



Department of Political and Social Sciences

Beyond Radical Right: Attitudes towards Immigration and Voting Behaviour in Europe

Sergi Pardos-Prado

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

Florence, June 2010

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PREFACE

For someone interested in inter-ethnic relations, a PhD programme at the European University Institute can become a deep intellectual and human experience. I mean inter-ethnic in the sense of inter-cultural and inter-linguistic, but let's keep this specific terminological issue for footnote 2 in chapter 2. Actually, for someone genuinely and generally interested in people, the EUI is definitely the place to be. The diversity of native languages, cultural backgrounds, and past personal experiences makes the EUI a true sociological laboratory. It is possible to know people without falling prey to customary prejudices, categories and shortcuts. Many of the conflicts of interest, identity issues, types of social contact and ideological categories described in theories of inter-ethnic relations that I use in this thesis were useful for understanding human relations at the EUI. It was not enough to interact with people over a *macchiato* on the terrace after lunch to write the theory I will defend in the next pages. But it was definitely inspiring and helpful. There are a great many proper names strongly linked to my human EUI experience. Even were it possible to write them all down, no list of names could summarise the vital legacy of four years in Florence.

The completion of my thesis, my PhD training and my overall EUI personal experience are also linked to the role of Mark Franklin as my supervisor. His never-ending attention to my work and progress is the main factor responsible for almost everything I learnt at the EUI. I owe him so many hours of discussion; his understanding when things could not improve; his pressure when things could improve; his perspectives on how to redefine the framing of a paper, on how to polish an argument, on how to edit a sentence for the fourth time. This could happen in his office, in the cafeteria, after a seminar, on the phone, on Saturday morning in San Felice, or between panel sessions during an international conference.

I also would like to acknowledge Peter Mair's permanent academic and institutional support. His door was always open to answer a question, and his meetings list on Liz's door had always a blank spot for yet another name. Peter and Jaap Dronkers thought that my research project could have some value when I applied to the EUI in 2006, and I owe them the possibility I was given to study here. I also have to thank professors Stephen Fisher and José Ramón Montero, whom I do not know personally as yet, for having agreed to be the external members of my thesis jury. Their encouraging comments and reflections

enormously helped me to think of ways to improve my thesis manuscript and to define future lines of research. Neither can I forget, now that I am at the end of my doctoral training, those professors who helped me to understand what quantitative political science was about at the start of my postgraduate studies. Eva Anduiza, Agustí Bosch, Joaquim Molins and Sara Hobolt's footprint is also visible in the pages that follow.

Finally, my PhD training and experience could not have been possible without my parents. Their infinite love, support and understanding have always helped me when trying to take the right decisions. This has always been the case, in spite of the difficulties, especially in my first and last years in Florence. This thesis is inevitably dedicated to them.

Sergi Pardos-Prado

Florence, June 2010

ABSTRACT

The issue of immigration has thus far been conceptualised almost exclusively as a catalyst for radical forms of behaviour. Scholars of political behaviour have focused on the exceptional character of the radical voter, the pivotal role played by radical right parties in explaining the strategies of mainstream parties, and the prevalence of negative attitudes. The aim of this study is to transcend the analysis of a minority of the political spectrum, present only in a limited number of political systems, and instead to comparatively observe the impact of attitudes towards immigration on mainstream electoral competition in Europe on the basis of individual, party and system levels of variation. The thesis has three main findings. First, the issue of immigration has strong potential to affect mainstream voting in contemporary European political systems. Contrary to what is usually implied by the literature on the radical right, attitudes towards immigration have a stronger tendency to generate centripetal rather than centrifugal electoral dynamics. Second, the immigration issue can reshape the morphology of established party systems through two distinct mechanisms of electoral change. The first mechanism is through the mobilisation of existing party supporters, which takes place through voters' calculations of electoral utility in a refined attitudinal continuum, taking into account voters' own positions and those of the parties. Thus, from a spatial voting perspective, the immigration issue can only mobilise parties' core supporters, but cannot easily generate vote transfers between parties. The second mechanism operates in reverse, through acquiring non-identified voters through valence mechanisms of voting. Changes in established electoral boundaries can only take place through voters who are not currently attached to a party, and who are able to link their concern about immigration to parties' competence in dealing with the issue. Finally, the third main finding of the thesis is that not all attitudinal constructs have a behavioural effect. Coherent perceptions constrained by previous left-right individual political predispositions are more likely to have an influence. These perceptions tend to focus on immigrant's adaptability to and compatibility with the host country. By contrast, perceptions framed in terms of superiority or inferiority of immigration vis-à-vis the host society are less likely to be translated into electoral outcomes.

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1. INTRODUCTION: FROM RADICALISM TO NORMALITY IN THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE

“The Negro’s great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Councillor or the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice”

Martin Luther King. Letter from Birmingham Jail in Alabama (USA), 16 April 1963¹

1.1- The gap

This is not a study of radical right-wing voting. When studying immigration, scholars of political behaviour have mainly focused so far on *protest, radical, xenophobic* or *far-right wing* votes. The scholarly and normative interest of this ever-growing literature is without question, and this is why a few things have now been learnt about the voters and the strategies of parties such as the *Front National* in France, the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* in Austria, the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* in the Netherlands, the *Vlaams Belang* in Flanders, *Die Republikaner* in East Germany, the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* in Switzerland, or the *Lega Nord* in Italy (Ignazi 1992; Mayer and Perrineau 1992; Kitschelt 1995; Perrineau 1996; Knigge 1998; van der Brug et al. 2000; Lubbers and Scheepers 2000; Lubbers et al. 2002; Mayer 2002; Fennema and Meindert 2003; Perrineau 2004; Taguieff 2004; Cole 2005; Dulmer and Klein 2005; Norris 2005; Rydgren 2005; Veugelers and Magnan 2005; Mudde 2007; Arzheimer 2009; van Spanje 2009). However, attention to radicalism of the issue has overshadowed to what extent immigration has become a relevant issue structuring the overall pattern of electoral competition and a good independent variable for predicting individual party preference and choice in general. Thus, the aim of this research is to assess the impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting behaviour in general elections in a large cross-national European perspective, going beyond the analysis of extreme parties that focus on this issue but represent only a small part of any country’s political spectrum.

¹ In Augarde 1991.

Radical right-wing literature fails, or does not even intend to analyse the complete behavioural impact of attitudes towards immigration in at least three ways. The explanations it gives for the rise and success of radical right parties focus on the exceptionality of radical voters, or on what distinguishes them from voters for a more mainstream party. Secondly, mainstream politics is used as an explanatory or intervening factor in the electoral fortunes of radical parties (for example in terms of its reactions to radical parties), but never as an *explanandum* which is independent from the existence of radical parties and likely to be affected by the immigration issue itself. Thirdly, radical right-wing literature only takes into account the impact of the xenophobic, negative or hostile construction of the immigration issue on public opinion, but forgets that it is “simply not debatable that some whites think well of blacks and want things to go well for them” (Sniderman and Stiglitz 2008:2). The attention given to just one extreme of the spectrum has prevented a more nuanced approach to the multidimensionality of the immigration issue, as well as the analysis of the consequences of less negative attitudes on party preference and choice.

There have been three main approaches to studying the emergence and success of radical parties: the sociological, the supply-side and the institutional approach (Norris 2005:10-1). The first focuses on the voters and analyses the change in socioeconomic background and political attitudes impinging on the success of these parties (Mayer and Perrineau 1992; Van der Brug et al. 2000; Mayer 2002; van der Brug and Fennema 2003; Van der Brug and Mughan 2007). The second takes the party as the main unit of analysis and considers radical right parties as rational actors who locate themselves in the ideological spectrum to maximise their share of votes and seats (Bale 2003; McGann and Kitschelt 2005; De Lange 2007). The third stresses the impact of the institutional context and emphasises the role of systemic features as constraints on voters’ and parties’ behaviour (Andeweg 2001; Lijphart 2001; Carter 2002; Veugelers and Magnan 2005; Hakhverdian and Koop 2007).

In spite of this thorough triangulation of demand-side, supply-side and systemic explanations, different approaches to the study of radical right parties have come up with theories stressing the exceptionality of the radical right-wing phenomenon or the specificity of the motivations of radical voters as distinct from other types of voters. The dissolution of established political identities, the rise of political discontent and economic vulnerability among certain social strata, increasing levels of unemployment and immigration flows, the strength and negativity of xenophobic attitudes, the convergence between established

parties in ideological terms, the existence of proportional voting systems, and interactions between these have been the primary focus in this area of study (Lubbers and Scheepers 2000; Lubbers, Gijsberts et al. 2002; Golder 2003; Carter 2005; Dulmer and Klein 2005; Norris 2005; Art 2007).

When mainstream political parties have been considered as factors explaining or intervening in the radical right phenomenon, they are always linked to or analysed *vis-à-vis* the strategies of radical parties (Bornschieer 2010), which are the actual object of interest (van Spanje 2010). The consequence of this approach is that the impact of the immigration issue on mainstream parties is overlooked, especially in political systems where the radical right-wing phenomenon is absent. Even when previous research has considered immigration as one of the components of a new cultural cleavage structuring general party competition, the analysis has been almost exclusively restricted to systems with a very prominent radical right (Kriesi et al. 2008a). The approach in this case consists of understanding radical right parties as the pivotal point of party system change (Kriesi et al. 2008b:20), and as the unique beneficiaries of immigration preferences (Lachat 2008:318). The debate within this line of research has also focused on the consequences of mainstream parties trying to avoid or even prevent the emergence of this issue in the public agenda (Joppke 1998) or how they try to compete on anti-immigrant issues (Bale 2003; 2008). In a Western European context, it has been suggested that mainstream right-wing parties have at least two reasons to take policy positions that are similar to radical parties. First, mainstream right-wing parties traditionally *own* issues used by radical parties such as immigration or crime. Secondly, mainstream right-wing parties have a strategic interest in removing what was essentially an artificial constraint on the size of any right block in parliament (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2009: 6). Even if useful for the purpose of this line of research, the focus on mainstream right-wing parties ignores the rest of the ideological spectrum. Moreover, mainstream parties are exclusively observed in this literature in relation to radical parties and not analysed on their own.

Another way in which radical right literature fails to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of attitudes towards immigration on the overall party system dynamic is its exclusive focus on the negativity of these attitudes. In general, the psycho-sociological construction of attitudes towards a public political issue is multidimensional (Jacoby 1995). Moreover, the implementation of predictive models of electoral competition (mainly spatial) requires measuring the complete range of preferred policy outcomes and analysing the possible

behavioural impact of any opinion in the overall policy spectrum (Downs 1957; Davis, Hinich, and Ordeshook 1970; Enelow and Hinich 1984). This is why, when talking about the electoral effect of issues like the economy, the environment, the health system, redistributive policies, or abortion, analysts and political commentators alike implicitly tend to think of the median voter or of any kind of voter located along a given policy continuum. By contrast, when talking about immigration, both political science and the media tend to implicitly refer to the behaviour of a radical voter. Radical voters are more visible and pose an obvious normative challenge to crucial democratic values, but they do not necessarily reflect the general kind of interaction existing between voters and parties along the overall political spectrum.

All in all, there are reasons to think that attitudes towards immigration can be a powerful predictor of individual voting behaviour right across the ideological spectrum, and that this can also be so in political systems where the radical right is absent or unsuccessful². The role of attitudes towards immigration and ethnic origins are assumed to have played a prominent role in the campaigns and the political positioning of mainstream parties, the 2008 Presidential election in the USA and the debates in countries like France³, Italy⁴, Spain⁵, the United Kingdom⁶ or Switzerland⁷ being some of the most recent examples. In fact, some radical parties themselves have proved to behave according to the same rules as

² See Ford (unpublished) for one of the scarce examples of studies analysing immigration concerns and mainstream voting behaviour, even if only focused on the British context.

³ “Identité: pétition pour la fin du débat” [Identity: asking for the end of a debate]
<http://www.parismatch.com/Actu-Match/Politique/Depeches/Identite-Petition-pour-la-fin-du-debat-153987/>
 (*Paris Match*, 21/12/09)

⁴ “Il marketing del Cavaliere e il bipolarismo della xenofobia” [Il Cavaliere’s marketing and xenophobia’s bipolarisation]
http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/01/31/news/marketing_cavaliere-2138563 (*La Repubblica*, 31/01/10)

⁵ “Inmigración y terrorismo, puntos calientes del primer debate entre Zapatero y Rajoy” [Immigration and terrorism, hot points of the first debate between Zapatero and Rajoy]
<http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/353857> (*20 minutos*, 26/02/08)

⁶ “Immigration is not out of control, says Gordon Brown”
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/mar/31/immigration-control-gordon-brown> (*The Guardian*, 31/03/10)

“UK workers end wildcat strike over foreign labour”
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKLNE51405220090205> (*Reuters UK*, 05/02/09)

“Gordon Brown 'bigoted woman' comment caught on tape”
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/election_2010/8649012.stm (*BBC News*, 28/04/10)

⁷ “Swiss reject new citizenship rule” <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7429728.stm> (*BBC News*, 01/06/08)

mainstream electoral competition. Academic literature has already made the distinction between protest and ideological (or normal) forms of behaviour, showing that even radical right-wing parties can respond to both types of logic (van der Brug et al. 2000). Even radical right success has been recently conceptualised as a result of mainstream rather than radical values (Mudde forthcoming). Surprisingly enough, however, the immigration issue is still mainly analysed as a possible trigger of only protest and radical forms of behaviour. As suggested by the initial quote of Martin Luther King in this introduction, the deepest understanding of the political consequences of attitudes towards the other may not lie in extreme forms of behaviour but in the attitudes of moderate citizens projected on the mainstream side of political life. Therefore, this research aims to conceptualise immigration as a broader issue beyond a simple catalyst of radical forms of behaviour likely to affect exclusively an extreme and even minor part of the political spectrum.

1.2- The immigration issue as a tool for unlocking electoral puzzles

The reliance of radical right-wing literature on the exceptionality of radical voters, on the marginality of the role of mainstream parties, and on the negativity of the construction of the immigration issue leads me to present here a more comprehensive study of the role of attitudes towards immigration on the overall electoral dynamic. By electoral dynamic I mean a configuration of issue-related opinions, both among voters and parties, that in interaction with exogenous systemic features, gives rise to a particular pattern of electoral competition affecting the overall political spectrum. The term *dynamic* does not necessarily have a longitudinal or a temporal connotation here, but rather refers to the variation of some subjective aspects of the configuration of the issue on public opinion and its electoral impact. The focus on the subjectivity of public opinion, however, does not preclude its objective quantifiable nature and the analysis of some exogenous systemic characteristics.

Interest in a comprehensive analysis of the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration beyond radical right-wing phenomena can be twofold. Firstly, from a migration studies perspective it can give some insights into the nature of the management of this issue in the mainstream political arena, and into its consequences for the articulation of a unified but diverse *demos* in advanced democracies facing an era of strong immigration inflows. Secondly, this study can help to shed light upon several questions not fully resolved yet in the electoral behaviour sub-discipline. More specifically, immigration can be

considered as a relevant issue for tackling electoral puzzles thanks to some distinct characteristics concerning the political system, the demand-side and the supply-side levels of analysis.

There are at least three reasons why immigration – understood as a general issue likely to affect political behaviour along the overall political spectrum – is a good tool to revisit and extend some theories of opinion formation and electoral competition. Firstly, immigration as a demographic phenomenon in terms of inflows and stocks has very different degrees of historical embedding across European political systems. Thus, it can be considered new in some countries but relatively old in other countries. This provides a good opportunity to account for the cross-national variation in the articulation of public opinions regarding the issue, and in how it is incorporated in general patterns of electoral competition.

Secondly, the immigration issue seems to cross-cut the traditional divide between economic and cultural issues. Or, at least, it contains both economic and cultural/identity features that seem difficult to disentangle and that can give new insights regarding certain topics in electoral research that have remained unexplored or which have not been much illuminated by past research on more one-dimensional and traditional issues (e.g., the economy). The immigration issue provides a good opportunity to observe the mechanisms by which a multidimensional and apparently cross-cutting issue can be framed and incorporated in traditional ideological schema ruling electoral competition in most countries.

Thirdly, the relative novelty of the immigration issue and the uncertainty it has generated among political elites has given rise to a wide variety of party strategies regarding the issue. These strategies, as stated above, range from trying to block its emergence in the public agenda to directly competing on a terrain that is usually considered exclusive to radical parties. This wide variation in party strategy is a crucial opportunity to analyse different patterns of electoral behaviour that would be difficult to study with more well-established issues. More specifically, the underlying fear and uncertainty of elites regarding a new, cross-cutting and potentially dangerous issue is related to the potential electoral change it can generate. The emergence of such an issue can affect the fortunes of traditional parties and allows us to see how an issue can generate, modify or activate party loyalties when being incorporated into the mainstream side of the electoral competition.

Having suggested that immigration can be a good tool to shed light on electoral behaviour puzzles and after having defined what I mean by *electoral dynamic*, I can spell out the main general question motivating the research proposed here: *how does an issue like immigration, with different degrees of historical embedding across contexts, with a potentially cross-cutting and multidimensional nature, and with a high level of novelty or uncertainty generating a particularly wide range of party strategies, become institutionalised in the electoral dynamic?* The notion of *institutionalisation* here denotes the different steps in which this electoral impact takes place. This is why the aim of this research is to depart from the classical funnel of causality first formulated in the Michigan school of electoral research (Campbell et al. 1964) in order to suggest an encompassing analytical strategy which observes the issue from its very original construction in people's minds, and follows its evolution through its ideological framing to its most contextual and election-specific causes and consequences.

As will be specified in the chapters below, there are three crucial propositions in this study that try to answer this general question. The first proposition is that only those dimensions of public attitudes towards immigration that can be incorporated or constrained by broader ideological categories organising electoral life (such as the left-right axis in the European context) will have a palpable electoral impact. The second proposition is that, if immigration can be considered as a normal issue likely to affect the overall party dynamic, its electoral impact is better accounted for by spatial models of competition predicting centripetal rather than centrifugal or more radical electoral dynamics as has been implied up until now. The third proposition is that when immigration is incorporated in the mainstream electoral dynamic it can become a crucial and complex mechanism of electoral change. More specifically, the effect of immigration attitudes under a spatial perspective (when voters are able to identify a quite refined continuum of possible immigration policy outcomes and vote on the basis of distances between themselves and parties) can only mobilise loyal voters. By contrast, the effect of immigration attitudes articulated through valence mechanisms (when voters become particularly concerned with the issue and can associate this concern with a given party perceived as competent to solve the issue) can generate a substantial amount of acquisition of previously non-loyal voters.

In sum, the chapters that follow constitute a theory of the normalisation of the immigration issue. In other words, this study is about how and why the immigration issue has come to have an electoral impact beyond radical and minority fringes of political spectrums. The

following pages of this introduction sketch out and justify the puzzles concerning each stage of the incorporation of the issue into the mainstream pattern of competition.

1.3- Which dimensions of attitudes towards immigration are there in public opinion?

Before analysing the impact of X (attitudes towards immigration) on Y (voting behaviour), one needs to know what X is. Before assessing whether and how immigration does indeed matter in the overall pattern of party competition in elections, we need to scrutinise what kinds of attitudes towards immigration do exist in European public opinion and how they are constructed. Apart from the conceptual interest of analysing how citizens construe the immigration phenomenon in itself, the proper specification of the independent variable in the models explaining voting behaviour can prevent incomplete and even biased results when trying to understand the complexity of immigration and its electoral impact.

While theories explaining the development of hostile attitudes towards immigration are seemingly well-established in the literature, there is little consensus about how to conceptualise and measure these attitudes themselves. This is why, before tackling the purely behavioural impact of the immigration issue, the first empirical chapter of this study (chapter 3) will revisit the underlying dimensionality of perceptions of immigration in public opinion and will try to contribute to the subfield that studies attitudes towards immigration. Some analyses in past research explain attitudes regarding the presence of immigrants; others explain perceptions regarding the convenience of granting legal rights to foreigners, whereas others analyse the feeling of economic or cultural threat. The use of one or another variable when testing theories of attitudes towards immigration is not always theoretically and empirically justified. It is therefore not rare to see apparently unexplained contradictions about the effect of some explanatory variables on differently specified outcomes. The most prominent examples are the effect of age- whether it is positive or negative- (Coenders 2004:111), gender- whether it is positive or negative and whether it is significant or not- (Burns and Gimpel 2000), and perceptions regarding the economy- whether it is significant or not- (Hoskin 1991; Citrin, Green et al. 1997; Hayes and Dowds 2006). One of the most plausible explanations for these apparent contradictions in previous literature is the validity and reliability of the variables measuring attitudes towards immigration.

One of the most prominent attempts to summarise how attitudes towards immigration are constructed in public opinion consists of identifying two constructs, namely a perception based on economic or material threat and another based on cultural threat (Gibson 2002; Paxton and Mughan 2006). The cultural threat hypothesis would be consistent with recent analyses supporting the emergence of a new cultural cleavage structuring Western European systems. Immigration is considered one of the main components of this cleavage, together with cultural liberalist values and the European integration issue (Kriesi et al. 2008a). In the context of literature on attitudes towards immigration, the material threat hypothesis is grounded in ethnic competition theory and frames negative attitudes towards immigration as a perception of competition for scarce material resources between in-groups and out-groups (Blumer 1958; Sherif and Sherif 1969; Quillian 1995; Clark and Legge 1997; McLaren 2002; McLaren 2006). The cultural threat hypothesis is based on social identity theory and depicts the attitude towards immigrants as a categorisation process where cultural similarities become the main cognitive cue (Tajfel 1982; Weldon 2006; Transue 2007). As I will argue, however, the distinction between material and cultural features in contemporary attitudes towards immigration in Europe is neither theoretically defensible nor empirically valid. The theoretical flaw comes from the fact that the dichotomy between materialism and culture confounds the explanation with the outcome to be explained. In other terms, the binary and intuitive distinction between ethnic competition theory and social identity theory does not necessarily imply that the identifiable constructs in public opinion are material and cultural respectively. As it will be seen in the empirical analyses below, both materialistic and cultural explanations can be useful to explain the two attitudinal constructs identified in European public opinion. At the same time, the replication of the analyses across different datasets and the careful use of different dimensional techniques will show that materialistic and cultural components of attitudes towards immigration are difficult to disentangle empirically.

Instead of a dichotomy between economic and cultural threat, I will argue that there are two other complementary axes that have never been considered before and that can be useful to account for the semantic construction of attitudes towards immigration in Europe nowadays. The first axis has been extensively used in previous research on economic issue voting, namely the distinction between *individual* and *sociotropic* attitudes (Van der Brug et al. 2007; Duch and Stevenson 2008; Hibbs et al. 1982; Lewis-Beck 1988; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). The former focuses on the perception of the impact of the issue at stake on the individual himself, whereas the latter focuses on the perception of the consequences of

that issue on the whole of society. There are no reasons to think that this fruitful and theoretically plausible distinction regarding an issue with remarkable consequences for the overall electoral dynamic like the economy is not applicable to other issues. The second complementary axis that will be suggested as an explanation for the binary construction of attitudes towards foreigners is immigration-specific, and relies on the ideas of hierarchy and differentiation. While classical conceptions of racism are articulated on the basis of a hierarchy framing immigrants as inferior for the host society, there is a different component based on a non-hierarchical difference that focuses on how distinct or adaptable are immigrants vis-à-vis the host society (Wieviorka 2002).

1.4- To what extent does an issue have to be embedded in the normal ideological structure of a society to generate an electoral effect?

Once the different attitudes towards immigration existing in public opinion have been identified, a crucial but usually overlooked question in issue voting studies is how they are incorporated into the electoral dynamic. It is commonplace among accounts of issue voting to acknowledge a preponderant role for cognitive heuristics as shortcuts enabling rational voters to cope with uncertainty and lack of complete information about issues and politics (Sniderman et al. 1991:18; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Sears 1999; Van der Eijk et al. 1999; Van der Eijk et. al. 2005:182; Dalton 2006:100). These cognitive heuristics are usually broad ideological labels or categories which are used by citizens to make sense of what a political issue means. The most widely used and well-known ideological axis in Europe since the times of the French Revolution is the left-right axis, which summarises a number of issue-related stances and which constitutes a spatial context within which both voters and parties decide their behaviour and strategy (Huber 1989; Dalton 2008:904; Ezrow 2008:481).

The question in this section, which will be tackled in chapter 4, could thus be rewritten as follows: *to what extent and how do people use categories like left-right to constrain and organise their attitudes towards immigration?* This is an important puzzle in two ways. Firstly, from a migration studies perspective, the literatures on ideological issue constraint and attitudes towards immigration have remained surprisingly apart until now. This is unfortunate since, in the very few studies where ideological continuums are included in the analyses, categories like left and right have proved to be increasingly strong predictors of attitudes towards immigration over time (Semyonov et al. 2006; 2007; Wilkes et al. 2007).

The mechanism by which this relationship came into play, however, remains completely unexplored. Secondly, from an electoral studies perspective, it is important to observe the intermediate step between the formation of the attitude and its electoral impact. This intermediate step concerns the linkage that voters are able to establish between the issue and electoral competition. In other terms, this intermediate step allows an issue-related attitude to be incorporated into a general pattern of competition, transcending the marginal and radical. The literature on issue constraint suggests that a relevant way in which this process takes place is through the framing of a given attitude within broad ideological categories governing electoral life (Nie et al. 1976).

Assessing the impact of left-right self-placements on the articulation of attitudes towards immigration is a way to understand aspects of the immigration issue with the potential to have a clear general electoral impact. The perception behind this approach is that an issue needs to be properly framed in general ideological categories to exist beyond the personal experience and circumstance of the individual. For instance, a voter does not need to suddenly become unemployed or to be close to losing all his savings in order to vote on the basis of his concern towards the economy. An individual does not need to be ill or to have experienced a failure of the national health system to vote on the basis of his attitude towards the reform of the public health system. A citizen does not need to directly experience the melting of the poles to vote according to his opinion about climate change. The key in these examples is that voters are able to link their issue-related attitudes to a more general scheme of ideological evaluation and political competition- that is, to connect the issue and the electoral languages beyond a purely personal circumstance. The same logic applies to the immigration issue: a citizen does not need to be in a social, economic or cultural situation which directly exposes him to the threats of immigration, as is usually implied in radical right-wing literature. An average citizen, or any citizen, might be able to express his immigration attitude in the ballot if he is able to link the immigration issue with what the parties represent. Chapter 4 will tackle this topic and suggest that electorally relevant dimensions of the immigration issue do exist, especially among individuals and political contexts which are not likely to become radicalised.

The ideological constraint of immigration in public opinion is a particularly relevant question since, as stated above, immigration combines both economic and cultural components which are difficult to disentangle. The incorporation of a cross-cutting attitude towards a relatively new issue into a quite settled ideological schema can generate

difficulties for mainstream parties when it comes to competing on this issue. In fact, radical right-wing literature has stressed the relatively uncommon ideological profile of the main bulk of right-wing voters. The *ouvriéro-lépenisme* phenomenon in France is paradigmatic and can be easily generalised across all radical parties in Europe (Mayer 2002). It consists of traditionally leftist voters in socio-economic terms who vote together with voters who are fairly rightist or authoritarian in cultural terms. From this perspective, then, it is not surprising that this cross-cutting issue has been able to generate new spaces of competition which could be monopolised by new or reformed radical parties. But as attitudes towards immigration become more established, constrained, and widespread, it is likely that the pattern of competition will open up and that the immigration issue will come to affect the whole of the political spectrum.

1.5- Is the incorporation of a new issue linked to a centripetal or to a centrifugal dynamic of electoral competition?

The title of this section is a more precise way to frame the main question of this study, which could be stated more simply as: what is the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration? The introduction of the notions of *centripetal* and *centrifugal* competition, however, frames this question into a non-resolved debate in issue voting studies concerning the impact of a new issue on the electoral dynamic. The already mentioned novelty of the immigration issue as a social and demographic phenomenon in some European systems compared to others, its potential cross-cutting nature, and the wide degree of party strategies that the uncertainty of its management has generated, offers a degree of inter-systemic, inter-individual and inter-party variation that practically no other issue would be able to provide nowadays. This particularity of the immigration issue provides the potential to observe in a comprehensive manner which aspects of an issue attitude have an impact, when and how.

From a spatial perspective, there are two main rival issue voting models existing in the literature: the proximity and the directional. The proximity model of issue voting was first established by Downs (1957) and predicts that a voter maximises his utility by minimising the distance between his preferred issue position and the position of the party that he votes for. In other terms, the voter will likely vote for the party representing the closest position to his preferred policy option. On the other hand, the directional model of issue voting was first established by Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) as a rival account for how policy

options affect voting behaviour. According to this theory, a voter maximises the utility by voting on the basis of the direction and intensity of his issue preference. This means that the voter will be more likely to vote for the party which represents more clearly the same policy option as his. In other terms, this means that the directional theory of issue voting predicts that people will vote for relatively extreme parties.

Apart from their mathematical formulations and assumptions, the key difference between these two theories which are so difficult to reconcile is that proximity voting predicts a centripetal dynamic in the party system, whereas directional voting predicts a centrifugal one. This is so because the minimisation of distances should favour more moderate parties with strategies aimed at the median voter, whereas voting for a clear and intense position suggests that parties will tend to locate themselves closer to one extreme in the political spectrum. Not only this opposition between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies lies behind the unresolved controversy between these two theories (Macdonald et al. 1991; Macdonald et al. 1995; Westholm 1997; Macdonald et al. 1998a; Macdonald et al. 1998b; Lewis and King 1999; Westholm 2001; Blais et al. 2001; Cho and Endersby 2003), but classic systemic approaches to party competition are also connected to it (Sartori 1993c). More importantly, assessing the role of an issue in the light of centripetal (proximity) or centrifugal (directional) tendencies can shed light on the fundamental question of the present study: is immigration an issue that generates a centrifugal dynamic and therefore favours the radicalism of the competition and those parties at the extremes of the spectrum? Or, by contrast, can immigration affect the overall party dynamic by the minimisation of policy distances stressing the pivotal point of the median voter and mainstream politics? These questions will be tackled in chapter 5, where the different dimensions of attitudes towards immigration are used as independent variables to predict voter choice.

1.6- Does a newly incorporated issue like immigration generate stability, or rather, change in the electoral dynamic?

This study tests the performance of different issue voting models when explaining the electoral impact of immigration in advanced European democracies. Such models include not only the spatial models discussed above, but also non-spatial (or valence) theories of voting behaviour. The main reason for distinguishing between these two types of models (spatial in chapter 5 and non-spatial in chapter 6) is that the former are theoretically better suited to explain the performance of immigration on the most stable side of the electoral

dynamic, whereas the latter are better suited to account for the role of immigration on the most contextually contingent and changeable side of politics. This is so because policy positions are assumed to be more reliable and permanent over time (Downs 1957:97), whereas images of issue saliency and party competence (the two main attributes of a valence rationale of issue voting) are more changeable and dependent on a given political context. The comparison of spatial and valence rationales of issue voting allows me to test how an issue like immigration can contribute to the stability or to the change of electoral alignments and results.

The sources of electoral change are the subject of a crucial and ongoing debate in political science (van der Brug et al. 2007:17). An issue like immigration which has been considered the domain of radical patterns of behaviour and which is progressively being incorporated into the mainstream side of the electoral dynamic can give new insights on this debate. There are three main sources of electoral change: the activation of voters, the swing of voters, and the incorporation of new cohorts into the electorate⁸ (Franklin et al. 1992:395-6; Franklin and Ladner 1995; Franklin 2004:208,216; Mayhew 2002). The study of the impact of an issue which is being incorporated into the mainstream electoral dynamic can shed light on the two former mechanisms, namely the electoral swing and the mobilisation of voters⁹. In order to do that, the *electoral potential* or *electoral market* of a given party needs to be identified. The electoral potential of a party is defined as the amount of voters that feel already identified or attached to that party. Party attachment or identification are different versions of an enduring psychological link of voters vis-à-vis parties. As it has been argued from the Michigan tradition of electoral research, psychological attachment to parties is a good indicator of anchored individual behaviour and of a very high likelihood of individuals permanently voting for a given party (Dalton and Weldon 2007). Both the analyses in chapters 5 (spatial voting) and 6 (non-spatial voting) will show that immigration can generate a substantial amount of change in election results following a logic of mobilisation of the potential electorate of a party, and through electoral swings among voters for other parties. The magnitude, logic and circumstances of the electoral change generated by the immigration issue, either through one process or the other, is a crucial aspect of the general electoral impact of the issue that will be explored and discussed in this study.

⁸ Even if the incorporation of new younger cohorts into the electorate is a more contested mechanism to explain electoral change in some contexts (see Erikson and Tedin 1981).

⁹ The analysis of the incorporation of new cohorts into the electorate would require the availability of longitudinal data over a long time span, as it has been done elsewhere (Franklin 2004).

The relationship between an issue like immigration and the patterns of electoral change generated when it is incorporated into a mainstream electoral dynamic can also give new insights into a non-consensual conception of issues in electoral research. Some authors conceptualise opinions towards issues as rather changeable in essence, and therefore very likely to explain variations across elections (Dalton 2006:100,201). On the other hand, other authors stress the ideological nature of attitudes towards issues and think of them as a direct product of socialisation processes, implying that they would generate stability rather than variability in the structure of party competition (Converse 1964; Nie et al. 1976:104; van der Eijk 1999). A study like the one I propose here can contribute to discovering whether the impact of a new issue like immigration is more closely linked to values/stability or to the context/change of electoral competition.

1.7- How to analyse the heterogeneity of the electoral impact of an issue?

The various puzzles summarised in the preceding sections deal with the dimensionality of the immigration issue in European public opinion; the extent to which these dimensions are linked to left-right schema so as to be incorporated into mainstream electoral dynamics; the actual electoral impact of these attitudes in terms of centrifugal or rather centripetal tendencies likely to overcome the assumed radicalism of the issue; and the amount and types of electoral change that the issue can generate in the overall political spectrum when transcending a minority and radical fringe of competition. The last puzzle that follows as a corollary of the previous ones is rather methodological: how to analyse the electoral impact of a new issue with such diverse potential as between individuals, between parties and between political systems?

Even if embedded in a rational paradigm of behavioural analysis, my study does not assume that individuals are isolated from political contexts and institutional constraints (Shepsle 1995). The difficult synergy between individual and aggregate units of analyses is a methodological problem that has threatened the reliability of some political science conclusions for at least five decades now. The difficulty of inferring individual patterns of behaviour from aggregated data, the so-called ecological fallacy (Robinson 1950; Seligson 2002), has been widely cited in order to foster the analysis of political attitudes and behaviour through individual level data available in large N opinion polls, which is the main methodological approach used in this study. The biases derived from the non-random

grouping of individuals in aggregate units and the difficulties of properly specifying statistical models with only contextual data are some of the basic problems related to the ecological fallacy (Irwin Langbein and Lichtman 1978). As the powerful academic strength of the behaviourist paradigm reached a position of dominance in the state of electoral studies, however, some claimed that individuals are not isolated from their context and that there was also a danger of individualistic fallacies (Lijphart 1980:45). The theoretical and methodological combination of individuals and contexts has thus become a central, even if still not perfectly resolved problem in voting behaviour analyses.

The need to account for the inter-individual and the inter-political system variation seems to be partially solved with the gradual implementation of multilevel or hierarchical techniques (Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Luke 2004). In addition to these two levels of analysis, however, one has to include an additional and usually surprisingly forgotten one, which is the level of the political party. The assessment of inter-party variation is unfortunately commonly overlooked in analyses of individual voting behaviour, which unrealistically assume that sociological, attitudinal and contextual explanatory factors affect the vote for all parties in the same way. The implementation of hierarchical designs with extended datasets whereby the unit of analysis becomes the individual in relation to each party preference or choice (instead of the individual himself) copes with this methodological challenge. Either through hierarchical linear designs (when the outcome is continuous, in chapter 6) or through alternative-specific conditional logit techniques (when the outcome is categorical, in chapter 5), the inter-individual, inter-party and inter-system levels of analysis are simultaneously accounted for. When the outcome is not voting behaviour but rather continuous attitudes towards immigration (in chapters 3 and 4), hierarchical linear analyses are implemented with the individual and systemic levels correctly specified, but without the level of inter-party heterogeneity (since it is irrelevant for the purpose of those non-electoral analyses).

Apart from special attention to the multilevel heterogeneity of the levels of variation offered by the immigration issue, another methodological characteristic of the design implemented here is the triangulation of different dimensional analytic techniques when observing the semantic construction of the immigration issue in chapter 3. Even if interpreting the outputs of dimensional analyses is far from being an exact science, the power of theory and the combination of factor analysis and Mokken scale analysis try to give a reliable portrait of the dimensionality of an issue in a way that has not been done before.

Still in terms of data and method, each chapter has a specific section where the data used and strategies followed in each case are explained. Generally speaking, the main datasets used in this study are the European Election Studies, the European Social Survey and Eurobarometers. The systemic and party data comes from sources like the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, the Migrant Integration Policy Index¹⁰, the Benoit and Laver (2007) party positions expert survey, and the Comparative Manifesto Project (Budge et. al. 2001).

1.8- Plan of the study

To observe whether attitudes towards migrants have indeed become a relevant predictor of party preference and vote choice beyond extreme forms of behaviour across different European political systems, I will follow an analytical strategy composed of different steps. Each step corresponds to a different phase in the internalisation of an issue in the electoral dynamic. This process goes from its emergence in public opinion, through its ideological framing in schemas usually used to structure party competition, through to its actual impact on party preference and the contextual determinants intervening in this impact. The broad framework which will be used and specified in the pages below is summarised in figure 1.1.

Chapter 2 is not included in figure 1.1 because it sets up the whole theoretical framework to be tested in subsequent empirical chapters. That chapter presents an encompassing model of internalisation of an issue into a general electoral dynamic, using immigration as a particularly illuminating case as well as an interesting case in itself. The chapter sketches out the specific hypotheses that can give answers to the puzzles presented above.

Chapter 3 will investigate the semantic structure of immigration in public opinion and the emergence of attitudes towards immigration. The main general objective of this study is to test the impact of these perceptions on voting behaviour. Before assessing the nature of this impact, however, one needs to understand how the public construction of the immigration issue is articulated in order to avoid simplistic, incomplete or even spurious results. Previous research in social psychology has shown that issues are very unlikely to appear as a single and one-dimensional attitude in people's minds. Usually, citizens tend to use cues and put issues together in order to articulate a semantic structure and make sense of social

¹⁰ <http://www.integrationindex.eu/> (09/01/10)

and political reality. Therefore, instead of randomly picking a couple of indicators of attitudes towards immigration, I should first empirically assess the kind of attitudes towards immigration that actually exist in European public opinion and how people construct this issue. Very briefly, the results will suggest that there is a two-dimensional construction of the immigration issue across the European systems analysed. The first relies upon logic of differentiation and adaptability, and it focuses on the individual characteristics of immigrants and the effect that they can have on the inter-personal interaction with the native population. The second is based upon logic of hierarchy vis-à-vis immigrants, and focuses on the impact of immigration on the collective sphere of the host country.

After observing the multidimensionality of attitudes towards immigration by means of appropriate data and methods, still in chapter 3 I will explain the causes of these different types of attitudes. To do so I will rely on six main theories which, to my knowledge, have been used so far in order to explain attitudes towards immigration: group conflict theory, social identity theory, social contact theory, marginality theory, explanations based on trust and disaffection, and media effects theories. The use of these theories will help to make sense of the existence of different dimensions in public perception of immigrants across Europe. Moreover, these theories will also help to clarify previous contradictions in the literature on attitudes towards immigration. These contradictions will be shown to be due to un-justified conceptualisations and operationalisations of these kinds of attitudes.

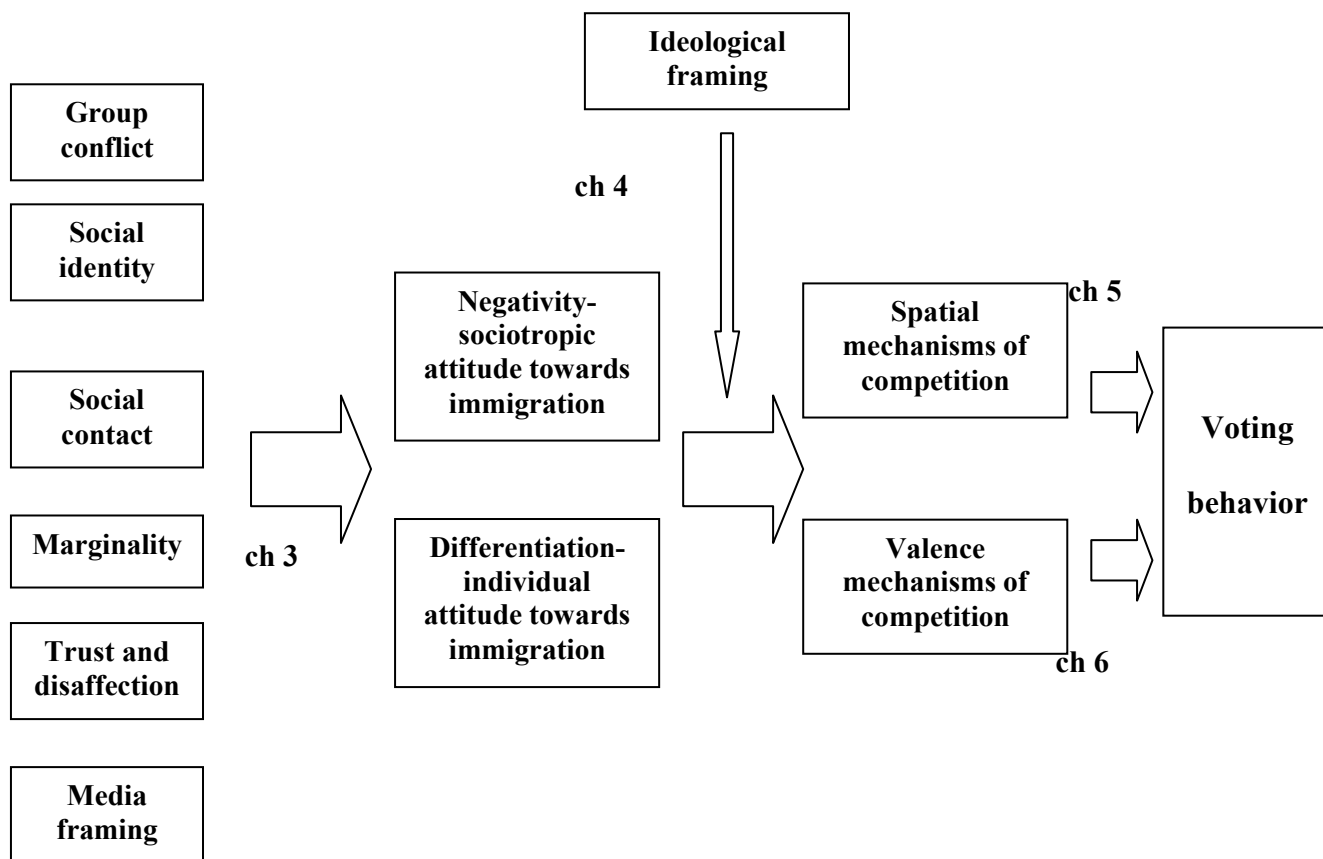


Figure 1.1- Broad theoretical framework

Chapter 4 will move a step forward and will assess the connection between political ideological categories (basically in terms of left-right self-placements) and each of the two relevant types of attitudes towards immigration identified in the previous chapter. The objective here will be to observe the way on which such attitudes are embedded in broader ideological frameworks. When analysing how a new issue like immigration is being integrated into the electoral dynamic, it is essential to know whether it has been framed in the normal axis of ideological competition or whether it cross-cuts this schema and has an influence completely beyond it. The former scenario can open up the pattern of electoral competition and extend it to the overall political spectrum by integrating an issue into the standard axis of party competition. By contrast, the latter scenario whereby a new issue opinion is hardly connected to any standard and commonly acknowledged axis of electoral dynamics can generate specific spaces of competition where only new, smaller and eventually more radical parties have incentives to organise themselves.

After having identified the dimensions of attitudes towards immigration and analysed their degree of connection with the mainstream ideological framework of electoral competition, chapter 5 will go a step further and test the impact of these attitudes on voting behaviour. The aim here is to analyse the impact of immigration on the overall party system, and more specifically on the most stable and settled structure of electoral competition. The reliability, integrity and moderately permanent stability of issue positions among voters and parties assumed by spatial theories of issue voting (both in terms of proximity and direction) provide an ideal theoretical framework to assess how the immigration issue performs in this more settled structure of issue and policy spaces. This is why one of the main concerns of this chapter will be to test to what extent a good synergy between voter and party immigration positions can just bind a potential electorate to a given party in terms of party attachment, or instead overcome natural party boundaries and generate electoral change through the swing of voters who were previously un-likely to vote for that party. Chapter 5 will also assess sources of heterogeneity in the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration beyond radical right voting, due to differences across party families and other party and systemic characteristics.

