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Migrating to the European Union: Determining Factors

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Migrating to the European Union: Determining Factors

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Migration is a phenomenon connected with human behaviour. Indeed, people frequently move from their place of birth to find better socio-economic settings. The European Union is a fine example to study migrant flows continuously arriving from all parts of the world. In this paper, I performed an empirical test for some theories of perpetuation of international movement. I assumed that networks of people from Africa, Asia and Latin America could be determining factors for their perpetual inflows to EU. To do so, I constructed a database from various sources: UNDESA[2], World Bank Database 2017, OECD.Stat[3] and CEPII[4]. I took total inflows rate per 10,000 inhabitant as dependent variable. Then I linked it to a set of independent variables from both origin and destination. Findings showed geographical distance clearly influences new inflows. In contrast, neither socio-economic indicators nor proxy variables selected for social networks could predict further immigration flows. I concluded that micro and meso data analyses are essential to obtain statistically significant results for social connections.

KEYWORDS: migration, migrants, social networks, international migrant stock, inflows.

INTRODUCTION

Migration connects with people's needs for fulfilment whether economic or cultural. The necessity for movement outside one's own city, or even country in search for better economic opportunities or decent life conditions, pushes individuals and/or households to leave behind their territory, their possessions even their own relatives for the sake of having a brighter future. Zlotnik described international migration as 'a volatile process that can and does change markedly in magnitude and even in direction over short spans of time' (2015). Furthermore, according to Boyd (1989), migrants' behaviours are responses to push and pull factors from both source and destination. She even portrayed migration as a calculated move 'designed to relieve

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[3] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Statistics International Migration Database 2016.
[4] Centre d'Études Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales 2011.

economic pressures at various stages of the life cycle' (*ibidem*). The existence of a diaspora can determine new migratory flows from the same origin since it represents an 'attraction mechanism for future migrants' (Beine 2016). In addition, people decide to move according to economic and noneconomic incentives defining the supply side for the labour market, while the destination's immigration policies determine the demand side (Mayda 2005). There has been a worldwide acceleration of migrant stocks, considering that the identification of a migrant pertains to the place of birth (Zlotnik 1999). Any individual, desiring to migrate, attempts to establish personal connections which serve as channels for information and for assistance whether financial or social (Boyd 1989). Networks coming from their country of origin and existing in destination countries could ease their coping with the new setting. In this article, I interpret some of these social networks through data analysis of country-specific international migrant stock in five European Union countries and recent inflows originating from those same countries. EU Member States are diverse in terms of social construction, economic growth and hosting of migrants. According to the categorisation scheme of Pastore, immigrants differ from 'free movers' (2015). The latter belong to the mobility of EU citizens category, while the former can be forced migrants entitled to protection, voluntary economically motivated migrants or even they can fit into a new category called 'mixed flows' (*ibidem*). In any case, Europe seems to have enlarged its population thanks to immigration flows precluding an expected decline in native population (Zlotnik 2015). In this study, I chose five EU countries (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden) perceived as migrant magnets since they are already moulded with a multicultural society composed of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, races and religions. Adding to their 'developed' status, they are characterized by an elevated income per capita. Aside the freedom of mobility in EU and the migration from other European countries, they receive perpetual inflows of migrants from African, Asian and Latin American nations. In the following sections, I made a quick review of literature regarding some theories of perpetuation of international movement. Then I hypothesized that existing international migrant stocks measured in various years can somehow be used as proxy variables of social networks, and that the latter can be good predictors for future inflows from same origin to same destination. To test this hypothesis and understand the link between origin and destination, I studied the international migrant stocks from the top five African, Asian and Latin American (Caribbean included) countries corresponding to each of the aforementioned EU States.

