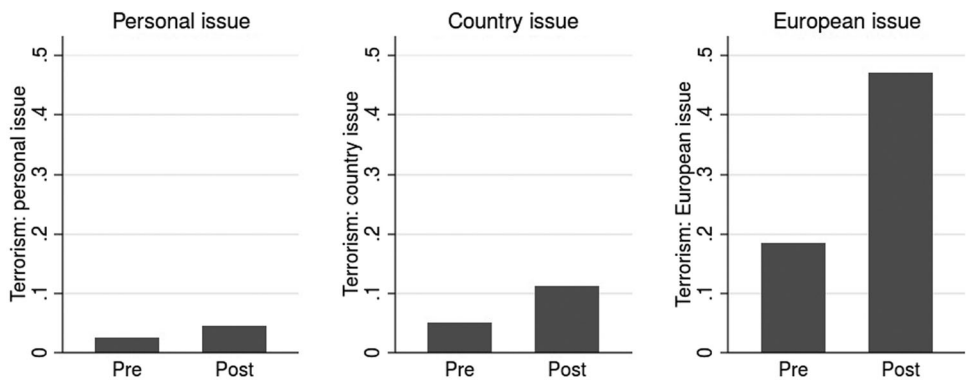


Figure 2. Perceptions of terrorism as a problem for the country, personally, and for the EU.

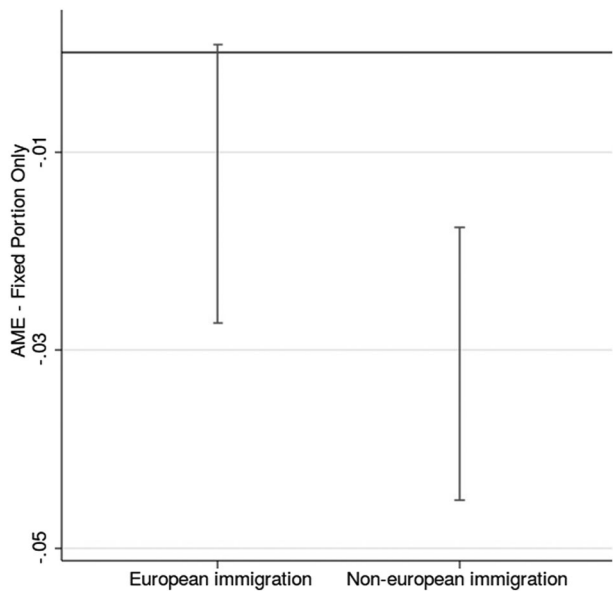


Figure 3. The treatment effect.  
Source: Models 1 and 2 in Table 3.

Turning now to *H1*, Figure 3 represents the results of the multilevel logistic model.<sup>7</sup> For the sake of clarity of our argument, only figures representing the average marginal effects of the treatment (according to the different model specifications) are shown in the article. In other words, the y-axis shows the adjusted changes in the dependent variable between the pre- and post-attack subsamples. The treatment appears to have an effect on both dependent variables, although only the change towards non-EU immigrants is significantly different from zero. After the treatment, respondents' attitudes to non-EU immigrants declined by 3.3 percentage points. Apparently, stereotyping and attribution of responsibility to immigrants occurred after the Bataclan attack, particularly targeting immigrants with a non-European background. Overall, our results corroborate our *H1*. Since *H1* holds, in the following

Table 4. Regression tables for Figures 3, 4, 7 and 8

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Post-Bataclan (Ref: Pre-Bataclan)	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.17*** (0.04)	-0.17*** (0.05)	-0.21*** (0.05)
Education years (country-centred)			0.05*** (0.00)			0.06*** (0.01)	
Left-right self-placement (country-centred)				-0.15*** (0.01)			-0.10*** (0.01)
Post-Bataclan * Education			-0.01 (0.01)			-0.01 (0.01)	
Post-Bataclan * Left-right self-placement				0.07*** (0.02)			0.06*** (0.02)
Extreme right-wing parties (country %)					-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Post-Bataclan * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)					0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)
Education * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)						-0.00** (0.00)	
Post-Bataclan * Education * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)							
Left-right self-placement * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)							
Post-Bataclan * Left-right self-placement * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)							
Constant	-0.81*** (0.14)	0.49*** (0.09)	-0.81*** (0.14)	-0.77*** (0.14)	-0.67*** (0.18)	-0.67*** (0.19)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Level 2 variance (ln)	-0.35** (0.14)	-0.74*** (0.14)	-0.33** (0.14)	-0.33** (0.14)	-0.37*** (0.14)	-0.35** (0.14)	-0.35** (0.14)
Observations	26,064	26,121	25,366	21,111	26,064	25,366	21,111
Number of groups	28	28	28	28	28	28	28