Finally, chapter 6 will account for the most contextually contingent dynamic of the immigration issue in European democracies. More specifically, this chapter will test the predictive strength of valence theories of voting (based on images of issue saliency and party competence) in accounting for the electoral impact of the immigration issue. The cross-sectional design of the data and the analyses suggested in this chapter will allow me to test the extent to which immigration can follow a valence dynamic and generate a substantial amount of electoral change. The findings in this chapter will suggest that, contrary to common wisdom, valence dynamics are not observed when there is consensus over policy outcomes but rather when the psychological anchoring of the individual is low. The utilitarian and rationalistic vote for a party on the basis of valence arguments will thus prove to be part of a zero-sum game in terms of enduring party attachments. While immigration under a spatial perspective will be theorised as a mechanism to mobilize the potential electorate of a given party, immigration under a valence perspective will be theorised as a way to overcome these boundaries and generate change in the electorate through the acquisition of voters not previously attached to the party they ultimately vote for.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: A THEORY OF THE INCORPORATION AND IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON A MAINSTREAM ELECTORAL DYNAMIC

“Issues are what politics is about”

Russell Dalton (2006: 100)

“As international migration reshapes societies, it inevitably and often profoundly affects political life. Yet, paradoxically, international migration is frequently viewed as a socio-economic phenomenon largely devoid of political significance”

Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2003: 255)

2.1- Issue voting studies and their relevance

If Dalton is right in the above quote, the analysis of an issue with outstanding political and social implications such as immigration seems to be justified from a perspective of political behaviour studies. As he argues, issue opinions are the everyday currency of politics. They identify the public's preferences for government action, define the positions of parties from election to election and provide a means for the citizens to choose between competing issue programmes (Dalton 2006:100). Paradoxically, however, as Castles and Miller point out (2003:255), immigration has deserved much more attention as a sociological and economic phenomenon than as a political one. More in particular, as argued in the introductory chapter, immigration has the potential to shed light on a number of unresolved puzzles in attitude formation and voting behaviour research. The potential radicalism of the consequences of the immigration issue assumed by radical-right literature has overshadowed the impact of the issue on the overall electoral dynamic. As defined before, by electoral dynamic I mean a configuration of issue-related opinions both among voters and parties, that in interaction with exogenous systemic features, gives rise to a particular pattern of electoral competition affecting the overall political spectrum.

Behavioural scholars interested in the immigration issue have mainly focused so far on the exceptional or particular features of the voter of radical right-wing parties. Moreover, mainstream party politics are only analysed in relation to the existence of radical parties and as explanatory or intervening factors in the radical right-wing phenomenon. Ultimately, only the most negative side of the range of attitudes towards immigration is taken into

account, leaving practically unattended the electoral impact of the remaining opinions existing in a given political spectrum. This approach has been useful for the study of a phenomenon that challenges some core democratic values and that brings to mind some of the deepest traumas of contemporary European history (Águila 2002).

The already extensive, prolific and relatively consensual literature on the radical right-wing phenomenon, however, might be a good indicator of the need to study from an individual-level perspective to what extent immigration is able to transcend this minority and extreme fringe of political competition. My attempt is thus to build a middle-range theory explaining the general impact of attitudes towards immigration on the overall spectrum beyond specific particularities, to analyse the vote for mainstream parties as a relevant dependent variable, and to measure and model the whole range of attitudes towards the issue existing in a given political system. This exercise can make a step forward in answering several puzzles in political behaviour studies outlined in the introductory chapter, namely: how to study and define the dimensionality of attitudes towards immigration across Europe; how is an attitude incorporated into mainstream electoral dynamics through its constraint within broad ideological categories governing electoral life?; what issue voting model better accounts for the impact of immigration on voting behaviour?; does immigration generate a radical and centrifugal dynamic in the party system as usually implied in the radical right literature, or does it rather generate a centripetal tendency whereby the median and mainstream voter becomes the reference point of the competition?; when incorporated into a mainstream dynamic of competition, is immigration linked to the stability of the voting patterns or rather to the change of the support and fortunes of established parties?

The study of these puzzles presented here is embedded in the confluence of the rational, the psychological and the sociological traditions of electoral research. Even if the general theory of the electoral incorporation and impact of the immigration issue into a mainstream electoral dynamic presented in this chapter assumes a rational and instrumentally motivated voter, the notion of causal heterogeneity (not everybody responds to the same stimulus in every circumstance) (Sniderman 1993) and the new institutionalist contribution about the role of the context in constraining *free* rational decisions (Shepsle 1995) will have a predominant role in the analysis developed below. Moreover, the modelling of sociological, psychological and rational factors and their interaction will be a crucial feature of some of the answers suggested in the present study.

Regarding the convergence of sociological, psychological and rational factors, the rise of issue voting has been sometimes considered parallel to the decline of two central paradigms of discipline i.e. class politics and party identification. The stable and overwhelming explanatory effect of social and demographic variables seemed to progressively lose its value in an era with increasing indexes of political sophistication, individualisation and fragmentation of collective ways of living (Franklin 1985). Moreover, the long-term psychological attachment to parties which also helped to predict political behaviour seems to lose its original essence in an epoch with rising levels of electoral volatility and instrumental-rational autonomy on the voters' side (Nie et al. 1976:156; Dalton et al. 1984). The impact of issues on the stability or rather on the change of electoral results, however, is far from being clear. As it will be argued below, electoral researchers refer to a variety of things when referring to issues. Attitudes, values, opinions, ideological orientations and more contingent perceptions of problems in the current political agenda are considered to be issues (Aardal and van Wijnen 2005:194). This is why the role of issues as a clear triumph over stable behavioural patterns will not be taken into consideration. One of the central concerns of this study is precisely the analysis of an issue in relation to both the stability and the change of the electoral dynamic. And this is why the framework proposed here is embedded in a confluence of the three traditions of electoral research rather than into the hegemony of pure rational choice principles. In this respect, Carmines and Huckfeldt (2001) already claim that the three schools of thought, the sociological (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), the psychological (Campbell et al. 1964), and the rational (Downs 1957), have not been strictly substituted by each other, but have rather converged in the acceptance of a rational and instrumentally motivated voter who therefore may think and behave in terms of issue opinions.

2.2- Intuition

Assume the existence of a voter who does not belong to the working class, who is not politically disaffected, is not located on any extreme of political and cultural values, his personal and economic situation is not so bad as to increase his perception of economic threat, is not particularly nationalistic, and does not live in a context particularly inclined to the emergence and growth of new parties. This voter is therefore not a candidate to vote for a radical right-wing party. Maybe this voter does not even live in a context where the radical right is a reasonable alternative, because it is either too marginal or because it has

not even emerged. The intuition behind the theoretical framework presented in this chapter is that this voter's attitude towards immigration can be nevertheless a relevant predictor of his voting behaviour in a general election.

In spite of not being a potential radical voter, this citizen has (wrong or right) perceptions and opinions about immigration. As it has been suggested with other issues like the economy, one of the ways to observe how this voter structures his attitudes towards immigration is the distinction between those aspects assessing the impact of immigration on the overall society, and those aspects assessing the impact of immigration on his personal sphere and individual pattern of interactions (*societal-individual hypothesis*). If the societal and individual aspects of the perceptions of immigration are indeed two reliable and distinct constructs, one can assume that our voter is moderately positive regarding, for instance, how immigration will affect the country's economy and life (measured as a 4 on a 0-10 scale from a positive to a negative attitude), but that he is moderately negative regarding the individual characteristic of migrants and the possibility to share his life with them (a 6 on a 0-10 scale).

The collectivist-individualistic articulation of his attitude is complemented with another type of logic that, as explained in more detail below, has been present in the construction of the other one throughout history. This logic distinguishes whether immigrants are perceived as inferior or just as different (*hierarchy-difference hypothesis*). As it will be seen below, the hierarchical framing of immigration is a contemporary evolution of classical forms of racism that classify ethnic groups as superior or inferior, whereas the differentiation logic stresses the compatibility or adaptability of an ethnic minority in the host society. Assume that our hypothetical voter does not consider immigrants to be inherently inferior (a 3 on a 0-10 scale) but, at the same time, he considers that migrants are quite different and incompatible with his own needs and life (a 6 on a 0-10 scale).

If the process stopped here, the articulation of an attitude towards immigration would not be a sufficient condition for our voter to guide his voting behaviour. Not only because this attitude is complex and multidimensional and somehow needs to be further organised, but also because the voter needs something else to link his opinion to what it is really offered in the political spectrum. If this voter was potentially radical, he may not need further cognitive cues to link attitudinal and the electoral semantics. This is so because his very prominent concern and negativity *vis-à-vis* immigration would directly activate attention

towards that topic and the link to a party monopolising the same single issue. But since for our non-radical hypothetical voter, immigration is just one more of his concerns and political opinions, and since these opinions are not that explicitly negative in all his dimensions, we need to know whether he is able to connect these opinions with a broader ideological schema structuring political behaviour like the left-right-wing continuum in Europe. Assuming our hypothetical voter is able to use the categories left-wing and right-wing to structure his opinions about immigration on the individual and difference constructs (where he is moderately negative), but not on the societal and hierarchy constructs (where he is moderately positive). This is so because his moderately negative attitude towards immigration on the individual and difference constructs is coherent and consistent with his broader universe of issue opinions, which are generally centre-right-wing regarding many other issues like the economy, the environment, cultural values, etc. (the *ideological constraint hypothesis*). The strong constraint of some aspects of his opinion about immigration within coherent ideological categories helps the voter to make sense of the immigration issue, and to make it salient and usable in political terms.

After having constructed an attitude towards immigration and having structured some aspects of this attitude ideologically, the voter is cognitively ready to express himself accordingly on election day. It is now time to connect this preference to what the available parties state about this issue. His opinion based on an individual and difference rationale will have a much stronger effect than his opinion based on societal and hierarchy logic, because the former is appropriately and coherently oriented within his broader framework of issue opinions and political orientations. From a spatial and policy-oriented perspective, he can now connect his salient and coherently framed issue preference in two ways (on the number 6 of the spectrum) with the preferences of the parties. Either the voter can opt for the liberal party which is closest to him (on the number 5 of the immigration policy spectrum), or for the conservative party which is further to the right (on the number 8 of the immigration policy spectrum). If he votes for the party that's more moderate and ideologically closer to his own preferences he will eventually contribute to a centripetal strategy of parties moving towards the centre of the spectrum seeking the votes of the majority of the population (the *proximity hypothesis*). By contrast, he can vote for the conservative party because he thinks his centre-right-wing policy option will be more clearly implemented and will not be diluted in a magma of centrality and neutrality. In case of behaving like this he will favour a directional way of voting which, in the long run, may

generate the movement of established parties and even the emergence of new parties towards the extreme of the spectrum (the *directional hypothesis*).

By behaving in one way or another, translation of the attitude towards immigration of our hypothetical voter on the mainstream electoral competition will contribute or not to the alignments that have defined previous electoral results. Assume that our voter tends to vote in a proximity way, which eventually directs his vote to the liberal party. If our voter already feels attached to that party and therefore tends to vote for that party in general, the coincidence of policy options in an important issue will increase even more the probability that this person will choose the same party again (the *mobilisation hypothesis*). If, by contrast, the distance between our voter and the liberal party increases due to strategic movements of the latter, the probability of our voter voting liberal might decrease even if he was initially inclined to do so. The validation of this hypothesis implies that party attachment and issue voting can reinforce each other, but that they are mechanisms with independent influences on the vote.

In a very different scenario but still regarding the potential of our mainstream voter to generate electoral change, imagine that our voter is not particularly attached to any party and therefore his voting behaviour is less anchored than previously assumed. In that case, a given context where immigration becomes a very salient issue for that voter and where the conservative party becomes the most clearly competent alternative in dealing with the issue, this voter might eventually vote for the conservatives even if he was theoretically supposed to vote for the more ambiguous liberals under a proximity perspective (*acquisition hypothesis*). In all, the specific configuration of psychological party attachments, policy positions, contextual issue saliencies and perceptions of party competence can generate quite varied scenarios for the continuity or the change on the strength of established parties in that political system.

The current chapter develops theoretically the hypotheses to be tested in subsequent empirical chapters. These hypotheses give provisional answers to the questions already outlined in the introduction. More specifically, the theoretical framework starts by hypothesising the multidimensional construction of attitudes towards immigration in Europe (based upon the societal-individual and hierarchy-difference logics). Subsequently, it establishes when and why an attitude towards immigration can be framed and constrained by the left-right-wing continuum in order to get saliency and coherence from a policy

perspective. Finally, the chapter will end up theorising the possible mechanisms by which an issue can actually have an impact on party preference and voter choice, and can generate electoral change on the mainstream side of political competition.

2.3- The perception of immigration vs. the perception of migrants: the societal-individual hypothesis

Among the key trends detected in migration studies over the last decade Luedtke highlights “the surprising complexity of European public opinion vis-à-vis immigration” and “the key role played by immigration in political party competition” (Luedtke 2005 :680,681). These two topics, which form part of the focus of my research, do not in fact seem to exist in isolation from one another. Moreover, the inherent multidimensionality of the social construction of attitudes towards certain political issues requires a more sophisticated look. It has been shown that people do not tend to adopt a single perspective to analyse and interpret social reality, but they tend to use cognitive tools and *put issues together* (i.e, immigrants in relation to economy or legal rights) in order to make sense of a given topic. As the research in social psychology progresses, there is increasing evidence that issues are not constructed as single one-dimensional entities in people’s minds but that they come together with each other (Duckitt 1992; Sniderman 1993).

The multidimensional construction of attitudes towards immigration has to do with the notion of framing. Framing refers to “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Hobolt 2009: 112). Even if the studies on framing usually focus on the top-down effect whereby the emphasis on a subset of issue considerations by elites or media causes individuals to focus on these considerations, I will rather focus on the subset of considerations that is relevant for European citizens to perceive the immigration issue rather than on the process that has led to this particular construction.

Before theorising the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration in Europe, then, there is a need to explore what these attitudes look like. This is a fundamental step, especially taking into account the unnecessarily broad diversity of measures used in research on attitudes towards immigration, and the uncritical acceptance of assumptions like the difference between material and cultural threats organising the dimensionality of the immigration issue. As it will be shown in chapter 3, material and cultural concerns are too

intertwined in the public construction of immigration as to be able to define clearly different constructs. I rather theorise two innovative and complementary rationales as cognitive pathways to organise attitudes towards immigration: the societal-individual logic (explained in this section), and the hierarchy-difference logic (explained in the following section).

The distinction between sociotropic and individual perceptions is recurrent in the economic voting literature. There are no reasons to deny *a priori* the validity of this intuitive and fruitful distinction applied to another issue like immigration, which also contains economic aspects and which it is also likely to affect the overall party continuum like the economy itself. Sociotropic perceptions refer to how the economy affects society or the country, whereas individual perceptions refer to the economic conditions of the individual himself. While sociotropic considerations seem to matter more according to the main bulk of economic voting literature (Van der Brug et al. 2007:181-182), other studies stress the equally important self-interested construction and impact of this issue (Lockerbie 2008:chapter 6). According to Lockerbie, the weakness of egocentric explanations in earlier works appears to have been the result of the choice of items used to measure retrospective egocentric economic evaluations (2008:110). The implication is that, when constructing an opinion regarding a public issue with remarkable political consequences, people seem to take into account both aspects affecting themselves and aspects affecting others.

Research on immigration and public opinion suggests that the same duality in approach may also be applicable to attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Lahav 2004b:1165-72). Does immigration affect the country, or does it rather affect individuals directly? Whereas attitudinal motivations may be based on personal self-interest (Kinder et al. 1989), societal and national concerns often drive policy preferences (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Sears and Citrin 1982). Even if there are reasons to think that a sociotropic view of a given public issue is not fully isolated from individual self-interest (since general well-being can also affect personal well-being), it is reasonable to expect some structure in the dimensionality of attitudes towards immigration that is based on this distinction. This group vs. individual interaction hypothesis is somehow behind the discussion between proponents of group-conflict theory and social cooperation thesis when analysing high local concentration of migrants in geographical contexts. While proponents of group conflict theory tend to conceptualise immigration as a phenomenon challenging the collective resources of the host or native population, proponents of social cooperation theory focus on the kind of personal contact between natives and immigrants. It is important to stress, then, that the societal-

individual hypothesis presented here not only refers to the sociotropic or individual impact of immigration (as the literature on economic voting does with the issue of the economy), but to the perception of immigration as a social phenomenon or as a set of individuals with specific personal characteristics. This reasoning brings me to the first hypothesis to be tested in chapter 3:

- **H1-** *Attitudes towards immigration in Europe are composed of different dimensions reflecting:*
 - **H1a-** *a logic based on the perception of immigration as a social phenomenon with an impact on society*
 - **H2b-** *a logic based on the perception of immigration as an individual-level phenomenon that impacts upon the respondent as an individual*

In formal terms, this first hypothesis can be expressed as a function of societal and individual perceptions shaping attitudes towards immigration:

$$A_i = g(G_i, E_i) \quad (1)$$

Where,

A_i is the global attitude towards immigration of voter i

G_i is the construct of societal perceptions of voter i regarding immigration

E_i is the construct of individual perceptions of voter i regarding immigration

2.4- Immigrants as inferior vs. immigrants as different: the hierarchy-difference hypothesis

2.4.1- A typology of reactions against non-natives in history

Apart from the societal-individual structure of attitudes towards immigration, I expect another immigration-specific rationale to have a role in the dimensionality of these attitudes: the hierarchy-difference axis.

There are two different axes mapping the construction of hostility towards others in different ideologies and regimes throughout history. The first axis is the polarisation

between hierarchy and difference, which I argue still influences the dimensionality of contemporary attitudes towards immigration in advanced democracies. The second is the polarization between essentialism (or biological determinism) and non essentialism, which, on the contrary, has been diluted and is less relevant in organising attitudes towards immigration today.

Table 2.1- Concepts on the basis of hierarchy-difference and essentialism-non essentialism criteria

		HIERARCHY-DIFFERENCE CRITERION	
		Inferior	Different
ESSENTIALISM CRITERION	Essentialist	Classic Racism	Racialism
	Non-essentialist	Symbolic Racism	Xenophobia

As can be seen in table 2.1, the juxtaposition of these two criteria leads to different concepts regarding the attitude towards the out-group¹. The negative and essentialist components correspond to the classic concept of racism. In this case the immigrant is potentially inferior and damaging. Moreover, this inferiority is inherited and determined by nature, and therefore cannot be changed. Racism is defined as an ideological conception which assigns to a given race or ethnic group a position of superior strength on the basis of its physical, cultural or economic domination among others (IOM 2006:59). Both determinism and a logic of superiority-inferiority are necessary and sufficient conditions to find classic racist attitudes (Fredrickson 2003:173). On the other hand, the negative but non-essentialist category corresponds to the so-called symbolic racism. This particular framing still sees the immigrant as potentially inferior or with negative consequences for the host society.

¹ I refer to *negative* rather than to *intolerant* attitudes or perceptions. The use of the concept of tolerance when assessing attitudes towards immigration seems rather problematic in this case. Some authors refer to it explicitly (Dalton 2006 :109) whereas others suggest that it cannot be applied to the kind of attitudes I analyse. Mondak and Sanders, for instance, define tolerance through 3 main properties which cannot be directly applied to the dimensions I work with. According to them, tolerance is (1) a dichotomous attitude (2) regarding the full legal rights of citizenship (3) from people who already dislike migrants (Mondak and Sanders 2003 :495-496). In my case, none of the items I use to construct the dimensions of attitudes towards immigration necessarily fulfil these conditions. Moreover, Weldon distinguishes between political tolerance vis-à-vis immigration (basically based on the acceptance of migrants' right to vote, equality before the law and freedom of speech, association and religion) and social tolerance (acceptance of migrants as eventual neighbours, bosses or relatives) (Weldon 2006 :336). In this case, again, the indicators I use measure other aspects not contained in the concept of tolerance.

However, this conception replaces the biological and essentialist components with other semantic constructions, such as the tendency of out-groups to rely on public assistance without deserving it or not to work hard enough (Kinder and Sears 1981; Tarman and Sears 2005; Gomez and Wilson 2006).

The different and essentialist cell corresponds to the concept of racialism. This is a less used concept originally defined by Appiah, and it is defined as the belief that social features can be transmitted generating different but non-hierarchically ordered races (Fredrickson 2003 :171). Finally, the category based on difference and non-essentialism corresponds to the concept of xenophobia. Xenophobia can be defined as hate, aversion or hostility towards foreigners. (IOM 2006:81). Even if it is sometimes difficult to distinguish xenophobic from racist attitudes, the clearest point of mismatch between the two concepts lies both on the lack of determinism and the absence of an unchangeable hierarchy in the former (Delacampagne 2000:14)².

2.4.2- Hierarchy and difference over the centuries

The historical analysis of the idea of racism locates Ancient Greece as the first context where proto-racist forms of behaviour can be found. The coexistence of two forms of logic based respectively on how good or bad, and on how different the other one was can already be found in this period. Some authors, like Fredrickson, consider that ancient Greeks made a distinction between themselves and the Barbarians, but that this distinction was rather based on difference and not on hereditary superiority (Fredrickson 2003:23). The presence of essentialist negativity in the construction of non-natives, however, is obvious since the

² The hostile attitude in the dimensions that I will analyse below refers to the two lower categories in table 1. That is, to xenophobia and symbolic racism. The use of the term racism on its own, however, is problematic and avoided throughout this study. This is so because its main defining attribute, the biological determinism, is lacking in the contemporary attitudes that I will be able to observe and generalise across twenty European systems. The word racism, however, even if separated from its biological connotation, is not completely erased from the Anglo-Saxon tradition of research, probably in part because of the important influence of the actual racial cleavage separating the in-groups and the out-groups analysed in the context of the USA. This contemporary use of the terms “race” and “racism” is misleading and would not be accepted in other linguistic frameworks different from the Anglo-Saxon one. As Wieworka explains, in the Anglo-Saxon intellectual tradition it is possible to talk about *race relations* without actually referring to the biological and classical sense of race. From that point of view, race is just a social and political construction based upon phenotypical attributes which generates relations among groups (Wieworka 2002 :21-22). This use of the term “race” was present during the 1920’s in some works from the School of Chicago, and also in some British academic contexts later on (Banton 1967). The use of the term “race” in this context is closer to the notion of ethnic group in other non Anglo-Saxon traditions.

ancient Greek conception of the human genre is divided *by nature* in classes which are *hierarchically* ordered. Moreover, the Greek conception of citizenship is not based territorially as in the Roman Empire, but on the transmission from parents to children (Delacampagne 2000:27). This coexistence between hierarchy and difference is present in the Aristotelian distinction between form and matter. While matter refers to the most essential and unchangeable identity of objects, form refers to a simple accidental differentiation with no consequences for eventual natural hierarchies (Aristotle [1989]:chapter 9). This abstract differentiation between form and matter generates contradictory statements going from anti-racist to purely racist expressions in Aristotle's writings. On one hand, he understands mankind as a relatively unitary group where the *difference* of the colour of the skin is not a reason to deny the presence of a human character. On the other hand, Aristotle explicitly states in his first book on Politics that slaves and Barbarians are *inferior* in nature (Aristotle [1943]:book I).

The logic of superiority is more explicitly defined in the Middle Ages through the expansion of Catholicism and the intensification of the anti-Jewish sentiment during the XII and XIII centuries. Even if the Judaeo-Christian creationist myth in Genesis states a common origin for all mankind through Adam and Eve, the more institutionalised expansion of Catholicism is based upon the belief of superiority over the populations to be *converted* (Fredrickson 2003:25,30). The religious motivation is also highlighted in the American conquest and the first colonisation processes. In this case, the populations in the recently discovered New World were considered inferior and therefore needed to be civilised. In spite of the strength of the hierarchy rationale and the perception of how good or bad the others were in this period, however, the rationale based on a non-hierarchical difference, even if weaker, is also made explicit. The identification of a natural right of Europeans to travel and proselytise the Evangel was put at the same level as the natural right of indigenous populations to live in their territories without being converted. The logic of differentiation was behind these arguments, where the difference of the new populations was acknowledged but not their inherent inferiority (Delacampagne 2000:112,115-117).

There is consensus in considering the Enlightenment as the starting point of explicit classical racism in political discourses (Wieviorka 2002). The new rationalistic and positivistic way of understanding social diversity was based both on differentiation and superior/inferior rationales. The scientific method strengthened the classification of ideal and eventually incompatible natural and social types (difference). It also established a

hierarchy between those models closer to modernity and civilisation, and those further from this unitary and homogeneous conception of human progress (superior/inferior). Apart from its reliance on both difference and hierarchy, the clearest defining attribute of classic racism is its essentialist component. The idea of an essential and unchangeable difference across civilisations with nature as its unique origin was settled and spread over the XVIII and XIX centuries.

Two main processes explain the articulation of classic racism: the development of science understood as the foremost way to knowledge and as the possibility to find objective, external and general laws governing the world; and the emergence and stabilisation of the nation as the main political unit structuring international relations. As for the first one, philosophers, natural scientists and historians believed in the division and classification of mankind into different races, similarly to what was done among other species in the natural world. Apart from mere distinction, however, the institutionalisation of a single scientific idea of progress and evolution towards modernity lead to consider as inferior all those groups which did not follow this particular model of social progress. The construction of the superiority of the white race on biological and scientific grounds affected a number of intellectual approaches at that time, when the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin were misused to justify other social and cultural theses about human progress (Wieviorka 2002:15-17). As for the second element behind this enlightened idea of racism, many authors like Arendt underline its connection to the emergence of the idea of nation (Arendt 1951). The division of the world into such well-defined and supposedly homogeneous units implied *de facto* the existence of some advanced and some underdeveloped nations, and justified the conversion of the latter by the former in historical events like colonisation and imperialism.

The perversion of the enlightened idea of scientific racism and the willingness to make a deterministic link between biology, culture and psychology reached its climax during the Nazi regime. In the interwar period, however, the idea of race begins to dissociate from the notion of racism. That is, even if race is still considered a valid scientific category to analyse human groups, biology is not used anymore to establish hierarchies of superiority and inferiority. Moreover, as time went by and the development of genetics progressed in the knowledge of the natural essence of mankind, the validity of the idea of race as a scientific category was even challenged. The real genetic and natural differences between human beings have appeared to be so tiny, and the mechanism of life transmission so

dynamic, that even race has proved to be in part a culturally and socially constructed notion (Jacob 1981; Piazza 1997). The essentialist and biological component of racial distinctions was then watered down and, as I will show below, is not a clear defining attribute of contemporary attitudes towards immigration in Europe.

The expansion of scientific racism into the XX century stressed the hierarchy rationale when perceiving non-natives. After World War II, however, the component based on differentiation and compatibility between ethnic groups recovered visibility (Delacampagne 2000:239; Fredrickson 2003:12). The apparent hegemony of the cognitive dichotomy between superior/inferior in the first part of the XX century is challenged by the emergence of the so-called *new, cultural, differential* or *neo* racism (Wieviorka 2002:27). In this case, reference to the original biological idea of race and its assumption of an existing hierarchy is replaced by a logic of differentiation. In this version of the hostility towards non-natives, the idea of identity becomes central. It is not that migrants are inherently and essentially inferior or damaging for the host society. It is just that they are different and eventually incompatible.

Underestimating and differentiating are therefore the two main points of logic which have driven the historical evolution of the attitudes towards “the other”. Some authors imply that this is a linear historical evolution where the logic of underestimation and establishment of hierarchies has disappeared in favour of a dynamic exclusively based on the construction of identity and cultural compatibility (Taguieff 1987). From a different perspective, however, it could be argued that this is just a conceptual evolution and that from a strictly historical perspective none of these types of logic have disappeared but adapted to modern times. If that is the case, both rationalisations based on how superior/inferior immigrants are and on how different they are should be present at the same time in contemporary public opinion.

All in all, the main general hypothesis to be tested in this chapter is:

- **H2-** *Attitudes towards immigration in Europe are composed of different dimensions reflecting the historical evolution of the classical idea of racism, namely*
 - **H2a-** *a logic based on hierarchy*
 - **H2b-** *a logic based on differentiation.*

In formal terms, these two new potential constructs can be added to equation 1 in order to express a general and still unspecified function of attitude towards immigration:

$$A_i = g(G_i, E_i, H_i, D_i) \quad (2)$$

Where,

A_i is the global attitude towards immigration of voter i

G_i is the construct of societal perceptions of voter i regarding immigration

E_i is the construct of individual perceptions of voter i regarding immigration

H_i is the construct of perceptions of voter i regarding immigration on the basis of hierarchy

D_i is the construct of perceptions of voter i regarding immigration on the basis of difference

2.5- Making sense of immigration in the absence of threat: the ideological constraint hypothesis

2.5.1- Opening up the pattern of electoral competition

Departing from psycho-sociological mechanisms previously observed in the structure of political issues and from the key trends of the historical construction of non-natives in Europe, I have just theorised two new potential ways to explain how attitudes towards immigration are framed in the European context: the societal-individual and the dialectics of hierarchy-difference. In order for the general attitude towards immigration to realistically become a predictor of party preference and choice, however, this attitude needs to have some correlation with the broader ideological schema usually defining voters' and parties' movements and strategies.

When a new issue comes into play in a given electoral dynamic, it is important to analyse to what extent it fits into existing structures of electoral competition. The more embedded the public attitudes towards this issue are in the standard framework of electoral competition, the easier it will be for voters to link their perceptions about the new issue to other issue opinions, party stances and patterns of electoral interaction. In other terms, it is important to analyse to what extent an electoral issue cross-cuts pre-existing axes of competition, or

rather fits into them. When the issue is new or unique enough as to cross-cut and offer an alternative pattern of competition, it is more likely for new (and eventually more radical, in the case of immigration) parties to try to monopolise this new electoral space. By contrast, when the issue is more embedded in previous ideological axes regulating the electoral dynamic, an effect of this issue can be expected in the mainstream of political spectrum. When it is easier for voters to link their immigration attitudes with the general positioning of voters and parties in a political system, it is reasonable to expect this issue to affect the overall party dynamic and to belong to a more open and general pattern of competition. This reasoning could be formally expressed as follows:

$$E(u_{ik}) = g(A_i, I_k) \cdot f_i \quad (3)$$

Where,

$E(u_{ik})$ is the expected utility of a given individual i to vote for party k at spectrum

A_i is the attitude towards immigration of individual i defined in equation 2 above

I_k is the position of party k on the immigration issue

f_i is the capacity of the voter i to constrain his attitude within a broader ideological axis, which, as we shall see below, can be conceptualised as a measure from 0 to 1

The reasoning behind the constraint hypothesis expressed in equation 3 taps into the distinction originally made by Sani and Sartori between domains of identification and dimensions (or spaces) of competition (Sani and Sartori 1983:330). While domains of identification can be related to specific cleavages or issues allowing voters to feel identified with a given party, spaces of competition are rather dimensions structuring party competition. In this case, the immigration issue can be understood as a domain of identification, whereas the left-right continuum can be considered as a dimension of competition summarising a number of domains of identification. The existence of a domain of identification (immigration) is not enough to structure a political system. Only when the issue attitude can be somewhat subsumed by a more overarching ideological schema or space of competition, can the issue acquire political relevance. In Sani and Sartori's words,

the polarisation that matters when structuring party competition is generally of the left-right variety and “this is generally the case because the spatial imagery subsumes under its ordering, regardless of domain of origin, the issues that acquire political salience” (1983:337).

According to equation 3, the ideological constraint of an issue increases the electoral impact of the issue itself. Moreover, the ideological constraint of an issue is an indirect way to make sure that the attitude being analysed is consistent, rather than non-attitudes or artefacts of survey questions (Sniderman, Tetlock and Elms 2001). This is something that is indirectly tackled also in the reliability tests conducted below in order to assess the dimensionality of attitudes towards immigration hypothesised in H1 and H2. In order to define what f_i is, there is an established consensus in pointing to the left-right schema as the main ideological axis structuring electoral competition in Europe (Huber 1989; Bobbio 1995; Dalton 2008:904; Ezrow 2008:481). The question to be theorised in this section and to be analysed empirically in chapter 4 is thus to what extent citizens use their left-right self-placements in order to constrain their attitudes towards immigration. The main proposition to be confirmed is that people’s left-right ideology has a significant and relevant relationship in organising and constraining attitudes towards immigration, but especially among those individuals and contexts where immigration is less likely to be perceived as a socio-economic threat (that is, among voters who are not potentially radical).

Immigration is usually understood as a catalyst of extreme forms of behaviour. Ethnic competition theory is one of the most recurrent theoretical frameworks to explain the hostility towards immigrants, both in terms of attitudes and radical right-wing voting. The blunter the competition for scarce resources between migrants and natives, the more likely are the latter to perceive migrants as a threat (Bergesen and Herman 1998; Oliver and Wong 2003; Kauffman 2003b; Coenders 2004). This is why people in situations of socio-economic vulnerability prove, on average, to be more hostile towards migrants. But what happens among people who are not in this minority and potentially radical side of the spectrum and who are not necessarily likely to have an experience of perceived direct threat *vis-à-vis* immigrants? I expect these people to equally have a given attitude towards immigration, even if outside the potential electoral market for radical parties. In just the same way that taxes can be a relevant electoral issue for someone who does not mind paying taxes, that crime can be a good predictor of the party choice of someone who has never been close to being a victim of a theft, or that the environment can be an important

concern for someone who is not at direct risk of dying because of global warming. The key is that this non-radical attitude towards immigration can have important behavioural consequences even when its effects are not perceived in personal terms.

Relying on axioms from ethnic competition theory and the Receive-Accept-Sample model first established by Zaller (1992), I test in chapter 4 the idea that left-right self-placements are good and significant predictors of attitudes towards immigration in Europe, especially when the level of socio-economic vulnerability and a consequent perception of threat *vis-à-vis* foreigners is low. This is so because people who are not exposed to flows of information characterising immigrants as a socio-economic threat need further cognitive tools in order to make sense of what immigration implies for them. Subsequently, people who are not in a potential radical anti-immigrant electoral market but who have a consistent attitude towards the issue and who are able to frame it in existing ideological terms will potentially open up the pattern of competition on the immigration issue, and transfer it to the mainstream side of the political spectrum. In formal terms, then, the capacity to constrain an attitude towards immigration within the left-right axis is a function of the level of socio-economic vulnerability³:

$$f_i = 1 - V_i \quad (4)$$

Where,

f_i is the use of left-right by voter i to constrain his attitude within a broader ideological axis

V_i is the level of socio-economic vulnerability of voter i ranging from 0 (less) to 1 (more)

It might be argued that ethnic competition theory is not the only one accounting for conditions of direct perception of vulnerability regarding migrants⁴. Even if this is true, it is by far the clearest and more consensual theory in both the research on attitudes towards immigration and radical right-wing voting. The weaker the socio-economic status of the

³ It is important to stress that this argument is not the same as stating that more cognitively sophisticated people (i.e., with higher levels of education) tend to use left-right-wing orientations more than other groups of people. The stronger use of ideological categories by cognitively sophisticated people is a well-known finding in literature on issue framing and issue constraint (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). As will be shown empirically in chapter 4, my argument focuses exclusively on socio-economic vulnerability (which correlates only to a certain extent with educational levels) and holds beyond the conditional impact of education and the use of left-right.

⁴ See chapter 3 for theories on attitudes towards immigration.

native individual, the more likely he will be to feel hostile towards immigration. This well-established finding allows me to theorise about economic vulnerability as a proxy for higher attentiveness and responsiveness towards the immigration issue, which generally leads to negative stereotyping (McGhee & Neiman 2009). Even if it could seem intuitive, the same conditional hypothesis could not be tested in relation to direct contact with migrants in a given geographical area. A high concentration of migrants in the local area of the voter being studied is not an indicator *per se* of an automatic activation of a perception of threat. The literature is actually divided between the proponents of group-conflict theory (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Bergesen and Herman 1998; Lubbers et al. 2002; Kauffman 2003b; Glaser 2003; Zapata-Barrero 2009; Andersen and Allerdice 2009; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009) and social cooperation thesis (Browning et al. 1984; Jackson et al. 1994; Oliver and Wong 2003; Kauffman 2003a; Escandell and Ceobanu 2008), predicting negative and positive attitudes towards immigration respectively in areas with a high concentration of migrants. The unobserved patterns of heterogeneity in this unresolved debate do not allow me, then, to consider the contact with migrants as a valid indicator of negativity towards migrants.

2.5.2- A heterogeneous constraint

There are reasons to think that attitudes towards immigration have a significant relationship to the main ideological axis structuring a society's distribution of political preferences (Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Citrin et al. 2001). First, left-right orientations can be one of the crucial shortcuts for rational voters to reduce the complexity and the lack of complete information about an issue (Sniderman et al. 1991; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Lupia et al. 2000; Lahav 2004b). Secondly, left-right orientations in Europe have proved to increase their weight as predictors of attitudes towards immigration over time, even if why and how this relationship takes place have been completely ignored (Semyonov et al. 2006). Thirdly, as stated above, the left-right wing continuum is a tool to make issue positions salient and identifiable for purposes of political competition. As it has been shown in the literature on party ideology and behaviour in Europe, for instance, parties tend to integrate new issues like immigration in the left-right wing axis of competition in order to be able to compete regarding these issues and be able to improve their electoral fortunes (Hix 1999; Hooghe et al. 2002; Warwick 2002; Kriesi et al. 2006).

In spite of these intuitions, however, left-right ideological orientations are usually considered a simple control variable or even forgotten in the models explaining individual attitudes towards migrants (Coenders 2004:101; Pantoja 2006:524). The explanations more usually considered in Europe to explain hostile attitudes and behaviour towards migrants are mainly economic and socio-structural (Citrin et al. 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Alba et al. 2003), whereas the systematic and cross-national comparison of the impact of ideologies and general belief systems on attitudes towards immigration has almost been ignored.

Since the classical work of Adorno and his colleagues on authoritarianism and ethnocentrism in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno 1969), right-wing tendencies have been associated with a more rigid way of thinking, a Manichean tendency to split the world up between friends and enemies, and to dislike people with an unfamiliar appearance or background. The association between right-wing ideology and xenophobic attitudes has also been suggested in contemporary studies on radical right-wing voting in Europe (Mayer and Perrineau 1992; Lubbers et al. 2002; Mayer 2002; Perrineau 2004; Norris 2005). Even if left-wing tendencies are also somewhat related to authoritarian attitudes in some (especially Eastern) contexts, this relationship is less consistent than with right-wing ideology (Enyedi 1999; Todosijevic and Enyedi 2008). Therefore, the first basic hypothesis to be tested in chapter 4 is the following:

- ***H3a- Right-wing self-placements are significantly related to hostile attitudes towards immigration***

Sniderman and his colleagues' concern about the heterogeneity in the use of ideological cues in framing issue opinions, however, requires us to move a step forward from this general relationship between right-wing self-placements and hostile attitudes towards immigration. More specifically, it is necessary to tackle a fundamental question which has not always received a proper answer: "under what conditions is ideology related to policy preference?" (Sniderman 1993:221,223-224). The notion of causal heterogeneity has become unavoidable in research about public attitudes today (Levitin and Miller 1979; Jacoby 1995; Gomez and Wilson 2006), and justifies here the analysis of sources of heterogeneity in framing attitudes towards immigration.

Ethnic competition theory and Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample model are the main theoretical grounds upon which I build the propositions to be tested here. Generally speaking, citizens living in lower educational and socio-economic strata are expected to be more vulnerable, less acquainted with the productive and cultural transformations of post-industrial societies, and more likely to compete for the same jobs and resources as immigrants do. According to this theoretical expectation, newcomers from different countries are more likely to be framed as a threat by those native citizens who will compete with them for the same jobs, houses and public services. This rational account for xenophobic attitudes has received widespread theoretical and empirical support over the last decades (Blumer 1958; Sherif and Sherif 1969; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Bergesen and Herman 1998; Oliver and Wong 2003; Kauffman 2003b; Coenders 2004).

If, according to ethnic competition theory, socio-economically vulnerable citizens are more likely to compete for scarce resources with migrants and frame newcomers as a threat, I expect these types of native individuals to be exposed to different flows of information and affective categorisations of migrants than the rest of society. According to Zaller, citizens vary in their attention and exposure to political information and argumentation. Moreover, they are able to react to the arguments they encounter only to the extent that they are knowledgeable about a given issue (Zaller 1992:1,4). It is very likely to expect that a given social position and a given structural situation of risk vis-à-vis immigrants will activate different levels of attention and concern regarding the issue. As stated by Zaller, any opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition (Zaller 1992:6). I hypothesise here that information and predisposition are interrelated when constructing attitudes towards immigration. Social and structural positions where migrants are perceived as directly threatening competitors for scarce resources imply different mental categorisations and a different level of interest in the information surrounding this issue. In this case the position of vulnerability is a cue in itself. By contrast, migrants are not necessarily perceived as a threat among less vulnerable social strata, and thus the openness and attention to acquire information about the issue is limited if it exists at all. It is in this less vulnerable situation when I expect people to rely on previous political predispositions (rather than direct information) as a cognitive cue so as to reduce complexity and be able to articulate a coherent opinion.

The connection between awareness, attentiveness, and capacity to acquire information regarding a given issue is explicitly stated in Zaller's model. On the other hand, a variety of

values and stable individual traits called political predispositions are assumed to regulate the acceptance or non-acceptance of the political communications a person receives (Zaller 1992:21-23). According to the argument presented here, ideology in terms of left-right self-placements summarise a variety of enduring values and political predispositions exerting a shield against new information and persuasion regarding a given issue. However, when socio-economic vulnerability activates the attention, concern and awareness regarding the immigration issue, ideological predispositions are expected to be a weaker shield against external stimuli and to play a lesser role in characterising immigrants.

The starting point in Zaller's account for the generation of mass opinions is the reception axiom. According to this, "the greater a person's level of cognitive engagement with an issue, the more likely he or she is to be exposed to and able to comprehend (...) political messages concerning that issue" (Zaller 1992:42). According to the argument suggested here, a given social position of vulnerability vis-à-vis immigrants activates cognitive engagement and places the individual in a particular place in terms of exposure to (usually hostile) messages and representations of immigration. The second step in Zaller's model is the resistance axiom. People tend to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions (Zaller 1992:44). Following that argument, a non-vulnerable position facing immigrants lacks direct experience, interest and access to more alternative sources of information and representation of what immigration implies. This is why political predispositions are, in this case, the only cognitive cue for filtering out external messages and constructing opinions in a coherent manner with previously existing ideological structures.

It is important to note that the role played by cognition and affect in the ideological framing of attitudes towards immigration can be more ambiguous than what it may seem according to Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample model. First, even if the framing and constraining effect of political ideology in terms of left-right is usually considered a pure cognitive and cerebral exercise (Van der Eijk et al. 2005:167,176), the use of ideology has also been considered as emotional and affective (Sniderman et al. 1991:141). On the other hand, the argument that people who are in more vulnerable socio-economic positions and who are more likely to perceive immigration as a threat do not need ideological cues in terms of left or right is not necessarily cognitive. Higher awareness, interest and engagement in relation to the immigration issue expected among these strata do not necessarily imply a superior cognitive and rational capacity of accessing and processing accurate information. The (most

likely) negative stereotypes and images of migrants usually constructed when the levels of socio-economic vulnerability are high can also be affective and emotional reactions to a perception of threat. The point here is thus not to contrast cognition and affect, but to stress the conditional relationship between the acquisition of information due to a direct experience of threat (be it emotional or cerebral) and political predispositions. According to the argument presented here, the second hypothesis to be tested is:

- **H3b:** *The relationship between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration is weaker when individual socio-economic vulnerability is high*

Apart from causal heterogeneity due to interactions with individual level factors, the effect of ideology is also very likely to depend on the context (Sniderman 1993:233). More specifically, left-right self-placements are considered a powerful tool but whose specific substantive meaning is relative to geographical and historical context (Van der Eijk et al. 2005:181). In terms of attitudes towards immigration, it has already been suggested that their relationship with values differ across culturally distinct geographic areas, economic systems and legal regimes (Clark and Legge 1997:910,912; Weldon 2006:344-345). This diversity might be explained by the heterogeneity proposed here. When the competition for scarce resources with migrants is more evident, people articulate their attitudes towards immigration in a more straightforward manner with less need for previously acquired ideological categories. By contrast, those citizens who are not in a context likely to perceive migrants as a direct danger do need further ideological tools to frame their position regarding this issue.

As claimed by group conflict theory, the scarcity of resources in a country increases the likelihood of generating hostile attitudes against migrants. Therefore, it could be expected that in those contexts where the scarcity of resources is more evident, there is a higher probability that people will be more negative towards migrants no matter their ideological constructs. In more affluent countries, however, where the eventual competition with immigrants for scarce resources is less evident, citizens might have a higher tendency to use ideological labels to make sense of the impact of immigration.

- **H3c:** *The relationship between left-right wing self-placements and attitudes towards immigration is weaker when the socio-economic conditions in a country are worse.*

2.6- The centripetal or centrifugal electoral impact of immigration: the proximity and directional hypotheses

Once the attitude towards immigration has been constructed, framed and constrained within an ideological axis governing general and mainstream electoral competition, it is time to analyse whether it indeed has an independent impact on party preference and choice. Intuitively, there are reasons to expect a remarkable impact on the perception of immigrants as to how voters behave on election day. Firstly, as the social interest in immigration and as the presence of this issue in the public agenda gain importance, it is logical to expect an expression of such a concern in the polls. Secondly, as suggested in the introduction, the political discourses of some parties have shown immigration to be a salient and sometimes bluntly polarising issue, which has been used by prominent and not necessarily extremist European leaders, France, Italy or Spain being some of the most relevant and recent examples in this respect. Even if it tends to be assumed in the media and public discourse that immigration is sometimes a key aspect in the campaign and in the success of some mainstream parties throughout Europe nowadays, still there has not been a systematic attempt to observe to what extent that is true, what aspect of immigration can accurately generate an electoral benefit and what can't, and under what conditions this happens. Thirdly, radical right-wing literature itself has suggested that a radical vote should not be considered a protest vote, but rather a logical consequence of the same rules that govern mainstream electoral dynamics (Van der Brug et al. 2000; Van Der Brug and Fennema 2003). If more mainstream political factors such as ideology or issue concerns become the main explanations for support of extreme parties, there is no reason to deny *a priori* an influence of these factors on other more moderate parties. In other terms, attitudes towards immigration seem to have an influence on extreme parties, but it does not mean that other parties are immune to this issue; it might merely be the case that we have been looking so far at a limited or even minor aspect of party alternatives, instead of considering the whole spectrum of possible choices.