THEORIES OF PERPETUATION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Douglas Massey et al. explained that the conditions for initiation of migration are rather different than those that extend it across time and space. Furthermore, the authors referred to the spread of migrant networks as a perpetuating cause among other factors contributing to the continuum of migration (1993). For Herman, once a migratory flow starts, various effects emerge and increase the likelihood of subsequent mobility (2006). She also stressed on Price's concept of 'chain migration' stating that "the influence of social networks on migrants and

immigration was paramount" (*ibidem*). In addition, other transformations in both the sending and receiving societies induce further movements such as the development of transnational institutions which support international migration (Massey et al. 1993). Thus, I will use the meso-level (network theory and cumulative causation) and macro-level theory (migration systems theory) as classified by Hagen-Zanker to underline the reasons behind the perpetuation of international migration (2008).

NETWORK THEORY

The network theory highlights the importance of social networks during the three phases of migration: mobilization, mobility and integration (Herman 2006). For Boyd "networks connect migrants and non-migrants across time and space" (1989). Once a potential migrant decides to migrate, he connects with compatriots already present in the destination country. He even creates interpersonal ties with non-migrants in the homeland as well as return migrants in the community of origin. These relationships plus familial and friendship ties can be particularly helpful when it comes to getting support in the traveling experience about to be taken and in exchanging information about new settlement countries. Hiwatari underlines the importance of 'peer effects' in a community; the former seem to differ from simple network effects as they take into account the actual behaviour of diverse network members (2016). Networks motivate the migrant to embark on his journey to destination and provide an important conduit for consequent resource exchange between source and host countries (Somerville 2015). In fact, migrant networks seem to decrease the costs and risks of migration and increase expected net returns to migration (Hagen-Zanker 2008). Contributions made by family and friends facilitate the move for the migrant who does not randomly select where to go (Johnson and Schultz 2011). Moreover, such connections relate to social capital in the migrant community or diaspora found in the host society. Strong ties (kinship and close friends) and weak ties (acquaintances) could reinforce bonding and bridging social capital to gain employment (Maher and Cawley 2015). Katler and Kogan argue that existing social networks to co-ethnic migrants present in the receiving society drive migration and play a crucial role in the post-migration phase (2014). They also serve as means to access assistance and to participate in the labour market at the point of destination (Massey et al. 1993). Ultimately, migration becomes a self-sustaining and disseminating process (Hagen-Zanker 2008).

CUMULATIVE CAUSATION

In this part, I will tackle only the aspects pertinent to the purpose of this article. The cumulative causation theory assumes that progressive additional movements over time are the outcome of each act of migration which changes the social setting and causes subsequent migratory flows (Heering et al. 2004; Massey et al. 1993). These changes can be perceived in multiple dimensions referring to the community of origin. Moreover, the expansion of networks transforms the migration process into an integral part of the local culture easily reached by all

members of the community (Hagen-Zanker 2008). First, remittances received by migrants' families impact income distribution between households stimulating outmigration, since non-migrant families feel a relative deprivation which in turn prompts some of them to migrate as means to increase their income. Henceforth, this generates more income inequality and more out-movement to remedy to the economic situation (*ibidem*). Second, the diffusion of migration modifies community values and cultural perceptions and predicts further trips in the future. Indeed migrants develop a better notion about social mobility and a taste for consumer goods and lifestyles unlike in the homeland (Heering et al. 2004). In some sending regions, migration is portrayed as a 'rite of passage' to many young men and women (Castles 2007; Massey et al. 1993). However, co-ethnic ties sometimes lower the opportunities for career advancement or upward social mobility (Ballarino and Panichella 2015), given that social labelling for 'immigrant jobs' (Massey et al. 1993) constitutes a sort of 'entrapment' (Kalter and Kogan 2014). Last, the outflow of human capital away from the sending regions and into the receiving regions depletes productivity in the former while enhancing it in the latter. In other words, economic growth is strengthened abroad while it is bound to stagnate at home leading to more migration (Massey et al. 1993).