Notes: Dependent variable: Non-EU immigrant (models 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7); EU immigrant (model 2). Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p < 0.01; \*\* p < 0.05; \* p < 0.1.

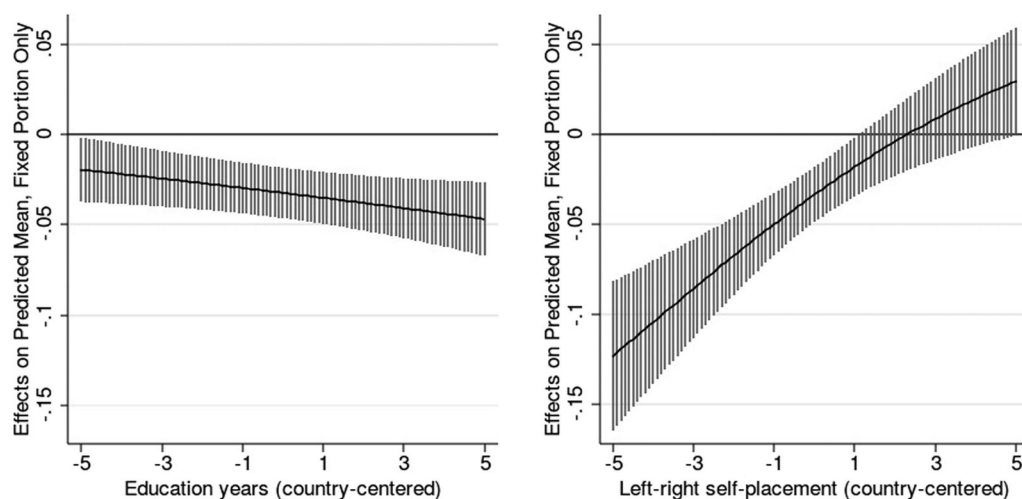


Figure 4. The treatment effect conditional on individual levels of education and left-right placement. Source: Models 3 and 4 in Table 4.

we only present the models with attitudes toward non-EU immigrants as the dependent variable.<sup>8</sup>

*H2* regards the moderating effect that some individual characteristics might have on the treatment effect. Models 3 and 4 in Table 4 show that before the Bataclan attack the well-educated and left-leaning individuals tended to be more positive towards non-EU immigrants than the poorly educated and right-leaning individuals.<sup>9</sup> What happened after the Bataclan attack? Figure 4, which shows the average marginal differences between the pre- and post-attack subsamples, supports our hypothesis: respondents experiencing disconfirmation of their previous attitudes were more likely to experience a greater treatment effect than respondents experiencing confirmation. Indeed, the more left-wing respondents (Figure 4, left-hand panel) with respect to the mean in their country were more likely to be affected by the Bataclan attack; the experimental effect for these respondents arrives at about 10 percentage points. On the other hand, the previous ideas of right-leaning people (Figure 4, right-hand panel) tend to not be affected by the attacks. Similarly, the more educated individuals are with respect to the average in their country, the more they are affected by the attacks; the prediction of the effect for those who have five years of education above the country mean is around -4 percentage points for the probability of evaluating immigrants positively. Thus, we can say that *H2* is corroborated by the data.