Following Schmitt, there are two main ways to analyse how voters link their issue preferences with party supply: the policy-based and the problem-based models of issue voting. Within policy-based logic we find spatial models of voting behaviour, mainly the proximity and the directional ones⁵. And within the problem-based group, we find the

⁵ Spatial models of issue voting have been developed for a few decades in productive and increasingly specialised literature. Apart from the proximity and the directional models, there are further propositions within the spatial policy-based paradigm like strategic (Alvarez & Nagler 2000), unified (Merrill & Grofman 1999), and compensational (Kedar 2005a; 2005b; 2006) models of issue voting. These models,

valence (or non-spatial) models of voting behaviour, with issue ownership and party competence theories as the main components of this paradigm (Schmitt 1998; Schmitt 2001). In this section I hypothesise the effect of attitudes towards immigration under a spatial (policy-based) perspective, and in the following section I theorise this effect under a valence (problem-based) perspective. As it will be seen, both impacts are strongly present in the electoral dynamic of contemporary European democracies regarding the immigration issue. However, each of them generates relevant but different expectations of change for the electoral fortunes of established parties once the issue gets incorporated into a mainstream and general framework of competition.

however, are generally extensions of the two original logics (proximity, directional or both at the same time) and try to account for the circumstances in which they work better. Testing here all the extensions together would imply writing a treaty on spatial modelling itself and taking into account assumptions and processes out of the scope of this research. Thus, I opt to test the two original logics which can shed light on specific question regarding the immigration issue- does immigration generate a centripetal (proximity) logic whereby mainstream politics becomes the pivotal point of competition, or does it rather generate a centrifugal (directional) logic whereby the extremes govern party strategy and voting behaviour?

Table 2.2- Models of issue voting

<i>POLICY-BASED (position issues)</i>	
Model	Rationale
PROXIMITY MODEL	voters choose the party which has the most similar position to their own
DIRECTIONAL MODEL	voters choose the party on the basis of the direction and the intensity of their policy preference
<i>PROBLEM-BASED (valence issues)</i>	
Model	Rationale
ISSUE OWNERSHIP MODEL	selective emphasis on specific issues which benefit exclusively one party or another
PARTY COMPETENCE MODEL	all parties compete in all issues but they are distinguished by the emphasis and the perception of credibility and competence

*Adapted from (Schmitt 1998; 2001)

Spatial models of issue voting rely on so-called position issues. A position issue is represented in a one-dimensional continuum of different policy preferences (generally going from less to more, e.g., from less immigration to more immigration) where the voter is able to position himself and the different available parties in the system. Position issues are usually understood as different from the so-called valence issues, which are at the core of the assumptions of non-spatial models of issue voting. A valence issue implies consensus over policy outcomes (i.e., everybody agrees that unemployment has to be low), and therefore the voting decision mechanism is not based on differentiation between policy

preferences but on images of issue saliency and party competence in reaching the commonly desired outcome.

More generally, it is widely accepted that position issues are prospective, based on conflictive preferences, requiring a lot of information on the voters' side and following a logic of proximity and/or direction in their electoral impact. Valence issues have been defined precisely in terms of the opposite properties: retrospective, based on consensual preferences, requiring less information on the voters' side, and only distinguished by the issue interest or the evaluation of party performance (Freire 2004:782-783; Martin 2000:42; Dalton 2006:204). As it will be argued below, however, the electoral impact of immigration on the basis of the saliency of the issue and on the image of party competence in dealing with the issue is very strong in spite of the non-consensual nature of preferred immigration policies among the electorate.

The two main models to be tested with the immigration issue under a spatial perspective are thus the proximity and the directional models of voting. As regards the proximity model, it implies that the issue stances of parties and voters can be presented as positions in a one or multidimensional space. The greater the proximity between a voter and a party, the larger the utility of the party for the voter, the better the voter's evaluation of that party and thus the greater the likelihood that this voter will prefer that party on election day (Downs 1957; Davis et al. 1970; Enelow and Hinich 1984). What's predicted in this model is a centripetal dynamic whereby parties tend to converge around the median voter. On the other hand, the use of issues within this theoretical paradigm is usually understood in a prospective manner requiring a high level of information on the voters' side. The electoral utility derived from the proximity model is usually represented in a quadratic form as follows⁶:

$$U_{ik} = -(1 - f_i) \cdot (A_i - I_k)^2 \quad (5)$$

Where,

U_{ik} is the utility of voter i to vote for party k

⁶ Even if the quadratic form is the most common formalisation of the proximity model (Merrill and Grofman 1999: 21), a linear, non-quadratic or city-block form is also sometimes used. Previous research, however, has proved that the results are not sensitive to the use of one or another specification (Cho and Endersby 2003). This and other empirical model specification issues will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5, where the spatial rationale of issue voting regarding the immigration issue is tested.

A_i is the attitude towards immigration of voter i

I_k is the position of party k on the immigration issue

f_i is the capacity of voter i to constrain his attitude on immigration as expressed in equation 4 above

According to equation 5, the utility gained from voting for a given party increases as the difference or distance between the voter and the party position decreases. This distance, however, as explained above, is conditioned by the capacity of the voter to frame and constrain his attitude on immigration within broader ideological categories. Assuming that f_i goes from 0 to 1 (meaning from less to more constraint) as expressed in equation 4, a weak constraint would increase the absolute value of the right-hand side of the equation and therefore would decrease the likelihood of voting for party k . By contrast, higher values of f_i will reduce the absolute value and will therefore increase the electoral utility of k . This makes sense except in the scenario of a complete coincidence and correlation between the left-right self-placement and an individual's attitude towards immigration- that is, when $f_i=1$. In this case, $(1-f_i)=0$ and this weight would artificially maximise the utility of voting for party k regardless of the preferred policy distance between the voter and the party. This means that a complete coincidence between the attitude towards immigration and the left-right schema would *de facto* erase any influence by proximity of the immigration issue itself, since this issue would just be a mirror image of a more general political orientation. Despite the mathematical logic of this reasoning, however, a perfect correlation between attitudes towards immigration and left-right constraints never takes place in the real world (see chapter 4).

The uncontested predominance of the proximity theory was challenged by the formalisation of the directional model (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989). In spite of using the same pieces of information, the prediction and implications of this theory are completely opposed to those stemming from the proximity model. The directional account for issue voting introduces a symbolic or affective component towards politics, reduces a bit the theoretical level of sophistication required among voters, and predicts a centrifugal electoral dynamic (Macdonald et al. 1991; Macdonald et al. 1995; Westholm 1997; Macdonald et al. 1998; Westholm 2001; Cho and Endersby 2003; Tomz and Van Houweling 2008). This theory implies a neutral point in the policy sphere, from which voters make their electoral choice

on the basis of two components: direction and intensity⁷. The evaluation of the party is better when both voter and party intensely favour the same direction on a given issue. As expressed in equation 6, assuming that the neutral point in the scale is 0, this link is usually formalised as the scalar product of the party and voter position⁸.

$$U_{ik} = f_i \cdot A_i \cdot I_k \quad (6)$$

where the terms of the equation are the same as in equation 5 above. The positive sign of the product indicates agreement between the direction of the voter and party preferences, whereas the magnitude of the product maximises the utility to vote for party k. Again, the capacity of issue constraint of the individual conditions the result obtained on the right-hand side of the equation- the more left-right matters in shaping attitudes towards immigration, the more likely the product of the voter and party preferences will guide the vote towards k.

Apart from observing which spatial issue voting model better fits the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration, the empirical test of equations 5 and 6 will allow us to advance our understanding of the potentiality of the immigration issue to move from radical to mainstream spaces of competition. Apart from the polar predictions about individual behaviour and the different modelling of voter and party preferences in a spatial policy continuum, the main distinction between proximity and directional theories is the mechanics of party competition that are expected by each of them. While proximity theory predicts a centripetal mechanic whereby the minimisation of the distance between voters tends to generate a moderate (as opposed to a radical) impact on the issue and an incentive of parties to approach the median voter, what is expected in directional theory is a

⁷ There is a precedent in the directional theory of voting. The Matthews directional model postulates the existence of a neutral or *status quo* point from which voters decide on the basis of the direction of their issue preference. The utility function of this model depends only on the angle between the voter and the party location vectors that emanate from the neutral point (Merrill and Grofman 1999:23). The difference with the Macdonald and Rabinowitz model, however, is that the Matthews model does not take into account the intensity of the preference. This is why I choose to model the Macdonald and Rabinowitz model for being more complete, as it is usually done in literature debating between the proximity and the directional model of issue voting.

⁸ The formalisation of the directional model of issue voting sometimes takes into account the existence of the so-called *region of acceptability*. This region implies that the direction and the intensity of an issue preference work up to a certain extent, as long as parties are located within this region of acceptability and are therefore not perceived as too radical. As is explained more in detail in chapter 5 (where these models are tested empirically), however, the modelling of this region of acceptability implies introducing a proximity component into the test of the directional model, and therefore both theories become particularly difficult to distinguish. This is why, following a quite standard procedure in previous research, I opt for not modelling this region and for testing the direction and intensity components of the directional theory on their own.

centrifugal mechanic whereby the coincidence between voter and party preferences tends to maximise the utility of parties being at the extremes of the continuum. If it is true that the immigration issue is something more than a domain of radical parties, it is reasonable to expect a predominant role of proximity theory accounting for the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration. This means that any party located at any position in the spectrum could benefit from a coincidence between voter and party positions. By contrast, if immigration is rather a catalyst of extreme forms of behaviour and not an issue likely to affect mainstream electoral dynamics, it is reasonable to expect directional theory to better account for the impact of the issue. The two rival hypotheses that one can derive from this reasoning are:

- **H4a:** *Proximity theory is stronger than directional theory in accounting for the impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting behaviour, therefore generating a centripetal dynamic of competition.*
- **H4b:** *Directional theory is stronger than proximity theory in accounting for the impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting behaviour, therefore generating a centrifugal dynamic of competition.*

2.7- The immigration issue as a source of electoral change: the mobilisation and acquisition hypotheses

2.7.1- Mobilisation

The incorporation of an issue like immigration in a mainstream dynamic of party competition can have an impact on the fortunes of established parties and on the shape of the potential electorates of these parties. There are two main ways in which a new issue can generate electoral change or stability: the mobilisation or acquisition of electorates (Franklin 2004:25; Erikson and Tedin 1981; Campbell 1985; Franklin and Ladner 1995). In this subsection I theorise on the expectation that spatial models can explain electoral change through the mobilisation of parties' most natural electorate, whereas I hypothesise below that valence rationales of voting can explain electoral change through the acquisition of electorates belonging to different party potential markets.

In his original and overwhelmingly cited *Economic Theory of Democracy*, Downs already refers to a dimension of consistency and stability in order for the spatial account of party competition to work. According to Downs, one of the requirements for the development of

political ideologies as proper cognitive cues addressing voting behaviour is consistency in the formulation of policies over time (Downs 1957:97). Downs explicitly mentions the role of reliability, integrity and responsibility in his model. These three dimensions refer to a temporal stability of ideological positions and voter-party interactions. Without this consistency, ideological positions would be too volatile to become real guides for the vote (Downs 1957:103-109). This consistency of policy positions makes spatial modelling particularly suited to account for the most structural dynamic of issue voting. In this case, issues are understood as attitudes, which by definition are relatively stable and, as stated above, eventually framed and constrained by even more stable and general political orientations. The integrity of attitudes and party policy positions assumed in spatial voting does not allow me to expect radical flows of electoral change across party electorate boundaries. For instance, it is improbable that a fairly conservative voter on the immigration issue will vote for a left-wing party that has recently radicalised its immigration position towards the right. To be credible and functional from a spatial perspective, this party movement cannot be as big as to jump towards a very conservative position. It is rather to be expected that the immigration issue will guide the vote of that conservative voter, but only around the area where he is located. If one has to take seriously the consistency and reliability of policy positions in a spatial continuum theorised by Downs, the mobilisation of party potential electorates is thus a more realistic and feasible mechanism of electoral change.

The notion of mobilisation often appears in studies on turnout (Franklin 2004:23-24). The idea of mobilising or demobilising the members of a reference group, in this case the potential electorate of a given party, is perfectly applicable to a study on issue voting and electoral change. One way to define what the potential electoral market of a party is, or its natural electoral domain, is the number of people who feel attached to this party. Party identification or attachment has become a crucial concept in electoral studies, and refers to a usually long-term psychological tie between a voter and a party due to habit or socialisation processes (Campbell et al. 1964: chapter 7; Budge et al. 1976; Richardson 1991; Niemi and Jennings 1991; Lohmann et al. 1997). Party identification or attachment is a sufficiently strong influence for guiding voting behaviour in itself. This, together with the idea of consistency and stability of policy positions under a spatial perspective, suggests that important transfers of votes across psychologically attached voters are unlikely. However, a voter who is psychologically attached to a given party can still increase or decrease the probability to vote for this party depending on the appropriate synergy between his position

and the position of the party on an important issue. This is so because the utilitarian value of the vote is usually calculated in relation to the social and political reference group (Franklin 2004:52). The specific hypothesis to be tested in this respect is:

- *H5: An appropriate synergy of voter and party positions on the immigration issue according to spatial models of issue voting can mobilise voters who already feel attached to that given party.*

2.7.2- Valence voting

As mentioned above, there are two main ways to analyse how individuals link their issue preferences with party stances in elections. The first way belongs to the domain of spatial voting and has been theorised in previous subsections. The second belongs to the valence paradigm of voting behaviour, which emerged as a critique of spatial models and which departs from very different assumptions about the nature of issues and the mechanisms linking attitudes towards issues with policy representation (Clarke, Sanders et al. 2004:chapter 10).

Since Stokes' first original critique of spatial theory, valence issues are defined as matters on which voters agree on the general objective and about which they judge, not the candidates' promises or policies, but their personal attributes or performance in office (Stokes 1963). A valence issue is thus framed as a common, consensual and desirable objective (e.g., low crime, low unemployment), and therefore the distinction between preferred policy outcomes among voters and parties becomes inapplicable. This main defining attribute of valence issues has gained increasing prominence because of the apparently rising consensus regarding desirable policy outcomes in advanced democracies (Fiorina 1981; Borre 2001:111; Aardal and van Wijnen 2005:196; Green and Hobolt 2008). Green summarises three reasons to explain issue convergence and the increasing weight of the valence rationale. The first is a lower ideological polarisation as an outcome of partisan de-alignment. The second is the need of party organisations to become electoral-professional or catch-all to be electorally successful. The third is the incapacity of position issues to capture modern political disagreements given the exogenous economic and political environment (Green 2007:631-632).

In contrast to spatial theories of issue voting, valence models have emerged as potentially more influential in some contexts (Petrocik 1996; Mayhew 2002:150; Freire 2004:797-798; Sanders et al. 2004; van der Brug 2004:211; Green and Hobolt 2008). Moreover, they have been used to deal with some of the drawbacks of models based on position issues such as the incorrect prediction of the parties' convergence to the median voter's location, and the unrealistic assumption of a very high level of information on the voters' side (Macdonald and Rabinowitz 1998:281-282; Ansolabehere 2006:30-31). Two components can be distinguished within the valence paradigm, namely issue ownership and perceptions of party competence (Schmitt 1998; Schmitt 2001). Even if these two components need to be integrated in the same model, the constituencies of the parties and their reputations for competence have to be distinguished theoretically (Borre 2001:119; Bellucci 2006:550). The former refers to the policy interests of the electoral bases to which parties respond, whereas the latter is a more specific factor regarding the parties' reputation for solving, managing, handling or dealing with problems.

Issue ownership theory predicts that parties selectively emphasize those topics where they feel they have a good reputation and deemphasize others, and that voters will make their electoral choice on this basis. Saliency is the key concept in this process, and it can be understood as a relatively high interest or emphasis on one specific issue in relation to the overall capacity of the public political agenda (Green-Pedersen 2007:609-610). This dynamic results in a sort of structure of issue domains which belong exclusively to one specific party and which can potentially benefit it (Hibbs 1977). The issue ownership theory was first validated on a cross-national comparative basis by Budge and Farlie from an aggregate methodological approach (Budge and Farlie 1983). At an individual level, issue saliency on the voters' side has proved to be a remarkable determinant of party preference (Van der Eijk et al. 1996:350; Bélanger and Meguid 2008). Van der Brug shows that the direct impact of issue ownership may be weak but it affects parties' ideological positions, and this in turn affects their final electoral choices (van der Brug 2004:211-212). In short, issue ownership can be defined here as a mechanism by which the saliency of an issue for a given voter increases the odds of voting for a specific party that has been able to incorporate this issue into its exclusive domain.

On the other hand, the party competence component is linked to the issue ownership theory and refers to the perceived capacity of a given party to deal competently with certain problems and issues (van der Brug 2004:213). The issue voting models based on the idea of

party competence assume that any kind of issue can affect the electoral fortunes of any kind of party, but that their success depends on the image of credibility and competence that they generate (Schmitt 2001). This perception of competence can crystallise previous behavioural components, but it has an independent theoretical existence (Sanders et al. 2004). Moreover, as will be shown in the analyses in chapter 6, it has an exogenous and strong empirical impact on party preferences not subordinated to key variables such as party identification, left-right proximity, education, and interest in politics.

The two main valence attributes (issue saliency and party competence) are usually formalised in a voter utility function as additive terms together with the spatial rationales of voting summarised above (Norris 2005:19-21; Ansolabehere 2006:33, 47; Green 2007:647). The additive test of the spatial (even if testing proximity and directional theory separately) and the valence rationale allows me to integrate equations 5 and 6 above, and to now add the two main valence dimensions:

$$U_{ik} = \left[-(1 - f_i) \cdot (A_i - I_k)^2 \right] + S_i \cdot C_{ik} + u_i + u_k + u_j \quad (7a)$$

$$U_{ik} = \left[f_i \cdot A_i \cdot I_k \right] + S_i \cdot C_{ik} + u_i + u_k + u_j \quad (7b)$$

Where,

U_{ik} is the utility of voter i to vote for party k

$\left[-(1 - f_i) \cdot (A_i - I_k)^2 \right]$ is the proximity effect of the immigration issue summarised in equation 5 above

$\left[f_i \cdot A_i \cdot I_k \right]$ is the directional effect of the immigration issue summarised in equation 6 above

S_i is the saliency of the immigration issue for individual i in a given point in time

C_{ik} is the image of party k competence regarding the immigration issue according to individual i

u_i is the set of individual-level factors generating heterogeneity in the effect of the previous terms of the equation

u_k is the set of party-level factors generating heterogeneity in the effect of the previous terms of the equation

u_j is the set of country-level factors generating heterogeneity in the effect of the previous terms of the equation

2.7.3- Acquisition

For many researchers, the immigration issue could seem like a paradigmatic position issue. The positions among the electorate and especially among parties regarding immigration policy are far from being clustered around a common desired goal in the wide range of possible issue preferences. This does not mean, however, that the saliency of the immigration issue in a given geographical and temporal context and the images of party competence generated and perceived in the public sphere cannot have a strong influence shaping the electoral impact of the issue. This implies that the theorisation of a valence issue as an issue where there is consensus about a commonly desired goal does not necessarily imply the exclusivity of saliency and party competence as important voting factors.

The classification of issues between position and valence may be more ambiguous than what appears *a priori*, as well as very sensitive to the theoretical predispositions and measurement strategies of researchers. If one asks “do you agree with having low unemployment in this country?”, it seems reasonable to expect considerable agreement in the answer. If, by contrast, one asks “do you agree with making labour contracts more flexible in order to keep unemployment low?”, one is likely to get more divergent pattern of both voter and party stances. A common and good general objective can mask very different positional approaches to reach the objective (Robertson 1976; Alt 1979). The goal and the means to reach the goal, then, might be two distinct dimensions of the evaluation of an issue but not two contradictory characteristics. The same would happen if one asked “do you

want the immigration issue to be controlled?”, or rather, if one asked “do you want to send all irregular immigrants back to their country of origin?”.

In spite of the ambiguous definition of valence issues as consensual, the conflict-consensus dimension is practically the only attribute distinguishing spatial and valence models predicting voter behaviour in previous research. The connection between the rise of valence politics and an increasing ideological convergence of the electorate, however, has not been demonstrated in a cross-sectional comparative perspective. Moreover, from a party strategy point of view it has been suggested that positional competition should not rule out issue emphasis (Borre 2001:103; Green-Pedersen 2007:610; Meguid 2008; Tavits 2008). This proposition could perfectly be applied to voters’ electoral behaviour and refers to the dominance and dispersion principles of issue competition. According to Riker, these two principles are not mutually exclusive and can take place at the same time. Drawing attention to an issue where all parties agree is not always attractive. To a political party it can be much more beneficial to draw attention to an issue where there is conflict with other parties (Riker 1996). Thus, it is possible to find a spatial-based framework together with a valence-based framework of competition. Spatial models do not work well in the context of complete consensus in issue preferences. Voter and party positions need to be distinguishable. On the other hand, Riker’s distinction between dominance and dispersion principles shows that valence politics components (such as the saliency of a given issue or the image of competence when handling it) can be found together with diverging party positions. Thus, conflict and saliency should not be contradictory. As a consequence, valence components of issue competition can also be found under conditions of conflict. This reasoning is coherent with previous formal modelling propositions which have not been empirically tested yet under a cross-sectional perspective, and which predict that parties with depressed valence attributes will slightly moderate their policy stances (Londregan and Romer 1993; Adams and Merrill 2009).

Finally, previous works establishing an association between valence voting and consensus have been almost exclusively focused on Anglo-American democracies, and usually implemented through single-country analyses. The aggregate and systemic nature of the arguments linking valence and consensus asks for a cross-national comparison of aggregate features affecting individual behaviour which has not been conducted yet, to the best of my knowledge. The link between consensus and valence politics has been mainly found in two-party and plurality democracies, which could favour ideological convergence due to the

presumably higher tendency of this kind of systems to impinge on centripetal and centrist modes of competition (Sartori 1999c). The essentially multiparty and proportional character of the majority of European polities included in the analysis below allows a stronger and stricter test to the common explanations given in the valence politics literature. The ambiguous distinction between positional and valence attributes within a single issue, the theoretical coherence between dominance and dispersion principles of competition, and the limited comparative character of previous research designs leads me to an additional hypothesis. The reasoning summarised above allows me to generalise this expectation to any issue, including immigration:

- **H6a-** *Valence models of voting (based on issue saliency and images of party competence) can also predict individual party preference when there is relatively high disagreement/conflict on issues.*

If this hypothesis is confirmed, what is the main attribute determining the performance of valence models? My answer is, the kind of people who think in valence terms and the electoral change that they can generate. Contrary to the stability and reliability of issue preferences assumed in the Downsian account of issue voting, issues are also often understood as short-term factors generating electoral change (Irwin and Holsteyn 1989; Borre 2001:128; Aardal and van Wijnen 2005:192; Enyedi 2008:289-290). The long-term stability of issue positions theorised by Downs and the more contingent short-term nature often assumed in issues constitute two intuitive but contradictory conceptions of issue voting. These two conceptions point respectively to the relationship between issues with the more permanent structure of party competition (articulated through reliable issue positions over time and stable geometrical spaces), and to the relationship between issues and the more volatile dimension of electoral competition (defined by the capacity to cross natural electoral boundaries and generate electoral change). One of the main inherent attributes of valence rationales of issue voting as opposed to other models coming from spatial theory is precisely this capacity to generate electoral change.

Contrary to position issues, valence issues are supposed to be more fluid and dependent upon context. In his analysis of the concept of realignment and the electoral cycles in the US, Mayhew asserts that elections in North-America seem to be increasingly driven by valence issues, which are inherently embedded in a shorter time frame. Valence issues imply contingent and opportunistic party strategies (Mayhew 2002:150). Therefore, it can be inferred that valence issues play a prominent role in an electoral dynamic characterised

by a relatively dealigned electoral context that permits short-term factors to come into play (Pappalardo 2007; Norris 1997). By contrast, it is opposing policy positions that anchor the electorate and lead to a longer-term stability in voting patterns (Sundquist 1973). The kind of electoral change that valence rationales of issue voting could generate when incorporating an issue into the mainstream electoral dynamic is thus the acquisition of non-identified voters by parties with good valence properties. Thus, I expect valence dynamics based on issue saliency and perceptions of party competence to particularly guide the vote of non-aligned voters.

Both classic and modern works on electoral change point out mechanisms suggesting the direct transfer of votes from one party to the other (Key 1955; Burnham 1970; Sundquist 1973; Schattschneider 1975; Erikson and Tedin 1981; Norpoth and Rusk 2007:396). All these works identify a dynamic of tension and polarization which makes social maladjustments increasingly visible. This polarisation is sometimes due to a new dominant voter cleavage replacing old interests and ideological tendencies, and sometimes to a replacement of old issues by new ones (Mayhew 2002:22).

Party attachment is a strong indicator of the degree of institutionalisation of electoral dynamics (Dalton and Weldon 2007). It has been shown that psychological long-term party ties have declined over the past decades. There are new forms of political mobilization that do not rely on party identification but which take place in a highly dealigned electorate (Dalton 2007). This weakening anchoring mechanism is connected to the rise of issue voting. Dalton states that “issue voting contributes to, and benefits from, the decline in partisanship-based voting. As party ties weaken, the potential increases for issue opinions to influence voting choice” (Dalton 2006 :219,220). The connection between issue voting and the decline of electoral anchors like party attachment is usually framed under the cognitive mobilization hypothesis (Evans 2000:405; Borre 2001:131; Berglund et al. 2005:108). Rising levels of education and cognitive resources imply a more autonomous voter who decides on the basis of his self-interest and circumstance. Following the argument presented here, this dealigned pattern of voting behaviour should not only be connected to issue voting in general, but to valence politics in particular.

- **H6b-** *Valence models of voting will predict party preference better when the level of individual party attachment is weaker.*

The theoretical expectations of this sub-section and the analyses presented in chapter 6 focus on the immigration issue but go beyond it. The inclusion of other issues apart from immigration allows me to test to what extent the dependence of valence models on the anchoring of individual electoral patterns of behaviour is a general theory of issue voting.

2.8- Summary

Briefly, I expect voters across European systems to articulate a complex and multidimensional attitude towards immigration. Two of the various ways to frame and organise their attitude can correspond to two pairs of complementary rationales: societal vs. individual, and hierarchical vs. differential. The first reasoning distinguishes the subset of beliefs about immigration as a general phenomenon, with social consequences, from the subset of beliefs about immigration as impinging upon the individual sphere of voters. The second reasoning distinguishes between opinions framing immigration as inferior, and opinions framing immigrants as just different. The range of attitudes in each of these constructs or sub-constructs can go from a positive to a negative attitude towards immigration.

In order to organise and politicise this complex structure of attitudes towards immigration, I expect some dimensions of these attitudes to be more powerful predictors of individual voting behaviour when they are properly constrained or embedded in a broad ideological axis structuring electoral competition (i.e., the left-right axis in Europe). In other terms, I expect voters to use their left-right orientations and predispositions to shape and constrain their attitude towards immigration in order to make it coherent, salient and usable in political terms. I also expect this constraining effect to take place especially among those individuals and in those political contexts where socio-economic vulnerability and the consequent perception of threat vis-à-vis immigrants are lower. Then, mainstream voters integrate their attitude towards the issue into a settled framework of competition, rather than letting it cross-cut established ideological frameworks, in contrast to radical voters for whom the issue can generate new (and eventually more radical) spaces of competition.

After a mainstream voter has constructed an opinion about immigration and constrained it ideologically in his universe of political opinions, I expect him to vote to a certain extent on the basis of this opinion. If the immigration issue is likely to structure mainstream electoral

competition and to affect the electoral fortunes of any party located in any position along the political spectrum, I expect voters to choose the party holding a very proximate position on this issue. By contrast, if the immigration issue tends to generate centrifugal patterns of competition and favour the extremes of the spectrum as implied by radical right-wing literature, I expect voters to vote for a party which clearly and intensely defends the same stance in terms of immigration policy (usually far from the centre of the spectrum).

Once an attitude towards immigration has had an effect by guiding individual voting behaviour, this can have an impact on the relative strength of established parties and on the shape of their potential electorates. I expect two kinds of effects in that respect, or two kinds of mechanisms of electoral change. The first one consists of mobilisation of the most natural or potential electorate of a party (defined as the number of voters psychologically identified or attached to this party due to the habit of voting for it or due to socialisation processes). The better the synergy of the voter with a party immigration position according to spatial theories of voting, the higher the likelihood of voting for the party the voter is already identified with. The second mechanism of electoral change is through the acquisition of non-loyal or non-potential voters through short-term images of issue saliency and party competence (a mechanism that is usually and probably wrongly assumed to work in contexts of low conflictive issue preferences, but that I argue to have an influence regardless of the conflict or consensus of issue preferences).

3. SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION: SOCIETAL HIERARCHY vs. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE

“Racism may be defined as the process whereby social groups categorize other groups as different or inferior”

Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2003: 35)

“Do ut des”
[I give you for you to give me]

Classic Latin proverb

3.1- The need for multidimensionality

Before observing the impact of X on Y it is necessary to understand what X is. A study of the impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting behaviour implies a good understanding of what these attitudes are and how they are constructed in public opinion. The assessment of how attitudes towards immigration are constructed from a public opinion perspective implies the analysis of the multiple dimensions of these attitudes. There are three reasons to justify the need for assessing the multidimensionality of a given social and political attitude. The first refers to a research design requirement, and more specifically, to the need for properly specifying the models that will subsequently analyse the ideological constraint of attitudes towards immigration (chapter 4) and voting behaviour (chapter 5). In any model aiming to yield statistical inferences one has to ensure that the *explanans* is properly specified in order to avoid biased or inaccurate results. The second reason refers to the substantive interest of attitudes towards immigration themselves. As stated in the previous chapter, research on social psychology suggests that political attitudes are multidimensional and that individuals tend to frame opinion on a given issue in terms of other attributes (i.e., immigration and economy, immigration and welfare state, immigration and identity, immigration and language, etc.). Assessing multidimensionality should thus be at the core of attitudinal research, especially in the field of attitudes towards immigration, where there is a broad disparity in the measures used. The notion of framing is thus employed in this chapter. According to the literature, there are two ways in which frames operate: “the importance change model”, and “the content change model”. According to the

former, frames operate by making certain beliefs more relevant and applicable to the issue at stake. According to the latter, frames introduce new arguments and information that the individual had not previously thought about (Hobolt 2009:112). The process and causes of the framing of the immigration issue are not discussed here. This chapter rather observes the result of this process, namely the way in which perceptions about immigration are articulated in public opinion. And third, there is a high risk of incurring a measurement validity problem if one relies on one single survey item to capture an attitude or an opinion to be analysed (Hobolt 2009:69). The construction of more valid and reliable measures of the underlying concept of interest helps to reduce measurement error and to capture more accurately the attitudes concerned.

In this chapter I will first summarise the attempts already made to define and analyse attitudes towards immigration in the existing literature. After suggesting why previous attempts to understand the dimensionality of the immigration issue are incomplete, I will suggest two alternative conceptual dichotomies to understand the contemporary articulation of attitudes towards immigration in Europe: the societal-individual and the hierarchy-difference hypotheses (hypotheses 1 and 2 articulated in chapter 2 above). The factor and Mokken scale analyses using European Social Survey and Eurobarometers presented below suggest that there are two distinct and observable constructs in public opinion *vis-à-vis* the immigration issue: a societal hierarchy and an individual difference outlook towards immigration. The first one frames immigration as a social phenomenon with consequences for the collective host society. Moreover, this first construct captures a more subtle hierarchical criterion whereby immigration is perceived as superior or inferior, positive or negative, *vis-à-vis* the current life, culture and economy within the country. The second construct consists of the perception of individual characteristics of migrants which can affect their capacity to integrate, adapt and even be useful. This second construct does not focus on how superior or inferior will be the social, cultural and economic outcomes due to immigration, but rather on how similar or different migrants are, and on how adaptable and useful they are.

3.2- Expectations

The intuition about the existence of a multidimensional semantic structure in the public construction of immigration to be analysed in this chapter comes in part from some

contradictions detected in previous studies of attitudes towards immigration (Lahav 2004). For instance, it has been found that in opinion polls thousands of European citizens express a commitment to helping immigrants in an abstract sense, whereas at the same time they tend to have a negative view of the impact of immigrants on jobs, crime and society. This is a similar pattern to that found in the USA, where citizen support for the principle of equality coexists with the remnants of segregation. The existence of distinct and relatively independent dimensions in the public perception of immigration can also be inferred through their variation over time. In the USA the racial issues which were intensely contentious in the 1960s (school desegregation, open housing and public accommodations) register more liberal responses today. By contrast, however, new racial issues (quotas and affirmative action programs) now seem to divide sharply the American public (Dalton 2006:109,119).

The need to disentangle distinct dimensions of attitudes towards immigration is also justified by works framed in more theoretical paradigms of migration studies. According to some scholars, the definitions of identity and ethnicity are constructed in the public sphere through overlapping polarised categories such as universalism/relativism or homogeneity/heterogeneity. These categories, in addition, vary across space and time (Yuval-Davis 2001:59-63). Furthermore, the contemporary idea of ethnicity emerges from a complex set of social and cultural interactions between people who are tied to different constructs of collectivity and citizenship (Bauböck 2001).

Some of the most prominent empirical attempts to identify different dimensions in racial policy preferences have already been made by Kinder and Sanders (1996) and by Sniderman and Piazza (1993). These two latter authors argue that there is no single race issue, but that rather it can be split into three broad categories: the race conscious, social welfare and equal treatment agendas. These categories have been used in subsequent analyses and have been operationalised through indicators of support for positive discrimination towards blacks (race conscious), for public expenditure to improve their social status (welfare state) and for equality in treatment of blacks at the workplace or at school (equal treatment) (Hetherington and Globetti 2002:271). The validity and comparability of this sort of dimensional analyses conducted in the North American context, however, are not of direct application in Europe. This is so for four reasons. First, it relies exclusively on the notion of race, whereas immigrants crossing European borders do not necessarily belong to a different race from the native population. Second, the focus of

the classification is based on the particular North American history of inter-ethnic relations (segregation, value of individualism and social expenditure in perceiving blacks, etc.), which might not be directly applicable to the European context. Third, it only focuses on the sympathy towards policies and not on other perceived impacts of immigration (such as crime, culture, economy or identity). Fourth, the more complete data now available that I will use include far more questions about attitudes towards immigration which permit analyses more applicable to the European context.

Past research focusing on the European context has also failed to provide a consensual theoretical and empirical framework on which to base the definition of attitudes towards immigration to be used here. While the theories explaining the development of hostile attitudes towards immigration seem to be quite established in this literature, there is little consensus about how to conceptualise and measure these attitudes themselves. Opinions regarding the presence of migrants (Citrin et al. 1990; Kinder 2003) and regarding whether they should be granted civic rights (Gijssberts 2004) are two of the most common types of attitudes analysed, even if the use of one or another is almost never justified. On the other hand, there is another unresolved controversy dividing scholars between those who use measures of *overt prejudice* (agreement with racial stereotype questions that portray blacks as inherently inferior to whites) and those who work with the concept of *new racism* (also called symbolic racism, modern racism or racial resentment, which canalize racism through core values like individualism. e.g. the belief that blacks are undeserving of any form of special government assistance) (Hetherington and Globetti 2002:255-271; Feldman and Huddy 2005:169). Finally, some other typologies mix rather haphazardly attitudes (behavioural intentions) with actual behaviour such as far right wing voting (Coenders 2004), when the distinction should be clearer (Hjerm 2001:43; Verberk et al. 2002:206). In sum, there is no clear consensus about whether there is a correct classification with a strong empirical basis of the types of attitudes towards immigration existing in public opinion.

One of the most intuitive and potentially replicable attempts to summarize how attitudes towards immigration are constructed in public opinion consists of identifying two constructs, namely a perception based on economic or material threat and another based on cultural threat (Gibson 2002; Paxton and Mughan 2006). The former is grounded on ethnic competition theory and frames negative attitudes towards immigration as a perception of competition for scarce material resources between in-groups and out-groups (Blumer 1958; Sherif and Sherif 1969; Quillian 1995; Clark and Legge 1997; McLaren 2002; McLaren

2006). The latter is based upon social identity theory and understands the attitude towards immigrants as a categorisation process where cultural similarities become the main cognitive cue (Tajfel 1982; Weldon 2006; Transue 2007). Even if intuitive, there are still two problems with the distinction between economic and cultural threats. The first one is that it confounds the theory with the outcome to be explained by the theory. The fact that we can distinguish between economic and cultural types of explanations for the hostility towards migrants does not mean that there are only economic and cultural ways to frame immigration. The second problem is that, as will be seen, the distinction between economic and cultural items across different constructs does not hold up empirically. The immigration issue is linked to both economic and cultural attributes which are difficult to disentangle, and seems to be able to cross-cut classical distinctions between economic and cultural explanations for political predispositions and issue formation.

In this chapter I argue that two alternative ways to understand how attitudes towards immigration are constructed in public opinion are the distinction between societal and individual attitudes, as well as the distinction between hierarchy and difference components in the perception of immigration. As explained in hypotheses 1 and 2 in the previous chapter, sociotropic and individual distinctions of attitudes have proved to be fruitful and reliable in the analysis of other issues like the economy, and particularly applicable to the immigration issue. This sociotropic and individual distinction does not only refer to the social or individual impact of migrants, but it is extended here to the perception of immigration as a social phenomenon or as a set of individual characteristics of migrants themselves. On the other hand, as Castles and Miller point out in one of the introductory quotes in this chapter, the hostility towards the newcomer can rely on considerations about how inferior or how different strangers are. As I argued in chapter 2, the distinction between hierarchy and difference has defined the evolution towards out-groups throughout history and could be a useful conceptual tool to guide the dimensional analysis of attitudes towards immigration today.

3.3- Data and method

The databases used here are the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002-2003 (N=42,358 and 22 countries), the Eurobarometer (EB) 53 in April-May 2000 (N=16,078 and 16 countries), and the EB 47.1 in March-April 1997 (N=16,154 and 16 countries). The

more than 40 items capturing different aspects of attitudes towards immigration and the extensive cross-national design of the ESS 2002-2003 represent an invaluable opportunity to observe more precisely the structure behind those attitudes. Another reason to use ESS 2002-2003 is that it contains practically all the individual-level indicators needed to explain the two scales to be tested here, once they will have been identified. Only one variable to test social identity theory (national pride) was lacking. I have imported this variable at a contextual-country level from the European Value Studies 1999-2000 (using methods described in van der Eijk 2002).

I will use the EBs 47.1 and 53 to replicate findings and to check for consistency over time. Even if the number and the quality of indicators (in terms of operationalisation and substantive questions asked) are lower than in the ESS 2002-2003, the focus of these datasets is on attitudes towards migrants and minorities in Europe. The added value of replicating findings with these two EBs is twofold. First, finding out the same underlying constructs in attitudes towards immigration in different datasets with different samplings and measurement errors can only strengthen the consistency of the results. This is so especially when dealing with factor analytic and non-parametric dimensional techniques like those used here, which are very sensitive to these sorts of issues. Even if the items are logically not the same between the ESS and the EBs, their substantive interpretation and the way in which they are correlated or ordered can be compared. Second, the timing of these different surveys allows me to check whether there is a certain consistency over time. The period between 1997 and 2003 is not long, but sufficient to overcome the possible drawbacks of relying solely on a single cross-sectional dataset.

The methodological strategy follows a two-step procedure. First, I have worked with the more than 40 items assessing people's opinion towards migrants and contained in the ESS 2002-2003 to disentangle different conceptual dimensions underlying these indicators. These dimensions have been confirmed with EBs 53 and 47.1. Second, I have used the resulting scales as dependent variables in hierarchical linear models to assess their nature and to what extent they can be explained using existing theories on the articulation of xenophobia.

As for the first step, I have checked the correlation logic inherent in principal component analysis by means of replications that employ the ordinal logic of nonparametric item response model Mokken scale analysis (Mokken 1971; Van Schuur 2003). Instead of

relying exclusively on confirmatory factor analysis and conditioning the data structure by an *a priori* theoretical expectation as is done elsewhere (Gibson 2002; Paxton and Mughan 2006), the comparison strategy suggested here aims to be stricter and to rely only on those items which seem consistent across Mokken and principal components analyses. More specifically, after an exploratory principal component analysis and the elimination of all those items with low communalities, I have overcome the problems derived from an asymmetric distribution or difficulty of the items by using Mokken scaling. The decision to include or not an item in a given attitudinal dimension according to this technique is dependent on the so-called homogeneity coefficient. This index gives information about whether a set of items with different degrees of difficulty (or positive response) follows an ordinal pattern of response. For instance, when the positive response to an item is significantly associated with the positive response to another more difficult item and so on, it is considered that they are homogeneous enough as to belong to the same scale. The homogeneity coefficient is then calculated as a ratio between the observed and the expected errors in a given pattern of distributions. The resulting scales with satisfactory homogeneity coefficients in each item and in the global construct have been confirmed and checked back with a principal components analysis including the same number of constructs as identified by Mokken scaling.

After comparing the correlational and ordinal non-parametric scales from the items contained in ESS 2002-2003, I have checked for the existence of similar dimensions in the items contained in EBs 53 and 47.1. In this case, since all the items are originally dichotomous I have not used any factor analysis but directly analysed them with Mokken scaling. To do so I have selected those items with comparable wordings and substantive meanings, and instead of making them confirm the scales I had in mind and to avoid any sort of *a priori* theoretical conditioning on my side I ran an exploratory Mokken analysis to see how are they ranked. As it will be seen below, the combination of these techniques across these three different datasets and without theoretically conditioning the results offers a remarkable similarity in the outcome.

The factor and Mokken analyses conducted below are exploratory. However, the exploration and comparison of results from different dimensional techniques has *de facto* a confirmatory function. Unlike some previous works on attitudes towards immigration (Gibson 2002; Paxton and Mughan 2006), then, I do not condition the specific items to load in one or another dimension on the basis of rigid theoretical expectations. In order to avoid

any random selection of indicators measuring attitudes towards immigration based solely on intuition or on the availability of data, the measurement of attitudes towards immigration will be data-driven and interpreted in the light of the societal vs. individual and the hierarchy vs. difference logics (hypotheses 1 and 2).

The inclusion of factor analysis and other measurement techniques in the construction of dimensions in attitudes towards immigration may seem controversial from a methodological point of view. There is the risk of falling victim to a “fantastic lack of perspective argument that these cut-off points can be obtained via statistical processing, i.e., by letting the data themselves tell us where to draw them” (Sartori 1970:1038). Despite this comment, however, Sartori by no means completely rejects the role of induction in the formation of concepts. Indeed, even in his groundbreaking article about concept formation, he defends the role of primary observation in order to construct categories with an appropriate empirical content: “whether a classification may serve multiple purposes, and which classification fits the requirement best, this is something we discover inductively, that is, starting from the bottom of the ladder of abstraction” (1970:1043). Thus, induction and deduction are not completely opposing poles in a dichotomous conception of social science¹.

Regarding the second methodological step, these scales have been used as dependent continuous variables in multilevel linear models. The use of a hierarchical approach instead of a conventional OLS model is justified here by the inclusion of contextual variables at the level of country (national pride, social expenditure, and post-communist), which requires this kind of modelling to properly estimate their standard errors (Steenbergen and Jones 2002).

¹ The use of factor analysis in concept formation is not new, nor is it necessarily mistaken. Goertz refers to Lazarsfeld and Blalock as two of the main key players in importing the factor analytic approach to concepts into political science and sociology. According to him, there are five main differences between the factor analytic and the ontological-theoretically driven approaches: factor analysis assumes causality between the basic or secondary level and the indicators; the ontological view does not assume causality but it understands dimensions as constituting the phenomenon; the ontological approach is usually functionalist (the properties can be functions or elements necessary to carry out these functions); in the factor analytic approach, the various indicators of a single dimension have to be highly correlated; and in the factor analytic view the concepts which need to be defined are usually abstract phenomena with no easily measurable manifestation (Goertz 2006 :14-17). In sum, the choice between the theoretically-driven or factor-analytical procedure depends on the nature of the concept and is not necessarily contradictory or wrong.

3.4- Dimensional analysis: societal hierarchy and individual difference

As outlined in the previous section, the analytical strategy has followed 3 steps: an exploratory principal components analysis to clean the data and find the most relevant items to be considered (table 3.1); a Mokken scale analysis to get rid of the pitfalls derived from dimensionalities based just on correlation (table 3.2); and another principal component analysis just allowing the same number of constructs identified by Mokken to check the consistency and comparability of the results across two different dimensional techniques (table 3.3). The assessment of the consistency across factor and non-parametric item response theory approaches like Mokken scaling has proved to be a strict and reliable strategy to assess the dimensionality of public attitudes (Vezzoni and Segatti 2009).

After running a first principal component analysis with more than 40 immigration items in the ESS 2002-2003, a high number of them did not reach a communality score above 0.5 as a first *a priori* criterion. Then, I have purged those items not scoring enough in their communality index and therefore not belonging to any specific dimension. I have repeated this procedure twice until getting all items with a communality score above 0.5. This is a similar approach as the two-stage principal components analysis used elsewhere (Schmitt and van der Eijk, manuscript). It is important to remember that the communality of an item is the sum of all the squared loadings of this item. This can be interpreted as the proportion of variation in that variable explained by the three factors. In other words, the communality is an indicator capturing to what extent a single variable belongs to the latent dimensionality found in the data. The assessment of the extent to which an item belongs specifically to one or another factor, however, is something that will need further analyses below². Table 3.1

² The selection of items with high communalities implies disregarding 21 items contained in the ESS 2002-2003. If a Mokken scale analysis (a technique used below to assess the proper number and composition of the dimensions found in the data) had been run with all items together, only 4 variables out of the 21 disregarded items would have appeared to belong to the individual difference dimension described below. The wordings of these four items are: “If a country wants to reduce tension it should stop immigration”, “It is better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions”, “Country has more than its fair share of people applying for refugee status”, and “Qualification for immigration: it is important that migrants are committed to the way of life in country”. These items are perfectly coherent with the two main characteristics defining the individual difference scale constructed below: they refer to individual characteristics that migrants have to have in order to be accepted (customs, traditions, committed to country way of life), and they refer to how similar or adaptable they are (reduce tension, cultural similarity), etc. I decided not to include these four items in the final operationalisation of the individual-difference scale because they do not have a high general communality, and my purpose is to only include items fulfilling the requirements of both factor and Mokken scale analyses. However, if these items are included, all the substantive conclusions derived from the analyses in chapters 3, 4 and 5 where the individual difference scale is involved remain unchanged.

shows the descriptive statistics of the items reaching enough communality after this set of principal component analyses.