MIGRATION SYSTEMS THEORY

This theory defines a migration system as a specific set of countries including core receiving and migrant-sending countries characterized by large outflows to the said core countries. Within a system, geographical proximity is not the most essential component because flows are generally linked to political and economic relations between the countries. In addition, systems can be multipolar with overlapping sending countries (*ibidem*). Fawcett described the linkages' categories (State to State relations, mass culture connections, family and personal networks, and migrant agency activities) and types (tangible, regulatory, and relational) that exist in a migration systems theory, where he emphasized that family networks present an enduring impact on migration, in addition to the role model played by a migrant family member, the credibility of source and the effective communication, and the information given to potential migrants (1989). Hagen-Zanker depicts migration as an interdependent dynamic spatial process, but denotes that migration system models appear to be equivocal with no tangible prediction for migration trends (2008).

DATA MEASURES AND METHODOLOGY

To test my hypothesis, I carefully designated five destinations from the European Union (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden) which are commonly seen as migrant-attracting countries. For origin countries, I chose the top five countries from each continent on the basis of continental provenance (Africa, Asia and Caribbean-Latin America). Then, I allocated fifteen countries for each European Member State following the ranking on the list of

International Migrant Stock by Origin and Destination[5]. The selection criterion was the top five countries of each continent forming a community that exceeds 3,500 people in 2015. I ended up with thirty-nine countries of origin since some of the settlement states presented common foreign-born nationalities as part of their international migrant stock (See Appendix 1). To give an example, the case of Morocco was particularly striking since Moroccans (Zlotnik 1999) are actively present in all five EU States (ranking second in France for Africa, first in Germany, first in Italy, first in the Netherlands and fourth in Sweden). For these thirty-nine countries, I combined data from UNDESA, World Bank, OECD.Stat and CEPII choosing a set of variables to construct my database. I finally reached a total number of 195 observations. Then I calculated the dependent variable 'Total inflows rate per 10,000 inhabitant 2015' from the absolute values of 'Total inflows' of immigrants in 2015 divided by the 'Total population' of the destination country in 2015 then multiplied by 10,000. I also calculated the 'Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant' for the years 1990, 2000 and 2010 as independent proxy variables for social networks by dividing the 'International migrant stock' in a specific year over the 'Total population' of the destination country at the same year then multiplying the result by 10,000. Last, I selected some other independent variables: 'Destination income per capita 2015', 'Destination unemployment rate 2014, '1 minus distance from capital to capital', and two dummy variables for income classification at countries of origin (upper middle and lower middle). In the following sections, I described some basic characteristics for both destination and origin countries. Then I proceeded with the correlation and regression analyses of the aforementioned variables. (See Appendix 2 for the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study).

A- Characteristics of European Union Selected Destination Countries

France, Italy and the Netherlands are three former colonizers which have respectively Africans, Asians and Latin Americans from their ex-colonies. France indeed has its migrant stock originating from ancient and recent colonial history namely in the African continent but also in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (Ballarino and Panichella 2015; Solivetti 2010, 58; Zlotnik 1999). Germany on the other hand had its migrant stock formed from relatively recent immigration policies such as the 'guest workers' in the early 1970s (Solivetti 2010, 59; Castles 2007) followed by family reunification schemes (Beine 2016; Heering et al. 2004) and the 1990s immigration wave from Former Soviet Union countries, in this case Kazakhstan (Zlotnik 1999). Aside multiple European nationalities on the German land, the Turks seem to be ranking high on the list of foreign born immigrants. For Italy, Northern African migration flows seem to have settled since the 1980s. Indeed, Fokkema and de Haas explained that "Mediterranean societies shared a long common history and several cultural features" (2015). Both economically motivated and asylum seeking Latin Americans and Asians arrived later. The

[5] UNDESA http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision* (last visited on 09/02/2018).