### *The role of context*

So far, we have focused on how individual characteristics can moderate the experimental effect of exposure to the Bataclan attack. However, dealing with the entirety of European public opinion means dealing with largely differentiated contexts and environments. Figure 5, which presents the marginal effects of the pre- and post-attack subsamples, shows



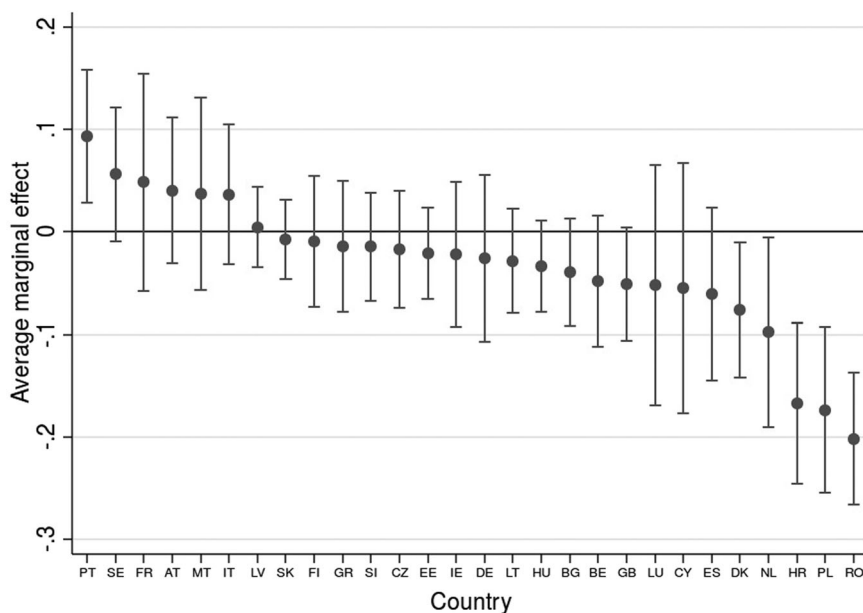


Figure 5. The treatment effect by country.

estimates of the experimental effect by country. As can be seen, the effect is generally negative and in some national contexts (such as Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania) large and significant. There is also a single case in which the effect is positive and significant (Portugal), in addition to a few national cases in which the effect is positive but not significant (Sweden, France, Austria, Malta and Italy). Figure 5 therefore confirms that the terrorist attack had a negative impact on Europeans' attitudes toward non-EU immigrants with spill-over effects beyond the country where the attack took place (21 contexts out of 28 present clearly negative figures).<sup>10</sup>

As argued in the background section, hypotheses that involve contextual characteristics as predictors (*H3*) or moderators of the relationship between individual exogenous characteristics and the Bataclan attack effect (*H4*) start from a main assumption that in addition to an individual pre-treatment (which is represented in this case by individual processes of confirmation/disconfirmation; see *H2*), people might also be primed to respond to terrorist violence by means of the context in which they live in the pre-attack moment. In this case, *H3* and *H4* implicitly assume that differences toward immigration are already identifiable before the attack. In this way, contexts in which right-wing parties (the main contextual predictor identified in the background section) are more present will be those in which attitudes toward immigrants were less positive before the Bataclan attack.

We tackle these assumptions descriptively by considering questions about people's opinions of immigration as an important issue at the personal and country levels which are present in the Eurobarometer data. By averaging these variables – and by only taking into account citizens interviewed before the attack – we can construct two variables (theoretically taking values from 0, if in the context nobody thinks about immigration as an important