Table 3.1- Descriptive statistics of items with communalities above 0.5 used in exploratory principal component analysis

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Communality
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	4.96	2.40	0	10	0.69
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	4.77	2.21	0	10	0.64
Immigrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs	4.47	2.27	0	10	0.57
Taxes and services: immigrants take out more than they put in or less	4.18	2.25	0	10	0.55
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	5.76	2.47	0	10	0.63
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries in Europe	2.43	0.83	1	4	0.89
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	2.50	0.83	1	4	0.90
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	2.53	0.83	1	4	0.82
Qualification for immigration: be white	2.35	2.9	0	10	0.70
Qualification for immigration: be wealthy	3.29	3.12	0	10	0.68
Qualification for immigration: christian background	3.70	3.31	0	10	0.62
Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications	6.26	2.76	0	10	0.71
Qualification for immigration: speak country's official language	6.74	2.99	0	10	0.65
Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country	6.74	2.81	0	10	0.69
If immigrants commit serious crime they should be made to leave	1.86	1.03	1	5	0.78
If immigrants commit any crime they should be made to leave	2.66	1.26	1	5	0.75
If immigrants are long term unemployed they should be made to leave	2.83	1.18	1	5	0.55
Law against promoting racial or ethnic hatred good/bad for a country	7.19	3.05	0	10	0.86
Law against ethnic discrimination in workplace good/bad for a country	6.99	2.94	0	10	0.86
People applying refugee status allowed to work while cases considered	2.49	1.06	1	5	0.73
Government should be generous judging applications for refugee status	3.14	1.08	1	5	0.66

Source: ESS 2002-2003

The varimax rotated output with the 21 items presented in table 3.1 (that is, the items contained in ESS 2002-2003 with a communality index beyond 0.5) shows 7 factors with an

eigenvalue above 1. The respective reliability analysis of the items composing each specific scale is satisfactory in all cases (Cronbach Alpha above 0.7), except for the last factor composed of two items assessing refugee status (Cronbach Alpha = 0.47)³. The results of this principal components analysis are:

$$\text{Factor1} = 0.79 \cdot \text{economy} + 0.72 \cdot \text{place} + 0.72 \cdot \text{jobs} + 0.71 \cdot \text{culture} + 0.71 \cdot \text{taxes}$$

$$\text{Factor2} = 0.87 \cdot \text{allowinEurope} + 0.87 \cdot \text{allowoutsideEurope} + 0.8 \cdot \text{allowdifferentrace}$$

$$\text{Factor3} = 0.79 \cdot \text{white} + 0.75 \cdot \text{christian} + 0.75 \cdot \text{wealthy}$$

$$\text{Factor4} = 0.81 \cdot \text{education} + 0.77 \cdot \text{language} + 0.75 \cdot \text{workskills}$$

$$\text{Factor5} = 0.85 \cdot \text{seriouscrime} + 0.77 \cdot \text{anycrime} + 0.53 \cdot \text{unemployed}$$

$$\text{Factor6} = 0.92 \cdot \text{lawagainstracialhathred} + 0.91 \cdot \text{lawagainstethnicdiscrim}$$

$$\text{Factor7} = 0.81 \cdot \text{refugeestatus} + 0.73 \cdot \text{refugeeapplication}$$

The use of the communality index to select the items I will work with is an appropriate strategy to choose the variables that belong indeed to the dimensionality found in the data (whichever that is), instead of randomly using at the same time the more of 40 indicators existing in ESS 2002-2003 in non-parsimonious dimensional analyses. The communality can be thus understood as a correlation of a given item with the overall dimensionality of the data. The specific belonging of each item to one or another factor, however, is a completely different story. There are three reasons to doubt about the consistency of the specific dimensionality (in terms of number of factors and the belonging of each item in each factor) resulting from a simple exploratory principal components analysis like the one presented above. The first is that some dimensions are composed of very few items which

³ I have replicated the analysis with a factor axis method of extraction to make sure that different exploratory methods lead to similar results. Indeed, the output obtained reflects the same dimensions emerging from a principal components analysis, except for the last one. As shown by the Cronbach Alpha indicator, however, the dimension composed of refugee status and refugee applications does not reach a satisfactory level of reliability. In the end, the difference between a factor axis and a principal components analysis is a different definition of “good fit” and a distinct way of calculating the communalities, but the substantive results are usually the same (Norusis 1990).

were together in the questionnaire and which had a very similar wording. Thus, it could be that a dimension apparently emerging from it does not really correspond to a real distinct manner of perceiving immigrants in the European public, but an artefact of the survey generating an artificial response consistency on the respondents' side. Second, since factor analysis is a technique simply based on the correlation of the items it does not take into account the different difficulty (or distribution) of them. This might produce an output with two or more dimensions that in reality are not so distinct. Third, when I run the final principal components analysis country by country (instead of running it with the pooled European sample), some inconsistencies emerged which do not allow me to generalise this structure across all political systems.

To overcome the problems derived from a correlation factor logic and the impossibility of considering the different difficulty of the items included in the analysis, I have used these 19 indicators in Mokken scale analysis⁴. As explained above, this kind of technique follows an ordinal logic and assesses whether the positive answer to a given item implies a positive answer to a previous less difficult item and so on. Then, this type of scale analysis is very appropriate to cluster items together which are ordinally related and which have different degrees of difficulty (different proportions of people giving a positive answer to them) (Mokken 1971; Van Schuur 2003). The output obtained with Mokken analysis solves some inconsistencies by integrating similar items which, as suspected, formed a dimension that was not apparent using exploratory factor analysis.

More specifically, I obtain three scales. The first corresponds to a way of perceiving immigrants as a social phenomenon that will either enrich or undermine the current economic, cultural and collective life of the host country. The second corresponds to a logic focusing on individual characteristics of migrants making them or not easy and even useful to integrate. The third represents a legal dimension (the convenience of approving laws against ethnic discrimination). In spite of the satisfactory homogeneity coefficients of the three scales and all their items (above 0.3 in all cases), however, the legal dimension is only composed of two items and does not let me conduct further analyses to check for the consistency of this dimension (such as the assessment of the double monotonicity of the

⁴ I have used them in Mokken analysis and in the final scale with a dichotomous operationalisation, in order to avoid overweighting those items with a wider range when summing them up. Moreover, this dichotomisation is unavoidable to run a Mokken analysis in this case, because the different items considered have originally different ranges and they need to be standardized with the same ordinal operationalisation and number of categories. All items are 0 = positive attitude towards migrants and 1 = negative attitude towards migrants, and the cut-off point has been the median of the original item.

scale). The fact that only two very similar items form a distinct dimension which cannot be properly assessed led me drop them in further analyses.

Three more steps have been done to improve the Mokken analysis and to polish the two final scales: the check of monotone homogeneity (to make sure that the positive response to each item is a function of the positive response to easier items in the same scale), the test for double monotonicity (to assess whether the degree of difficulty across items is the same for all individuals), and the confirmation of the scale country by country and not only with the pooled European sample. The first step offered very satisfactory results across all items in the two scales. The second step presents a satisfactory result in terms of double monotonicity in the first scale (except for a slight intersection of the items assessing whether immigrants help to create new jobs and whether they make the host country a better or worse place to live) and a relatively worse but still satisfactory result for the second scale. The items which sometimes intersect with the group of other items in this scale are those regarding the optimum number of migrants to be accepted in the country. I decided not to drop these items, however, because the level of intersection is not bad in all cases and because they have the strongest discriminative power within this scale according to the monotone homogeneity test. Finally, the third step confirmed the reliability of both scales in a broad majority of countries⁵. In these analyses, the global homogeneity coefficient of the societal hierarchy scale only drops slightly below the conventional threshold of 0.3 in Portugal. Regarding the individual difference scale, the homogeneity coefficient is below the conventional threshold in Hungary, Israel and Portugal. The results concerning these countries in later analyses using these scales will have to be interpreted with caution. Table 3.2 reports the two scales obtained with Mokken analysis after completing all these steps.

⁵ After these last steps, the missing values of these items have been imputed using a two-way imputation method suited to this sort of scale analysis, which uses the average of all observed scores of respondents, the average of all observed scores of items, and the average of all observed scores on both (Sijtsma and Van der Ark 2003).

Table 3.2- Mokken scale analysis for societal hierarchy and individual differentiation scales

<i>SCALE 1-Societal hierarchy</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Item Homogeneity</i>	<i>Item Z</i>
Items scale			
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	0.43	0.44	98.06
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	0.56	0.43	116.87
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	0.65	0.39	111.83
Immigrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs	0.66	0.33	92.57
Taxes and services: immigrants take out more than they put in or less	0.72	0.34	87.46
N = 29,593			
Scale homogeneity = 0.39			
Scale Z = 160.53			
<i>SCALE 2- Individual difference</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Item Homogeneity</i>	<i>Item Z</i>
Items scale			
Qualification for immigration: be white	0.14	0.52	126.27
Qualification for immigration: be wealthy	0.23	0.43	132.56
Qualification for immigration: Christian background	0.28	0.37	123.22
If immigrants are long term unemployed they should be made to leave	0.43	0.37	149.40
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries in Europe	0.45	0.46	191.36
If immigrants commit any crime they should be made to leave	0.47	0.36	149.25
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	0.49	0.47	195.86
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	0.50	0.46	193.30
Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications	0.63	0.34	127.40
Qualification for immigration: speak country's official language	0.69	0.35	125.24
Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country	0.70	0.42	145.63
If immigrants commit serious crime they should be made to leave	0.80	0.41	114.08
N = 29,593			
Scale homogeneity = 0.41			
Scale Z = 364.63			

Source: ESS 2002-2003

In order to contrast these scales with those deriving from a factor analytic procedure and in order to purge those items which fail to satisfy both a correlation and an item response logic, I have run a principal components analysis with the same items but just allowing two factors to be constructed. The rotated output confirms the existence of two scales with the same items suggested in Mokken analysis. The only items which do not reach a loading of 0.5 are the one regarding the relationship between migrants and serious crimes (which I consequently dropped from the final differentiation scale), and the two legal items regarding ethnic discrimination and hatred (which, as stated above, formed a very weak scale according to Mokken analysis as well). Table 3.3 shows the rotated factor loadings of this principal component analysis. The factor loadings above 0.5 are indicated in bold.

Table 3.3- Principal components rotated output with only 2 factors allowed

	SOCIETAL- HIERARCHY	INDIVIDUAL- DIFFERENCE
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	0.26	0.71
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	0.26	0.7
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries in Europe	0.26	0.69
Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country	-0.62	0.67
Qualification for immigration: be wealthy	0.014	0.65
Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications	-0.1	0.6
Qualification for immigration: be white	0.11	0.59
If immigrants are long term unemployed they should be made to leave	0.26	0.59
Qualification for immigration: speak country's official language	-0.08	0.58
If immigrants commit any crime they should be made to leave	0.23	0.57
Qualification for immigration: Christian background	0.016	0.57
If immigrants commit serious crime they should be made to leave	0.21	0.48
Government should be generous judging applications for refugee status	0.25	0.29
People applying refugee status allowed to work while cases considered	0.19	0.26
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	0.73	0.04
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	0.69	0.12
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	0.67	0.23
Taxes and services: immigrants take out more than they put in or less	0.63	-0.09
Immigrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs	0.61	-0.03
Law against ethnic discrimination in workplace good/bad for a country	0.45	0.2
Law against promoting racial or ethnic hatred good/bad for a country	0.43	0.2
Varimax rotation method: 3 iterations		
Eigenvalue	2.35 (11.21%)	5.66 (26.96%)
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample adequacy test	0.852	
Bartlett's significance test	Chi2=233125.3; DF=210; sig=0.000	

Source: ESS 2002-2003

The final robustness check reported in table 3.3 confirms the two dimensions of attitudes towards immigration in the European public found with Mokken scaling (in table 3.2). These two dimensions can be interpreted under the light of the societal vs. individual and the hierarchy vs. difference hypotheses. The two constructs that emerge empirically actually combine these two rationales. The societal vision of immigration as a collective one with aggregate consequences for the country life is somehow combined with a subtle but still existent hierarchical component assessing how better or worse, how superior or inferior, will be the country life due to immigration. On the other hand, the individualistic way to look at migrants and their characteristics relies precisely on what makes them different or similar (race, religion, language) as well as easy to integrate and even useful (work skills, educational and economic background, etc.). It can also be considered that this scale taps into attitudes towards rights of access and the differential thresholds or barriers that might be placed against immigration by the host country. In other terms, this construct refers to whether immigrants should be allowed to enter, on the basis of their adaptability and functionality. As it can be seen, it is problematic to interpret these two constructs as a purely material vs. cultural threat (Gibson 2002 :104). The societal hierarchy construct is composed of both economic and cultural items (e.g., impact of immigrants on economy and jobs, but also on cultural life and on the country as a place to live), as well as the individual difference construct (e.g., acceptance of migrants depending on whether they are rich or poor, but also on whether they share some cultural or identity aspects like language). It is also important to stress a distinct temporal connotation in the results of both scales. Whereas the societal-hierarchy construct measures how good or bad has been the effect on the host country of receiving past immigrants, the individual-difference construct refers to criteria of access for future immigrants.

The societal hierarchy dimension does not appear to be directly linked to traditional and essentialist ways of articulating racism. This is so because the item assessing the importance of biological race loads clearly in the other dimension. This finding suggests that perceiving migrants as inferior or potentially damaging is not done in a classic way, but through a more covert attitude which relies on how good or bad are foreigners for the country economy and culture. This can be considered an adaptation to the European context of the logic behind the so-called symbolic racism, namely a way to stress the inherent negativity of migrants through other less crude discourses (Henry and Sears 2002; Tarman and Sears 2005). Symbolic racism would be then distinguished from classic racism by its lack of biological essentialism, but it would keep its hierarchical component through the perception of how

bad immigrants are for the country, or how inferior would be the societal outcomes for the host country if immigration is accepted.

Table 3.3 reports factor loadings for the items contained in both factors. Regarding the societal hierarchy construct, this contains how good or bad are migrants for the country's economy, do migrants make the country a worse or a better place to live, do migrants undermine or enrich the country's cultural life, do migrants take out more than they put in terms of taxes and services, and do migrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs. In sum, this construct is composed of items exclusively assessing how better or worse, superior or inferior will be the economic and cultural outcomes of the country due to immigration.

On the other hand, the individual difference construct incorporates the following aspects of attitudes towards immigration: the number of immigrants that should be allowed from different races or ethnic groups and from poorer countries whether inside or outside Europe; how important it is for a migrant to have appropriate working skills, to be wealthy, to have a good education, to be white, to have a Christian background and to speak the country's official language; and to what extent being unemployed or committing a crime is a reason to send a migrant back to his country of origin. This dimension focuses on individual characteristics of migrants and is based upon how adaptable, easy to integrate, compatible and even useful are migrants. None of these items considers explicitly that the migrant can be inferior or inherently negative in its more hostile version. At most, the most hostile opinions contained in this dimension consider the migrant to be different or to have difficulties in adapting. This is why I argue that this dimension corresponds to a logic of differentiation. It is not that the migrant is bad, but that he can be different. The identity component (white, Christian, etc.) is mixed up with a utilitarian one (how useful are their working skills and educational qualifications, etc.), and both constitute a cue to determine rights of access and whether immigrants should be allowed to enter the host country in the first place. Even if the language and productivity components found by Paxton and Mughan in their assimilationist threat scale seem to be also captured by the individual difference scale (Paxton and Mughan 2006:549-550), the utilitarian component assessing how useful immigrants need to be in order to be accepted goes beyond a cultural identity concern. Furthermore, I consider this dimension as an evolution of the essentialist component of traditional racist ideas. This is so because the only classical racist item (how important it is for a migrant to be white) loads in this construct. So this traditional essentialist component

based on the colour of the skin seems to still be present but diluted in this scale where the compatibility of the identity, the way of life and the skills of foreigners are the main defining attributes.

3.5- Describing the scales

In the previous section I have implemented a Mokken scaling (table 3.2) and a principal components analysis allowing just the same number of reliable dimensions to be created (table 3.3). Both analyses yield remarkably consistent results in terms of identifying the items belonging to one or the other dimension, except for the item assessing the relationship between migrants and serious crimes, which I have thus disregarded. The next step in this section consists of summing up the items belonging to each scale respectively, and to describe both scales. I have opted to sum up the items operationalised in a dichotomous fashion (see footnote 4) to give them an equal weight in the final construction of the scale (unlike what factor scores would do) and to relax the assumption of orthogonality in the oblique rotation implemented in the factor analyses in the previous section. Table 3.4 summarises the final items included and summed up in each of the scales.

Table 3.4- Items summed up in societal-hierarchy and individual-difference scales

Societal-Hierarchy scale

Immigration bad or good for country's economy

Immigrants make country worse or better place to live

Immigrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs

Taxes and services: immigrants take out more than they put in or less

Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants

Individual-Difference scale

Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries in Europe

Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe

Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority

Qualification for immigration: be white

Qualification for immigration: be wealthy

Qualification for immigration: Christian background

Qualification for immigration: good educational qualifications

Qualification for immigration: speak country's official language

Qualification for immigration: work skills needed in country

If immigrants commit any crime they should be made to leave

If immigrants are long term unemployed they should be made to leave

The two resulting scales have been recoded from 0 (positive attitude towards immigration) to 1 (negative attitude towards immigration). In the pooled ESS 2002-2003 sample, the average on the societal hierarchy scale is 0.6, whereas the average on the individual difference scale is 0.4. This means that the European average is moderately negative perceiving immigration as a social phenomenon with a somewhat negative balance of consequences for the country, whereas the average is slightly more positive when perceiving the individual adaptability and utility of migrants. More interestingly, the two scales are significantly but very weakly correlated with a Pearson R coefficient of 0.24. This means that being hostile on the societal hierarchy scale does not necessarily mean

being hostile on the individual difference scale. Table 3.5 presents the descriptive statistics and the bivariate correlation between the two scales.

Table 3.5- Descriptive statistics and correlation between the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Pearson R</i>
Societal hierarchy	40,812	0.61	0.32	0	1	0.24 (p=0.000)
Individual difference	40,812	0.46	0.27	0	1	

Source: ESS 2002-2003

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 plot the average level of hostility towards migrants per country on the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales respectively. The systemic variation is much smaller and more hostile on average regarding the societal vision perceiving immigration as better or worse for the country. Practically all countries are clustered around the European average (0.6). Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia are the most hostile countries (slightly above 0.7), and Finland, Luxembourg and Sweden are the less hostile (around 0.5 or slightly below). By contrast, the variation of the perception of migrants as individuals with more or less adaptable and useful characteristics is much bigger across countries. Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Israel, the Czech Republic and Poland are, in this order, the most hostile countries on this scale (around 0.5 or clearly above). Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Ireland, Denmark and Switzerland are the less hostile countries according to the individual difference scale average (0.4 or below).

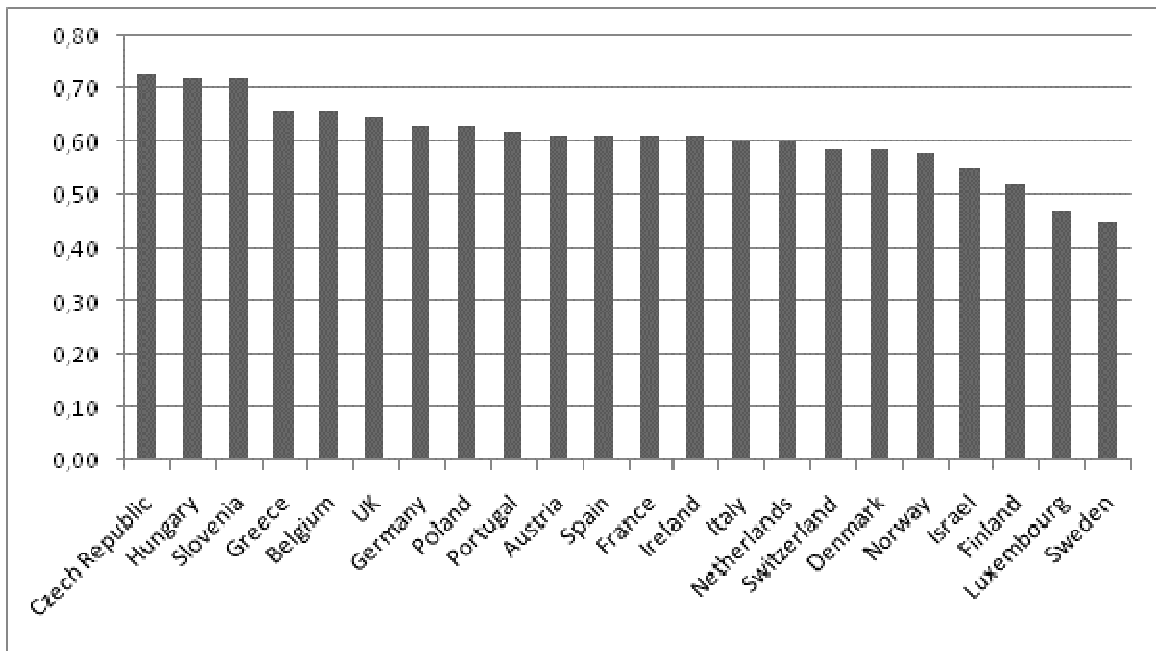


Figure 3.1- Societal hierarchy scale per country

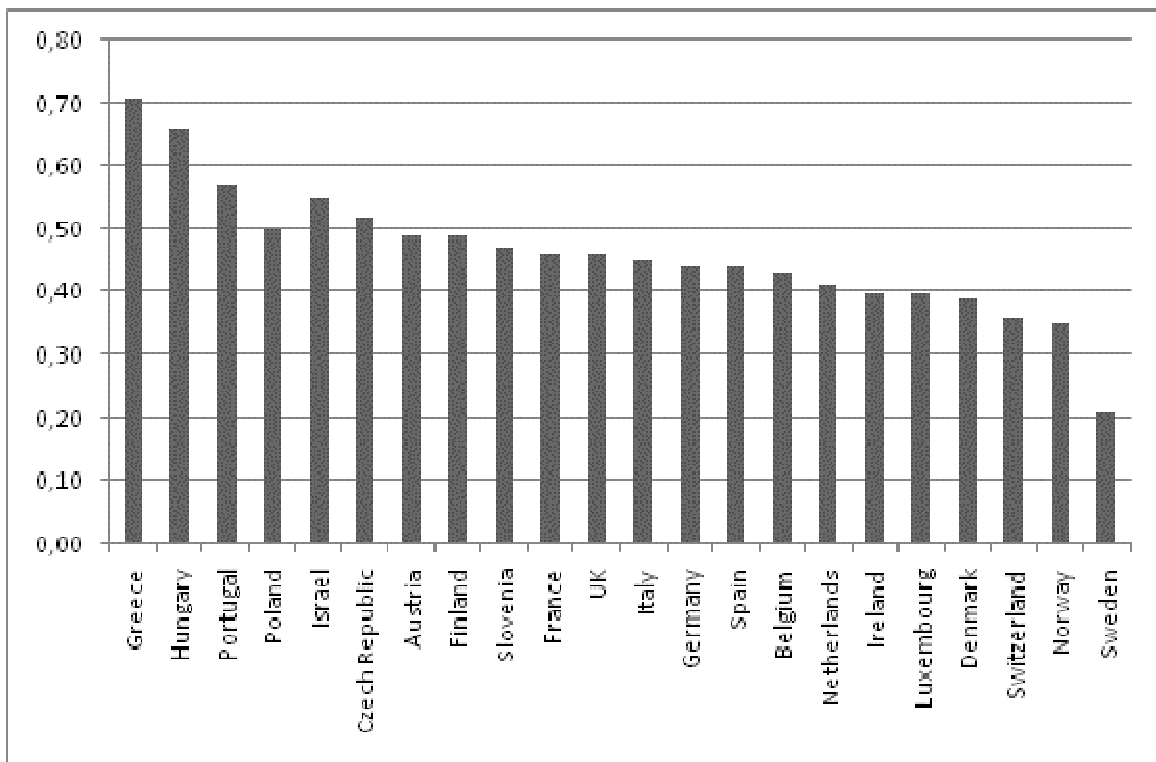


Figure 3.2- Individual difference scale per country

The description provided by the two previous graphs is complemented by figure 3.3, where countries are plotted in a bi-dimensional scatter according to their positions on both scales. These countries can be observed in relation to both dimensions of the perceived hostility towards immigrants. As can be seen, at the aggregate level there is also a positive but small correlation between the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales. This means that the country average positions on the two dimensions are coherent but rather autonomous. On the upper-right quadrant, where more hostile positions than the European average can be found, one can observe Greece and Hungary as the most extreme cases of hostility on both dimensions. The Czech Republic, Portugal, Poland and Slovenia also belong to this quadrant. On the opposite bottom-left quadrant of figure 3.3, where less hostile positions on both dimensions can be found, one can see Sweden, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Norway and Denmark. The rest of countries, mainly Western European, are quite clustered around the European average on both the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales. The countries closer to the average are Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany and the UK. Austria and Belgium are also quite central in the graph, but the former is slightly more hostile on the individual difference scale and the latter is relatively more hostile on the social hierarchy scale.

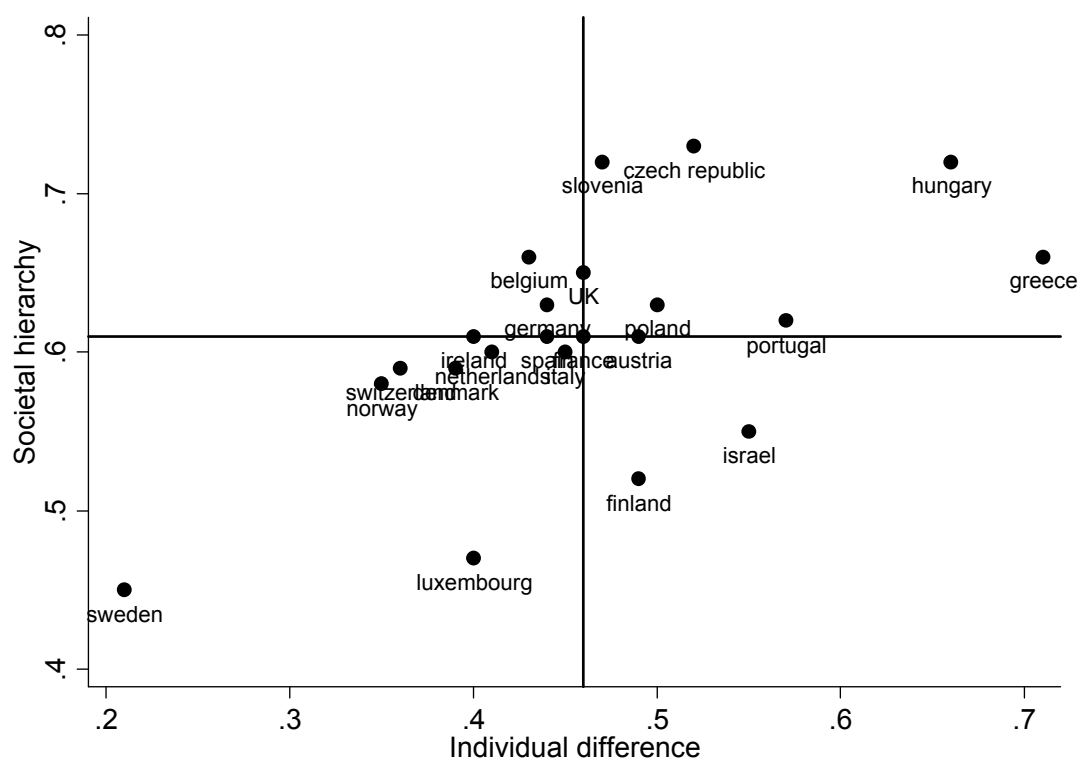


Figure 3.3- Bi-dimensional scatter with societal hierarchy and individual difference scales

One of the possible explanations for the low correlation between the societal-hierarchy and individual-difference scales is the distinct temporal character of these constructs. While the first scale needs to rely on the perception of past immigration to assess their impact on the host country, the second scale needs to consider types of prospective immigration to assess its possible fit and functionality for the host society. The low correlation between both scales makes sense if one takes into consideration the period when the first wave of the ESS was fielded (2002-2003). Future immigration into Western Europe at that time was likely to come predominantly from Eastern Europe, especially given the debates on the accession of new states in 2004. By contrast, much of the most controversial immigration prior to that time was non-white immigration from Turkey, former colonies, North Africa and other regions depending on the destination country.

In all, the pattern unveiled by graph 3.3 might look intuitive. The group of countries more positive towards immigration is composed of basically Northern, Scandinavian or wealthy countries. By contrast, the more negative group *vis-à-vis* immigration on both dimensions is composed of Southern and Eastern European countries. Inferring from here an exclusively economic explanation to this contextual variation, however, would be inaccurate. First, because aggregate units corresponding to nations or states can overshadow important sources of regional variation, and, second, because they are unable to provide clues about individual-level attitude formation and behaviour. In fact, section 3.7 below tries to explain the individual and contextual sources of variation on these two dimensions of attitudes towards immigration and suggests that the role of economic insecurity is more ambiguous than what this bivariate description might suggest.

3.6- Confirming and replicating over time

In the previous section I have observed that immigrants are perceived in Europe on the basis of two main logics. The first corresponds to a dimension of social hierarchy containing items stressing the opinion about how superior or inferior, better or worse will be the societal outcomes of the host country after accepting migrants. The second corresponds to a construct called individual difference, which contains items assessing the appropriateness to accept immigrants depending on the compatibility of their identity background and the utility that they can provide to the host country. The first construct relies upon a logic of hierarchy and focuses on a sociotropic outlook stressing the collective impact of

immigration on the host country, whereas the second relies upon a logic of differentiation and focuses on an outlook stressing individual characteristics of migrants. In their more hostile form, the first dimension considers immigration to be inferior or negative, whereas the second considers migrants to be different or unadaptable. Furthermore, the significant presence of a classic racist item in the second construct allows me to suggest that traditional approaches based upon biological race have historically evolved towards this difference dimension of attitudes towards immigration. By contrast, the underestimation or inherent negativity of immigrants is expressed through more symbolic or covert attitudes which link the impact of immigration with the preservation of the country economy and culture.

The objective in this section is to check for consistency and to rule out the possibility that these results are an artefact of the single cross-sectional dataset that I used. To do so I replicate some of the dimensional analyses using data contained in EB 53 and EB 47.1. As will be shown, both datasets confirm the presence of two similar dimensions in the articulation of attitudes towards migrants in Europe. This strengthens the conclusions obtained above since the analysis is replicated with different items, different samplings and different measurement errors. Moreover, it shows a certain consistency over time because EB 47.1 was conducted in 1997 and the first wave of the ESS was conducted in 2002 and 2003.

As for EB 53 conducted in 2000, I have first selected those items which refer to either a societal impact or to the individual adaptability of migrants in the host society. Since the operationalisation of the vast majority of immigration items in the EBs is dichotomous, I did not employ a factor analytical approach. Instead, I observed whether there was an ordinal pattern of response between them through an exploratory Mokken scale analysis (not confirmatory, in order to avoid theoretical conditioning). As shown in tables 3.6 and 3.7, this exploratory analysis finds two different scales where the negative or positive impact of migrants on the country is contained in the first dimension, and where the adaptability of foreigners to the host society is contained in the second.

Table 3.6- Exploratory Mokken scale analysis for societal hierarchy scale (EB 53)

<i>n = 4109 Scale coefficient H = 0.34 Scale Z = 43.12</i>			
	Mean	Item H	Z
Immigrants discriminated in job market	0.32	0.34	27.41
Do jobs that no one wants to do	0.37	0.36	30.71
Get poorer or better housing	0.50	0.32	28.38
Immigrants help economy	0.64	0.32	26.45
Immigrants pay more	0.77	0.35	23.09

Table 3.7- Exploratory Mokken scale analysis for individual difference scale (EB 53)

n = 4109 Scale coefficient H = 0.40 Scale Z = 212.18			
	Mean	Item H	Z
Accept from different race	0.16	0.57	80.16
Accept from different religion	0.16	0.50	70.37
Accept from different nationality	0.17	0.54	78.98
Immigrants have to give up culture	0.29	0.36	65.90
Diversity is good	0.29	0.43	79.42
Education enriched with migrants	0.31	0.33	61.51
Compatibility way of life	0.33	0.41	79.22
Quantity accepted	0.37	0.42	83.06
Too different to be adapted (migrants)	0.38	0.41	80.89
Enrich culture	0.40	0.35	68.13
Too different to be adapted (ethnic, racial or national minorities)	0.41	0.36	70.93
Diversity strengthens society	0.46	0.37	70.94
Impact o insecurity	0.50	0.40	75.64
Impact on unemployment	0.57	0.39	69.15
Abuse welfare state	0.61	0.40	67.96
Impact on schools	0.63	0.33	54.76
Limit to diversity is good	0.70	0.38	56.64

The items contained in the first scale assess the opinion about whether migrants get better or poorer housing, pay more or less into the social security system, take jobs than no one else wants to do, help or not the country's economic progress, or are discriminated against in the job market. There are a few items, however, that I would have expected to belong to this dimension but that do not reach a satisfactory H coefficient above 0.3. These items are placed by the analysis in the other dimension, and assess whether the quality of education suffers from immigration (two items), whether immigrants abuse social benefits, whether they enrich the country's culture, and whether they generate unemployment. The economic character of the first scale is actually also present in the second, even if the coincidences of economy and culture is more easily observable with the items contained in ESS 2002-2003. The logic behind the construction of this scale, however, is exactly as expected. The items contained in this scale do not refer to the characteristics of migrants themselves and their consequent adaptability to the host society. The items rather stress societal outcomes like jobs, the housing market and the economy. The framing of the items is always how much better or worse (hierarchy) these societal outcomes will be due to immigration.

As for the differentiation scale, the exploratory Mokken analysis with the selected questions from the EB 53 shows that it contains items regarding the following aspects of migrants and their impact: the appropriate presence of people from different nationalities, races and religions, the threat of migrants towards the country's way of life, their impact on insecurity, the numbers of foreigners that should be allowed, agreement with the notion of diversity, the willingness of migrants to give up parts of their culture to be compatible, the impossibility of their adapting because of their difference, and their impact on criminality. Some of the items refer explicitly to the components mentioned earlier to describe the logic of the differentiation dimension of attitudes towards immigration in Europe. The stress on the difference, the adaptability and the compatibility of the characteristics of migrants themselves is quite explicit in some of these items. The terms *different*, *compatibility*, and *adapted* are precisely some of the most common in the wording of the items contained in this scale. The only notable difference from the results obtained in ESS 2002-2003 is that the functionality component (that is, how useful can migrants be on the basis of their education and working skills) is not properly captured in the EB 57. This is not because this sort of items does not have a relationship with this dimension, but simply because they are lacking in this dataset. I was expecting some other variables to belong to this dimension, however, but they did not reach a satisfactory H coefficient. This is the case for whether migrants' culture can generate conflict, whether migrants can become adapted after some

generations, whether migrants are incapable of adapting, and whether the group to which migrants belong matters for their acceptance as full members of the host society. In spite of the lack of homogeneity of these items within the adaptability scale, this construct is validated with a large number of items.

As for the replication with EB 47.1, the exploratory Mokken scale analysis shows a very similar result. This survey conducted in 1997 reflects first the emergence of an attitude towards immigrants based on their negativity for the country (how much they contribute or take), and mainly in reference to a collective or sociotropic framing of the issue (basically in terms of housing, jobs, economy and discrimination in the job market). Second, it also shows a consistent and homogeneous ordinal ranking of items based on the difference and compatibility with individual characteristics of immigrants (basically in terms of way of life, degree of difficulty in adapting, impact on insecurity and criminality, and cultural aspects that can generate a clash). On theoretical grounds, however, I would have expected some items to fall into the hierarchy scale which in reality happen to be contained in the differentiation one. This is the case for items assessing the impact of immigrants on the quality of education, on the abuse of the welfare system, on cultural life, and on unemployment. These are exactly the same results obtained in the EB 53, except for the item assessing the opinion about whether immigrants pay or take more, which does not seem to belong to the hierarchy scale here. On the other hand, there are also some of the selected items which I would have expected to belong to the differentiation scale and which are not placed in either of the two. This is the case for the opinion towards the potential conflict of immigrants' culture, the adaptability of migrants across generations, their lack of adaptability, and the importance of their belonging to a given group in order to be accepted as a full member in the host society. These are, however, just relative mismatches, since my theoretical expectation came just from the visualisation of the item and from my own intuition. As shown in tables 3.8 and 3.9, the overall pattern drawn by the exploratory Mokken analysis clearly confirms the existence of two distinct and internally coherent dimensions of attitudes towards immigration in Europe.

Table 3.8- Exploratory Mokken scale analysis for societal hierarchy scale (EB 47.1)

n = 1904 Scale coefficient H = 0.35 Scale Z = 24.58			
	Mean	Item H	Z
Immigrants discriminated in job market	0.31	0.36	17.10
Do jobs that no one wants to do	0.42	0.38	20.79
Get poorer or better housing	0.53	0.32	17.23
Immigrants help economy	0.70	0.33	14.26

Table 3.9- Exploratory Mokken scale analysis for individual difference scale (EB 47.1)

n = 1904 Scale coefficient H = 0.40 Scale Z = 138.68			
	Mean	Item H	Z
Subjective racism	0.21	0.46	42.93
Immigrants have to give up culture	0.30	0.40	45.31
Diversity is good	0.31	0.45	52.82
Education enriched with migrants	0.35	0.41	51.29
Compatibility way of life	0.38	0.41	52.94
Too different to be adapted (ethnic, racial or national minorities)	0.39	0.39	50.89
Quantity accepted	0.42	0.45	58.75
Enrich culture	0.44	0.41	53.86
Diversity strengthens society	0.47	0.37	49.62
Impact o insecurity	0.49	0.40	53.02
Too different to be adapted (migrants)	0.50	0.39	51.58
Abuse welfare state	0.61	0.42	51.61
Impact on schools	0.61	0.33	40.10
Impact on unemployment	0.62	0.40	49.22
Limit to diversity is good	0.71	0.38	40.64
Impact on criminality	0.72	0.38	39.07
Immigrants pay more	0.83	0.23	18.41

The added value of the EB 47.1 in comparison to EB 57 is that, apart from having the same items with a similar wording (if not identical in the majority of cases), it contains a question

on the subjective individual perception of being racist⁶. In spite of the eventual measurement error that such a direct politically incorrect question might generate nowadays, this item appears to be consistently linked to the individual difference dimension. As in the results obtained in the ESS 2002-2003, this finding lets me suggest again that this dimension is the evolution of classic forms of biological racism which have lost their essentialism and have turned into a logic of differentiation. The hierarchy and the negativity of migrants, however, have not disappeared completely. They are now expressed through more covert attitudes as shown in the societal hierarchy scale. More specifically, migrants can be considered as bad or inferior basically when putting them in relation with the preservation of the country's economy and culture.

3.7- Explaining the scales

In the previous sections I have identified two main constructs organising the way in which European public opinion frames and constructs the immigration issue. The first one is called societal hierarchy, because it perceives immigration as a social phenomenon and frames it in terms of how positive or negative is its impact, or on how superior or inferior are societal outcomes to be expected from immigration. I argued that this is a subtle incorporation of a hierarchy rationale that has guided the construction of strangers throughout history. The second construct is called individual difference, and it mainly focuses on individual characteristics of migrants which make them more or less similar to native populations, and therefore more or less adaptable. In this latter construct, an utilitarian component regarding how useful migrants are for the needs of the host society is also observable.

Once I have identified these dimensions, in this section I aim to explain them through hierarchical linear models using the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales as dependent variables. Both scales have been recoded to range from 0 to 1 and from positive to negative attitudes. It is important to note that these scales result from adding up the items considered to belong to each dimension according to the analyses in section 3.4, and that therefore they are not weighted factor scores. The hierarchical linear models presented in table 3.10 do not model random slopes and specific country differences, even if this kind of method is needed in order to obtain a correct standard error for the country-level covariates.

⁶ The original operationalisation of this item in EB 47.1 is continuous, but I have recoded it into a dummy variable (1=above the median of the scale, 0= the rest) as the rest of items are coded.

The only purpose here is to test classical indicators explaining xenophobia on both scales, and observe whether these indicators have a different impact between the two scales, but not between countries. The thorough analysis of country differences is conducted in chapters 4, 5 and 6, when the validation of the theories tested there requires it.

As regards the explanatory factors of both scales, I will use several existing theories regarding attitudes towards immigration to yield expectations regarding which factors explain the variation in the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales. These theories are: group conflict theory, social identity theory, social contact theory, marginality theory, expectations based on trust and disaffection and media effects theories. All the independent variables used to operationalise these theories are recoded to range from 0 to 1, as are the dependent variables.

The most important finding presented below concerns the differential effect of the feeling towards the personal income. While, as expected, this feeling of individual economic insecurity helps to explain the hostility on the individual difference scale, it is surprisingly unrelated to the societal hierarchy scale. This is an important finding because it confirms the sociotropic vs. individual nature of the two scales. More importantly, the fact that economically vulnerable people are not those holding more hostile attitudes towards immigration in comparison to other groups on the societal hierarchy dimension suggests a symbolic rather than objective construction of the negativity of migrants. It is not economic vulnerability that generates, for instance, a negative perception of the impact of immigration on general economic outcomes for the country. The attribution of negativity or inferiority of immigration *vis-à-vis* the country's economy is thus not an economically oriented opinion, but a symbolic construction of the hierarchical distinction between natives and newcomers. It is important to stress that if it is indeed true that the differentiation and hierarchy logics refer to an individual and a sociotropic way of perceiving migrants respectively, it is likely that there will be a more significant impact of personal feeling of economic vulnerability on the former rather than on the latter.

One of the main approaches to the analyses of the emergence of hostile attitudes towards migrants has developed under the paradigm of ethnic competition theory or realistic group conflict theory. As Coenders, Gijsberts, Hagendoorn and Scheepers explain (2004:6-12), this view presumes that inter-group conflicts are rational. Different ethnic groups have incompatible goals and compete for scarce resources. This tradition of research, of which

Blumer (1958) and Sherif & Sherif (1969) are the main pioneer exponents, has followed a psycho-sociological and a sociological path. The kind of scarce resources which conflict theory talks about are generally material (Clark and Legge 1997), but not only (Lubbers et al. 2002). Moreover, the scholarly debate has focused on whether the competition for scarce resources is relevant because it challenges an individual or a collectivist interest (Quillian 1995; McLaren 2002:554 ; McLaren 2006 :44,49-51,109). Group conflict theory has been tested both at the level of individual attitudes and at an aggregate level (Glaser 2003). In sum, this theory predicts that those individuals living in similar social strata as immigrants are more likely to develop hostile attitudes towards them. The indicators to test this theory are: satisfaction towards the economy (from less to more), difficulty of living within one's personal income (from less to more), being unemployed (dummy variable) and years of education (from less to more).

Realistic group conflict theory has sometimes been understood as an alternative approach to social identity theory, even if other contributions show that they need not be considered as rival explanations but rather as complementary ones (Weldon 2006:333,343). Social identity theory asserts that the psychological processes of identification towards one group in contraposition to another contribute to the development of anti-immigrant attitudes independently of the scarcity of resources existing in a society (Tajfel 1982; McLaren 2002). More specifically, the basic premise of this theory is that humans are fundamentally social animals and thus their group membership has an influence on how they see themselves and others. Cognitive categorization is a fundamental aspect in this process. As the categorization becomes more salient, the effects of ingroup/outgroup bias are likely to be more pronounced. These social groups help to shape people's worldviews and they constitute the basis for human interaction. Moreover, the attachment to a group reduces social uncertainty and increases the positive distinctiveness and self-esteem of its members (Weldon 2006 :332-333; Transue 2007:79-80). In sum, the hypothesis behind this theory is that those individuals who are more closely identified with a given salient cultural identity are more likely to generate a negative image of migrants. The main indicator here is the country level of national pride (from less to more pride)⁷.

Another relevant approach to explain anti-immigrant attitudes is social contact theory. This theory predicts that the higher the contact of a person with migrants in his life, the more

⁷ This variable has been imported from the European Value Study 1999-2000 because indicators on national pride, nationalism or patriotism are lacking in the ESS 2002-2003.

likely he will be to understand cultural differences, to get used to the presence of foreigners and to integrate them in a non-conflictive pattern of social perception (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Hayes and Dowds 2006). There are, however, studies carried out at a more regional or local level which challenge the previous principles and predict exactly the opposite pattern: the higher the proportion of immigrants in a specific geographical region, the more likely the anti-immigrant attitudes are to appear (Baybeck 2006). Social contact is measured here with an indicator assessing the perceived number of people from a minority race or ethnic group living in the area of the respondent (from less to more).

Marginality theory corresponds to a different set of principles. Basically, what this theory predicts is that, *ceteris paribus*, those people belonging to a marginal minority tend to be more tolerant towards foreigners. This is so because the experience of marginality or oppression creates sympathy for other marginalised or oppressed groups like migrants (Hayes and Dowds 2006). This is operationalised through a dummy variable assessing whether respondents feel they belong to a marginal group in society.

Disaffection processes and political trust are other explanations which have been suggested to shed light on attitudes and behaviour against immigrants. In the literature about far right-wing voting, for instance, political disaffection of usually socially outsider individuals has been underlined as one of the main set of attitudes explaining this kind of extreme behaviour (Lubbers et al. 2002). Mayer, for example, denies the broad and absolute effect of right-wing ideology in addressing the vote for the Front National in France, and attributes nearly as much importance as the so-called *niñistes*: a group of voters not characterised by their strong ideological convictions but, in contrast, by a high level of distrust towards politics and the system (Mayer 2002). On the other hand, other authors hypothesise that political trust is an important indicator of support for racial policies. More specifically, trust should be influential when individuals are asked to support policies for which they receive little direct benefit (Hetherington and Globetti 2002:254-255). Briefly, these sets of theoretical contributions predict that the lower an individual's political satisfaction and trust, the higher the probability that he will be negative towards immigrants. Trust and disaffection theories are measured through interpersonal trust (from less to more), and satisfaction towards life and towards democracy (from less to more).