Netherlands too has an interesting colonial past thus a large amount of its foreigners come from Latin America (Suriname). Sweden, as a Scandinavian welfare state, witnessed waves of refugees from Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea), from Asia (Iran, Iraq and Syrian Arab Republic) and from Latin America, especially from Chile (Andersson 2015). Table 1 below shows the total international migrant stock for each EU Member State in terms of gender for the years 1990 and 2015. Also Figure 1 displays a column chart for the total international migrant stock in the EU selected countries, irrespective of gender.

TABLE 1
TOTAL INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK OF MAIN EU COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION AT MID-YEAR IN 1990 AND 2015

	MALE		FEMALE	
Country of destination	**1990**	**2015**	**1990**	**2015**
France	2,999,376	3,782,619	2,897,891	4,001,799
Germany	3,293,128	5,709,939	2,643,053	6,295,751
Italy	642,414	2,608,451	785,805	3,180,424
Netherlands	592,343	942,478	589,920	1,037,008
Sweden	383,085	810,259	405,682	829,512

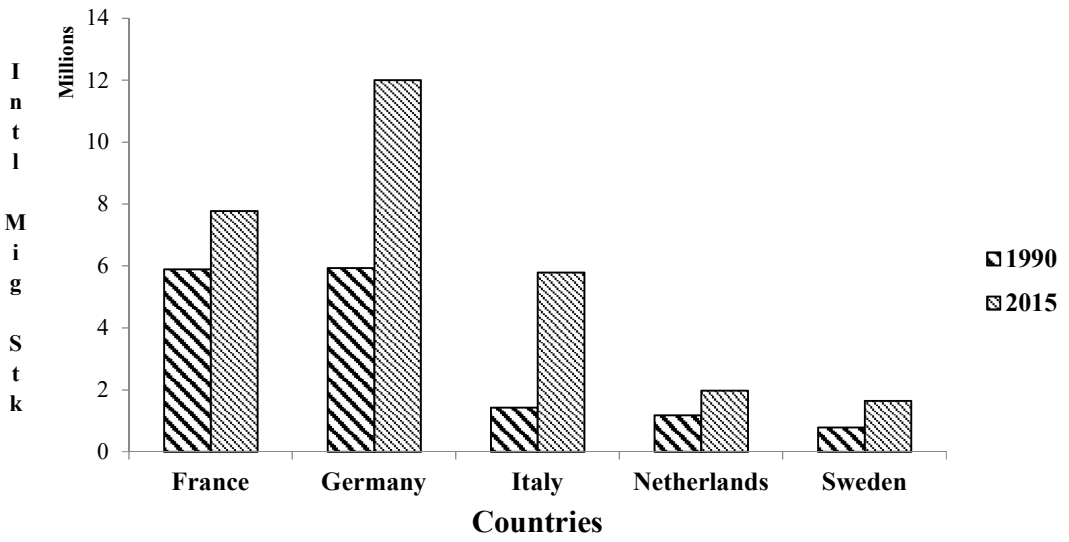

FIG. 1 — *Total international migrant stock of main EU countries of immigration for both sexes at mid-year in 1990 and 2015.*

Turning to the percentage of total international migrant stock from the total population for each of the EU countries, Sweden presents a relatively important figure (around 17% of the total population) in comparison with the other countries. Germany follows tail with about 15% from its total population estimates in 2015. Italy, the Netherlands and France's percentages range between 9 and 12% respectively. This is shown in the bar chart below (figure 2). These figures include all migrants and are not exclusively representing the ones coming from countries of origin selected for the study.