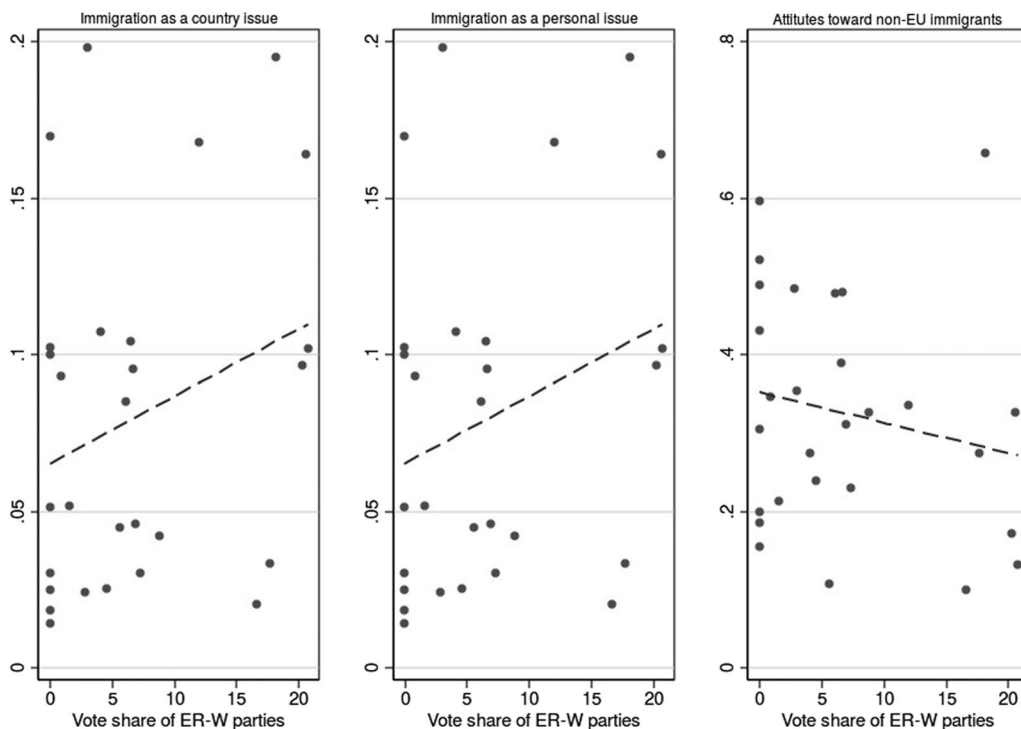


Figure 6. Correlations between the strength of extreme right-wing parties and attitudes to immigrants.

issue, to 1 if everybody does) and correlate them with our relevant predictor (a presence of extreme right-wing parties). As can be seen from the aggregate analyses in Figure 6 (left-hand and central panels), and consistently with the assumptions behind *H3* and *H4*, a higher presence of right-wing parties correlates with the aggregate levels of perceptions of immigration as an important issue at the country and personal levels (with Pearson correlation coefficients of 0.23 and 0.27, respectively,  $n = 28$ ). On the other hand, attitudes toward non-EU immigrants – namely, the average of the dependent variable employed to test *H1* and *H2* – are negatively correlated with the predictor with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $-0.19$ ,  $n = 28$  (see Figure 6, right-hand panel).<sup>11</sup>

Model 5 in Table 4 further confirms that pre-Bataclan attitudes toward non-EU immigrants were more negative the stronger the presence of extreme right parties.<sup>12</sup> As for *H3*, Figure 7 presents the marginal effects of the Bataclan attack conditionally on different levels of presence of extreme right-wing parties. Consistently with what was seen in Figure 5, the effect is always negative, providing further evidence that the few positive figures do not represent a systematic result. Moreover, the stronger extreme right-wing parties are in the national context, the smaller the treatment effect on respondents' attitudes towards immigrants.<sup>13</sup> Partly consistent with *H3*, in contexts where the ideological-political climate is potentially less negative the treatment effect is greater (although the pattern is not statistically significant). In other words, disconfirmation at the context level increases the likelihood of becoming more negative toward non-EU immigrants after the Bataclan attack.