Another aspect to take into account is the role of the media. The literature about media effects is broad and rather inconclusive, but must be taken into account when talking about

the framing of public perceptions. From a conception of very strong and direct effects of media narrations in people's beliefs during the interwar period, the academic consensus shifted to the paradigm of the minimal effects (Kappler 1960; Lazarsfeld 1979). After a long dominance of this paradigm, the apparently middle way that tends to characterise the state of the discipline nowadays is the acceptance of a certain influence of the media in setting the important issues of the agenda (McCombs and Shaw 1972) and in framing them semantically (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). The specific impact of the media in the construction of attitudes towards immigration has already been studied. The influence of media has been proved to be relevant but indirect: it frames the values used by people to construct their attitudes towards migrants, but not the attitudes themselves (Kellstedt 2000:257). In sum, media effects theories hypothesise that the higher the exposure to these messages the higher the likelihood of adopting their particular way of framing the issue of immigration. The media exposure indicators included in the models are three items assessing the total number of weekly hours that the respondent consumes TV, radio and newspapers.

Finally, gender, year born, religiosity (from less to more), belonging or not to a post-communist country and the level of economic country expenditure are also specified as individual and contextual control variables.

Table 3.10- Hierarchical linear models with societal hierarchy and individual difference scales as dependent variables

	<i>SOCIETAL HIERARCHY</i>	<i>INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE</i>
Satisfaction towards Economy	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.01** (0.01)
Feeling towards own personal income	-0.003 (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Unemployed	-0.002 (0.01)	0.001 (0.01)
Years of education	-0.44*** (0.02)	-0.45*** (0.01)
Member of discriminated Group	0.06*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.005)
Contact with migrants	-0.06*** (0.005)	-0.04*** (0.004)
TV exposure	0.03*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.004)
Radio exposure	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.003)
Newspaper exposure	-0.04*** (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)
Interpersonal trust	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.14*** (0.01)
Satisfaction towards life	0.003 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Satisfaction towards democracy	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
Religiosity	-0.004 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.005)
Female	0.02*** (0.003)	-0.02*** (0.002)
Year born	0.04*** (0.01)	-0.25*** (0.01)
Country national pride	0.07* (0.04)	-0.06 (0.06)
Post-communist country	0.08*** (0.03)	0.07 (0.05)
Country expenditure	-0.06 (0.06)	0.08 (0.1)
Intercept	0.73*** (0.03)	0.74*** (0.04)
Variance level 1	0.09*** (0.001)	0.05*** (0.0003)
Variance level 2	0.002** (0.001)	0.01*** (0.002)
Log Likelihood	-7993.1627	1705.7981
AIC	16028.33	-3369.596
BIC	16207.08	-3190.842
N	36,757 individuals, 22 countries	36,757 individuals, 22 countries

* $p < 0.1$ ** $p \leq 0.05$ *** $p \leq 0.01$

Standard errors between brackets

Dependent and independent variables recoded from 0 to 1

Source: ESS 2002-2003

As shown in table 3.10, the goodness of fit of the models is more satisfactory when predicting the individual differentiation scale than when explaining the societal hierarchy dimension. The AIC and BIC indicators are lower in the first case. This means that the set of indicators used to explain the articulation of attitudes towards immigration in previous literature work better when predicting a logic based on differentiation of immigrants than on hierarchy and negativity. On the other hand, there are significant differences in the performance of these indicators in both cases. More specifically, these differences concern the personal feeling towards the respondent's own income, exposure to newspapers, satisfaction towards life, the level of national pride, and the socio-demographic variables included here such as sex, age and religiosity.

The most fundamental difference affects the feeling towards the respondent's own income, which is a proxy for individual economic vulnerability. This indicator has a statistically significant impact in the expected direction on the individual difference scale (the more economic difficulties, the more likely to be hostile towards immigrants), but it has no effect on the societal hierarchy scale. As for the satisfaction towards economy in general, the indicator works in both models and in the expected direction. What the differences concerning these two latter indicators seem to suggest is a difference between the sociotropic and individualistic ways of perceiving economic vulnerability in explaining attitudes towards immigration. The individually based perception of insecurity does have a positive and significant effect on the differentiation scale (0.03), but it has a negative and insignificant impact on the hierarchy scale (-0.003). This finding reinforces the idea that considering the immigrant as negative or dangerous for the country is just a symbolic justification and does not derive from a real personal fear or individual position of vulnerability. It also suggests again that this scale is not really capturing a pure material threat. Not only, as shown above, there are items measuring cultural threat in this scale, but perceived personal material insecurity is not related to this construct (Gibson 2002:117,143).

As for social identity theory, the imported indicator of country national pride from the European Value Study does not get an associated probability value below 0.05 in predicting either of the two scales. This can be due in part to the fact that the measure is aggregated to the country level and that it is imported from a different dataset. If the possibility that the measurement error is higher in this indicator is taken into account and if I lower the threshold to a 90% of confidence (instead of the usually required 95%), this variable has the

expected effect on the societal hierarchy (0.07) scale but has no significant effect on the individual differentiation scale. National pride and positive feelings towards the in-group are thus associated with the consideration of societal outcomes due to immigration as negative or inferior, but not with the consideration of migrants as just incompatible.

The weekly exposure to newspapers and the level of life satisfaction also have different effects on both scales. Reading newspapers decreases the hostility towards migrants on the societal hierarchy scale (-0.04), but it increases it on the individual difference scale (0.01). On the other hand, satisfaction towards life has no effect on the societal hierarchy scale but has a positive effect on the individual difference scale (0.02).

Finally, the other significant differences involve, once again, some variables which have shown contradictory results in previous literature. As suggested above, these differences may not be due to a non-robust performance of the independent variables but to a mis-specification of the dependent variable. In that case, gender has a significant but contrary effect on the two scales. Women tend to be more negative against immigrants on the societal hierarchy dimension (0.02) but more positive on the individual differentiation dimension (-0.02). On the other hand, age has opposite effects as well: the younger, the more likely to be positive towards immigrants on the individual difference scale (-0.25) and the more likely to be negative towards immigrants on the societal hierarchy scale (0.04). Finally, the level of religiosity (in terms of church attendance) has a positive significant relationship with the individual differentiation scale (0.05) but not with the societal hierarchy one.

As for the other theories, social contact is equally validated and marginality theory is equally rejected in both scales. This means that, on average, low contact with migrants in the living area of the respondent and the fact of belonging to a marginal group in society increase the likelihood of being hostile against migrants. Indicators on media exposure and trust and dissatisfaction have a similar performance across both models, except for small differences in the already mentioned indicators measuring consumption of newspapers and satisfaction towards life.

3.8- Summary

Before analysing the electoral impact of an issue, it is necessary to know how this issue is constructed in public opinion. The analysis of the different dimensions of attitudes towards immigration in Europe is justified by the need for properly specified models in subsequent chapters. Moreover, the assessment of the multidimensionality of the immigration issue helps to narrow down the broad disparity of measures of attitudes towards immigration existing in the specialised literature, and to explain some previous contradictory findings that turn out to be due to this disparity of operationalisations. Finally, the dimensional analysis and the pursuit of reliable latent indicators capturing the immigration issue in public opinion is also needed to avoid the measurement error that might arise from the use of a single indicator.

After disregarding items with low communality levels using an extensive battery of items in ESS 2002-2003 (N=42,358 in 22 countries), both factor and Mokken scale analyses show two main latent and reliable constructs organising attitudes towards migrants in Europe. The results have been confirmed with EBs 53 and 47.1. These constructs respectively correspond to a societal hierarchy and to an individual differentiation logic. Even if interpreting outputs from dimensional analyses is not an exact science, these findings confirm that the two axes proposed in hypotheses 1 and 2 of the theoretical chapter are indeed reliable (even if probably not exclusive) ways to look at the construction and framing of the immigration issue nowadays. The first axis distinguishes between a sociotropic and an individualistic way to perceive immigration. Immigration can be thus framed as a phenomenon with collective consequences for the country (both in economic and cultural terms), and as a set of individual characteristics of migrants with potential consequences for interactions with them. The second conceptual axis focuses on hierarchy vs. differentiation. The societal outlook to immigration frames the issue on how good or bad, positive or negative, immigration will be for the host country. This is why I consider this kind of attitude to be linked to a historical logic of underestimation and of establishing hierarchies between the self and the other. The individual outlook, by contrast, focuses on how similar, compatible, easy to integrate, and even useful migrants are. These immigration characteristics are used to establish perceived thresholds of entrance, or requirements to allow immigrants into the host country. Therefore, the hostile pole in the first construct perceives migrants as dangerous, negative or inferior, whereas the hostile pole in the second construct perceives migrants as just different or incompatible.

The conceptual distinction between material and cultural threat used in previous literature proves to be less useful than the societal vs. individual and the hierarchy vs. difference rationales proposed here. The first construct explicitly mixes up economic and cultural items. On the other hand, even if it contains an obvious identity component, the second construct is explicitly composed of an utilitarian component which frames migrants as useful or not (work skills, educational background, etc.) beyond a mere perception of cultural threat. This utilitarian component driving inter-group perceptions today is impressionistically captured by the classical Latin quote “*Do ut des*” at the start of this chapter- I give you for you to give me.

Finally, this chapter has stressed the importance of justifying and properly specifying the measure of attitudes towards immigration when analysing its causes. When properly specifying these two different dependent variables, I have shown that some key variables operationalising established theories of attitudes towards immigration can have contradictory effects. These contradictions have been detected in previous literature, but not attributed to the specification of the dependent variable. One of the most crucial differences is the lack of impact of perceived individual economic insecurity on the societal hierarchy scale. This finding stresses its sociotropic nature, the lack of a pure material character of this construct, and suggests that the historical logic of inferiority or negativity towards the foreigner is still present but articulated through a symbolic and covert semantic framing.

Once the core dimensions of attitudes towards immigration have been detected, it is time to advance towards the understanding of their possible electoral impact. Which of these dimensions, societal hierarchy or individual difference, is more likely to affect electoral outcomes in contemporary European democracies? Is it the evolution of classic racist ideas based on underestimation what matters politically, or rather utilitarian adaptations of the ideas of compatibility and adaptability of individual migrants in host societies? The next chapter goes a step further in this puzzle by assessing which of these dimensions is properly captured by the left-right axis of individual political predispositions governing general electoral competition and semantics. Subsequently, chapter 5 will directly specify these two dimensions according to different voting behaviour models in order to understand the impact of immigration on mainstream electoral dynamics.

4. THE IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINT OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION¹

“Every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given issue, and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it”

John Zaller (1992: 6)

"Ni droite, ni gauche ... Français"

[Neither right, nor left... French]

Front National slogan for the 1995 French Presidential election campaign

4.1- When voters need something else

In the previous chapter I have identified two basic ways to look at immigration in the public opinion of 22 European political systems. The first is called societal hierarchy and is based on a sociotropic perception of immigration as a phenomenon with consequences on the host country. This construct is based on a gain vs. loss logic and stresses how negative or inferior the general economic and cultural outcomes can be due to the acceptance of immigration. The second is called individual difference and is focused on the thresholds imposed to the entrance of immigration on the basis of immigrants' characteristics. More specifically, this individualistic construct focuses on how adaptable, functional and easy to integrate are contemporary migrants in host societies. In their most hostile form, the first construct frames immigration as inherently bad or negative for the country, while the second construct frames immigrants as just different. Both constructs, however, capture a wide range of opinions from the most positive to the most hostile across individuals and political systems. The two constructs are significantly but weakly correlated, which suggests that they are quite autonomous from each other and that therefore they can have different political consequences.

The next step in order to assess the eventual impact of attitudes towards immigration on mainstream (and not only radical) voting behaviour is to assess the degree to which these

¹ Much of the material of this chapter is forthcoming in 2011 as a research article in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*

attitudes are connected to general political predispositions governing electoral behaviour and party strategies. The ideological constraint hypothesis developed in chapter 2 expects that the dimensions of attitudes towards immigration with a more relevant and observable impact in mainstream electoral dynamics² are those which are properly framed within broader ideological categories organising different issue opinions and putting them in relation to what it is offered in the supply-side of the political spectrum. The most well-known and comparable ideological predisposition structuring party competition across Europe is the left-right axis. The validation of the ideological constraint hypothesis will be conducted in this chapter and in chapter 5, where the specific constraint mechanism and the stronger electoral impact of properly constrained dimensions are shown.

There is likely to be a potentially stronger impact of a given issue on the overall party competition dynamic when the attitudes towards that issue can be constrained by and identified with already established axes of electoral competition. Otherwise, the attitude towards the new issue can cross-cut the previous electoral dynamic and therefore can generate a new space of competition more likely to be monopolised by a new (and perhaps smaller and more radical) alternative rather than by the mainstream side of the political spectrum. As implied by the slogan used in the 1995 French Presidential election campaign by one of the most paradigmatic cases of radical right parties, the Front National, radical parties may benefit from cross-cutting or minimising the effect of settled and established axis structuring mainstream political competition (“*Ni droite, ni gauche... Français*”). By contrast, the more embedded an issue attitude within such an established ideological axis, the more likely it is to have an impact on already established parties. The new twist in this argument when applied to the immigration issue is that I expect citizens to make a stronger use of ideological categories to constrain their attitudes towards immigration when they have fewer reasons to perceive migrants as a threat. The extension of the immigration issue from a radical to a mainstream dynamic of competition has in my view to be linked to the non-experience of direct competition or threat *vis-à-vis* migrants. It is precisely in this kind of circumstances when I expect people to rely more on previously existing ideological cues in order to make sense of what the issue implies for them, and to be able to link it to a mainstream electoral structure and language.

² As defined in chapter 1 and 2, by electoral dynamic I mean a configuration of issue-related opinions both among voters and parties, that in interaction with exogenous systemic features, gives rise to a particular pattern of electoral competition affecting the overall political spectrum.

4.2- Expectations

As already noted, the development of hostile attitudes towards immigration in Europe has attracted much scholarly attention in sociology, social psychology and political science over recent decades (Browning et al. 1984; Jackson et al. 1994; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Kellstedt 2000; Henry and Sears 2002; Lubbers et al. 2002; McLaren 2002; Kauffman 2003a; Hayes and Dowds 2006; McLaren 2006; Paxton and Mughan 2006; Kehrberg 2007; Coenders and Scheepers 2008; Semyonov et al. 2008; Masso 2009). One of the most empirically validated propositions derives from ethnic competition theory, which predicts that economic vulnerability and competition for scarce material resources increase fear and resentment against immigrants (Bergesen and Herman 1998; Oliver and Wong 2003; Kauffman 2003b; Coenders 2004). The attention given to economic and sociological factors, however, has left little room for the systematic and comparative study of how ideological structures and cognitive heuristics are used to constrain attitudes towards immigration. This gap is surprising since the analysis of the relationship at the individual level between broad ideological schema and specific issue opinions has proved to be fundamental for the understanding of attitude formation and the political relevance of issues (Nie et al. 1976; Bennet and Bennet 1990; Sniderman et al. 1991; Sniderman 1993).

The notion of *minimalism* in public opinion research refers to the tendency of individuals to ignore most political issues and to have inconsistent opinions about them (Sniderman et al. 1991:15). In spite of this pessimistic portrait of ignorant citizens in advanced democracies, however, people prove to be able to find their way around politics and to make their choices in a manner that approximates rationality. The mediating factor resolving this puzzle between political ignorance and rational behaviour is the use of cognitive heuristics. Citizens frequently can compensate for their limited information about politics by taking advantage of judgemental shortcuts. These shortcuts organise the limited information available to citizens and simplify political choices (Sniderman et al. 1991:18-20).

Political ideological predispositions are shortcuts organising and constraining or framing opinions towards quite disparate issues about which citizens have very little knowledge and information. Political predispositions can be defined as a stable set of psychological orientations which serve to frame individuals' opinions towards political issues through a cognitive and a symbolic component. The cognitive component allows people to decode, make sense of, and maximise the utility of information they receive in a given circumstance

of choice (Nie et al. 1976:117,123-130; Klingemann 1979). The symbolic component implies an affective attachment to values inherited via socialisation processes (Conover and Feldman 1981; Sniderman 1986; Sniderman et al. 1991). The main comparable indicator of people's political ideological predispositions across Europe since the first National Assembly after the French Revolution is their self-placement along the left-right scale. The validity, reliability and therefore comparability of left-right placements are widely assumed in political behaviour research, either from a sociological (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Bartolini and Mair 1990), psycho-sociological (see Medina Lindo 2004) or rational perspective (Downs 1957).

In spite of some doubts about the direction of causality in specific circumstances (Duff 2007), ideological labels are generally understood to be a prior background which helps to reduce complexity and structure opinions about specific political issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Sears 1993; Van der Eijk 1999; Van der Eijk et al. 2005:182; Dalton 2006:100). Converse's seminal article popularized the concept of belief system and theorised for the first time this framing function of ideology. Converse defined a belief system as "a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence" (Converse 1964:207). This cognitive function of ideology allows individuals to organise their issue opinions and be able to calculate the cost and the benefit of their political actions. Ideology is then defined "as a more general left-right scheme capable of organising a wide range of fairly disparate concerns, where the concerns being organized include various value or issue dimensions or both" (Zaller 1992:26).

As pointed out by Sniderman (1993:222), the notion of *issue framing* is related to that of *issue constraint*. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualisation of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Hobolt 2009:112). Issue constraint refers to the consistent organisation of issue opinions within a single ideological axis, which usually corresponds to the liberal/conservative in the American context and to the left-right axis in Europe (Nie et al. 1976:123-130). I have used the term *framing* more explicitly in chapter 3, when analysing how the different dimensions of attitudes towards immigration are constructed in public opinion and how different attributes of the issue are put together in people's minds. By contrast, I more explicitly use the term *constraint* in the current chapter, where I analyse the correlation between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration. The use of the notions framing and

constraint, however, is correct in the current chapter. As saw in chapter 3, the literature has identified two ways in which frames operate: “the importance change model”, and “the content change model”. According to the former, frames operate by making certain beliefs more relevant and applicable to the issue at stake. According to the latter, frames introduce new arguments and information that the individual had not previously thought about (Hobolt 2009:112). The constraining effect of left-right on attitudes towards immigration is perfectly compatible with the “importance change model” in framing theories. By considering a given immigration attitude as leftist or rightist, left-right categories make specific issue dimensions more coherent, relevant and therefore usable in political terms. This is also why a properly constrained attitude will be considered as salient in the universe of issue opinions and ideological beliefs of the voter when analysing voting behaviour in chapter 5.

Apart from the slippery conceptual distinction between framing and constraining effects, it is important to understand who is likely to make use of a given heuristic and who another (Sniderman et al. 1991:20). There is a general theoretical and empirical consensus in accepting that highly educated people, in the sense of people with more cognitive resources, are those more likely to constrain issue attitudes within a single ideological dimension. Highly educated people are considered more capable of managing abstract ideological categories and of seeking order in their mental categorisation of the political world (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). My argument goes beyond this cognitive argument and this already acknowledged heterogeneity due to educational attainment. In this chapter I suggest that, apart from a conditional effect of left-right shaping attitudes towards immigration due to differences in education, there is a conditional effect due to differences in socio-economic status.

As developed in more detail in equations 3 and 4 and hypotheses H3a, H3b and H3c in chapter 2, I expect the relationship between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration to be stronger when the level of socio-economic vulnerability is weaker. More specifically, I expect on average right-wing self-placements to be positively and significantly related to attitudes towards immigration (H3a), but especially when the individual (H3b) and the country (H3c) levels of socio-economic vulnerability are low. Relying upon Zaller’s concept of political predispositions and his Receive-Accept-Sample model (1992), I hypothesise that a low socio-economic status must necessarily activate the attention, the concern and the exposure to flows of information regarding the immigration

issue. By contrast, those socio-economic strata with a sufficiently secure position are less likely to be concerned about immigrants and therefore need further cognitive cues like ideological labels in order to organise their opinions about immigration. Socio-economic vulnerability is thus taken here as a proxy for a direct (perceived) experience of competition with migrants and as a direct, non-ideological and probably negative articulation of hostility towards migrants. As explained in more detail in section 2.5.1 above, socio-economic vulnerability as a catalyst of hostile attitudes and behaviour against migrants is one of the most widespread findings in the radical right literature and in the literature on attitudes towards immigration. By contrast, the effect of other intuitive factors such as the contact with migrants in a given geographical area are far more controversial and contradictory in past research, and therefore subject to more complex sources of heterogeneity not properly accounted for yet.

4.3- Data and method

The analytical strategy in this chapter will depart from the models used in the previous chapter when analysing the explanatory factors of the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales. The hypothesised effect of ideological predispositions in terms of left-right will be included in these models and therefore it will be possible to test whether it has a constraining effect on the immigration issue beyond the predictions of the theories presented in chapter 3. Even if the theory behind this chapter builds upon previous works whose orientation mainly presupposes that left-right predispositions shape specific issue opinions and not the other way around, this specific causal direction is not at the core of the validation of the propositions tested here. The *degree* of issue constraint at stake here refers to the relationship between left-right categories and attitudes towards immigration, but it does not refer to the process through which this issue constraint takes place (whether left-right constrains issues or whether issues constrain left-right). The main propositions of this chapter are that, once this process of issue constraint has taken place following whichever direction of causality, more embedded attitudes will have a stronger electoral impact and will be more visible among non-socio-economically deprived individuals and contexts.

The database used here is thus, again, the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) conducted in 2002-2003 (N=42,358 and 22 countries). Since the objective is to test the condition hypothesised effect of left-right on the two scales identified in the previous

chapter, it is necessary to rely on the same dataset for the sake of comparability. The ESS 2002-2003 is the only dataset containing a large number of items for a high number of political systems which allow me to construct the two immigration attitude scales identified earlier.

The methods used here are 2-level hierarchical linear models. The use of a multilevel approach instead of a conventional OLS model allows me to overcome the problems derived from ecological (Robinson 1950; Seligson 2002) and individual fallacies (Lijphart 1980:45); to model cross-level interactions; and to avoid the biases derived from a likely truncation of the variance across contexts³ and an incorrect calculation of standard errors at the contextual level (Snijders and Bosker 1999; Steenbergen and Jones 2002; Luke 2004). This chapter uses for the first time in this study the full methodological power of hierarchical equations in terms of estimation of random slopes and cross-level interactions, so this is why it is worth detailing the formalisation of the models implemented below.

More specifically, the model at level 1 can be expressed as:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}X_{ij} + r_{ij} \quad (8)$$

where Y_{ij} is the observed attitude towards immigration for individual i nested in country j , β_{0j} corresponds to the intercept of this regression in a given country, β_{1j} to the slope of left-right axis in this particular country, X_{ij} to the self-perceived position of a given individual in this context on the left-right axis, and r_{ij} to the residual. When adding a second level of analysis, it is possible to predict the intercept and the slope of this model using country variables. First, the random intercept (which varies across contextual units) is denoted:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}Z_j + u_{0j} \quad (9)$$

³ That is, to apparently find contextual effects that in reality are accounted for differences in population characteristics across the countries studied.

where γ_{00} is the mean attitude towards immigration across countries, γ_{01} is the strength of the hypothesized contextual variables such as the country level of unemployment, Z_j is the value of each country in this variable, and U_{0j} is the unique country j effect holding Z_j constant. The same logic can be applied to the prediction of the random slope:

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}Z_j + u_{1j} \quad (10)$$

where γ_{10} is the average left-right slopes in all countries, γ_{11} is the weight of a contextual variable Z_j , and U_{1j} is the unique effect of country j on the left-right slope conditioning on Z_j . The final model to be estimated derives from the integration of these equations into a mixed-effects model as follows:

$$Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}X_{ij} + \gamma_{01}Z_j + \gamma_{11}X_{ij}Z_j + u_{0j} + u_{1j}X_{ij} + r_{ij} \quad (11)$$

where X , Z , r , and u are the same as above, XZ is the cross-level interaction between left-right self-placements and a given contextual variable Z , and uX is the country specific effect of left-right. One of the main advantages of this type of modelling is its ability to test the significance of interactions between terms at the same level (either individual or contextual) and cross-level interactions. Following Brambor, Clark and Golder, I include the interaction and its constitutive terms in order to avoid biased calculation of intercepts in regression lines assessing the impact of the independent variable in every conditional circumstance (Brambor et al. 2006:67,73). Moreover, I also report the marginal effect of the interaction, which takes into account the overall effect of both the constitutive and the conditional terms introduced. Following Brambor et. al., for the individual level interactions I calculate this marginal effect by adding the coefficient of the first constitutive term to the product of the coefficient of the interaction and the value of the second constitutive term:

$$effect = \beta_1 + \beta_3 X_2 \quad (12)$$

where β_1 is the coefficient of the first main constitute term, β_3 is the coefficient of the interaction, and X_2 is the value of the second main constitutive term.

As for the cross-level interactions, I plot the slope of left-right self-placements predicting attitudes towards immigration in each country against the contextual variable of interest. This strategy allows me to visualise more clearly in which contexts left-right matters more, in which direction, and depending on which contextual characteristic. In formal terms, the Bayesian estimate of the slopes is expressed:

$$\beta_{1j}^{EB} = \lambda_j \beta_{1j}^{OLS} + (1 - \lambda_j) \gamma_{00} \quad (13)$$

where β_{1j}^{EB} is the Bayesian slope of a given country j , β_{1j}^{OLS} is the OLS slope of a given country j , γ_{00} is the mean attitude towards immigration across countries, and λ is the reliability in group j (Luke 2004:43-44). This reliability component is expressed as:

$$\lambda_j = \frac{\sigma_{u0}^2}{(\sigma_{u0}^2 + \sigma_r^2 / n_j)} \quad (14)$$

where σ_{u0}^2 is the variance of the slope parameter across countries, σ_r^2 is the variance of the errors, and n is the number of level 1 units in group j .

The two dependent variables to be used here correspond to the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales identified in the previous chapter. As for the main independent variables, the most relevant item is the individual self-placement on an 11-point scale from the most leftist (value 0) to the most rightist position (value 10). H3a (*right-wing self-placements are significantly related to hostile attitudes towards immigration*) will be assessed just by evaluating the average effect of left-right self-placements on the two dependent variables without modelling any kind of interaction.

The test of H3b (*the relationship between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration is weaker when individual socio-economic vulnerability is high*) will be conducted through the interaction between left-right and a socio-economic indicator. This indicator is the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI) (Ganzeboom et al. 1992). This index is derived from the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) and its main advantage is that it maximises the role of occupation as an intervening variable between education and income. The synthesis between occupation, education and income in this scale perfectly captures the general socio-

economic vulnerability of respondents and the competition for scarce material resources that is fundamental for the argument presented and tested here. A stress on occupation is particularly appropriate for a research on attitudes towards immigration, since the competition for jobs is one of the most essential aspects of the competitive nature of the relationship between immigrants and natives with low socio-economic statuses. According to the proponents of ISEI, the validity of this index is superior to other internationally accepted occupational prestige scales and class categorisations (Ganzeboom et al. 1992 :2,5-6,13). More specifically, one of the main advantages of ISEI is its continuous nature. This allows it to capture some variability between occupations that is not properly measured with traditional and broader categorical schemes. Moreover, a continuous scale is more appropriate for multivariate analysis (especially as an interaction) thanks to its direct interpretability through a single parameter.

As stated above, a consensual finding in the issue constrain literature is the heterogeneity in the use of cognitive heuristics across educational levels. The argument is that cognitively sophisticated people are able to use broad and abstract ideological categories and to coherently organise their universe of issue opinions. The argument to be tested in this chapter goes beyond this acknowledged finding, and suggests that the heterogeneity in the use of left-right categories shaping attitudes towards immigration also depends on socio-economic status. It is not clear to what extent a variable measuring educational attainment is clearly capturing a socio-economic and/or a cognitive dimension. This is why H3b will be basically tested through the interaction between left-right and the ISEI index, while controlling for the conditioning effect between left-right and education. This means that both interactions (left-right*ISEI and left-right*education) will be included in the models at the same time. The former interaction will exclusively assess the interrelation between the use of ideological categories and socio-economic vulnerability. The latter will capture at least the interrelation between the use of ideology and cognitive ability. It is important to note that the correlation between ISEI and educational attainment in ESS 2002-2003 is 0.5, which means that they are obviously related but that there is still half of the variance of the ISEI index not captured by education. The need to distinguish between the two indicators and between a cognitive and a socio-economic argument is thus at the core of the analytical strategy presented here.

The interaction between left-right and ISEI will thus test H3b. The marginal effect of left-right in constraining attitudes towards immigration is supposed to be stronger when the

socio-economic vulnerability of respondents is low. As for H3c (*the relationship between left-right wing self-placements and attitudes towards immigration is weaker when the socio-economic conditions in a country are worse*), it will be tested through the interaction between left-right and country GDP, and between left-right and country level of unemployment. Both indicators have been imported from the World Development Indicators database of the World Bank. Again, the marginal effect of left-right is supposed to be stronger in constraining attitudes towards immigration when the country economic conditions are worse, namely when GDP is lower and when unemployment is higher.

As for the control variables, I include exactly those used in section 3.7. These variables constitute a wide range of indicators that have been proved to be relevant in previous research (Tajfel 1982; Browning et al. 1984; Jackson et al. 1994; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Kellstedt 2000; Lubbers et al. 2002; Mayer 2002; McLaren 2002; Kauffman 2003a; Hayes and Dowds 2006; Kehrberg 2007). The individual-level indicators are: satisfaction towards the personal income and collective economic situation; being unemployed; personal perception of interaction with migrants; personal perception of belonging to a marginalised group; level of interpersonal trust; satisfaction with life and with democracy; level of exposure to the media; gender; age; and religiosity. Apart from those, I also include a dummy assessing whether the respondent is a manual worker or not (equivalent to the categories 8 and 9 of the Erikson-Golthorpe social class categorisation) (Erikson et al. 1979; Chan and Goldthorpe 2007). I include a manual worker variable to properly control for social class and to check whether the hypothesised effect of socio-economic status and left-right is significant once this control is in place.

The contextual-level control indicators are social expenditure, aggregate level of national pride⁴, and a dummy variable for postcommunist countries. The different cultural heritage and the enormous social and economic shifts underway across the former communist world require a distinction between East and West Europe in mass attitudes research (Tucker et al. 2002:569). Therefore, I control for the possible differential use of the labels left-right in historical and cultural terms by introducing an interaction between left-right and postcommunist country. I also include the change in unemployment over the previous year, to check whether the hypothesised interaction between left-right and country unemployment resists the dynamic change of unemployment as such. All the contextual economic

⁴ As explained in the previous chapter, the ESS does not contain any measure of nationalist attitudes. This indicator has been imported from the 1999-2004 World Values Survey wave and is treated here as a country level variable.

indicators included in the analyses have been imported from the World Development Indicators of the World Bank.

4.4- Left-right predispositions and immigration across individuals and contexts

Before implementing the multivariate hierarchical linear models suggested above, table 4.1 shows the bivariate correlations between left-right self-placements and the two dimensions of attitudes towards immigration analysed here. With almost no exception, the analysis with the pooled European sample and the country by country analyses show that the individual difference scale is more strongly correlated (about three times on average) with left-right than the societal hierarchy scale. This first finding suggests that conceptions based on difference, compatibility and functionality of immigration (rather than on the inherent negativity or inferiority of societal outcomes due to immigration) have a stronger potential to be connected with electoral semantics and, eventually, electoral behaviour. The correlations are low, implying that in spite of significant and non-negligible differences in the relationships between the left-right axis and attitudes towards immigration across many European systems, attitudes towards immigration are not a mirror image of broader ideological categories. The significant correlations between left-right and attitudes towards immigration strengthens the assumption of a relatively exogenous or, at least, autonomous articulation of a specific issue attitude beyond broader ideological schemata. As formalised in equation 5 in chapter 2 above, if the correlation between left-right and an issue opinion was too high, the independent or exogenous electoral impact of that opinion under a spatial proximity perspective would be virtually 0.

Even if the relationship between left-right and the individual difference dimension is stronger than with conceptions of migration based on social negativity and hierarchy, the latter are still significant in a number of countries. The countries where both dimensions are significantly correlated with left-right self-placements are: Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia. On the other hand, the countries where only the correlation with the individual difference dimension is significant are: Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Ireland and Luxembourg. The exceptional cases where only the correlation with the

societal hierarchy dimension is significant are Hungary and Israel⁵, but it is worth remembering that precisely these two countries and Portugal were the only ones presenting a non-satisfactory level of reliability on the individual hierarchy scale in the previous chapter. Finally, only in Poland does neither of the two dimensions prove to be significantly embedded in the left-right axis.

Overall, taking into account the magnitude of the correlation between left-right and the individual difference scale, as well as the significance of the correlations with both scales, the embedding or constraint of attitudes towards immigration within the left-right schema seems to be stronger in Western European countries, especially those with a long immigration tradition. Some of these countries are well-known for having relevant radical right parties in their political spectrum (France, Austria or the Netherlands), but some others are not (United Kingdom or Germany). Regardless of the presence or not of a radical party, it is reasonable to think that precisely those countries with a stronger immigration tradition are those where the issue is more embedded in broad and stable ideological axes structuring political competition, and therefore those with a stronger potential for the impact of the issue on the overall political spectrum (and not only on an extreme of it).

⁵ It is important to note that all the results presented below in this chapter hold even if Israel is excluded from the analysis. It could be argued that it is better to drop Israel from the analysis since the meaning of immigration in this country differs from what is usually implied in Europe. However, the models below and graphs 4.3 to 4.6 show that it does not follow a particularly distinct pattern. Therefore, I have decided to include the country in the analyses in order to maximise variance and number of cases. It is perfectly reasonable to think that the content of the notion *immigration* can be different in Israel. But there is also empirical evidence that the heterogeneous use of ideological cues in framing attitudes towards “the other” (the actual question of this chapter) is not necessarily different in that country.

Table 4.1- Bivariate correlations between left-right self-placements and societal hierarchy and individual difference scales

	<i>Societal hierarchy</i>	<i>Individual difference</i>
Pooled European sample	0.06*	0.17*
Austria	0.11*	0.31*
Belgium	0.03	0.17*
Switzerland	0.17*	0.27*
Czech Republic	-0.04	-0.07*
Germany	0.15*	0.29*
Denmark	0.23*	0.32*
Spain	0.11*	0.23*
Finland	-0.01	0.15*
France	0.16*	0.28*
United Kingdom	0.08*	0.2*
Greece	0.02	0.18*
Hungary	-0.06*	0.03
Ireland	0.01	0.11*
Israel	-0.07*	-0.01
Italy	0.08*	0.22*
Luxembourg	0.01	0.15*
Netherlands	0.11*	0.28*
Norway	0.14*	0.23*
Poland	-0.01	0.03
Portugal	0.09*	0.11*
Sweden	0.09*	0.14*
Slovenia	0.09*	0.14*

Source: ESS 2002-2003

* significance at $p \leq 0.05$

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show the different hierarchical linear models conducted in order to assess the relationship between left-right self-placements and the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales respectively. All the independent and dependent variables in these tables are coded from 0 to 1, and the magnitudes of their coefficients are thus comparable in the sense that they index the extent of change in the dependent variable resulting from a change in the independent variable concerned from its minimum value actually found in the data to its maximum value. The first model in both tables reports the null model with no predictors in it, just in order to assess the variance of the intercepts (or

of the dependent variable between countries). The second model includes the left-right variable together with all the individual-level controls. The objective here is to test H3a and to observe the unconditional impact of left-right beyond other relevant predictors. The third model tests H3b by adding the interaction left-right*occupational status (ISEI index) and controlling for the interaction left-right*years of education. Finally, the fourth model adds the contextual variables and tests H3c with the cross-level interactions left-right*GDP and left-right*country level of unemployment.

In terms of model fit, both the AIC and BIC indexes⁶ tend to decrease across the four model specifications presented in tables 4.2 and 4.3. This means that the models tend to fit the data better when the individual-level variables, contextual-level variables and hypothesised interactions are included. The AIC decreases across the four model specifications presented here to explain both scales. The BIC decreases up until the third model (where the individual-level interactions are included), and remains almost the same in the fourth model. More specifically, the model explaining the individual difference scale seems to have a better fit than the one explaining the societal hierarchy scale, since the reduction of the AIC and BIC indexes across the null and the last model is much stronger. On the other hand, still in terms of goodness of fit, the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) decreases from 0.14 in the null model to 0.11 in the last model explaining the individual difference scale, and from 0.05 in the first model to a 0.02 in the last model explaining the societal hierarchy scale. The ICC can be read as the amount of variance at the upper level that remains to be explained, so it can be read as a goodness of fit measure- the lower the variance to be explained across model specifications, the more accurate the explanations tested.

⁶ The Akaike's information criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) are two measures of the goodness of fit of an estimated statistical model. The lower their value, the higher the goodness of fit of the model. They are not strictly a test of the model in the sense of hypothesis testing, but they rather compare model specifications and the trade-off between bias and variance in each of them.

Table 4.2- Hierarchical linear models explaining the societal hierarchy scale

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
Left-right		0.09*** (0.01)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)
Satisfaction towards economy		-0.05***(0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Difficulty with income		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Unemployed		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Years of education		-0.42***(0.02)	-0.54 (0.05)	-0.41 (0.02)
Member of discriminated group		0.06***(0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Interaction with migrants		-0.05***(0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
TV total exposure		0.02***(0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Radio total exposure		0.01** (0.005)	0.01** (0.005)	0.01** (0.005)
Newspaper total exposure		-0.04***(0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Interpersonal trust		-0.1***(0.01)	-0.1*** (0.01)	-.1*** (0.01)
Satisfaction with life		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.004 (0.01)
Satisfaction with democracy		-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)
Religiosity		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Gender		0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.04)
Year born		0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.002)
Manual worker		-0.005 (0.005)	-0.01 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)
ISEI		-0.07 (0.01)	-0.14*** (0.03)	-0.07*** (0.01)
Left-right*ISEI			0.12** (0.05)	
Left-right*years of education			0.26** (0.1)	
Postcommunist				0.09* (0.04)
GDP				-0.17* (0.08)
Social expenditure				-0.06 (0.07)
Country unemployment				-0.02 (0.06)
Nationalism				0.08* (0.04)
Change				-0.02 (0.06)
Unemployment				
Left-right*postcommunist				-0.05 (0.03)
Left-right*GDP				0.08 (0.07)
Left-right*unemployment				-0.15 (0.04)
Constant	0.61*** (0.02)	0.81***(0.02)	0.88*** (0.03)	0.83*** (0.05)
N (individuals)	40,812	28,524	28,524	28,524
N (countries)	22	21	21	21
AIC	19954.7	11700.3	11675.22	11654
BIC	19980.5	11873.7	11865.16	11901.7
Intercept variance	0.005*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
Intraclass correlation	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.02

* p≤0.05, ** p≤0.01, *** p≤0.001

Standard errors between brackets

Dependent and independent variables recoded from 0 to 1

Source: ESS 2002-2003

The second column in tables 4.2 and 4.3 confirms H3a and shows that left-right self-placements have indeed a highly significant relationship with attitudes towards immigration beyond the effect of other relevant individual-level control variables. Generally speaking, this just confirms that, on average in the pooled European sample, right-wing tendencies are more likely to be associated with negative attitudes towards immigration everything else equal. More specifically, the fixed-effects coefficient shows that a unit of increase in left-right self-placement implies an increase of 0.09 in the societal hierarchy scale, and an increase of 0.17 in the individual difference scale- nearly twice as great. The constraining effect of left-right self-placements is thus a bit superior for the individual difference scale. The bivariate correlations presented in table 4.1 above, the better fit of the model explaining the individual difference scale, and now this slightly superior effect of left-right self-placements on this scale strengthen the intuition that the individual perception of immigration focusing on the similarity, adaptability and functionality of migrants is more ideologically embedded and therefore potentially stronger in electoral terms than the perception based on the negativity or inferiority of social outcomes due to immigration.

The third column of both tables 4.2 and 4.3 adds the individual-level interactions hypothesised above. H3b expected that the relationship between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration to be stronger as the socio-economic status of respondents goes up. Apparently, this hypothesis is validated as the interaction between left-right and ISEI is positive and significant when explaining both the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales. Figures 4.1 and 4.2, however, show that the hypothesised conditional effect between left-right and the ISEI index is only significant regarding the individual difference scale, but not regarding the societal hierarchy scale. This means that not only the average constraining effect is stronger with the individual difference scale, but that it is particularly strong among those citizens who are not likely to be personally threatened and who therefore use ideological labels to make sense of the immigration issue.

Table 4.3- Hierarchical linear models explaining the individual difference scale

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
Left-right		0.17*** (0.01)	0.04 (0.02)	0.18*** (0.02)
Satisfaction towards economy		-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)
Difficulty with income		0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Unemployed		-0.005 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Years of education		-0.38*** (0.02)	-0.49*** (0.04)	-0.38*** (0.02)
Member of discriminated group		0.02** (0.01)	0.01** (0.01)	0.01** (0.01)
Interaction with migrants		-0.03*** (0.004)	-0.03*** (0.004)	-0.03*** (0.004)
TV total exposure		0.06*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Radio total exposure		0.02** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.04)	0.02*** (0.004)
Newspaper total exposure		0.02*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
Interpersonal trust		-0.13*** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.01)
Satisfaction with life		0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.009 (0.007)
Satisfaction with democracy		-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
Religiosity		0.03*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Gender		-0.01*** (0.003)	-0.02 (0.003)	-0.02*** (0.002)
Year born		-0.04*** (0.001)	-0.04*** (0.001)	-0.04*** (0.001)
Manual worker		0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)
ISEI		-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.01)
Left-right*ISEI			0.15*** (0.04)	
Left-right*years of education			0.23*** (0.07)	
Postcommunist				0.11(0.06)
GDP				-0.14 (0.13)
Social expenditure				0.1 (0.11)
Country unemployment				0.08 (0.1)
Nationalism				-0.06 (0.06)
Change				-0.1 (0.1)
Unemployment				
Left-right*postcommunist				-0.1*** (0.02)
Left-right*GDP				0.12** (0.05)
Left-right*unemployment				-0.09** (0.03)
Constant	0.46*** (0.02)	0.49*** (0.02)	0.56*** (0.02)	0.53*** (0.07)
N (individuals)	40,812	28,524	28,524	28,524
N (countries)	22	21	21	21
AIC	2517.2	-3826.1	-3881.3	-3930.1
BIC	2543	-3652.7	-3691.4	-3682.4
Intercept variance	0.01*** (0.003)	0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.002)	0.01*** (0.002)
Intraclass correlation	0.14	0.17	0.12	0.11

* p≤0.05, ** p≤0.01, *** p≤0.001

Standard errors between brackets

Dependent and independent variables recoded from 0 to 1

Source: ESS 2002-2003

The interaction between left-right and years of education in column 3 is positive and significant. This means that the constraining effect of left-right regarding attitudes towards immigration is stronger among those individuals with higher levels of education. As stated above, however, the individual level of education is usually considered as a proxy for cognitive sophistication. In any case, it is correlated 0.5 with the ISEI index, so it does not capture completely the level of socio-economic vulnerability at the core of the argument tested here. It is important to keep the interaction left-right*education in the model and to show that left-right*ISEI has a robust effect beyond it.

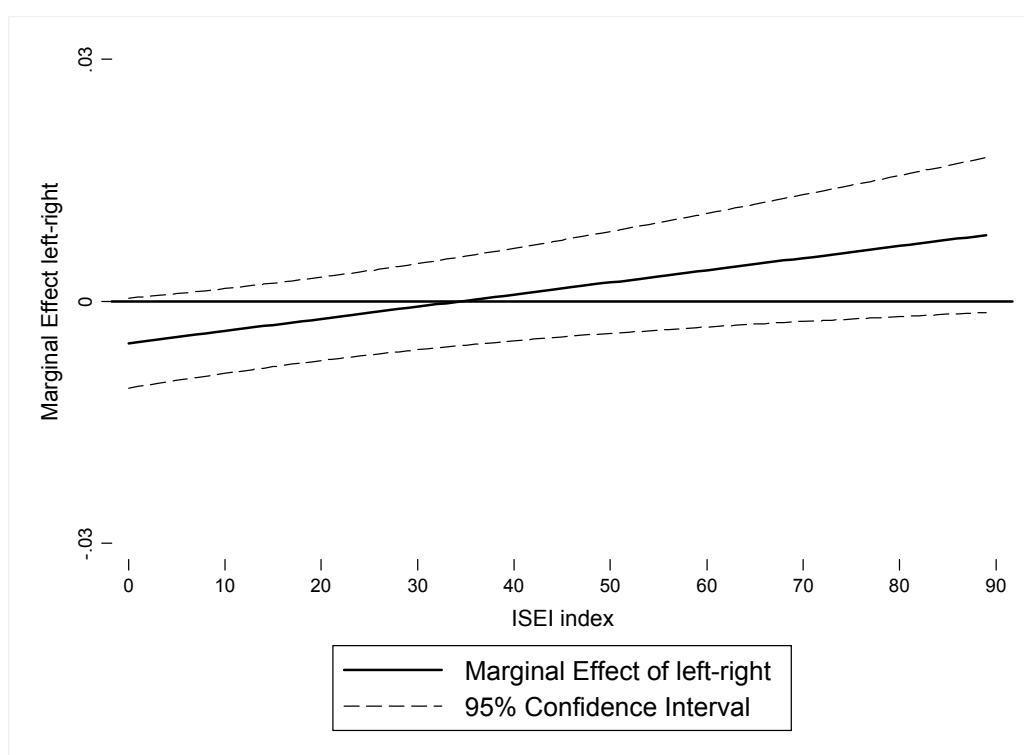


Figure 4.1- Marginal effect of left-right conditional on occupational status (ISEI index): societal hierarchy scale

The fourth column in tables 4.2 and 4.3 tests H3c. As for the individual difference scale, other things being equal the interaction between left-right and country level of unemployment is negative and significant, and the interaction between left-right and GDP is positive and significant. This fully confirms H3c and means that the tendency to use left-right categories to frame attitudes towards immigration is weaker in those countries with higher levels of unemployment and with lower levels of GDP.