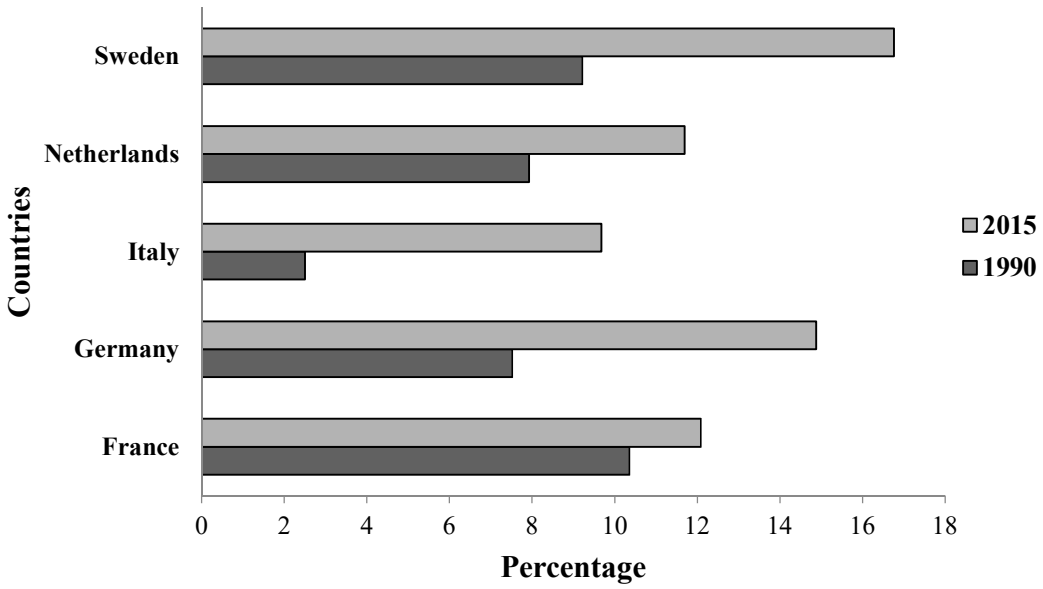

FIG. 2— *International migrant stock as percentage of total population of main EU countries of immigration for both sexes in 1990 and 2015.*

B- CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN, ASIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN ORIGIN COUNTRIES

Looking at the World Bank list of economies[6], countries of origin are classified in low, lower middle, upper middle and high income groups. Only few countries among the chosen thirty-nine belonged to low or high income. Hence two major income classes appeared in the immigration scenario: seventeen for upper middle and fourteen for lower middle. Dummy variables were coded as such: 1 if belongs, 0 if otherwise. Savelkoul et al. describe 'non–Western' immigrants as having lower levels of educational attainment and occupational status. Thus, they are more exposed to unemployment than natives in times of economic crisis (2015). Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia) dominates the picture in terms of immigration. The majority of women from this region tend to follow their husbands as 'trailing wives', although some migrate for work or to escape the patriarchal society (Heering et al. 2004).

[6] WORLD BANK https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups, *World Bank list of economies June 2017* (last visited on 09/02/2018).

Countries from the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia) are known to be refugee populations therefore their nationals are mainly concentrated in countries of resettlement, especially Sweden (Andersson 2015). Nationals from Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa are also present but to a lesser extent in these EU selected countries according to the ranking lists which I had prepared for this study (not shown here). Among Asian immigrants, Turks are practically dispersed in all five EU countries having substantial figures relevant to the migrant stocks, with the exception of Italy where they seem to be a bit behind in the ranking list (Castles 2007). In addition to Turkey, Iraq and Iran contributed to significant numbers in the migrant stocks of Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. The rest are quite varied in terms of regional provenance. For instance, Chinese migrants from Eastern Asia have settled in the recent years in Italy where they rank first on the list of migrant stock. Others from South-Eastern Asia like Cambodia and Viet Nam have primarily settled in France (Zlotnik 1999). While as Afghans coming from Southern Asia rank fifth in the composition of Dutch migrant stock. Finally, Chileans had chosen Sweden as a country of resettlement and till today they make the number one Latino-American community there (Andersson 2015). Suriname, a Dutch ex-colony, tops the list for the migrant stock in the Netherlands. Similarly Haiti, a French ex-colony in the Caribbean, is on the top of the ranking for France (See Appendix 1).