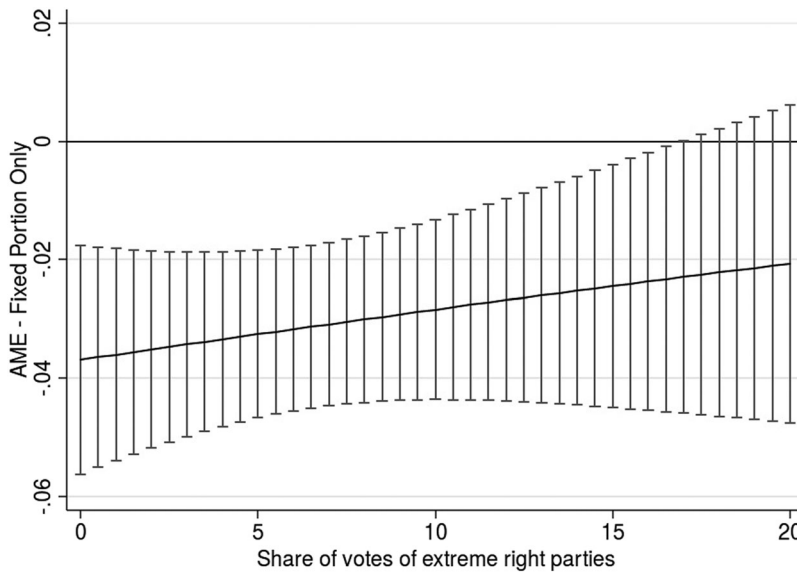


Figure 7. The treatment effect conditional to the strength of extreme-right parties.  
Source: Model 5 in Table 4.

Finally, to test for the moderating effect of the context on the relationship between individual characteristics and the Bataclan attack, we include additional terms in the interaction between the treatment and context-level moderator: levels of education and left-right placement.<sup>14</sup> Figure 8 presents the marginal effects of the Bataclan attack on the three-way interaction. We observe that if an individual resides in a country in which the context is neutral/positive – namely a context in which extreme right-wing parties are in the minority – the moderating effects of the individual characteristics, both left-right self-placement and education, are stronger and go in the same direction as seen above (i.e., the effect of disconfirmation is strong in positive-neutral contexts). Conversely, in contexts which are more negative, the individual effects are not significant.<sup>15</sup>

According to our results, individuals who experience disconfirmation, both individually and at the context level, are more likely to be affected by the treatment than individuals who do not experience disconfirmation, or experience it only at either the individual or the context level. In other words, both individual and contextual characteristics contribute to training people's belief systems to deal with such dramatic events as terrorist attacks. Negative immigrant stereotyping (both at the individual and context levels) prior to the attack diminishes the impact of the Bataclan attack. It appears that the process of making sense of a new more threatening reality particularly affects those who are not trained to think about threat. The context in which people are embedded, moreover, represents a crucial element in the forming of their attitudes. Indeed, in anti-immigrant contexts, people who have characteristics that could make them vulnerable to threat (e.g., the poorly educated/right-leaning) do not seem to be influenced by the treatment. On the contrary, people who are generally neutral/positive towards immigration are exposed to, and influenced by, a negative context.