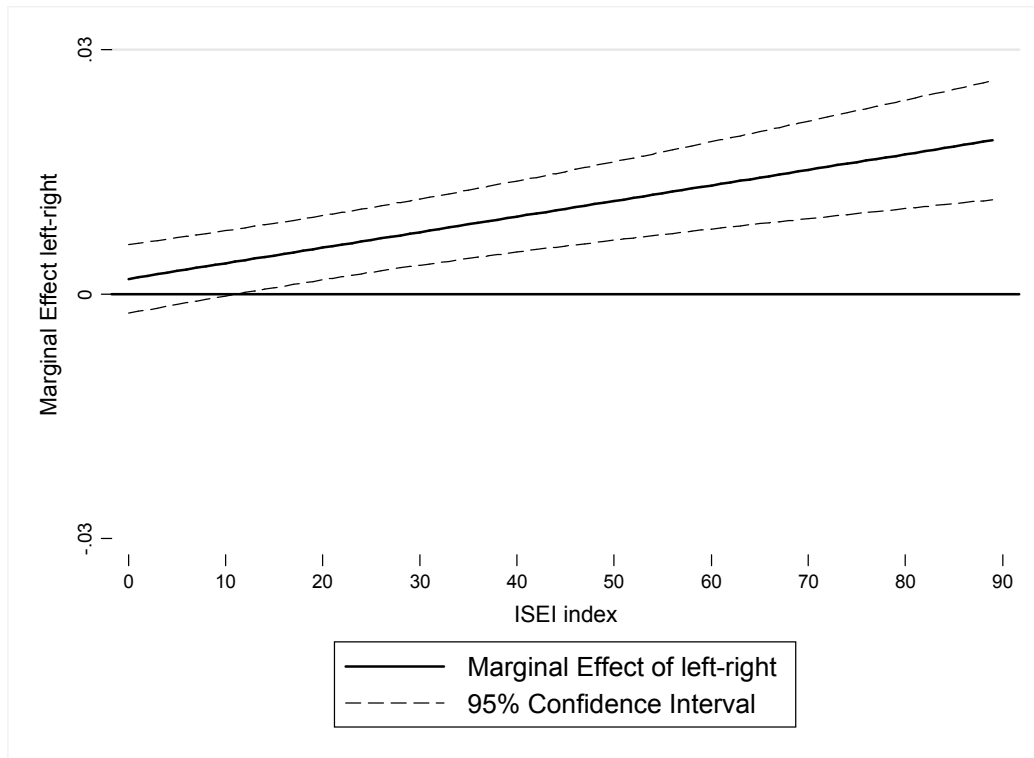


Figure 4.2- Marginal effect of left-right conditional on occupational status (ISEI index): individual difference scale

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 plot the slope of left-right predicting attitudes towards immigration (which can be interpreted as the strength of the constraining effect of left-right, or as the strength of the relationship between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration in each country) and GDP.

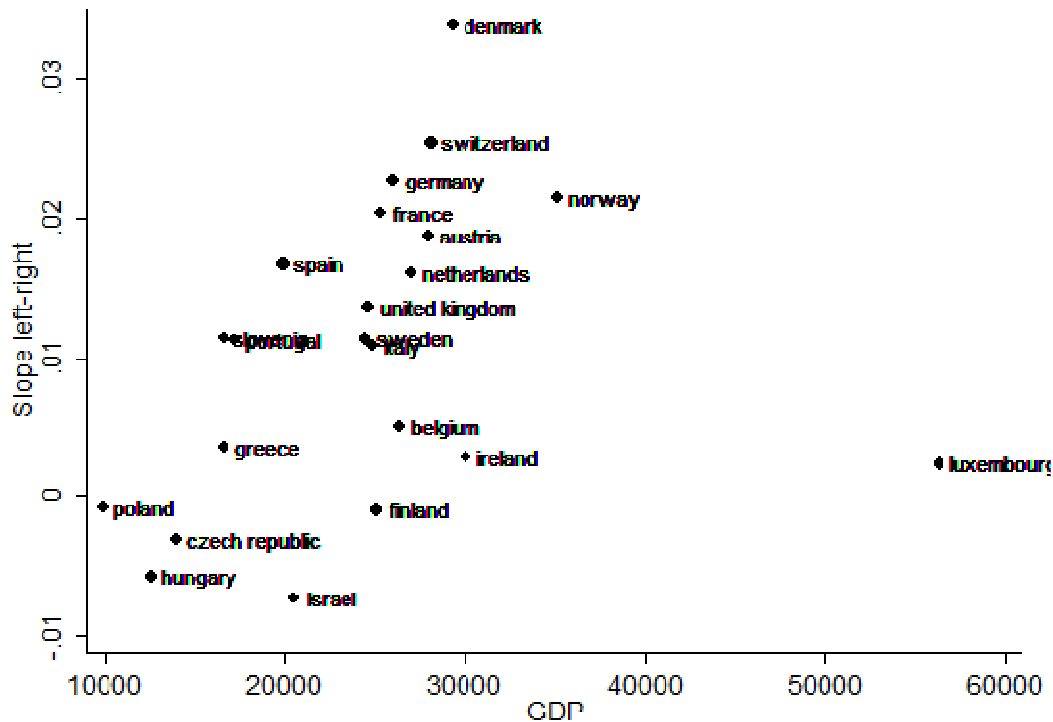


Figure 4.3- Scatter between slope of left-right and country GDP: societal hierarchy scale

As it can be seen in figures 4.3 and 4.4, the relationship is quite strong and positive in both cases, with the only exception of Luxembourg, which does not seem to follow the general pattern. If the interaction between left-right and country level of unemployment was removed in the model explaining the societal hierarchy scale, the interaction with GDP would become significant ($p=0.001$) and in the expected direction. This suggests that the framing function of ideology conditional on the GDP level exists, but that does not resist the control for the conditional relationship with unemployment. Therefore, in the case of the societal hierarchy scale H3c is confirmed but the level of unemployment seems to better account for the contextual variability across political systems.

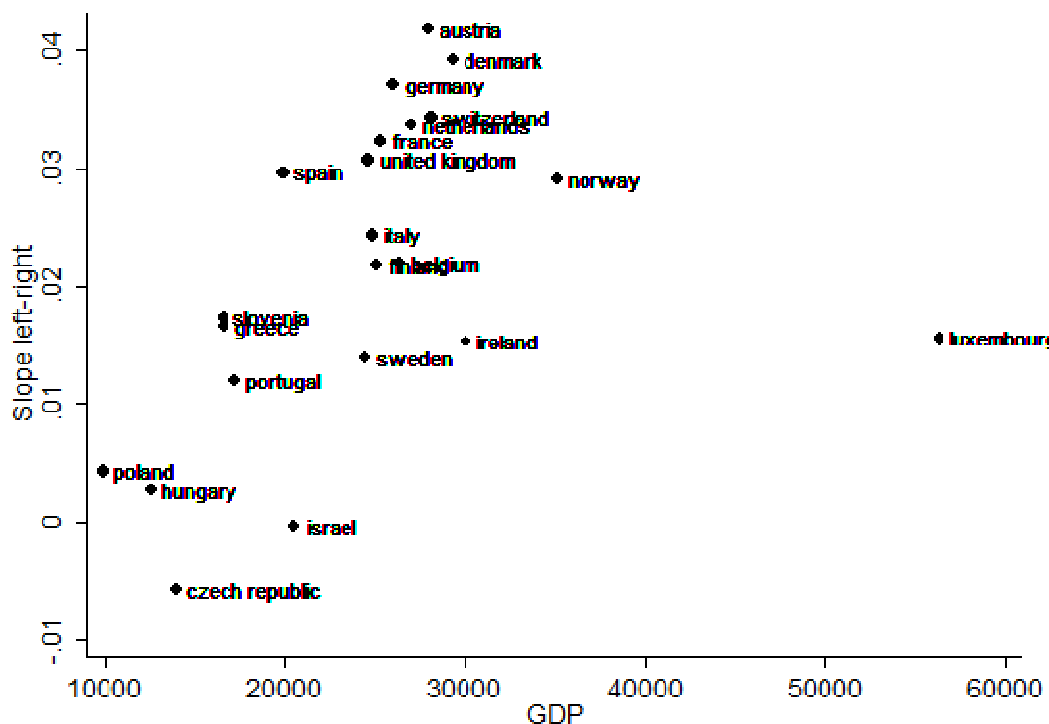


Figure 4.4- Scatter between slope of left-right and country GDP: individual difference scale

On the other hand, figures 4.5 and 4.6 plot the slope of left-right predicting attitudes towards immigration and unemployment. In this case, the relationship is quite strong and negative. Again, a contextual situation of socio-economic vulnerability reflects a more straightforward and non-ideologically mediated construction of attitudes towards immigration. When the context is not such as to create a vulnerable or risky situation regarding competition for scarce resources with migrants, people tend to make more use of ideological predispositions in terms of left-right to articulate a coherent attitude towards immigration. In the case of the societal hierarchy scale, both interactions have the expected sign but only the interaction between left-right and country level of unemployment seems to reach a satisfactory level of significance in the multivariate model.

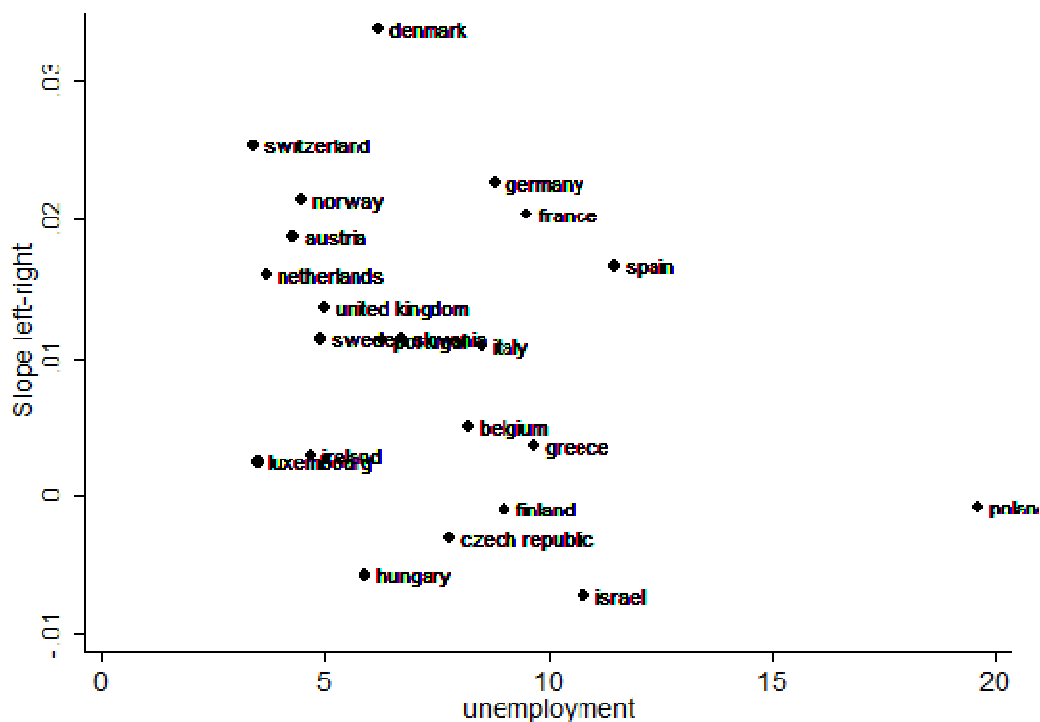


Figure 4.5- Scatter between slope of left-right and country level of unemployment: societal hierarchy scale

It is important to note that the control interaction introduced in model 4 in table 4.2 between left-right and postcommunist country is very robust and significant. Its negative sign shows that the framing effect of left-right on the individual difference scale is weaker in postcommunist countries. Moreover, as shown in figures 4.4 and 4.6, the average slope (a Bayesian and more reliable transformation of the bivariate correlation coefficients presented in table 4.1) of left-right is even negative in Israel and some non-Western countries, which means that left-wing tendencies are more likely to be negative against migrants in those contexts. As mentioned above, the objective with the interaction between left-right and post-communist countries is to control for the possible differential meaning and historical use of the labels left and right in Western and Eastern Europe. The generally weaker effect of left-right self-placements on attitudes towards immigration in the East can have a two-fold explanation: the historically different use of such an ideological schema, and the presence of left-wing people with comparatively more negative attitudes towards immigration.

The separation between left and right has been historically denaturalised in the post-communist area and thus might have a weaker impact in framing issue opinions. The

different historic cultural usage of the categories left and right in Central and Eastern Europe, however, should not be seen as an argument of the incomparability of the labels with West European usage. As Miller, White and Heywood explain (1998:307-308), there should be nothing extremely foreign about the political meanings of the words left and right. They derive from the seating arrangements in the French revolutionary assemblies, and all the countries they study were invaded by French revolutionary armies. Indeed, the French Revolution and its new paradigm of political values made a deep impression on the symbolic structures of the Tsarist empire. Thus, the existence of a common organisational political schema makes possible the comparison of the left-right continuum between post-communist and non post-communist systems. Moreover, the findings of Miller, White and Heywood reflect the fact that the left is significantly more committed to socialist values, consistently with the Western meaning (1998:310). Moreover, Markowski (1997) finds that the correlation between left-right self-placements and economic and cultural opinions in East Central Europe reflects a very similar pattern as what could have been expected in a Western country.

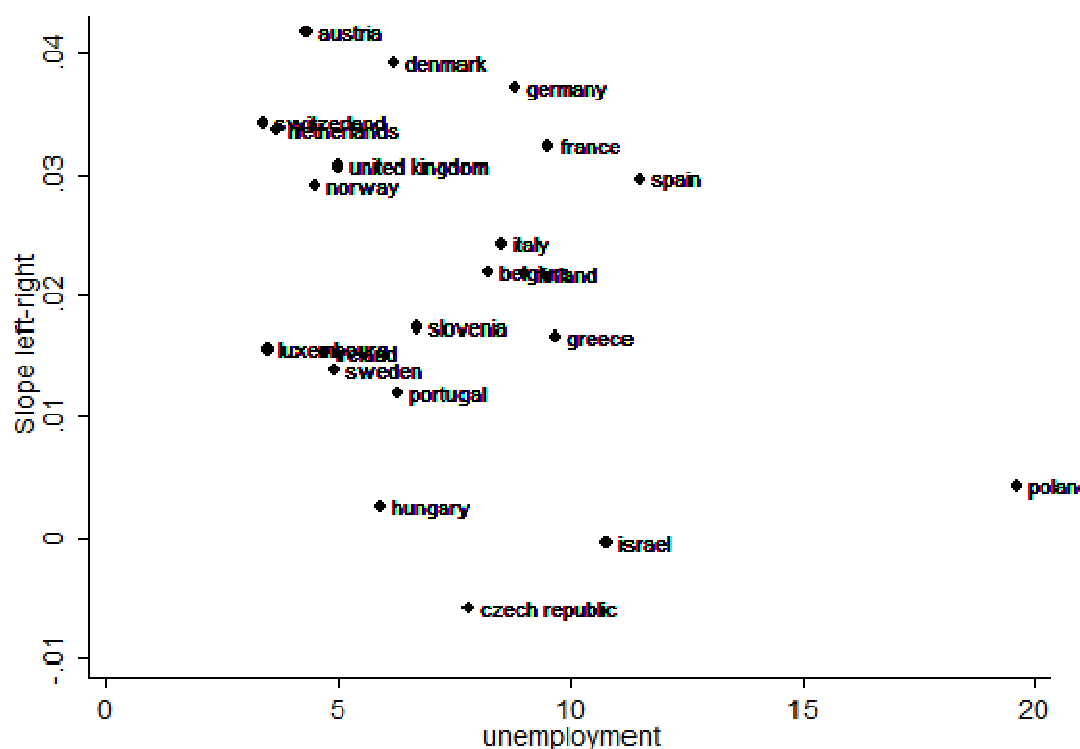


Figure 4.6- Scatter between slope of left-right and country level of unemployment: individual difference scale

4.5- Summary

This chapter has analysed the effect of individual left-right political predispositions on attitudes towards immigration across 22 European contexts. The aim was to analyse to what extent attitudes towards immigration are independent or rather constrained within existing ideological axes structuring electoral competition. The results show that, with a certain variation across individuals and political systems, left-right self-placements exert a robust and non-negligible framing function regarding the individual difference dimension of attitudes towards immigration. By contrast, the relationship between left-right and the societal hierarchy dimension is weaker. Apart from deepening the understanding of how this issue is constructed in public opinion, these findings suggest the stronger potentiality of perceptions of immigration based on individual difference and compatibility (rather than on the inherent negativity of the social impact of immigration) to be transferred from a radical space of competition to a more mainstream and still not systematically observed electoral dynamic.

The construction of attitudes towards immigration has attracted much scholarly interest over recent decades. The attention, however, has focused almost exclusively on sociological and economic factors while forgetting the systematic and comparative analysis of the effect of cognitive heuristics and ideological predispositions. This chapter suggests that more stable and permanent left-right self-placements help citizens to organise, constrain and articulate their attitudes towards immigration, but especially when the experience of direct competition for scarce resources with migrants is weaker. In other terms, when the individual and contextual levels of socio-economic vulnerability are higher, people tend to articulate their (generally negative) attitude towards immigrants without further ideological mediation. By contrast, in situations of low socio-economic vulnerability immigrants are not directly framed as a threat and therefore people need to rely on left-right predispositions in order to make sense of what does this issue imply and to construct a coherent opinion on it. This theoretical expectation implies that voters who are not in a position of socio-economic vulnerability regarding migrants (i.e. non-potential radical voters) are particularly those more able to construct ideologically their attitude towards immigration since they cannot rely on any experience of perceived threat.

The theoretical expectations of this chapter have been built upon ethnic competition theory and Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample model. The marriage between information and

predisposition considered necessary by Zaller to construct an issue opinion has proved to be a conditional relationship in the ideological framing of attitudes towards immigration in Europe. Socio-economic vulnerability and direct experience of competition with immigrants for scarce material resources are assumed to increase the attention, the saliency, and the exposure to flows of information on the immigration issue. The perception of threat (be it informatively or emotionally based) allows less room for political predispositions to play any role in the articulation of an issue opinion. The absence of competition or perception of threat, however, implies a more limited attention and concern towards the issue, as well as a more limited exposure to classical negative stereotypes of immigrants. It is in this situation that political predispositions become a stronger shield in resisting (the already limited) external categorisations of immigration, and when ideological categories like left-right are more needed in order to articulate an attitude which is coherent with the individual's other political predispositions.

In terms of more specific empirical findings, the impact of left-right self-placements interacts with the level of occupational status of individuals (measured by the ISEI index): the lower the levels of socio-economic vulnerability, the stronger the constraining effect of left-right. This conditional effect, however, is only significant concerning the individual difference scale and not the societal hierarchy scale. Once again, this finding suggests that the former may have a stronger capacity to get inserted in electoral mechanics of competition. At the contextual level, the use of ideological predispositions to organise attitudes towards immigration (measured as slope coefficients of left-right predicting attitudes towards immigration) is stronger in countries with lower levels of unemployment and higher levels of GDP.

Is it true, then, that individualistic outlooks towards immigration based on difference and compatibility have a stronger electoral potential than sociotropic conceptions of how good or bad is the general impact of immigration on the host country? After analysing the multidimensionality of the immigration issue and its ideological framing, the next question is how the issue may affect electoral outcomes? Can we confirm that the immigration issue can affect any party, or does it rather affect only the radical extremes of the political spectrum? If this is the case, among which types of individuals, parties and political systems is the electoral effect of immigration stronger? These are the questions tackled in chapter 5.

5. SPATIAL VOTING AND THE MOBILISATION OF PARTY SUPPORT

“Thinking well of blacks as well as thinking ill of them may matter in political choices”

Paul M. Sniderman and Edward H. Stiglitz (2008:2)

“The supposed incompatibility between the party ID approach and the approaches that focus on issues has been greatly exaggerated”

Samuel Merrill III and Bernard Grofman (1999:8)

5.1- Expectations

In chapter 3 I have identified two latent ways in which to perceive immigration across the different European systems analysed. The first is called societal hierarchy and it consists of a sociotropic perception focusing on how negative, inferior or damaging the consequences of migration can be for the economy, culture and society of the host country. The second is called individual difference, and rather than perceiving immigration on the basis of the inherent negativity of their societal outcomes, it focuses on the individual characteristics of migrants that could make them similar, adaptable and even useful for the in-group. In chapter 4 I took a step further by analysing to what extent these two dimensions are related to people’s left-right political predispositions. The results showed that ideological constraint is greater on the individual difference scale, and that this constraint is stronger among those individuals and contexts where socio-economic vulnerability and the consequent perception of direct ethnic threat and competition are less. This finding implied that centrist voters are precisely those more likely to construct their attitude towards immigration ideologically rather than on the basis of direct experiences of threat, and therefore those more likely to connect this attitude with a broader framework of political opinions and electoral competition.

The aim of the current chapter is to use the two immigration dimensions (societal hierarchy and individual difference) to predict vote choice across different European systems. More

specifically, the current chapter will test the proximity (H4a)¹ and the directional hypotheses (H4b)² articulated in chapter 2 above. The contemporary evolution of the spatial paradigm of policy representation has been defined by the controversy between two main rationales- the proximity and the directional. The proximity theory of issue voting states that voters maximise electoral utility by voting for the party that is closest to them in terms of policy stances. By contrast, directional theory assumes a *status quo* point from which voters decide their vote on the basis of the direction and the intensity of their issue preferences. The literature on spatial voting has proposed multiple variations of these models trying to explain heterogeneity in vote choice, but the proximity and the directional logics are usually the original constitutive components of these variations (see footnote 5 in chapter 2). Moreover, my focus on these two logics rather than on other spatial accounts of issue voting is due to the focus of this research on whether the immigration issue is able to transcend a minority and radical space of competition and to affect the overall political spectrum. Proximity theory predicts a centripetal dynamic of electoral competition whereby any party can benefit from representing a given policy stance and whereby voters and parties tend to approach the moderate centre of the spectrum. By contrast, directional theory predicts a centrifugal dynamic whereby the extremes of the spectrum tend to maximise electoral utility and to be perceived as more credible in implementing a given policy preference. The empirical analyses in this chapter will suggest that proximity theory is a more valid account for the electoral impact of the immigration issue, therefore validating H4a and rejecting H4b. This implies that, as expected, the immigration issue is not an exclusive domain of negative and radical framings on the issue, but that less radical opinions about immigration can have an impact on election outcomes and mainstream party dynamics. It is important to stress, however, that the results regarding the immigration issue do not necessarily have to be extrapolated to the understanding of general party dynamics. This means that a strong moderating (proximity) effect of the immigration issue from a spatial perspective could be associated with both general centripetal systems (if the other cleavages, issues and dimensions of competition in those systems are also centripetal) and centrifugal systems (if other factors cancel out the effect of immigration). The distinction between a single issue and a more general dimension of competition thus remains crucial (Sani and Sartori 1983). The focus of the current chapter is the former and not the latter.

¹ H4a states that “Proximity theory is stronger than directional theory in accounting for the impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting behaviour, therefore generating a centripetal dynamic of competition”.

² H4b states that “Directional theory is stronger than proximity theory in accounting for the impact of attitudes towards immigration on voting behaviour, therefore generating a centrifugal dynamic of competition”.

But what are the consequences of an issue which is able to transcend minority and radical spaces of competition for mainstream dynamics of competition? How can such an issue reshape established party systems and the electoral fortunes of mainstream parties? In order to partially answer this question, the current chapter also tackles the mobilisation hypothesis (H5) developed in the theoretical chapter above. The empirical analysis presented in this chapter suggests that spatial calculus of voting regarding the immigration issue is only influential among those voters who feel already attached or identified with the party they finally vote for. This means that the immigration issue under a spatial perspective is a powerful tool to understand electoral change through differential mobilisation of a party's own supporters, but not for understanding the acquisition of supporters from other parties. As stated in the introductory quote by Merrill and Grofman in this chapter, the party identification and the issue voting approaches are not necessarily always contradictory accounts of voting behaviour. It is not surprising that spatial accounts of issue voting can generate electoral change through mobilisation of psychologically identified electorates rather than through a more volatile acquisition of other electorates. One of the main assumptions of the classical Downsian model of issue competition is the reliability, integrity and relative temporal stability of issue positions (Downs 1957:97). This means that policy positions cannot change from liberal to conservative in one day, and that liberal voters will not readily opt for a conservative party even if this party has just moderated its policy position. Therefore, this approach focuses on a relatively more stable and settled structure of policy spaces and preferences regarding the immigration issue. As will be seen in the next chapter, only valence approaches of issue voting (based on more volatile features like issue saliency and images of party competence) seem able to appeal to un-attached electorates and generate electoral change through the conversion of party preferences.

This chapter is structured in 7 more sections. Section 5.2 explains the general method and research design to be implemented in this chapter. Section 5.3 justifies some operationalisation and model specification choices made before testing the performance of proximity and directional models of voting regarding the immigration issue. Section 5.4 presents the empirical analyses testing the proximity, directional and mobilisation hypotheses using the pooled European sample. Section 5.5 conducts a joint test of proximity and directional rationales instead of a separate analysis as in the previous section in order to confirm the robustness of the findings. Section 5.6 assesses the different sources of heterogeneity across party families in Europe. Section 5.7 assesses sources of heterogeneity

across other party characteristics. Finally, section 5.8 assesses systemic sources of heterogeneity.

5.2- Data and method

The main dataset to be used in this chapter is the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002-2003. The main reason to use it here again is the availability of all the indicators used in the construction of the two immigration attitude scales (societal hierarchy and individual difference), and the exact same samplings procedures, sample characteristics and possible sources of measurement error as in the analyses conducted in previous chapters. The two dimensions of attitudes towards immigration identified before will be used now as the main independent variables to predict vote choice (vote recall in the last national election), which is the dependent variable.

The nominal nature of the dependent variable to be analysed requires an alternative methodological design beyond OLS. Moreover, the main independent variables to be tested are party-specific. This means that the square of the distance between the voter and the party position (proximity model) and the scalar product of the voter and the party position (directional model) vary across individuals but also across party choices. The best technique to deal both with the categorical nature of the dependent variable and the party-specificity of the main independent variables to be tested is an alternative-specific conditional logit model (McFadden's choice model) (McFadden 1974). This is a specific case of the more general conditional logistic regression model which is more straightforward and easily replicable. To be able to use this technique one has to stack the dataset first on the basis of individuals conditional on party choices. This means that the dataset is now extended and the cases or units of analysis are individuals*party choices. Each row of this new dataset corresponds to a given individual's choice (or not) for a given party, and the party-specific variables are summarised in a single vector which varies both between and within individual respondents. More specifically, the vote recall variable is disentangled in dummy variables for each party (1 = voted for that party and 0 = not voted for that party). Then, these several dummies are stacked in a single vector. Tables 5.1a and 5.1b illustrate how this stacking process is conducted in a hypothetical dataset with 4 individuals and 3 parties.

Table 5.1: An example of how the original data-matrix is transformed into a stacked format:**a) Original dataset**

<i>N of cases</i>	<i>Vote recalled</i>	<i>Voted for party 1</i>	<i>Voted for party 2</i>	<i>Voted for party 3</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity party 1)</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity party 2)</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity party 3)</i>	<i>Individual-specific variable (e.g., age)</i>
Indiv. 1	1	1	0	0	-2	-32	-46	24
Indiv. 2	2	0	1	0	-30	-9	-27	67
Indiv. 3	3	0	0	1	-50	-43	-5	54
Indiv. 4	1	1	0	0	-13	-89	-19	33

b) Stacked dataset

<i>N of cases</i>	<i>Voted for party</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity)</i>	<i>Individual-specific variable (e.g., age)</i>
Indiv. 1 (party 1)	1	-2	24
Indiv. 1 (party 2)	0	-32	24
Indiv. 1 (party 3)	0	-46	24
Indiv. 2 (party 1)	0	-30	67
Indiv. 2 (party 2)	1	-9	67
Indiv. 2 (party 3)	0	-27	67
Indiv. 3 (party 1)	0	-50	54
Indiv. 3 (party 2)	0	-43	54
Indiv. 3 (party 3)	1	-5	54
Indiv. 4 (party 1)	1	-13	33
Indiv. 4 (party 2)	0	-89	33
Indiv. 4 (party 3)	0	-19	33

Only the alternative-specific and party-specific effects are reported in the tables below, because, in the context of this chapter, individual-specific effects are of no substantive interest and are only included as control variables. The control variables are party identification (which is party specific and therefore reported), left-right self-placement, satisfaction with the economy, satisfaction with the government performance, religiosity, age, education, sex, income and being a manual worker. The missing values of these individual-level variables have been imputed through a single imputation method from a conditional distribution, that is, with introduction of random residual error in the imputed value³.

³ With the command “uvis” in Stata 10. For replicability purposes, the introduction of the random error has been fixed (seed=50). The variable names of the ESS 2002-2003 included in the imputation

Since the estimated models will be based on logistic functions, the magnitude of the effects will have to be assessed through the calculation of probabilities. I have calculated them using the software Clarify (King et al. 2000), after replicating the same alternative-specific conditional logit but with a standard logit model (which is supported by Clarify). The probabilities are reported only when conditional logit and standard logit results are comparable in terms of sign, significance and magnitude of the coefficients. The validation of hypotheses based on conditional logit models and the estimation of probabilities based on equivalent logit models have been successfully implemented elsewhere (Marinov 2005).

5.3- Model specification issues

The main analytical strategy in this chapter is to compare the capacity to predict vote choice of proximity and directional ways of thinking regarding attitudes towards immigration. Before reporting the results in the subsequent sections, it is necessary to justify some choices made regarding the statistical specification of the proximity and directional models. This is the aim of the current section. The model specification choices do not concern the theoretical expectations and implications of proximity and directional ways of voting for the incorporation of immigration into mainstream electoral dynamics. They are rather empirical and analytical strategies, which is why they are summarised in this section.

As developed in chapter 2, the main component of the proximity theory is the squared distance between the voter and the party position on the immigration issue⁴. On the other hand, assuming that the *status quo* is coded as a 0, the formalisation of the directional theory of voting is the scalar product of the voter and the party position on the immigration issue⁵. Departing from here, there are 5 analytical concerns that need to be addressed.

The first analytical concern refers to the notion of the region of acceptability when testing directional theories of voting. In their original formulation of the theory, Rabinowitz and

regression are: eduysr, stfgov, manualwork, lrscaler, stfeco, rldgr, hincfel, tvpol, rdpol, nwsppol, netuse, ppltrst, polintr, stflife, stfdem, stfedu, stflth, gincdif, freehms, scsensv, happy, sclmeet, impfml, imppol, imprlg.

⁴ $U_{ik} = -(A_i - I_k)^2$, where U_{ik} is the utility of voter i to vote for party k , A is the position of the vote on the immigration issue, and I is the party position on the immigration issue.

⁵ $U_{ik} = A_i \cdot I_k$, where the terms are the same as in the previous footnote.

Macdonald (1989) theorise a punishment for a party which becomes non-credible when located too far on an extreme, or out of the so-called region of acceptability. This region, however, implies an empirical and, more importantly, a conceptual problem. The empirical problem is that it is not clear whether this region is the same for all voters or whether it depends on each voter's perceptions. Merrill and Grofman's unified model (1999) assumes the first, whereas Iversen's representation model (1994) assumes the second. The conceptual problem is that, by modelling the region of acceptability, it becomes impossible to distinguish empirically the two core theories. If extremeness is penalised by a voter, this is necessarily due to proximity reasoning. For this reason, I follow previous research and choose to test the directional model without modelling the, admittedly vague, notion of the region of acceptability.

The second concern affects the measurement of the party positions. There are three ways to measure them: citizens' perceptions about party positions in surveys, expert surveys, and party manifestos. The first option, citizens' perceptions about parties regarding the immigration issue, is unavailable in the dataset used in this chapter. Moreover, citizens' perceptions are sometimes thought to be contaminated by self-projection- the party voted for is artificially perceived as the most proximate to the voter. Regarding the choice between two more exogenous sources of party positions, expert surveys and party manifestos, I follow previous research and rely on the former (Steenbergen and Marks 2007). This is because even if there are indirect ways to convert party manifesto scores into party positions (Gabel and Huber 2000; Franzmann and Kaiser 2006), analyses of party manifestos need to directly rely on the number of times that a given item is mentioned, which is *de facto* a measure of saliency rather than position (De Lange 2007). Even if I use party manifesto data below in order to analyse sources of heterogeneity due to the emphasis of the party on one or another issue, I extract the party positions from expert surveys (Benoit and Laver 2007). I thus use party manifestos to assess the saliency given by parties to the issue (in section 5.7) and expert surveys to assess the position of parties on the issue. In this I follow much past research on party positioning and overcome possible problems deriving from the fact that party manifestos, as has been suggested, may not be reliable images of party stances.

In relation to the previous point, the scale on party positioning according to the expert surveys mentioned above is not the same as the two types of voter attitudes tested here (societal hierarchy and individual difference). Thus, before subtracting and multiplying

voter and party positions, I have standardised all scales from 0 to 1. It could be argued that standardising might not be the optimum strategy to harmonise measures which have been originally constructed on the basis of different scales. However, assuming that the measurement error due to the standardisation of scales is distributed at random, the statistical effects of proximity and directional thinking regarding the immigration issue will be affected *equally*. Moreover, this possible measurement error should make it more difficult to validate the proximity and the directional hypotheses. It is thus preferable to obtain conservative rather than overstated estimates. On the other hand, it could also be argued that while voters' attitudes towards immigration are measured in terms of two different constructs, expert surveys on party positioning only took into account a single and general immigration scale. Even if this caveat is impossible to solve technically, the possible negative consequences for the substantive results are more limited than what might appear at first sight. The theoretical expectation of a multidimensional structure of the immigration issue derived from social-psychological literature (chapters 2 and 3) applied to voters but not necessarily to parties. The exact correspondence of very specific issue constructions between voters and parties is not likely to occur, and is not necessary for the validation of the hypotheses. The significant link between what voters think about immigration and what parties offer about immigration is a sufficient condition for the existence of an electoral impact of the issue.

The fourth and fifth concerns in past literature affect, respectively, the use of the quadratic proximity form (instead of a linear, city-block or non-quadratic form), and the use of the mid-point of the scale as the *status quo* point when modelling the directional model. In spite of the controversy these points sometimes generate, it has been shown already that these two concerns rarely appear to substantively affect the results (Cho & Endersby 2003).

5.4- Proximity and mobilisation

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 respectively assess the effect of the proximity and the directional models separately according to conditional logit estimates⁶. In both tables the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales are modelled at the same time. The conditional logit estimation shows that, for both scales, the alternative-specific proximity and directional

⁶ The analyses are implemented using the pooled European sample, since country differences are specifically assessed in section 5.8 below.

model variables have a positive and significant effect on vote choice when all other terms are held constant. Since this is a logistic function, however, the magnitude of the effect cannot be assessed just by looking at the coefficients. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show the probability of a given voter to vote for the party he finally voted for according to the variation of his issue proximity to the party and of his party attachment. In the probability calculus, this voter is at the mean of all other variables included in the model. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show the same probability but according to the coincidence in direction and intensity over the issue preference between the voter and the party voted for.

Table 5.2- Conditional logit predicting party choice through proximity model

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Proximity societal hierarchy scale	1.21	0.07	0.000
Proximity individual difference scale	1.37	0.09	0.000
Party ID	3.83	0.03	0.000
Log-likelihood	-16713.87		
N observations	128930		
N cases	18003		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

Table 5.3- Conditional logit predicting party choice through directional model

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Directional societal hierarchy scale	0.99	0.15	0.000
Directional individual difference scale	2.32	0.18	0.000
Party ID	3.85	0.03	0.000
Log-likelihood	-16923.74		
N observations	128930		
N cases	18003		

Source: ESS 2002-2003

Controls not shown

The first important conclusion that emerges in figures 5.1 to 5.4 is the confirmation of the ideological constraint hypothesis that was already explored in the previous chapter (H3). The individual difference scale, which was more systematically constrained within the left-right axis and comparatively more properly framed in broader schema of issue opinions and electoral competition, has a stronger electoral impact than the societal hierarchy scale. Not by chance, the individual difference scale is ideologically constructed especially by voters who are not likely to vote for a radical right party and who are not likely to perceive immigration as a direct threat. It is not surprising that this ideologically constructed attitudinal dimension beyond particular personal experiences of threat is precisely a better predictor of behaviour of all kind of voters on average.

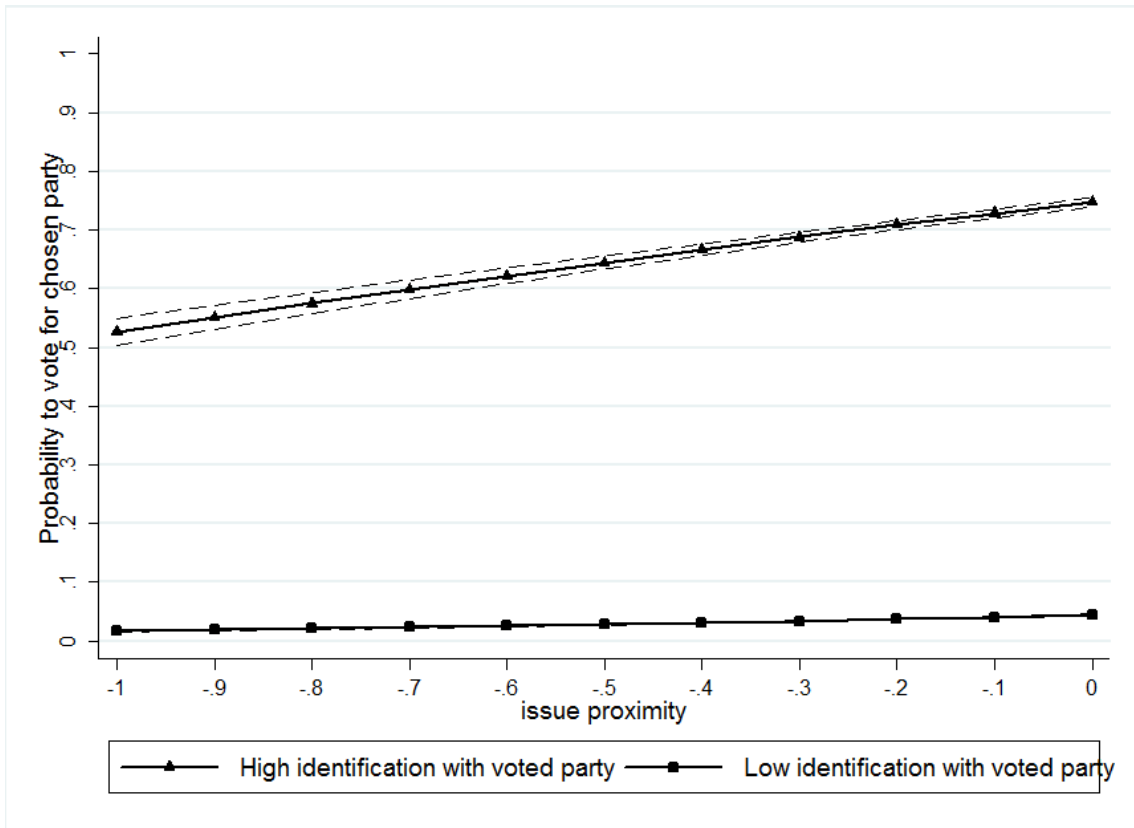


Figure 5.1- Probability of vote choice with proximity model (societal hierarchy scale)

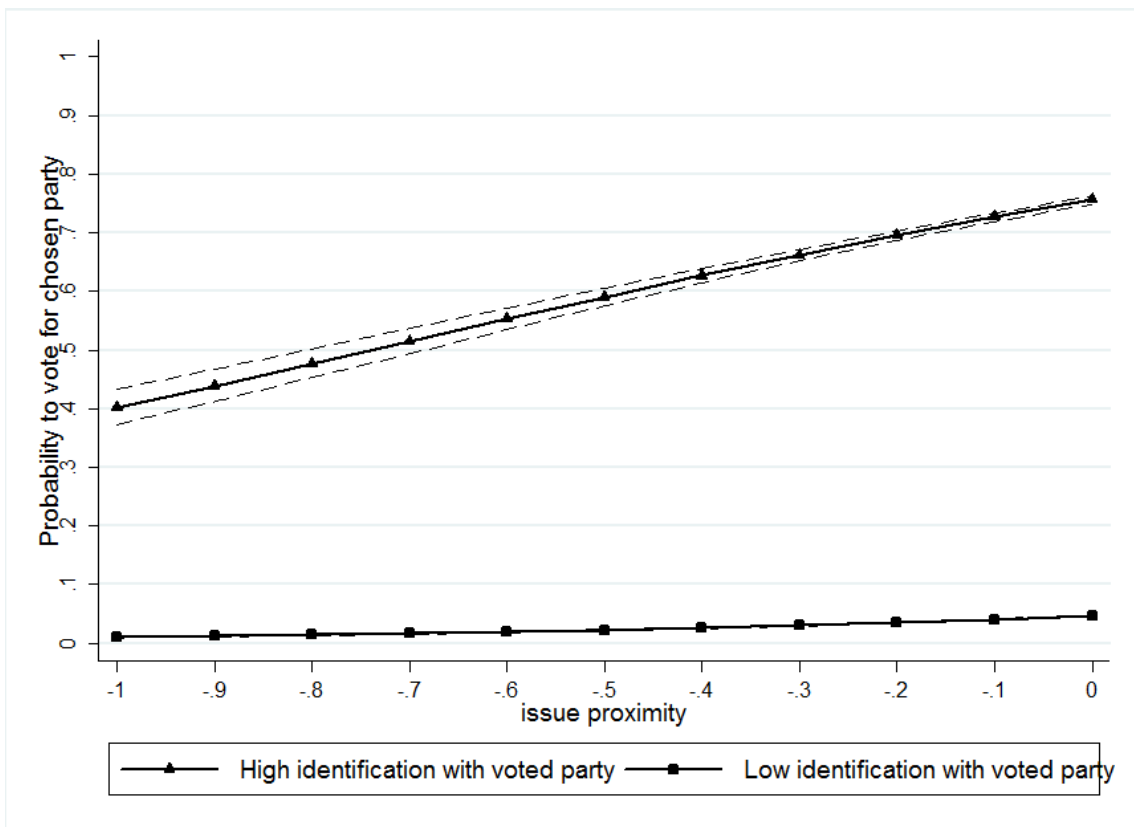


Figure 5.2- Probability of vote choice with proximity model (individual difference scale)

While the proximity between voters and parties on the individualistic perception of immigration can increase almost by 40% the probability of a given individual to vote for his party (going from the maximum to the minimum possible distance regarding the immigration issue), the increase in the societal hierarchy scale is almost a 30%. The same conclusion is obtained when analysing the directional model of issue voting. Going from a very low to a very high synergy in direction and intensity regarding the preference on the individual difference scale can increase the probability to vote for a given party by almost 30%. By contrast, the effect that this mechanism has in the case of the societal hierarchy scale is practically non-existent. According to both spatial logics, then, individualistic and utilitarian framings of migrants are more incorporated into patterns of electoral competition rather than sociotropic perspectives of immigration based on the negativity or inferiority of societal outcomes. Self-interest (immigration as useful and adaptable) and epistemological approaches based on individuals rather than on societal constructions seem to be better predictors of political behaviour (Mansbridge 1990:12), at least regarding the immigration issue.

The second important conclusion derived from the analyses reported in tables 5.2 and 5.3 and in the probability calculus plotted in figures 5.1 to 5.4 is that the proximity model shows a stronger effect of variations in proximity and distance than the directional model when predicting voting behaviour. This is so in spite of the apparently greater log odds of the proximity and directional terms regarding the individual difference scale reported in tables 5.2 and 5.3, showing once again the necessity to plot predicted probabilities in order to assess magnitudes in a logistic function. This means that the proximity hypothesis (H4a) is validated, while the rival directional hypothesis (H4b) is rejected. This does not mean that the directional model of issue voting concerning immigration preferences is not a good predictor of voting behaviour, but it means that the proximity model has a stronger predictive effect than the directional one. Regarding the societal hierarchy scale, the increase of the probability to vote for the party finally voted for increases by almost 30% when going from the minimum to the maximum issue proximity, whereas the increase is less than 10% when going from the minimum to the maximum issue direction. As for the individual difference scale, going from minimum to maximum issue proximity increases by 40% the probability to vote for the party finally voted for, whereas the increase is only 20% when going from a minimum to a maximum in terms of issue direction.