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS OF THE DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1- Total inflows rate per 10,000 inhabitant 2015	1								
2- Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 1990	0.080	1							
3- Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 2000	0.088	0.978	1						
4- Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 2010	0.113	0.902	0.956	1					
5- Destination income per capita 2015	0.111	0.049	0.060	0.051	1				
6- Destination unemployment rate 2014	-0.146	-0.057	-0.072	-0.039	-0.689	1			
7- 1 minus distance from capital to capital	0.246	0.250	0.288	0.313	-0.056	0.038	1		
8- Origin upper middle income dummy	-0.113	0.067	0.091	0.126	0.000	0.000	-0.117	1	
9- Origin lower middle income dummy	0.131	0.023	0.007	-0.026	0.000	0.000	0.113	-0.658	1

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The basic associations between the dependent variable 'Total inflows rate per 10,000 inhabitant' and the independent variables are shown in Table 2 above. On one hand, I found a weak positive correlation between total inflows and immigrant shares measured in various years,

meaning that migrant stocks have somehow a very little effect on new flows. Income per capita in the country of destination and total inflows are weakly and positively associated, indicating that migrants might be possibly attracted to countries generating higher income per capita. Unemployment rate in the country of destination and total inflows are weakly correlated with a negative sign for the correlation coefficient, suggesting that if there is a low level of unemployment, migrant inflows might increase. On the other hand, total inflows are moderately and positively connected with geographical distance (0.246), in other words, the lower the distance between origin and destination the greater the inflows. As for income classification in countries of origin, total inflows and upper middle income in the country of origin have a weak negative association, expressing that flows originating from upper middle income countries arrive at a much smaller scale; while there is a weak positive correlation with lower middle income in the country of origin, showing that there might be more flows arriving from lower income countries. Nevertheless, immigrant shares of 1990, 2000 and 2010 are obviously strongly and positively associated with each other (0.9), which might denote that the bigger the size of the migrant community in the country of destination the better the chances of having social networks from that same ethnic group already formed in that country of settlement.

Next, I ran multiple linear regression models to interpret the relationship between the dependent variable 'Total inflows rate per 10,000 inhabitant 2015' and all other independent variables at parity (See Table 3 below). I standardized 'Destination income per capita 2015' and '1 minus distance from capital to capital' to obtain better statistical representation. Findings showed that distance variable had an important positive effect on the dependent variable with a statistically significant P-value of 0.003**, highlighting the role of geographical proximity in the prediction of new inflows. Alternatively, the proxy variables for social networks, i.e. 'Immigrant shares', had no statistical significance and could not be considered as good predictors for future immigrant flows. Neither 'Destination income per capita 2015' nor the dummy variables were statistically significant. Yet in Model 5, 'Destination unemployment rate 2014' had a negative sign for the β coefficient and a slight statistically significant P-value of 0.027*, meaning with lower unemployment rates there could be future influxes of migrants.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I analysed macro data from multiple sources. I took as dependent variable 'Total inflows rate per 10,000 inhabitant 2015'for thirty-nine countries of origin arriving to five EU destinations. I combined it with a set of independent variables. Results of the empirical analysis in this study showed a positive impact of the distance variable on subsequent migrant flows. Nevertheless, the proxy variables for social networks 'Immigrant shares per 10,000 inhabitant' which were calculated from the international migrant stocks in various years, were not able to predict new inflows, thus contrasting the initial hypothesis. This leaves room for future analysis of meso and/or micro data collected from households and communities of migrants, as suggested by the theories of perpetuation of international movement. Perhaps, the study of migrant social ties might provide a good prediction of new inflows to the EU.