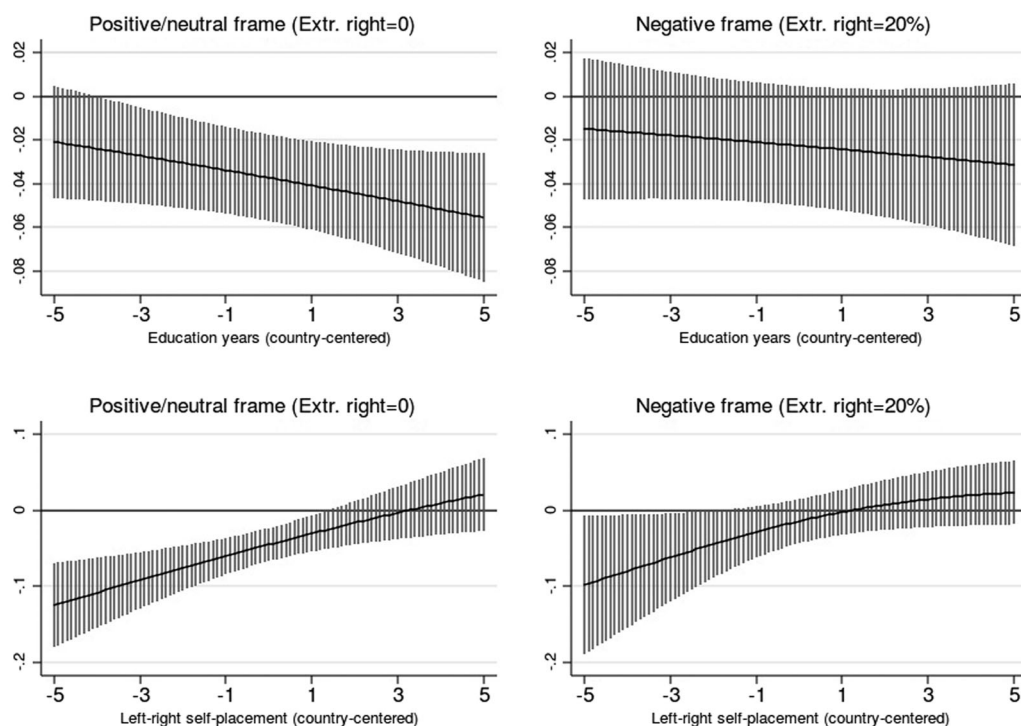


Figure 8. Treatment effect and the interaction between contextual and individual moderators.  
Source: Models 6 and 7 in Table 4.

## Conclusion

In recent years, in Europe the combination of challenging events, such as the financial crisis, the refugee crisis and the EU crisis, and terrorist attacks seems to have increased concerns among the European population about a new arrival of immigrants and refugees of Muslim origin (PEW Research Center 2016) and to have increased support for anti-immigrant parties. Using a quasi-experimental research design, our study has shown that the Bataclan attack had a significant negative effect on public opinion in the first four days after it occurred. The education level and self-placement on the left-right political spectrum of the population surveyed mediated the impact: better educated and left-leaning individuals were more likely to be affected by these events (Brouard et al. 2018; Vasilopoulos et al. 2018). The negative effect of the Bataclan attack was greater in countries where there is a more neutral or favourable political context. When we looked at the interaction between individual characteristics and the political-ideological context we found that the Bataclan attack had a multiplicative effect. We observe a greater negative effect on the better educated and left-leaning individuals in more favourable contexts.

The study has aimed to improve our understanding of the impact of terrorist events in several ways. First, it contributes to our knowledge of reactions to terrorist attacks: the results suggest that the effect of terrorist attacks depends on individuals' education and ideology. Furthermore, they show that the psychological mechanisms with which we account

for variations in responses across countries is mediated by the political-ideological context. Therefore, while it is quite difficult to predict the impact of exogenous events on attitudes towards immigrants (Legewie 2013), the explanation elaborated in the study can offer a starting point for understanding the conditions under which terrorist attacks affect people differently in different political contexts. Finally, in line with Legewie's (2013) observations, our study points to the necessity of considering *temporal* factors in research on the impact of terrorist events. The study contributes to our understanding of the short-term effects of terrorist attacks. Considering that important political reactions often take place in the aftermath of such attacks, and that attacks increasingly occur close to elections (as was clearly the case of the regional election in France in 2015 and the national election close to the London and Manchester attacks in 2017), it is pivotal to understand their impacts, which began to be felt just a few hours after they occurred. Comparing our empirical evidence with results collected in previous research on terrorism leads us to argue that short-term reactions to dramatic political events, which people tend to process independently of the reactions of politicians, journalists and the media, are quite different from their reactions after some time has passed, when pundits and political leaders have started to frame the situation in a more 'structured' way.

To generalise our findings, we need to consider some other factors that came into play in the year the Bataclan attack occurred. These factors may have mitigated or increased the impact of the attack. First, the attack took place only seven months after the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris in January 2015, which was a highly stressful event that received an enormous amount of media attention and had a significant impact on public opinion in France, Europe and North America more generally (Iacobucci & Toope 2015). Second, the event happened during a time when a massive number of refugees and immigrants were arriving in Europe, which may have influenced its negative impact on countries affected by the 'refugee crisis'. Nonetheless, we believe these factors strengthen the relevance of our results. First, as Legewie (2013) highlights in her study of the impact of the 2002 Bali attacks on European public opinion, our results can be considered 'a conservative test' of attitudes. Indeed, the fact that the Bataclan attack occurred in a period of rising hostility towards immigrants, and that our findings show a significant impact despite these important developments, prove their relevance because they show a direct short-term impact of terrorist attacks on attitudes. Second, because the event happened at a critical juncture as Europe was facing a major immigration challenge, the data allow us to isolate the impact of terrorist attacks from other exogenous events, such as the exponential arrival of refugees in Europe in 2015.