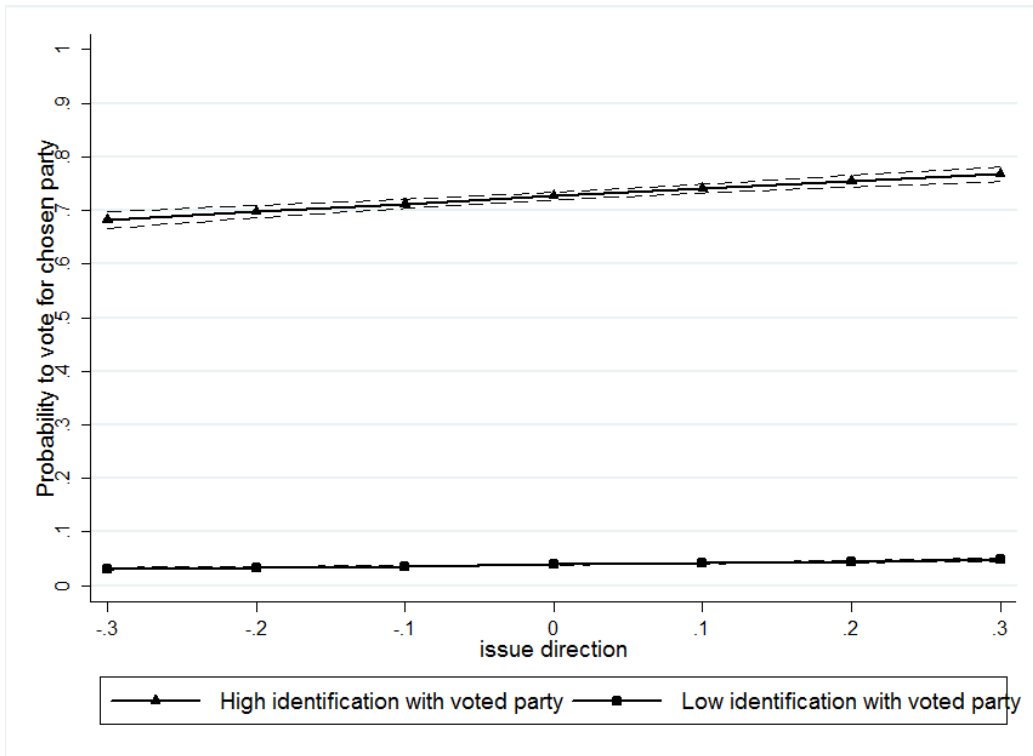


Figure 5.3- Probability of vote choice with directional model (societal hierarchy scale)

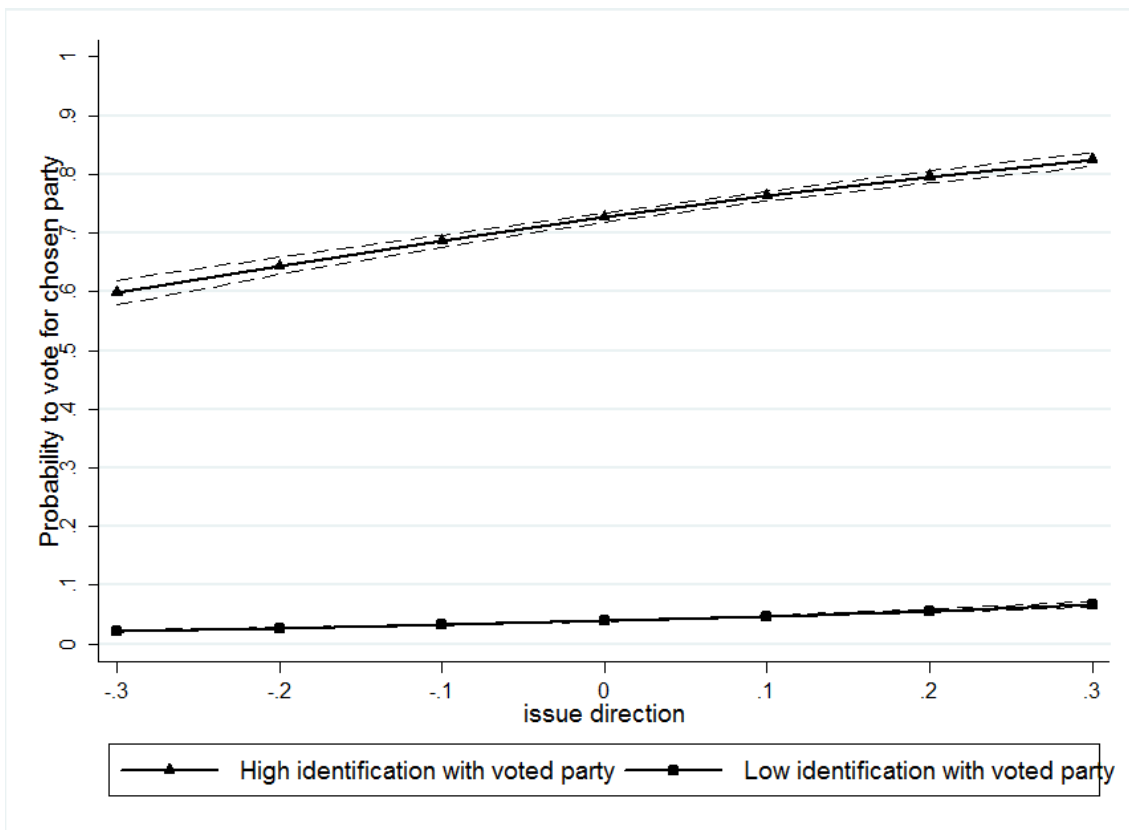


Figure 5.4- Probability of vote choice with directional model (individual difference scale)

The third and last conclusion provided by the analyses reported in this section is the confirmation of the mobilisation hypothesis (H5). The description above of the increase and decrease of the probability to vote for one or another party on the basis of issue proximity and direction only referred to people who already feel identified or attached to that party. This implies that the impact of the immigration issue under a spatial perspective is remarkable, but only among those who are already party supporters. By contrast, the immigration issue seen in a spatial perspective has virtually no power of affecting or attracting people who are not identified with the party. It is important to note that the category “low identification with party voted for” in figures 5.1 to 5.4 includes both people who are identified with a different party and people who are not identified with any party at all. However, non-voters are excluded from the analysis as is necessarily the case in conditional logit techniques.

It is important to note that the finding that issue voting depends on levels of party attachment is reliable in spite of not introducing a multiplicative term between proximity or directional thinking and party attachment in tables 5.2 and 5.3. In fact, the multiplicative term between proximity or directional thinking and party attachment would be insignificant. As discussed by Berry, DeMeritt and Esarey (2010), conditional or interaction effects in discrete-choice models assuming a logistic distribution of the error (like the ones implemented here) are possible to estimate without the specification of multiplicative terms. In a logistic function, the marginal effect of a given covariate always depends on the values of the other covariates. This means that findings implying conditional relationships are inherent in the method of estimation. The only difference between an interaction estimated without multiplicative term and an interaction estimated with multiplicative term in logit models is that the former is due to the compression or bounded nature of the dependent variable (which cannot be lower than 0 or bigger than 1). However, both kinds of interactions can have meaningful, reliable and substantive theoretical implications. In practical terms, the fact that the interaction between issue voting and party identification is confirmed without multiplicative term is not strange since interactions with insignificant multiplicative terms in logit models take place when extreme values of the covariates are associated with estimated probabilities near their limit of zero or one (Berry et al. 2010:261). This is obviously the case at maximum and minimum levels of issue proximity, issue direction and party identification.

This finding gives some insights on the temporality of the issue, which is discussed again in the next chapter when assessing the potential for short-term changes of the issue under a valence perspective. Issues can be considered in the literature as short-term factors able to generate change and unpredictability, but also can be considered as attitudes and even values, which are by definition quite stable over time. The main proposition here is that the immigration issue understood as an attitude which is shaped by ideological and socio-demographic factors (as seen in previous chapters) and which can be represented in a spatial continuum where voters and parties decide their behaviour can affect vote choice, but always within the limits of aligned electoral markets. In other terms, a correct synergy between voters' and parties' positions under a spatial perspective still needs an anchoring of the issue position itself, and therefore it is more immune to contextual swings (Downs 1957:97). The implication of this reasoning is that this kind of issue-oriented voting could mobilise voters who feel already close or attached to a given party, but could hardly overcome the limits of well-defined electoral markets. By contrast, as it will be argued in the next chapter, that when the issue is constructed on the basis of its saliency and in terms of images of party competence, the electoral mechanism can also affect voters who are by default quite unlikely to vote for a given party.

This first part of the empirical analysis has provided three important findings. The first one is that, both in proximity and directional terms, the individual difference scale has a stronger electoral effect than the societal hierarchy scale. This means that a perception of the individual characteristics of migrants based on their adaptability, functionality and similarity is more relevant in electoral terms than discourses and attitudes based on a sociotropic vision of immigration and on how negative this phenomenon is for the collective country sphere. The second conclusion is that the proximity model seems to have a stronger effect than the directional one. This would contradict the image of the immigration issue as a political factor which only polarises and affects one extreme of the political continuum. The centripetal dynamic predicted by the Downsian account for spatial competition suggests that the immigration issue can also be very important in moderate and mainstream sides of the spectrum. Finally, the third conclusion is that these findings only concern the behaviour of those people who are already party supporters. The mobilisation effect of the immigration issue is thus remarkable, but its capacity to affect election results beyond the boundaries established by settled party attachments is weaker.

5.5- Disentangling the spatial effect

The previous section tested the proximity and the directional models separately. In spite of a polar theoretical implication and a different algebraic manipulation of the equation terms, both the proximity and the directional models use the same party and voter issue positions. This results in a very high degree of collinearity between the two terms, making the simultaneous comparison of both models highly problematic. Apart from this technical problem, a substantive critique of the supposed independence of the two theories has been raised. Lewis and King show that the original formulation of the proximity theory actually contains the directional component. From a substantive point of view, this makes the two theories indistinguishable (Lewis and King 1999). Considering U as the utility to vote, i as a voter, j as a party, V as the position issue of the voter, and P as the position issue of the party, Lewis and King show that the squared of the distance between voter and party positions (proximity) actually contains the product of these two positions (direction):

$$U_{ij} = -(V_i - P_j)^2 = -V_i^2 - P_j^2 + 2(V_i \times P_j) \quad (15)$$

where the proximity component is present in the three terms of the new equation (V_i^2 , P_j^2 , and $2(V_i \times P_j)$), whereas the directional theory is represented only by the third term ($2(V_i \times P_j)$). The two first terms (V_i^2 and P_j^2) are the proximity components which are independent of the directional theory.

To try to move a step forward in distinguishing empirically the two types of spatial effect, and to confirm the robustness of the conclusions inferred in the previous section, I specify both models at the same time following equation 8. Now, the spatial effect of the immigration issue is composed of three terms. The proximity effect is spread over these three terms, but its unique effect which cannot be attributed to the directional model is captured only by the two first terms. The directional effect is now just contained in the third term.

Table 5.4- Logit with robust standard errors predicting party choice with both proximity and directional models (societal hierarchy scale)

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Societal hierarchy squared	1.08	0.06	0.000
Party positions squared	1.63	0.08	0.000
2(societal hierarchy *party position)	1.48	0.06	0.000
Log pseudolikelihood	-38875.94		
Pseudo R2	0.36		
N of observations	198530		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 show respectively that the three spatial terms regarding the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales have a significant effect on vote choice. These are logistic regressions with robust standard errors (due to the stacked nature of the dataset) rather than conditional logit estimations, because the square of the voter position is not party-specific.

Table 5.5- Logit with robust standard errors predicting party choice with both proximity and directional models (individual difference scale)

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Individual difference squared	1.81	0.08	0.000
Party positions squared	1.61	0.07	0.000
2(individual difference*party position)	1.99	0.07	0.000
Log pseudolikelihood	-38800.9		
Pseudo R2	0.36		
N of observations	198530		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

The significance of the three terms means that both proximity and direction have an effect. But which of these theories matters really more? Figures 5.5 and 5.6 show the probability calculus of a given voter who is at the mean on all the variables specified in the models, and highly attached to a given party (since I showed in the previous section that, under the spatial approach, the immigration issue only matters in mobilising party loyalists). Going from one extreme to the other in the two unique proximity components can increase by 40% the probability of vote choice on the individual difference scale, and about 30% on the societal hierarchy scale.

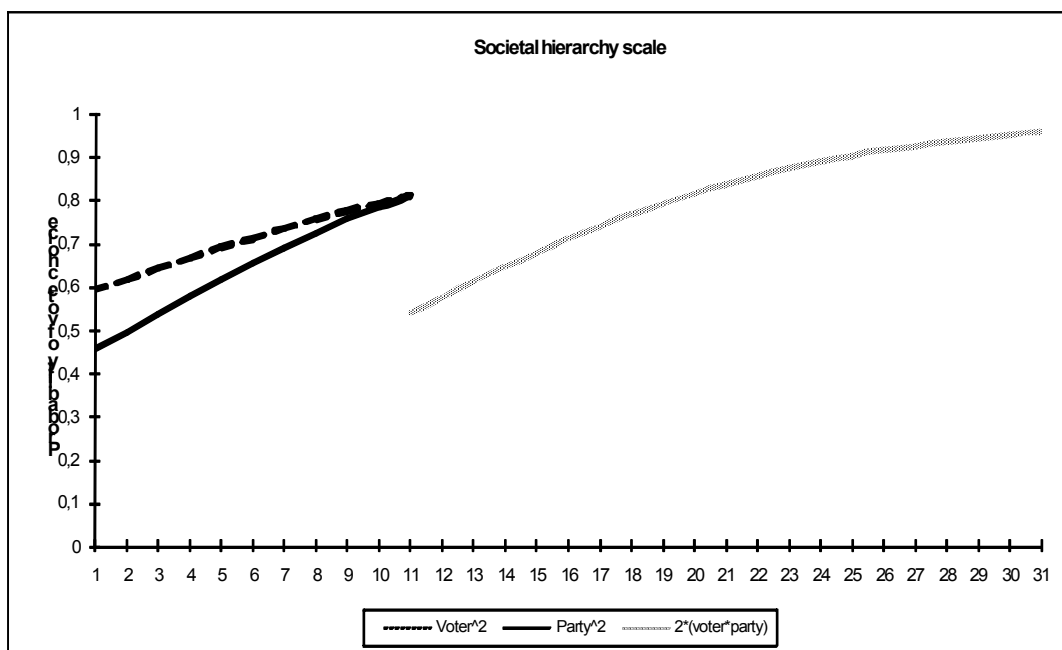


Figure 5.5- Probability of vote choice with both proximity and directional models (societal hierarchy scale)

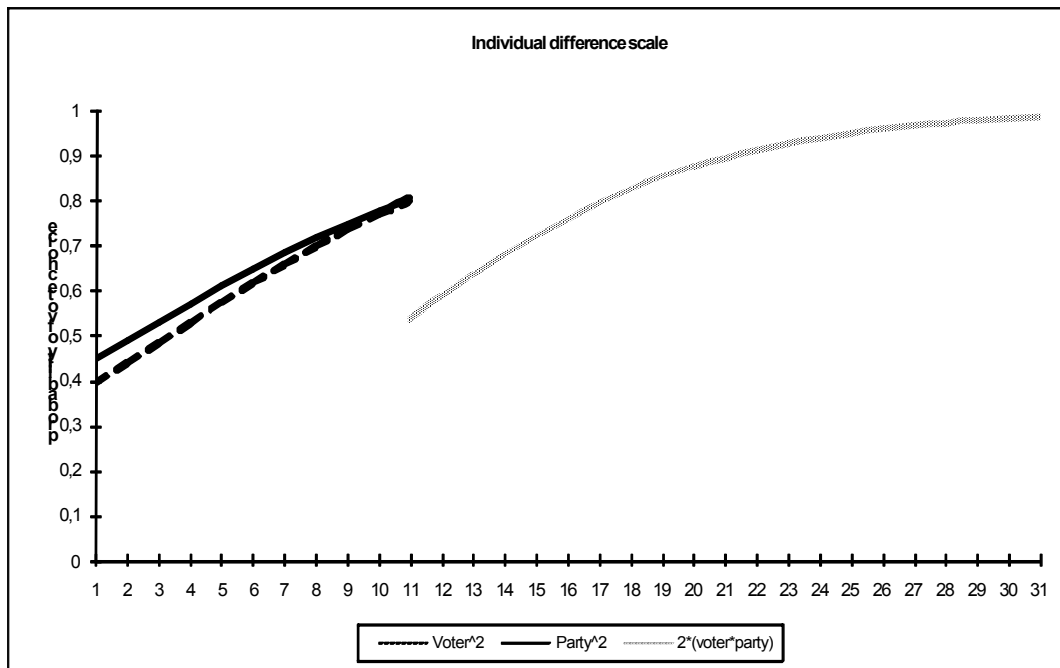


Figure 5.6- Probability of vote choice with both proximity and directional models (individual difference scale)

At first sight, the effect of the directional component on the probability to vote for a party, as directionality varies from one extreme to the other, can reach up to 50%. Even if this increase seems strong, it has to be noted again that there is some proximity mechanism still captured in this term. Moreover, the real distribution of this component is quite skewed towards positions of low directionality. This means that, even if the potential electoral effect of the directional model would be strong, its real effect is weak because there are actually rather few voters in Europe whose attitudes coincide closely with the positions of parties they vote for, in terms of direction and intensity. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 show a histogram of the directional term in equation 8 for the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales respectively. As shown there, the European electorate is rather clustered in positions of low directionality (low synergy between voters and parties regarding the direction and intensity of their immigration opinion), suggesting, on average, a rather limited power of the immigration issue to generate centrifugal dynamics of competition.

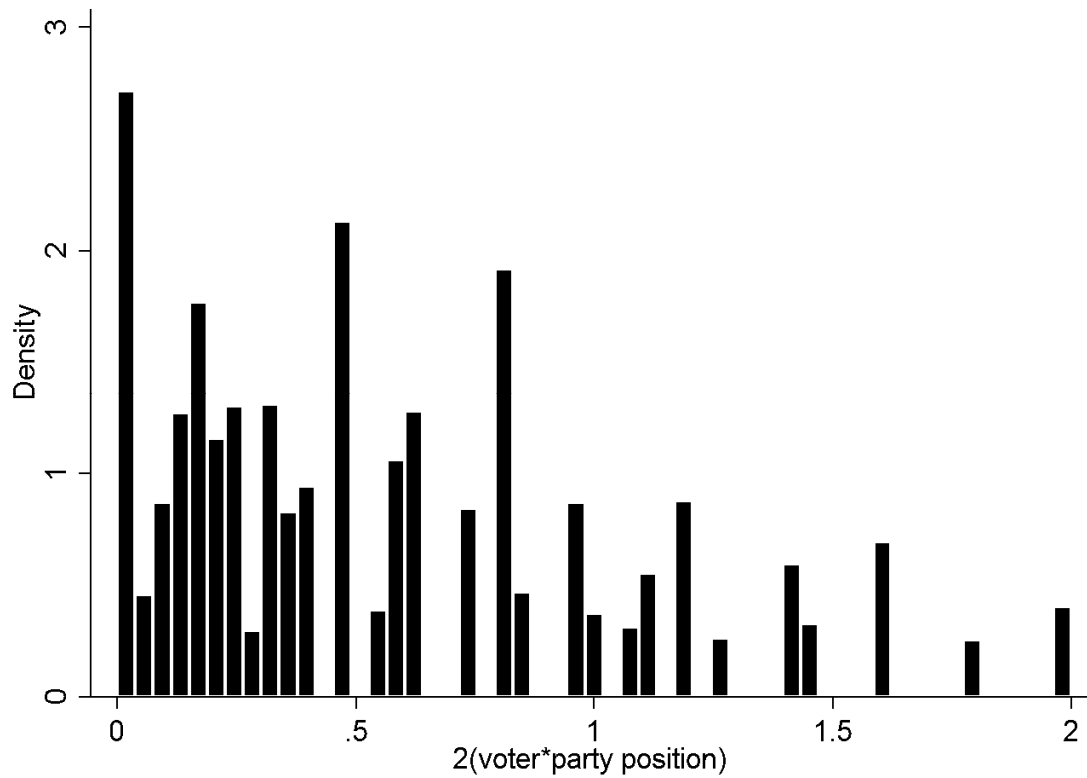


Figure 5.7- Histogram of directional component in societal hierarchy scale

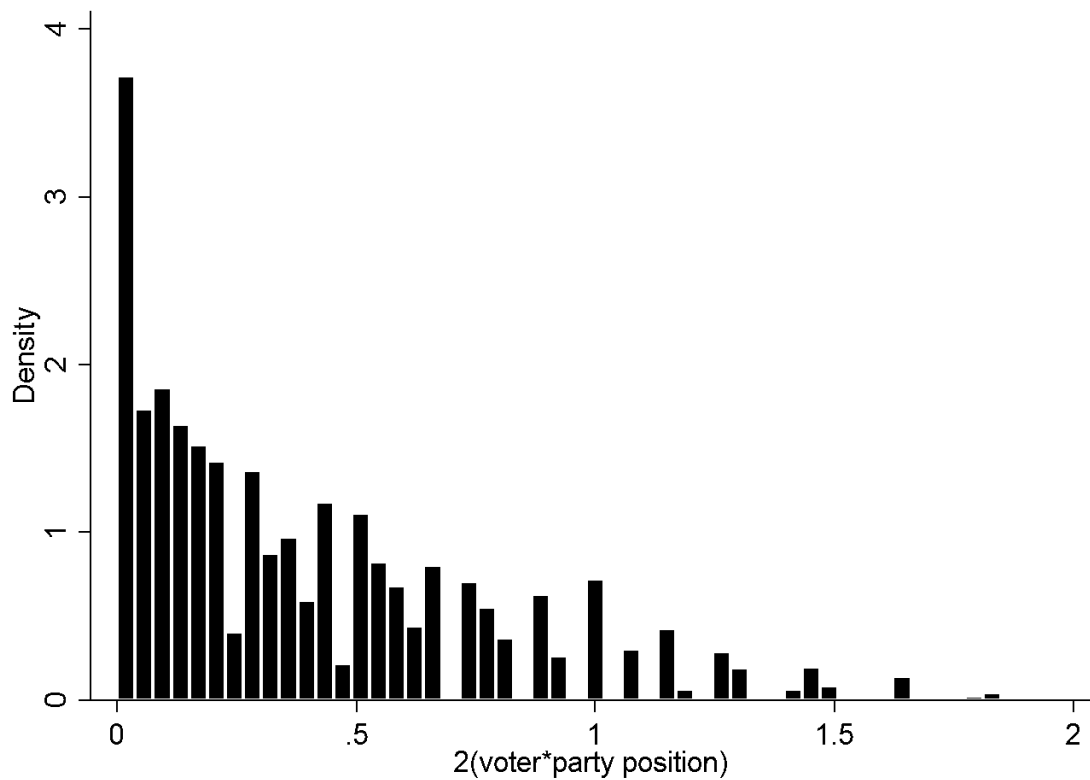


Figure 5.8- Histogram of directional component in individual difference scale

5.6- Across party families: decentralisation and positivity

The analyses in the previous sections showed that, on average, the attitude towards immigration based on how similar, adaptable and functional are individual migrants is a stronger predictor of vote choice than sociotropic constructions of the impact of immigration on the host country. At the same time, the proximity model proved to be stronger than the directional one in accounting for this impact, suggesting that the immigration issue can be related to centripetal dynamics of party competition rather than to dynamics favouring radical extremes of the spectrum. Finally, this incorporation of the immigration issue into mainstream electoral dynamics under a spatial perspective seems to be observable only among the party mainstream supporters, defined here as the group of voters who feel psychologically identified or attached to the party they vote for⁷.

Proximity and centripetal rationales of issue voting, then, account well for the role of immigration on mainstream electoral dynamics. This means that competition over the immigration issue can take place anywhere along the political spectrum and not only at the extremes. As a next step, since not only the electoral fortunes of radical parties are found to be affected by attitudes towards immigration, this section aims to analyse which other parties can be affected by this issue as well. Analysing heterogeneity across party choices is a crucial but surprisingly forgotten enterprise in electoral behaviour studies, which usually only take into account the attitudes and characteristics of voters, implicitly assuming that voter utility functions are not dependent on party characteristics. The structural-functionalist, rational and inductive-typological schools of research in the party politics literature show that the functions, behaviour and types of parties can vary in a significant way (Montero and Gunther 2002:10-15). The stacked and party-specific structure of the data I use in this chapter allows me to simultaneously take into account demand-side and supply-side sources of variation in the analysis of vote choice. I will first explore here the heterogeneity of the impact of immigration across party types in terms of party families. Even if no specific hypotheses regarding this kind of heterogeneity were derived in the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2, two supplementary hypotheses come immediately to mind when considering the possibility of party heterogeneity in responses to the immigration issue: the regional-decentralisation and the positivity hypotheses. These are

⁷ This is why all the subsequent analyses in this section only refer to voters who feel attached to the party they vote for.

additional to the already well-established idea that the immigration issue is a particular preserve of radical-right parties.

As regards the regional-decentralisation hypothesis, the immigration issue is a very sensitive one which concerns the allocation of economic resources, the implementation of public policies in order to handle immigration flows and integration strategies, cultural and identity challenges, etc. A line of conflict which is present in a number of European systems and that can be indirectly affected by all these different aspects is the centralisation-decentralisation one, which at the same time refers to the classic centre-periphery cleavage. This can have an impact on those parties which represent a more regional or decentralised vision of their political system, and whose *raison d'être* is precisely the fight for more competences at the regional level to be able to handle crucial political issues and to defend a distinct political and cultural identity. I thus expect regional parties to be particularly affected by the immigration issue, since this phenomenon affects many of the classical concerns of a regional vision of political demands, which are already perceived as threatened by the national or central level of decision-making. The supporters of this sort of party are likely to express more sharply their visions on immigration in the polls. Even if one does not normally think of such parties in terms of a radical right type of behaviour, the concern towards what immigration can imply for their already contested legitimacy in handling their own political issues, economic resources and cultural projections of identity can make voters of regional or sub-national parties particularly sensitive as regards this issue.

The second supplementary hypothesis that comes to mind is the positivity hypothesis. If the impact of the immigration issue on the radical right side of the spectrum is acknowledged, there is no reason not to expect a counter-effect on the other side of the spectrum. As stated above, negative opinions about immigration are not necessarily the only ones likely to have an electoral effect. Positive opinions may also matter. Even when controlling for left-right proximity between voters and parties, the opposite to radical right parties in some quite polarised political systems may very well act as a counter-balance or represent the extreme positive opposite position. Kitschelt understands the emergence of radical right parties as a historical evolution of post-industrial electoral markets and the generation of a significant space of right-authoritarian conceptions of politics and society (Kitschelt 1994; Kitschelt 1995; Palmer 1995). The other pole of this new axis of competition is precisely a left-libertarian one, where mostly green or new left parties are located. Moreover, if the

ideological vote thesis is correct and therefore the success of radical right parties can be due to standard issue and ideological considerations rather than to simply a form of protest behaviour (Van der Brug, Fennema et al. 2000; Van Der Brug and Fennema 2003), the same issue and ideological considerations can apply to other overlooked sides of the spectrum. All in all, both proximity and directional arguments of electoral competition regarding the immigration issue can be applied to parties representing the absolute opposite of what radical right parties represent, namely green or new-left parties.

The methodological strategy to assess sources of heterogeneity at the party level will be to depart from the conditional logit models presented in tables 5.2 and 5.3 above, and to add interactions between each type of issue voting (proximity and direction) and party families. Unlike the conditional effects between issue voting and party identification reported in section 5.4, the interactions will be tested here through multiplicative terms. This is so because, unlike the interactions between spatial models and party identification, some of the multiplicative terms between issue voting and party characteristics are significant. This means that the marginal effect of spatial thinking is not necessarily constant or parallel across party families and characteristics, and therefore it needs to be carefully observed. Moreover, it is reasonable to expect that the possible interactions between issue voting and party characteristics are not only due to the compression or bounded nature of the dependent variable (which can only take the values 0 and 1), since belonging to a given party family is not necessarily associated with an extremely high or low probability to vote for that party.

In order to avoid collinearity and testing all the interactions between spatial models and party families at the same time, I have assessed its statistical significance one by one. Those which turned out to be significant individually, are then included altogether in a model. Only those which remain significant in this last model are reported here. In terms of measurement, the party family variable has been imported from the Comparative Manifesto Project (Budge et al. 2001)⁸.

⁸ The categorisation of radical right parties, however, relies on Norris (2005). When there was a party considered as radical right by Norris and coded as belonging to a different party family by the Comparative Manifesto Project (usually as nationalist), I have recoded this party as radical.

Table 5.6- Conditional logit assessing heterogeneity of proximity model across party families (societal hierarchy scale)⁹

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Proximity societal hierarchy	1.17	0.08	0.000
Proximity individual difference	1.45	0.09	0.000
Party ID	3.83	0.03	0.000
Conservative party	0.28	0.05	0.000
Proximity societal hierarchy*conservative	-0.86	0.28	0.002
Log-likelihood	-16667.45		
N observations	128930		
N cases	18003		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

⁹ When included separately in the model, the interaction with conservative (-), nationalist (-) and radical parties (-) are significant. When introduced together, only the interaction with conservative remains significant, and that is the one I report.

Table 5.7- Conditional logit assessing heterogeneity of proximity model across party families (individual difference scale)¹⁰

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Proximity societal hierarchy	1.03	0.07	0.000
Proximity individual difference	0.99	0.13	0.000
Party Id	3.83	0.03	0.000
Green party	-0.34	0.06	0.000
Liberal party	-0.17	0.04	0.000
Nationalist	0.29	0.13	0.021
Radical party	-0.01	0.09	0.890
Proximity individual difference *green party	1.43	0.33	0.000
Proximity individual difference *liberal party	-0.3	0.27	0.255
Proximity individual difference *nationalist party	1.02	0.37	0.006
Proximity individual difference *radical party	0.43	0.28	0.125
Log likelihood	-16639.12		
N observations	128930		
N cases	18003		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

Tables 5.6 to 5.9 report the final results of the conditional logit estimates testing heterogeneity across party families. The decentralisation hypothesis seems to be confirmed

¹⁰ When included separately in the model, the interaction with green (+), liberal (-), christian (-), nationalist (+), regional (-) and radical parties (+) are significant. If I include all these interactions together, only the terms with green, liberal and nationalist remain significant. These are the ones I report.

in the case of the directional model (tables 5.8 and 5.9). The electorate of regionalist parties seems to be particularly affected by the immigration issue, but only from a directional perspective, and both for the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales. In this case, the vote for regionalist parties can be affected by both the concern over what immigration can imply for the societal outcomes of the host society (since the general outcomes in terms of economy and culture are even eventually disputed with the central level of administration) and an individual perspective on the similarity and functionality of migrants.

Table 5.8- Conditional logit assessing heterogeneity of directional model across party families (societal hierarchy scale)¹¹

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Directional societal hierarchy	1.19	0.2	0.000
Directional individual difference	2.35	0.18	0.000
Party ID	3.83	0.03	0.000
Conservative party	0.32	0.04	0.000
Regional party	-0.99	0.08	0.000
Radical party	-0.22	0.05	0.000
Directional societal hierarchy *conservative party	-2.4	0.55	0.000
Directional societal hierarchy *regional party	2.36	1.02	0.021
Directional societal hierarchy *radical party	0.39	0.39	0.314
Log likelihood	-16765.88		
N observations	128930		
N cases	18003		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

¹¹ When included separately in the model, the interaction with green (+), conservative (-), agrarian (+), regional (+) and radical (-) are significant. When I introduce them together, only conservative, regional and radical remain significant. I report the model with these 3 interactions. In this model, though, the interaction with radical parties loses significance confirming that there is no particular immigration attitude or spatial model that affects more radical right parties. Then I just calculate probabilities for conservative and regional.

Table 5.9- Conditional logit assessing heterogeneity of directional model across party families (individual difference scale)¹²

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Directional societal hierarchy	1.15	0.16	0.000
Directional individual difference	1.57	0.22	0.000
Party ID	3.82	0.03	0.000
Green party	-0.9	0.05	0.000
Nationalist party	-0.41	0.07	0.000
Regional party	-1.21	0.08	0.000
Directional individual difference *green party	4.26	0.58	0.000
Directional individual difference *nationalist party	1.68	0.54	0.002
Directional individual difference *regionalist party	2.31	1.05	0.027

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 show that the impact of the issue on regionalist parties is very considerable, and even stronger in the sociotropic scale than in the individual difference scale. This latter finding is relevant, since the sociotropic scale is not a good electoral predictor on average, but it seems to be activated when overlapping with decentralisation and regional axes of conflict. The rise in the probability to vote for a regionalist party between the two extremes of the directional model regarding the sociotropic scale is a bit more than 60%, whereas it is of a 50% in the individual difference scale. All the significant interactions are plotted together with the baseline probability, which is obtained if no party

¹² When included separately in the model, the interaction with green (+), conservative (-), nationalist (+) and regional parties (+) are significant. When I introduce those interactions at the same time, only green, nationalist and regional parties remain significant. I just report the model with these 3 interactions.

family is specified in the model (so a hypothetical party not belonging to any party family). In figure 5.9 one can see that the increase in the probability to vote for a regionalist party as the coincidence in the issue direction goes up is much stronger than the interaction with conservative parties, which also turned out to be significant in table 5.8. At the highest values of directionality between voter and party preferences, however, the probability to vote for a regionalist party is not considered to be significant because it is not distinguishable from the baseline category (since the confidence intervals of the probabilities overlap). As regards the directional effect of the individual difference scale (figure 5.10), nationalist and green parties are also significantly and strongly benefitted from a coincidence between voters' and parties' direction of issue preference.

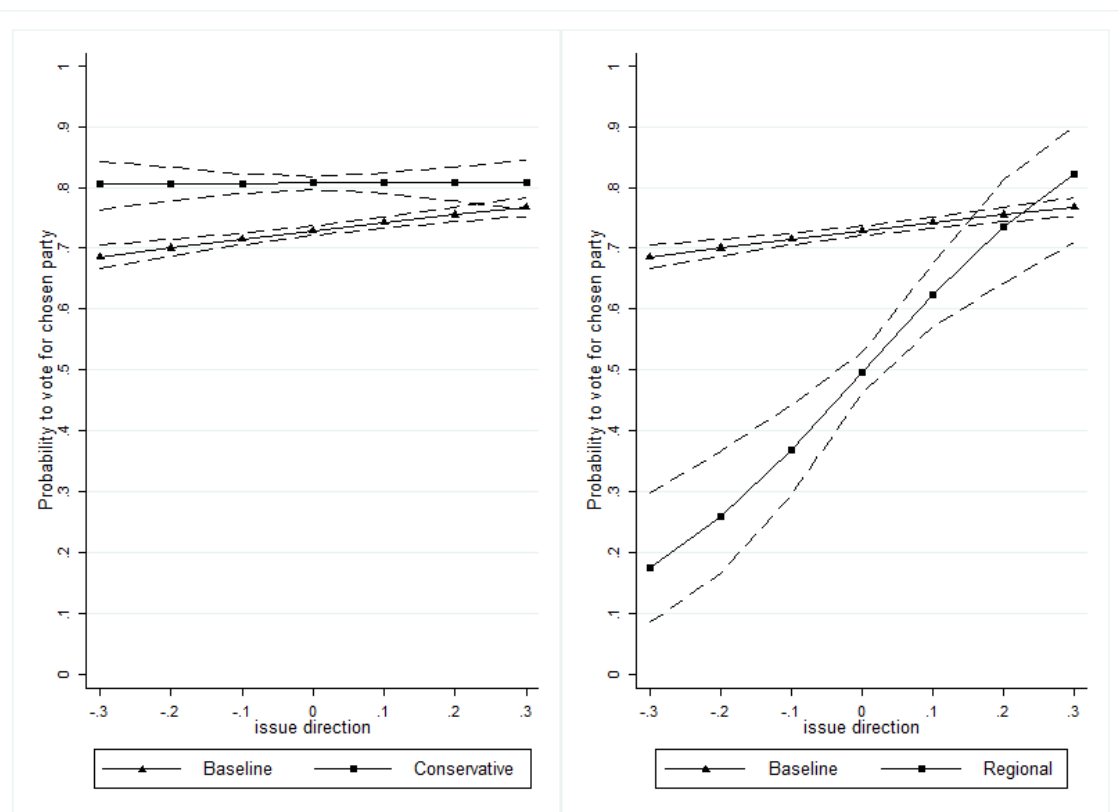


Figure 5.9- Probability of vote choice with directional model across party families (societal hierarchy)

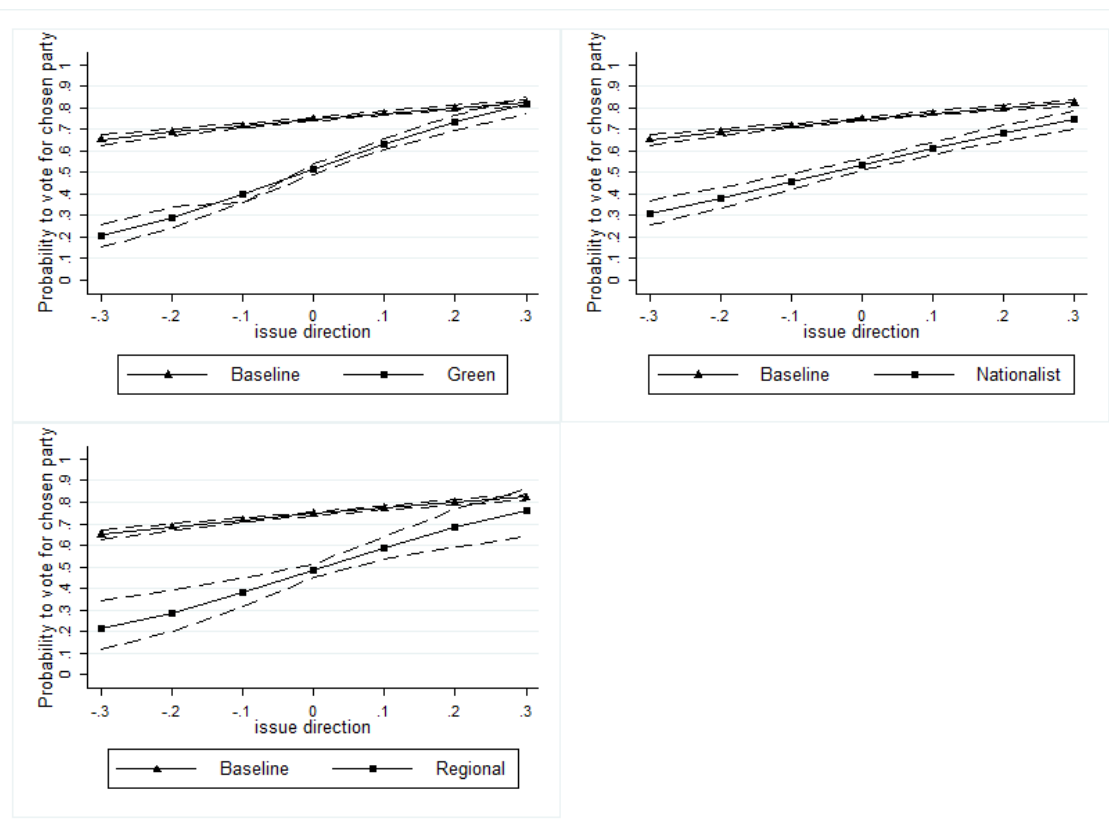


Figure 5.10- Probability of vote choice with directional model across party families (individual difference scale)

The positivity hypothesis is confirmed both from a proximity and a directional perspective but only regarding the individual difference scale. This means that green parties can also be affected by the immigration issue as a counter-balance of the complex post-industrial structure of ideological markets that also explains the emergence of radical right parties. This effect, however, only concerns the perception of individual characteristics of migrants on the basis of how similar and adaptable they are. As just seen, figure 5.10 reveals that the probability to vote for a green party can increase by 60% between the two extremes of the directional model. Figure 5.12 shows that this probability can do so by 40% between the two extremes of the proximity model. It is not surprising that, even if the directional model is on average less able to predict patterns of behaviour regarding the immigration issue, it is nevertheless rather better at explaining the vote for a party usually located towards one of the poles of the spectrum.

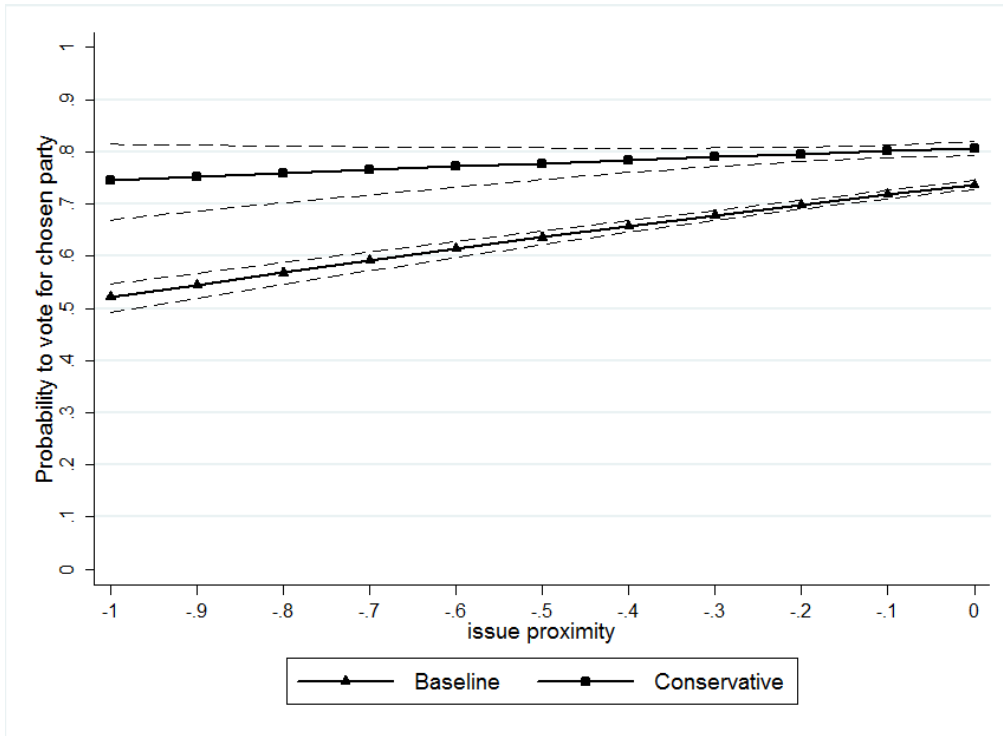


Figure 5.11- Probability of vote choice with proximity model across party families (societal hierarchy scale)

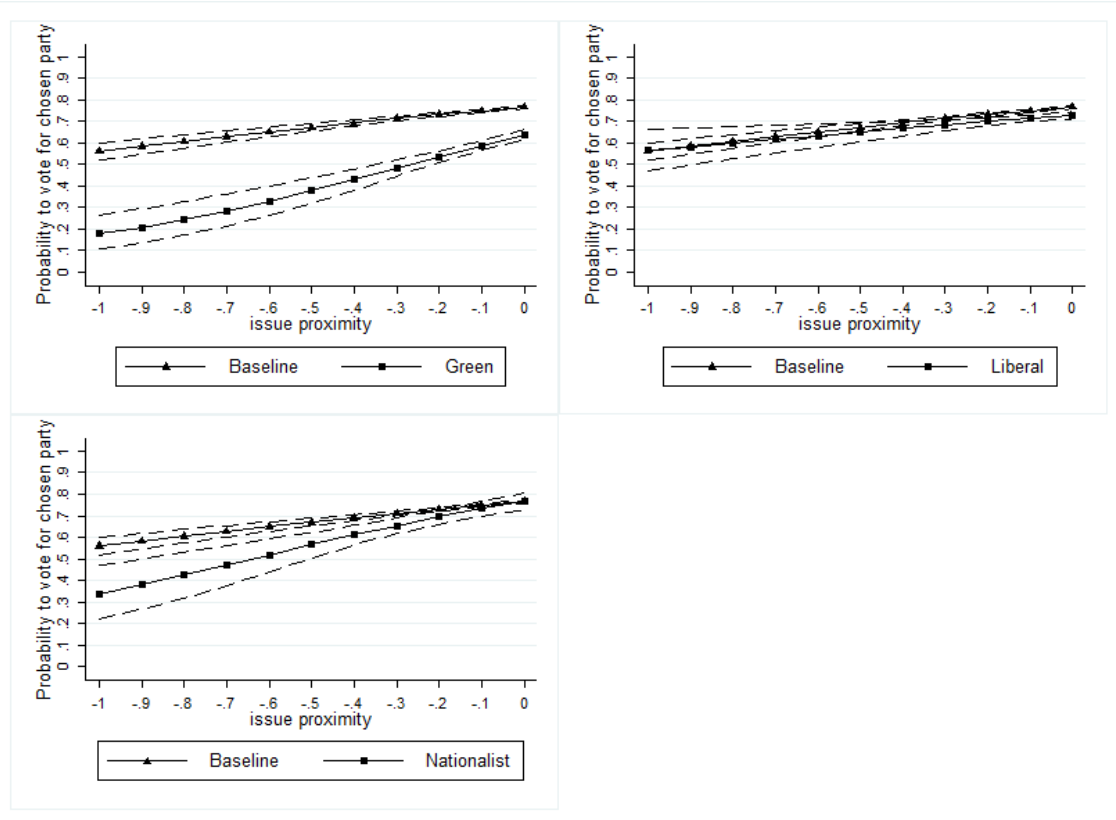


Figure 5.12- Probability of vote choice with proximity model across party families (individual difference scale)

The analyses of this section also show some other relevant results. First, radical right parties do not seem to interact significantly with any issue voting model in particular. This means that the immigration issue can affect them in a quite homogeneous way, following both proximity and directional logics of issue voting. Second, in spite of the apparently significant coefficient of the interaction, liberal parties are not significantly affected by the individual difference attitude under a proximity perspective since this effect is indistinguishable from the baseline category. By contrast, nationalist parties seem to be slightly more affected by it. Third, conservative parties are surprisingly very little affected by the immigration issue, especially in terms of the societal hierarchy scale (both in terms of proximity and direction).

5.7- Across party characteristics: saliency and size

The heterogeneity of the electoral impact of immigration under a spatial perspective can be dependent on other more specific party characteristics beyond the family they belong to. The characteristics that have been explored in this section are the saliency that parties give to the immigration issue, their size, and their emphasis on negative mentions of internationalism, positive mentions of decentralisation, positive mentions of a controlled economy, positive mentions of the expansion of the welfare state, and mentions of the need to preserve the national way of life. The emphasis on these issues was extracted from Comparative Manifesto Project scores, but they did not show significant or consistent results when interacted with proximity or directional models of voting. So they have remained in the models as control variables. The results regarding the party saliency of the immigration issue itself and regarding the size of parties, however, offered significant and consistent results.