TABLE 3: *LINEAR REGRESSION MODELS OF 'TOTAL INFLOWS RATE PER 10,000 INHABITANT 2015': BETA COEFFICIENTS, P-VALUES, STANDARD ERRORS, R-SQUARED AND OBSERVATIONS*

	Model 1		**Model 2**		**Model 3**		**Model 4**		**Model 5**		**Model 6**	
Independent Variable	**β**	**P-value**	**β**	**P-value**	**β**	**P-value**	**β**	**P-value**	**β**	**P-value**	**β**	**P-value**
Origin upper middle income dummy	-0.244	0.725	-0.252	0.717	-0.301	0.666	-0.544	0.440	-0.544	0.437	-0.292	0.672
	(0.691)		(0.693)		(0.695)		(0.703)		(0.699)		(0.690)	
Origin lower middle income dummy	0.634	0.373	0.633	0.374	0.620	0.383	0.722	0.318	0.732	0.309	0.677	0.337
	(0.710)		(0.710)		(0.709)		(0.721)		(0.716)		(0.703)	
1 minus distance from capital to capital (standardized)	0.830	0.002**	0.824	0.003**	0.788	0.004**					0.835	0.003**
	(0.267)		(0.270)		(0.273)						(0.273)	
Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 1990	0.004	0.743					0.025	0.679	0.037	0.530	0.058	0.327
	(0.011)						(0.059)		(0.059)		(0.059)	
Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 2000			0.004	0.724			-0.076	0.367	-0.099	0.240	-0.120	0.153
			(0.011)				(0.084)		(0.084)		(0.083)	
Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 2010					0.006	0.478	0.058	0.098	0.068	0.055	0.060	0.085
					(0.009)		(0.035)		(0.035)		(0.035)	
Destination income per capita 2015 (standardized)							0.404	0.122			0.069	0.844
							(0.261)				(0.351)	
Destination unemployment rate 2014									-0.228	0.027*	-0.229	0.099
									(0.102)		(0.138)	
Intercept	0.941	0.098	0.937	0.099	0.912	0.109	0.827	0.154	2.751	0.009**	2.807	0.031*
	(0.565)		(0.566)		(0.566)		(0.577)		(1.035)		(1.293)	
R-squared		0.072		0.072		0.074		0.054		0.066		0.111
Adjusted R-squared		0.053		0.053		0.055		0.023		0.037		0.073
Observations		195		195		195		195		195		195

*Standard errors in parentheses. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001*

APPENDIX 1: TOP FIVE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN BY CONTINENT FOR THE MAIN FIVE EU COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

European Union	Africa	Asia	Caribbean-Latin America
France	Algeria	Turkey	Haiti
	Morocco	Viet Nam	Brazil
	Tunisia	China	Colombia
	Madagascar	Cambodia	Suriname
	Senegal	India	Chile
Germany	Morocco	Turkey	Brazil
	Tunisia	Kazakhstan	Colombia
	Ghana	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Peru
	Nigeria	Iraq	Argentina
	Egypt	Viet Nam	Mexico
Italy	Morocco	China	Peru
	Egypt	Philippines	Brazil
	Tunisia	India	Ecuador
	Senegal	Bangladesh	Argentina
	Nigeria	Sri Lanka	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Netherlands	Morocco	Turkey	Suriname
	Somalia	Indonesia	Brazil
	Ghana	China	Colombia
	South Africa	Iraq	Dominican Republic
	Egypt	Afghanistan	Peru
Sweden	Somalia	Iraq	Chile
	Eritrea	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Colombia
	Ethiopia	Syrian Arab Republic	Peru
	Morocco	Turkey	Brazil
	Egypt	Thailand	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

APPENDIX 2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Total inflow rate per 10,000 inhabitant 2015	1.092	3.666	0	38.382
Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 1990	8.239	24.609	0	200.881
Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 2000	9.928	25.712	0	201.431
Immigrant share per 10,000 inhabitant 2010	13.623	30.173	0	210.067
Destination income per capita 2015	40,471.226	7,036.262	29,957.804	50,579.674
Destination unemployment rate 2014	8.460	2.576	5	12.5
1 minus distance from capital to capital	-6,955.127	3,003.955	-13,103.440	-594.353
Origin upper middle income dummy	0.436	0.497	0	1
Origin lower middle income dummy	0.359	0.481	0	1

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