However, our study also has some limitations. First, we have not been able to examine the impact of media coverage in mediating the effect of the attacks across countries. Research indicates that the content of the media coverage of terrorist attacks can affect public opinion (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart 2009; Ladd & Lenz 2009). An analysis of the media would have allowed us to further explore our argument about the political climate in which the attacks occurred. However, a lack of data on media content does not undermine the conclusions we have reached as we were able to proxy for the political context in which the attacks took place and have focused precisely on the non-mediated short-term effect of the attacks. Second, our experimental design has allowed us to observe changes in the attitudes to immigrants of two interchangeable groups of respondents before and after

the Bataclan. We are, however, aware that only panel data would give full support to the disconfirmation hypothesis, as panel data would be unique in providing direct evidence that individuals' initial beliefs about immigrants were dis/confirmed. However, so far such data are lacking. Third, the article has failed to pass the endurance test of the Bataclan attack. An ideal empirical setting would allow testing of both short- and long-term effects of the Bataclan attack to fully understand its impact across individuals and across countries. Unfortunately, and even though relevant in themselves, our findings are limited to the short-term effect of the attack. Looking ahead, future research should further distinguish between the short-term and the long-term impacts of terrorist events. In this respect, our article might be useful for understanding part of the renewed support that populist and extreme right-wing parties have been receiving in recent years all over Europe. We might argue that the repetition of terrorist attacks, in addition to a short-term effect, might also be able to eventually change the long-term attitudes of a quota of European societies that was, to some extent, impermeable to nativist/xenophobic narratives. On the other side of the spectrum of possibilities, these exogenous shocks might be intended as isolated cases which, after a period of re-settlement of previously held opinions, might further polarise European public opinion along the pro-/anti-immigrant dimension. A more comprehensive analysis of the different stages of the impact of terrorist attacks, together with the adoption of long-term panel data to track changes in public opinion, would help unpack the complex causality underlying the relationship between terrorist attacks and support for extreme right-wing parties.

### Appendix: Replication of main models with multilevel ordered logistic regression

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Post-Bataclan (Ref: Pre-Bataclan)	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.15*** (0.04)	-0.19*** (0.04)
Education years (country-centred)		0.04*** (0.00)			0.05*** (0.00)	
Left-right self-placement (country-centred)			-0.12*** (0.01)			-0.08*** (0.01)
Post-Bataclan * Education		-0.01*** (0.01)			-0.02** (0.01)	
Post-Bataclan * Left-right self-placement			0.07*** (0.01)			0.06*** (0.02)
Extreme right-wing parties (country %)				-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Post-Bataclan * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)				0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)					-0.00** (0.00)	
Post-Bataclan * Education * Extreme right- wing parties (country %)					0.00 (0.00)	

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Left-right self-placement * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)						-0.01*** (0.00)
Post-Bataclan * Left-right self-placement * Extreme right-wing parties (country %)						0.00 (0.00)
Cut1	-0.94*** (0.13)	-0.95*** (0.13)	-1.00*** (0.13)	-1.09*** (0.17)	-1.10*** (0.17)	-1.16*** (0.17)
Cut2	0.80*** (0.13)	0.81*** (0.13)	0.76*** (0.13)	0.66*** (0.17)	0.66*** (0.17)	0.59*** (0.17)
Cut3	2.96*** (0.13)	2.99*** (0.13)	2.96*** (0.13)	2.82*** (0.17)	2.84*** (0.18)	2.80*** (0.17)
Level 2 variance	0.45*** (0.12)	0.46*** (0.12)	0.44*** (0.12)	0.42*** (0.11)	0.44*** (0.12)	0.42*** (0.11)
Observations	26,064	25,366	21,112	26,064	25,366	21,112
Number of groups	28	28	28	28	28	28

Notes: Dependent variable: Non-EU immigrant. Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\*p < 0.01; \*\*p < 0.05; \*p < 0.1.

## Online Appendix

Additional supporting information may be found in the Online Appendix section at the end of the article.

## Notes

1. Blinder (2015), in fact, finds that non-EU immigrants are the group that comes first into people's minds as 'immigrants'.
2. Left-leaning individuals also tend to be more likely to react to emotions and change their attitudes in reaction to these emotions than right-wing individuals (Pliskin et al. 2014).
3. Although the exact wording of the question is 'feelings toward immigration' (rather than 'feelings toward immigrants'), this item is satisfactory from the point of view of face validity. In addition, it has the advantage that it distinguishes between 'EU immigrants' and 'non-EU immigrants'. As our main dependent variable (attitudes toward non-EU immigrants) was originally a four-category variable, we replicate the main models in the article fitted by means of multilevel ordered logistic regression models (see Appendix). As it is possible to see, the models show that there are no substantive differences between the logistic and the ordered logistic models; instead, the multilevel ordered logistic regression models present higher levels of significance. For the sake of simplicity, we only present the logistic regression models in the main text.
4. Being based on a quasi-experimental design, the model does not necessarily require additional variables in order to control for composition effects. However, an additional set of models (available from the authors upon request) are fitted with basic sociodemographic additional variables (gender and age) without significantly changing the estimates.
5. In models 3 and 4, and models 6 and 7 in Table 4, we decided to add one moderator each time for two reasons. First, since we have an experimental design, we are interested in the effect that each moderator has on the attack coefficient without any further control variable. Second, there was a medium



correlation between two variables (education and ideology) which could lead to an over-parametrisation of the model, depress the moderation effect and produce type-II errors.

6. This classification has been also reviewed qualitatively, following Mudde (2014).
7. Regression tables in which marginal effects have been calculated can be found in Table 4.
8. We have, however, replicated all the analyses with respondents' attitudes to EU immigrants as the dependent variable (results available from the authors upon request). Overall, these analyses support the hypothesis that non-EU immigrants were the primary target of prejudice after the Bataclan attack, as the effects are minimal or even insignificant for EU immigrants.
9. As can be seen from Table 4 (models 3 and 4), education and left-right self-placement – the main effects of the moderators in the control group – respectively, present positive and negative significant main effects, meaning that more educated and left-leaning people were exogenously more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants. We are aware that these two variables only proxy respondents' pre-Bataclan attitudes toward immigrants and therefore do not track individual changes pre-/post-Bataclan. There are, however, no alternative or better measures in the dataset and so we follow the extant literature on the relationship between education and ideology regarding immigration attitudes.
10. Our findings for the French case confirm Castanho Silva's findings with the same data but a different dependent variable (Castanho Silva 2018). This non-finding for the French case might be related to the fact that the fieldwork in France was finished earlier than in the other countries surveyed by Eurobarometer. In fact, people interviewed after the Bataclan attack represent only 9.4 per cent of the sample (97 cases overall), the lowest national subsample of individuals treated in the study. The results might have been different if the sample size had been bigger (see, e.g., Vasilopoulos (2018) on the Bataclan attack in France).
11. The coefficient increases in size to  $-0.38$  if we drop Sweden (a clear outlier) from the analysis.
12. See the main effect of the percentage of vote share of extreme right parties in the control group, which is negative but non-significant in model 5 in Table 4.
13. The simple interaction with the strength of extreme right-wing parties might not be sufficient to support the context argument. We therefore attempted several other robustness checks for this hypothesis, including other operationalisations of the context effect. In particular, we tested the interaction effect with the average positioning of all political parties competing in elections; the number of immigrants in the country; the expert coding of each party system on a pro-/anti-immigration scale; the expert coding of each party system in a multicultural versus ethnic scale; and the expert coding of parties' manifestos on the migration dimension. With a few exceptions resulting from the different nature of the data, these analyses led to substantively similar results with respect to those presented in the article (analyses available from the authors upon request).
14. As can also be seen from Table 4 (models 3 and 4), education and left-right self-placement – the main effects of the moderators in the control group in contexts with a low presence of extreme-right parties – respectively, present positive and negative significant main effects, meaning that more educated and left-leaning people are exogenously more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants.
15. It is possible to see a negative effect that is still on the edge of significance in the bottom right-hand panel of Figure 8, but the substantively relevant element is that the curve becomes less steep in the context of a strong presence of the radical right.

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