As regards the saliency of the immigration issue, it seems intuitive to expect that the electoral impact of this issue should be bigger as the importance and emphasis given to it by a given party goes up. In spite of the consensus about the importance of taking into account the saliency of an issue when assessing its electoral influence, it is not so clear how to do it. The proponents of the two-stage model of voting behaviour (formation of party preference and actual vote choice) suggest that the distribution of utilities across the electorate somehow indirectly account for the saliency of a specific issue (Van der Brug et al. 2007:14-15). The debate of how to properly conceptualise the salience of an issue, however,

is older and has considered other more direct approaches. Some of the more recurrent (and also contested) approaches are the intensity of the media coverage (Epstein and Segal 2000), the validity of open-ended questions in opinion polls (such as “which is the most important problem facing the country now?”) (Wlezien 2005), the focus on specific group memberships (Hutchings 2001) and the measures of objective saliency (like number of immigrants or growth of immigrant fluxes in a given country). In this case I will rely on the assessment of the saliency of the immigration issue by academic experts (Benoit and Laver 2007), as it is the same technique used here to derive party positions on the immigration issue.

On the other hand, a policy-oriented mechanism of voting implicit in any spatial theory of voting requires some sort of strategic consideration about who is more likely to be able to implement this policy and who is not. The size of the party is a relevant indicator used in previous electoral studies (Van der Eijk et al. 1996), and a good proxy to identify bigger parties more likely to be in office and to be responsible of implementing a preferred immigration policy. Therefore, I expect bigger parties to be more affected by attitudes towards immigration. The size of the parties (in terms of vote share) has been imported from Benoit and Laver’s (2007) expert surveys as well.

Table 5.10- Conditional logit assessing heterogeneity of proximity model across party characteristics (individual difference scale)¹³

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Proximity societal hierarchy	1.04	0.13	0.000
Proximity individual difference	-2.56	0.96	0.007
Party ID	3.99	0.05	0.000
Party saliency on immigration	1	0.27	0.000
Party emphasis on decentralisation	0.08	0.01	0.000
Proximity individual difference*party saliency on immigration	4.77	1.24	0.000
Proximity individual difference*party emphasis on decentralisation	0.17	0.06	0.002
Log likelihood	-5507.885		
N observations	50241		
N cases	7699		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

The analyses show that the immigration issue does indeed have a stronger electoral effect among those parties which give more saliency to the issue and which are bigger, controlling for several other characteristics in terms of party discourse. No interactions are significant for the societal scale, and this is why tables 5.10 and 5.11 only report the results for the individual difference scale. The proximity model presents a positive and significant interaction with party saliency. The probability calculus reported in figure 5.13, however, reveals a quite complex and unexpected interaction effect.

¹³ When included separately in the model, the interaction with saliency (+), size (-), decentralisation (+), and controlled economy (-) turn out as significant. When introduced altogether, just saliency and decentralisation remain significant. Then I run the final model with just these 2 interactions. When replicating the same analysis with a logit model to calculate probabilities, however, the interaction with emphasis on decentralisation becomes non-significant and therefore does not seem to be a very reliable result.

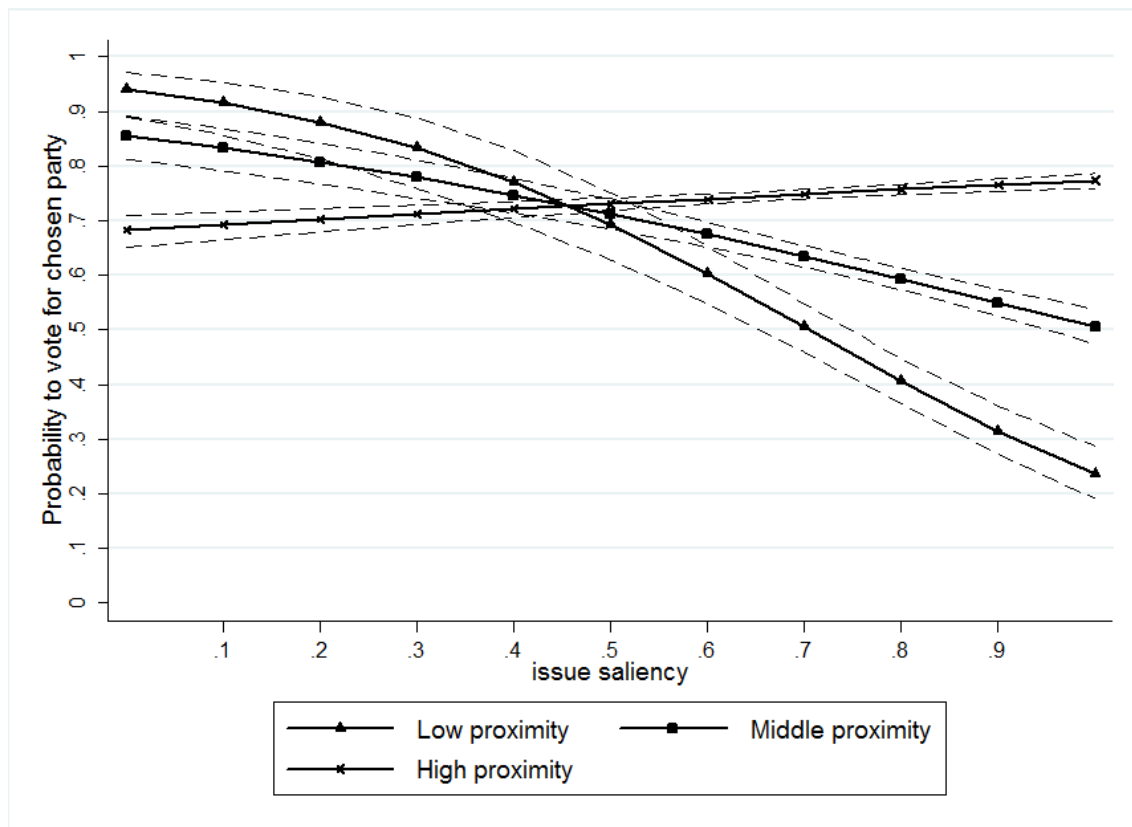


Figure 5.13- Probability of vote choice with proximity model conditional on party issue saliency (individual difference scale)

When the issue is salient in the party agenda, the likelihood of losing psychologically party attached voters but who are distant on this issue is very high. By contrast, by being salient those who are already close to the party on this issue do not significantly increase in likelihood to vote for it. The confidence intervals of the predictions only overlap at middle values of issue saliency, but the differences between the three probability lines are significant when the saliency is lower or bigger. So, in terms of spatial voting, it is more rational and useful for parties to put this issue off the agenda. In chapter 6 I will show that the valence mechanism works the other way around, because it is precisely by making this issue salient and projecting a good image of competence that parties can attract non-attached voters. The conclusion is that parties have to behave strategically between a policy-oriented and a valence-oriented mechanism. Being salient on the former can lose voters who are likely to vote for that party but who disagree with the party issue position. But being salient on the latter can attract voters who by default would not vote for that party (because they are not attached psychologically) if they are concerned by that issue in a given particular context.

Table 5.11- Conditional logit assessing heterogeneity of directional model across party characteristics (individual difference scale)

	<i>Log odds ratio</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>P value</i>
Directional societal hierarchy	1.37	0.28	0.000
Directional individual difference	4.66	0.6	0.000
Party ID	3.82	0.05	0.000
Party size	0.06	0.002	0.000
Party emphasis on internationalism	-0.05	0.01	0.001
Directional individual difference*party size	-0.09	0.02	0.000
Directional individual difference*emphasis on internationalism	-0.95	0.29	0.001
Log likelihood	-5058.47		
N observations	50241		
N cases	7699		

Source: ESS 2002-2003
Controls not shown

Table 5.11 confirms that, the bigger the party, the more likely it is to be affected by the immigration issue through a directional way of voting. The effect is quite strong but especially among those people who have a low coincidence of direction and intensity of the preference with the party. Apart from this reasonable finding which confirms that strategic considerations also mediate the electoral effect of attitudes towards immigration, the plot of probabilities in figure 5.14 reveals that a high coincidence between a voter and a party in terms of issue direction implies a very high probability to vote for that party even if it is small. More specifically, a high directionality regarding the immigration issue is associated with almost 80% of probabilities to vote for a very small party. The three probability lines are statistically distinct except for when the party is very big, since the probability to vote for very big parties is very high regardless of the issue synergy between voters and parties.

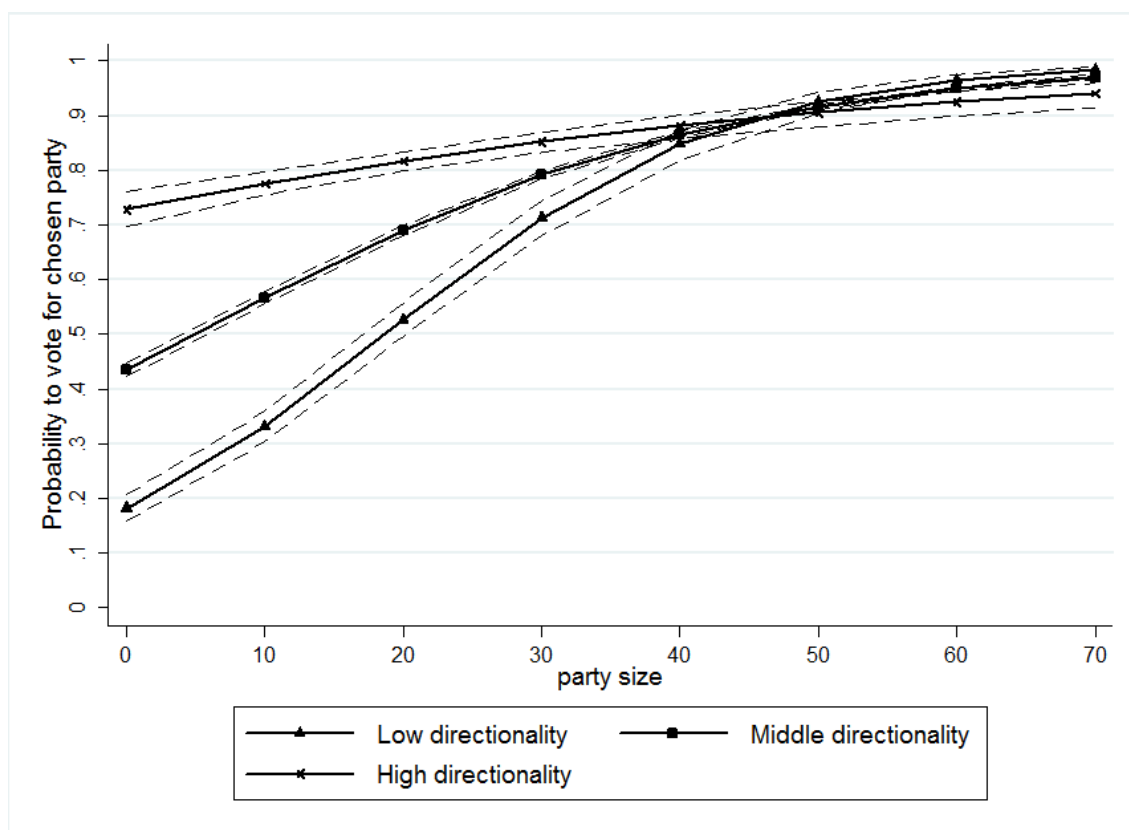


Figure 5.14- Probability of vote choice with directional model conditional on party size (individual difference scale)

5.8- Across institutional settings: integration of migrants and fragmentation of party systems

Finally, some systemic characteristics can also mediate the impact of attitudes towards immigration on vote choice from a spatial perspective. Two main theoretical expectations have been partially confirmed in the analyses presented in this section. The first expectation is that the electoral effect of the immigration issue depends on the degree of liberalisation of public policy regarding immigration in the country concerned. In other words, the electoral effect of the immigration issue depends on the institutional and legal opportunities for migrants to become integrated in the destination society. The second expectation affects the characteristics of the party system analysed, more specifically its fragmentation and the consequent incentives and capacity that parties have to distinguish their positions along the spatial continuum.

The character of the national immigration policy itself should affect the electoral impact of the issue (for the types and development of different public policies regarding immigration

in Europe – see Castles and Miller 2003:14-15, 32-33, 243, 249-251). It is reasonable to expect a very different electoral reaction to an issue depending on whether it is apparently under control and less likely to generate blunt social and political conflicts, or whether it is not. In the case of immigration, if foreigners are well-integrated into a society it is reasonable to expect less conflict and therefore less of a basis for electoral competition on this issue. By contrast, if immigrants do not have access to a normal status in social, political and cultural spheres of the host society they are more likely to be perceived as outsiders and even as dangerous challenges to the *status quo*. It is important to note that this argument is not equivalent to ethnic competition theory, which states that socio-economically vulnerable strata are more likely to perceive immigrants as a threat and therefore vote for radical right parties. In this case, the lack of integration of migrants into the host society can affect a number of social strata, including non-vulnerable ones. Then, the un-resolved situation of the immigration issue is more likely to be on the public agenda and in the overall structure of spatial political competition.

The second expectation is that the character of the party system should also have a prominent role in enhancing or watering down the impact of a given issue. The number and relevance of parties in Sartorian terms define some of the essential parameters of a party system, as well as the interaction between its components (Sartori 1999a; Sartori 1999b; Sartori 1999c). The mechanisms of representation cannot be the same in very fragmented as in non-fragmented systems, for instance. The argument I propose here is that the more parties one can find in a given political system, the more difficult it will be for them to have distinct positions regarding the immigration issue and the less likely a spatial mechanism of voting is to be observed. By contrast, the fewer parties there are, the easier it is for them to monopolise or represent bigger and clearly different spaces of preferred immigration policy.

The methodological strategy followed in this section varies a bit in comparison to the previous sections. Instead of relying on conditional logit techniques which are specifically designed to assess individual and party variation instead of systemic variation, I use hierarchical logit analyses. More specifically, this method consists first of implementing a random-coefficient logit model with vote choice as the dependent variable¹⁴ (using the dataset in stacked format as explained in section 5.2) and with the proximity and directional terms regarding both the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales as independent variables (one at a time). This allows me to estimate a coefficient (effect) per

¹⁴ With the command “xtmelogit” in Stata 10.

country of four variables on vote choice: proximity between voters and parties regarding societal hierarchy, proximity between voters and parties regarding individual difference, direction between voters and parties regarding societal hierarchy, and direction between voters and parties regarding individual difference. Then, each of these four systemic variables (which can be interpreted as the behavioural strength of each spatial model regarding each of the two scales analysed here) is correlated with indicators operationalising the two theoretical expectations summarised above in this section: immigration public policy and party system fragmentation. Significant correlations would mean that there is a relationship between the spatial effect of the issue and a specific systemic feature. Two-step hierarchical designs have proved to be an appropriate method to check for contextual relationships in a reliable¹⁵ but at the same time in a parsimonious and easy to visualise manner (Achen 2005), especially when the computational cost of estimating macro and micro-macro effects through conditional logistic functions is so high.

In terms of measurement, the degree of liberalisation of the country's public policy towards immigration is imported from the European Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)¹⁶. The specific indexes that are imported capture the level of immigrant integration in the host society from less to more, and in terms of labour market access, family reunion, long-term residence, political participation, access to nationality, and existence of anti-discrimination policies. On the other hand, the effective number of parties is constructed by me using Laakso's and Taagepera's measure of fragmentation (Laakso and Taagepera 1979).

Table 5.12 presents the bivariate correlations between the effect of each spatial model and each of the contextual features expected to have a relationship with them. Since the unit of analysis is now the political system rather than the individual or the individual conditional on a party choice, I accept statistically significant relationships at $p = 0.1$ rather than at the usual $p = 0.05$ to avoid committing type II errors¹⁷.

From a linear perspective, the role of proximity thinking in the electoral effect of attitudes towards immigration tends to be more mediated by systemic characteristics than by directional thinking. More specifically, the predictive strength of proximity thinking regarding the societal hierarchy scale is negatively correlated with some dimensions of the

¹⁵ Since the estimation of the slope of issue voting models is in reality a hierarchical micro-macro analysis.

¹⁶ <http://www.integrationindex.eu/> (11/02/2009)

¹⁷ So considering that there is no relationship when in reality there is one.

integration of migrants in the host society (legal access to nationality, existence of anti-discrimination policies, and labour market access) and with the effective number of parties. The magnitude of these relationships is close to -0.5. The proximity effect regarding the individual difference scale is significantly and negatively correlated with migrants' access to nationality. Among the correlations with directional models, only the directional effect regarding the individual difference scale is significantly and negatively correlated with immigrants' political participation (-0.57). In general, thus, the expected negative relationship between the spatial electoral effect of the immigration issue and immigrants' integration and the effective number of parties is only partially validated.

Table 5.12- Bivariate correlation between spatial models slope and systemic characteristics

	<i>Proximity societal hierarchy coefficient</i>	<i>Proximity individual difference coefficient</i>	<i>Directional societal hierarchy coefficient</i>	<i>Directional individual difference coefficient</i>
Access to nationality (MIPEX index)	-0.47* (0.06)	-0.48* (0.05)	-0.02 (0.94)	-0.2 (0.43)
Existence of anti-discrimination policies (MIPEX index)	-0.49* (0.05)	-0.2 (0.44)	-0.1 (0.7)	-0.06 (0.83)
Family reunion (MIPEX index)	-0.25 (0.33)	-0.29 (0.26)	-0.01 (0.96)	-0.2 (0.4)
Labour market access (MIPEX index)	-0.45* (0.07)	-0.32 (0.21)	0.18 (0.48)	-0.07 (0.79)
Long-term residence (MIPEX index)	-0.18 (0.49)	-0.06 (0.8)	0.22 (0.38)	0.22 (0.39)
Immigrant political participation (MIPEX index)	-0.08 (0.75)	-0.34 (0.18)	-0.17 (0.52)	-0.57* (0.02)
Effective number of parties	-0.56* (0.02)	-0.14 (0.59)	-0.29 (0.26)	-0.37 (0.15)

* Significant at $p > 0.1$.

Source : ESS 2002-2003 and MIPEX

The criteria to establish significant relationships in table 5.12 are based on the assumption of linearity. However, practically all the coefficients are negative as would be expected if spatial electoral effects of immigration are weaker when the legal possibility to integrate

migrants and when the effective number of parties go up (only the relationships of directional thinking with labour market access and long-term residence have an unexpected positive sign – however these relationships are not statistically significant even at the 0.1 level). In order to properly assess whether the lack of significance of the correctly signed coefficients is just due to non-perfect linearity, I present below some scatter plots. I have fitted smooth loess lines in those graphs in order to observe the specific relationship found in the data. Loess functions are an acronym for “local regression”, and they have to be understood as a non-parametric extension of the traditional least-squares regression on each sequence of the relationship between two variables. The fitted curve “is obtained empirically rather than through stringent prior specifications about the nature of any structure that may exist within the data” (Jacoby 2000:578), in order to find complex relationships that would have been overlooked with traditional statistical procedures.

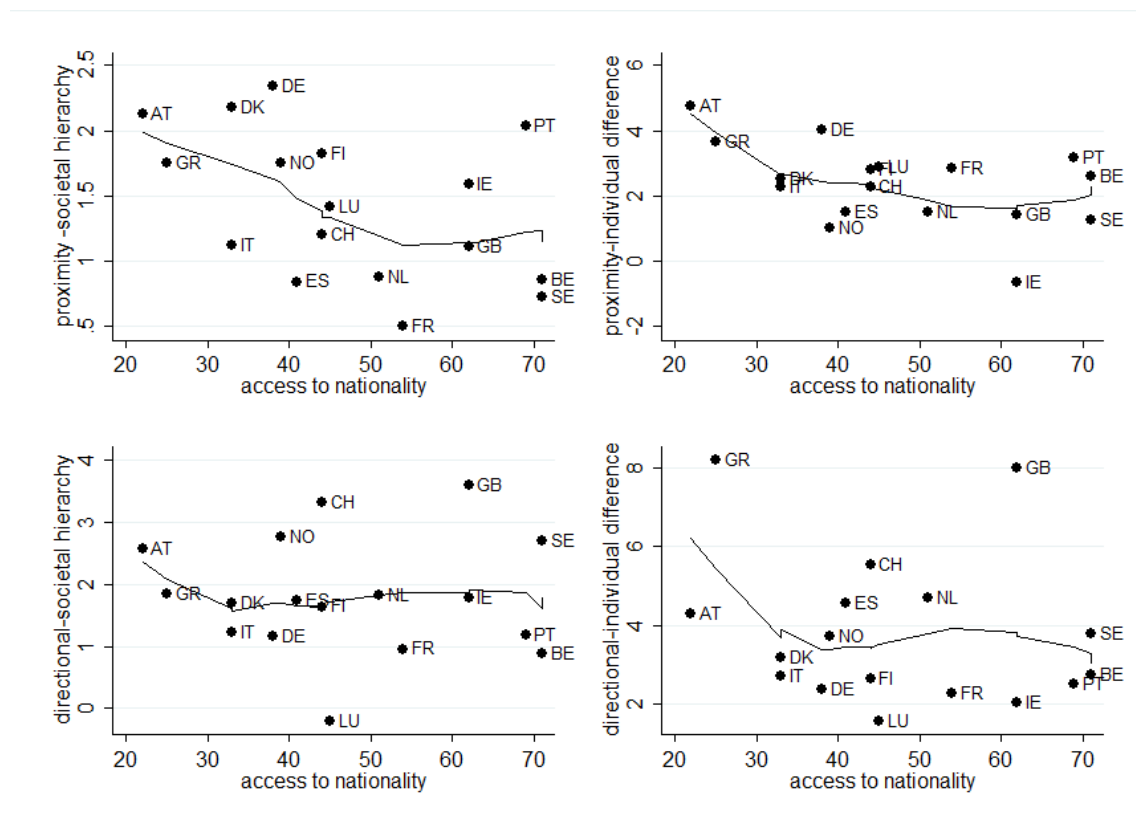


Figure 5.15- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and immigrants' access to nationality

Figure 5.15 shows that the relationships between the spatial electoral effect of the immigration issue and the legal possibility for migrants to access nationality is always negative but not perfectly linear. The slopes are weak but tend to be better represented by a

curvilinear U-shaped function. This means that in those countries where it is more difficult for migrants to access nationality, the electoral effect of immigration is bigger. The effect of the issue goes down as the legal requirements to access nationality become more flexible, but the relationship tends to slightly go up again in more liberal countries. Overall, the lack of integration of migrants in the host society tends to make the conflicts and disagreements on the immigration issue more explicit on the electoral results.

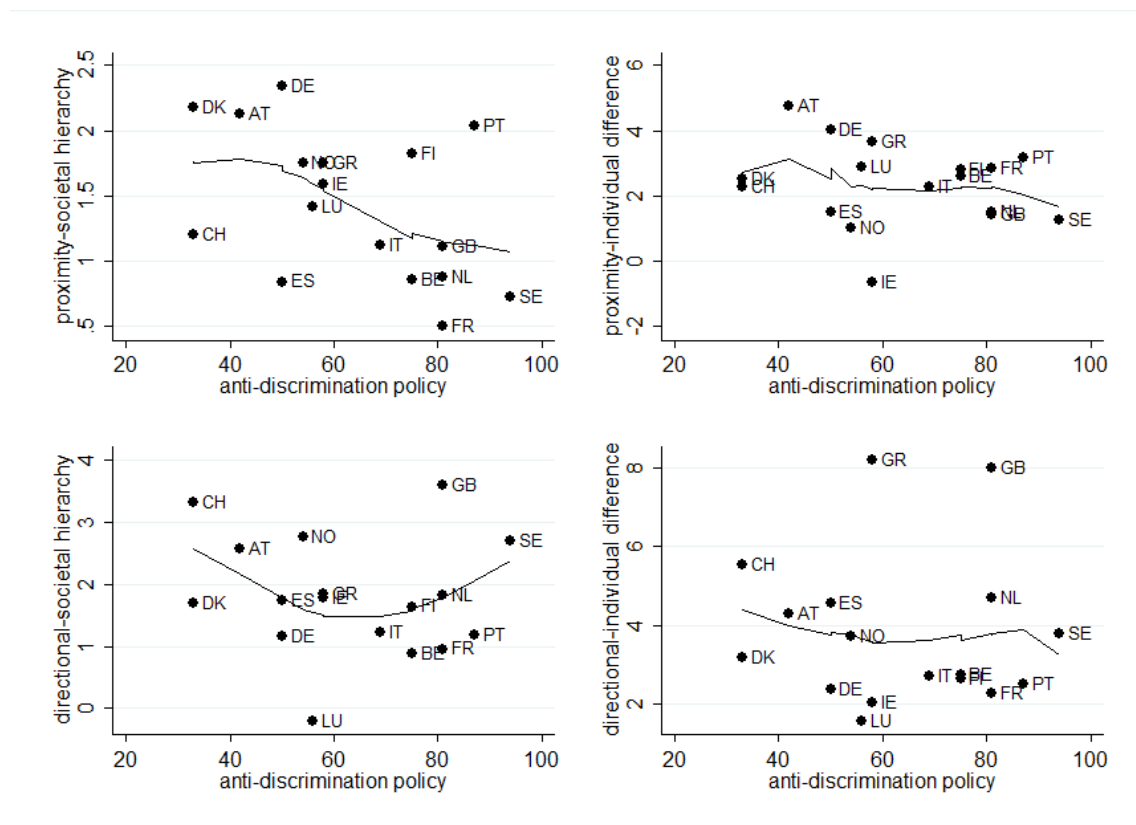


Figure 5.16- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and existence of anti-discrimination policies

Figure 5.16 reveals a similar pattern to figure 5.15. The relationship between the spatial effect of immigration and the existence of anti-discrimination policies in the host country tends to be negative. On average, the only relationship reaching statistical significance from a linear perspective is with the proximity coefficient regarding the societal hierarchy scale. The loess function, however, reveals that the slope of this relationship is flatter in extreme values of this dimension of the integration of immigrants. On the other hand, the directional effect regarding the societal hierarchy scale failed to reach significance because it follows a clearer quadratic U-shaped pattern. Again, in those systems where it is more difficult for migrants to integrate due to the lack of anti-discrimination policies, the impact of the

immigration issue is stronger. The electoral strength of attitudes towards immigration weakens as the country is legally more equipped against discrimination, except for very high values of this index, where the effect of the issue raises again. This pattern is more observable in the societal hierarchy scale than in the individual difference scale, where the slopes of the local regression are practically flat.

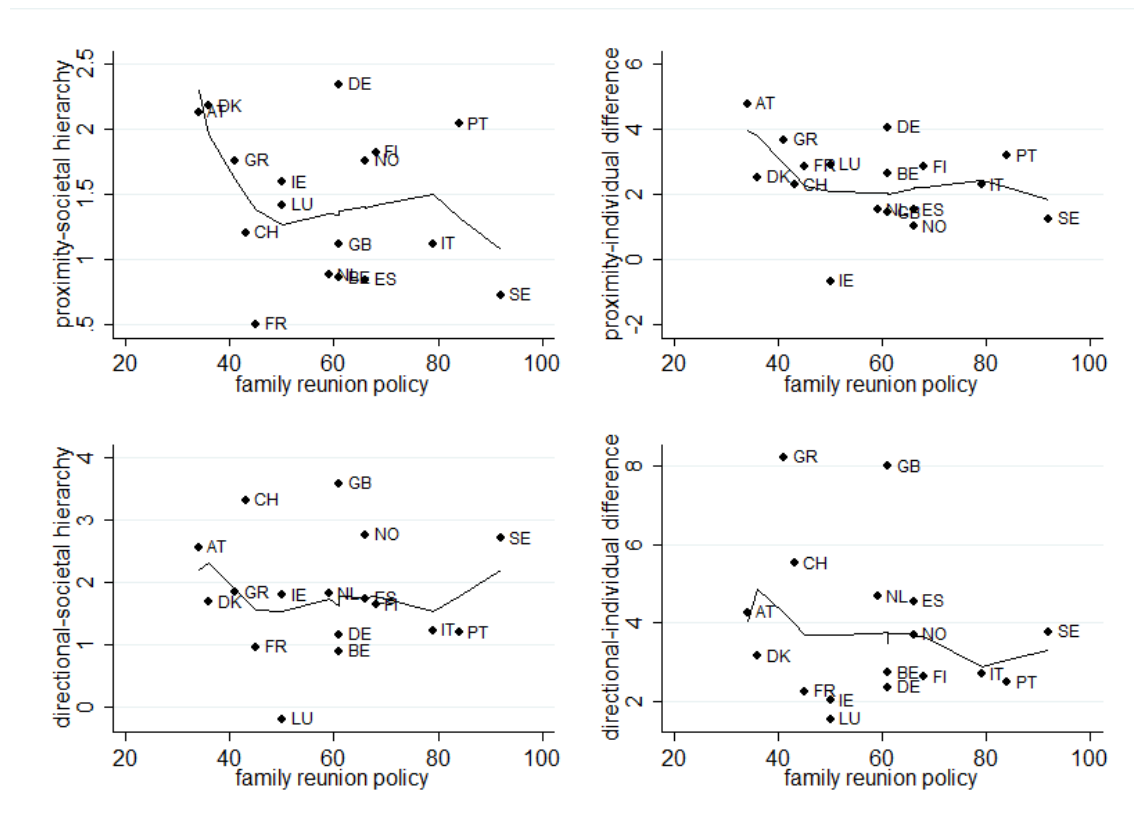


Figure 5.17- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and existence of family reunion policy

The relationship between spatial effects of the immigration issue on voting behaviour and how easy the integration of migrants is through family reunion policies is again negative. The slopes of the relationships shown in figure 5.17, however, are only steeper in terms of the proximity effect regarding the societal hierarchy scale, where the spatial effect of the immigration issue seems to vary more across contexts. The pattern is again non-linear, in the sense that the countries placed in a relatively middle position on the family reunion dimension do not seem to follow a clear pattern. Only extreme values of this dimension are related with high electoral effects of the immigration issue (when migrants have difficulties to integrate) or with low electoral effects of the issue (when migrants are more easily integrated).

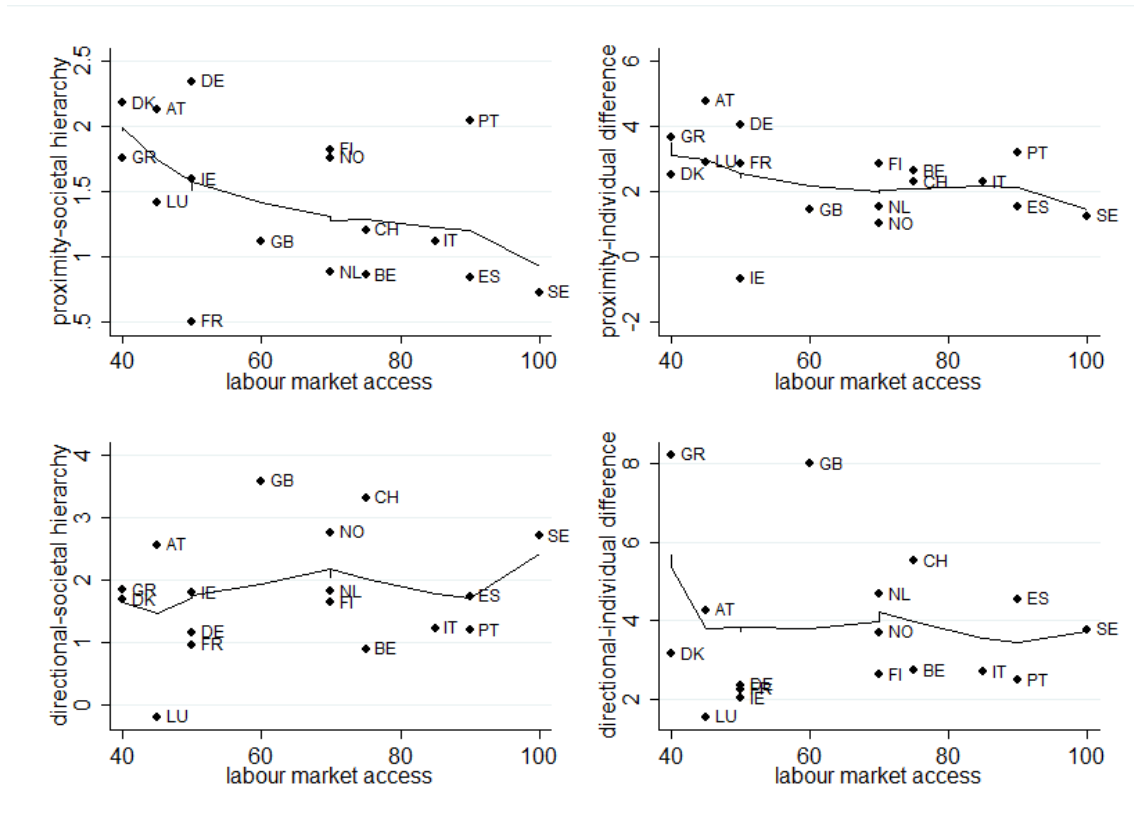


Figure 5.18- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and labour market access for migrants

Even if the possibility for migrants to access the labour market of the host country seems a crucial integration dimension, it only seems to follow the expected relationship regarding proximity voting. Among the two proximity voting models, however, again the societal hierarchy scale seems to vary more across political systems in a way that resembles a standard linear function. As shown in figure 5.18, among the two tested forms of directional voting, the societal hierarchy construct seems to follow an opposite pattern to the expected one, whereas the individual difference construct does not follow any clear pattern.

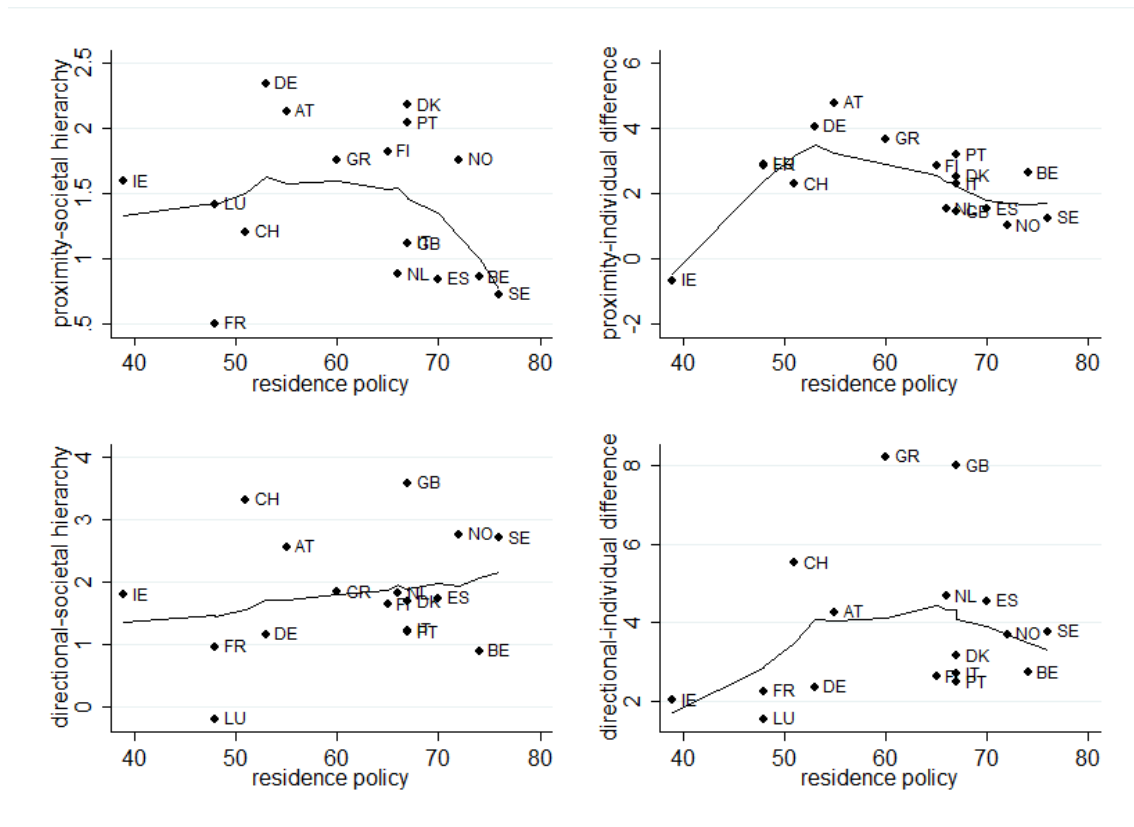


Figure 5.19- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and residence permit policy

Figure 5.19 partially confirms again that, among some spatial effects of the immigration issue on voting behaviour in Europe, a proper integration of migrants through public policies tends to depress the strength of the issue in political competition. The dimension of access to residence permits for migrants represented is the one represented on the X axes of the graphs included in figure 5.19. The relationship is again U-shaped and more pronounced regarding the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy scale. The slope of the relationship is less steep regarding the proximity effect of the individual difference scale, and it would resemble an almost perfect linear function if Ireland was not a clear outlier. The contextual effect of directional voting follows a less clear pattern.

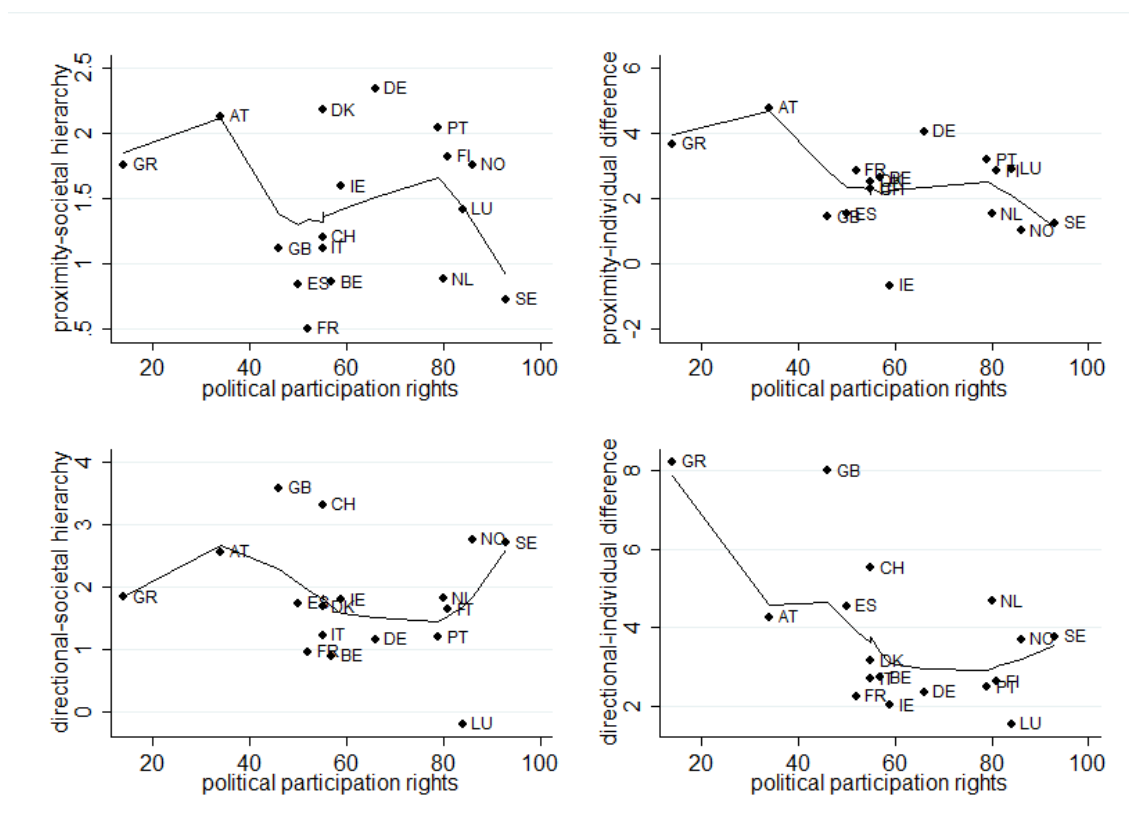


Figure 5.20- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and immigrants' political participation

Figure 5.20 shows the relationship between the different spatial effects of the immigration issue and the last dimension of immigrants' integration in European countries available at MIPEX. The theoretical reasoning summarised above would expect that the clearer and legally recognised are the rights of migrants to politically participate in the host society, the weaker will be the electoral impact of immigration. The results, however, show that this particular dimension of immigrants' integration does not follow exactly this expected pattern. The relationship is very unclear regarding the societal hierarchy scale. The directional effect of this scale can actually be relatively big when migrants can almost be fully integrated in terms of political participation, as it happens in countries like Norway and Sweden. This makes sense since the more integrated migrants are in political competition, the more likely it is that their demands and potential conflicts derived from their demands become relevant in this competition. This does not seem to happen, however, with the individual difference scale, which seems to matter less as migrants are more integrated following the U-shaped curve found earlier.

Overall, the careful analyses of the loess functions linking spatial electoral effects of attitudes towards immigration in the overall party system across European countries offer a complex pattern. First, the proximity effect seems to vary more across legal settings regarding the integration of migrants, especially regarding the societal hierarchy construct. This is so even if, as shown above, the societal hierarchy scale has a weaker effect than the individual difference scale on average. This finding just shows that, even if societal hierarchy perceptions of immigration are weaker on average, their effects vary quite a bit depending on how the integration of migrants is handled from a public policy perspective. Second, when a clearer relationship is found between a spatial effect and a legal dimension of the integration of migrants in the host society, it tends to be curvilinear rather than linear. More specifically, low values of integration are associated with stronger electoral effects of the immigration issue. This might be so because when the immigration phenomenon is not subject to a legal framework it becomes an outsider phenomenon with all the potential disagreements and conflicts that may derive from this. The strength of the immigration issue tends to decrease as migrants have more legal opportunities to integrate, even if maximum levels of integration tend to enhance again the influence of the immigration issue on party competition. This relationship, however, is not clear on all the legal dimensions analysed. It is clearer regarding the access to nationality and the existence of anti-discrimination policies. As a third and unexpected finding, it has to be noted that precisely when the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy construct tends to decrease also with high values of ethnic integration, the directional effect goes up precisely on these values. This would mean that even when from a proximity perspective the immigration issue seems to be less relevant when integration values are higher, the issue is in reality acquiring more prominence from a directional (and eventually more centrifugal) perspective.

This just confirms the curvilinear relationship between the spatial effect of the issue and legal integration of migrants. When integration is very low or very high, the issue has more effect. By contrast, intermediate values of migrants' legal integration tend to depress the relevance of the issue.

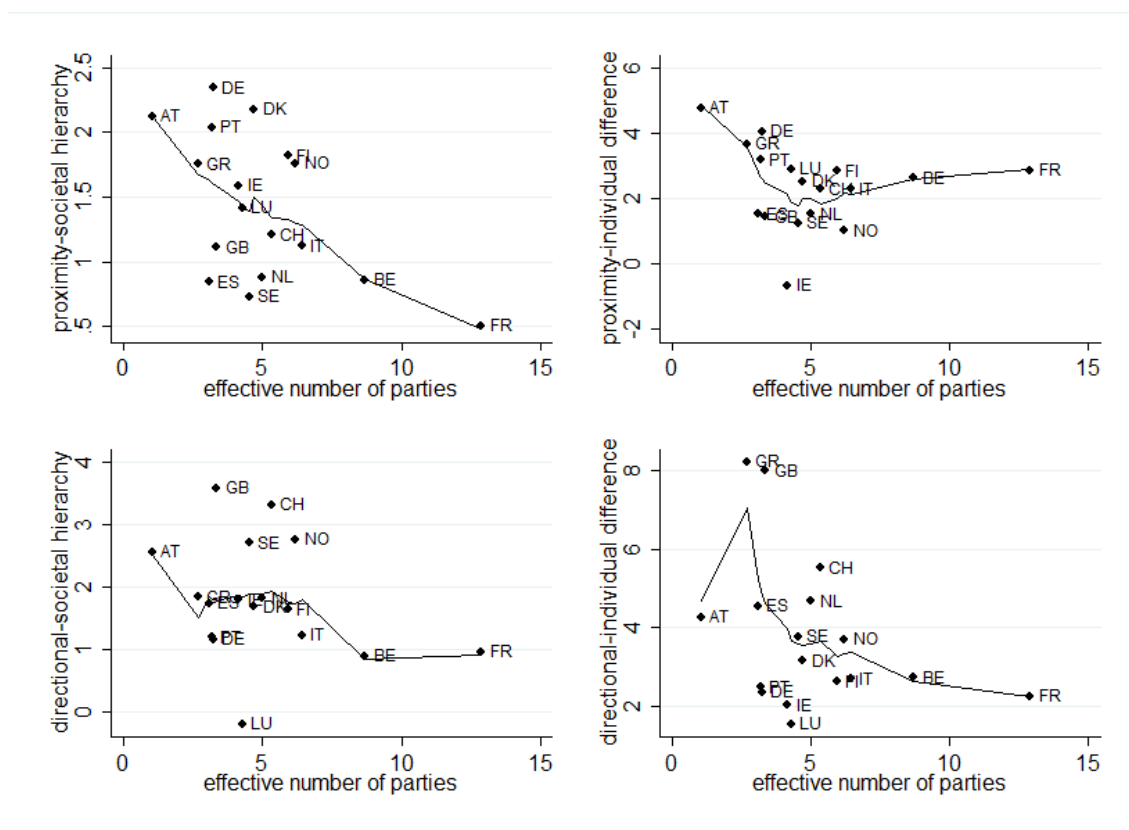


Figure 5.21- Scatter between spatial models coefficients and effective number of parties

Finally, the hypothesis that the spatial effect of immigration decreases as the effective number of parties increases is clearly confirmed with a very steep and significant slope regarding the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy scale. This expectation is also confirmed with the other three tested combinations of attitudinal constructs and spatial effects, but in those cases the slope is less steep and follows a curvilinear path.

Apart from the relationship between spatial effects, immigrants' legal integration and effective number of parties, I explored a number of other possible relationships. GDP, unemployment, change in unemployment and social expenditure were imported from the World Development Indicators of the World Bank. The proportion of foreign born was imported from OCDE databases. I also tested relationships with voter and party polarisation on the immigration issue. Voter polarisation is the aggregate variance per country of the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales. Party polarisation is constructed using Hazan's weighted system indicators (Hazan 1995) and on the basis of the party positions coming from Benoit and Laver's expert survey (2007). None of these analyses yield

significant or clear conclusions, so the spatial effects of the immigration issue seem to be independent from these specific systemic characteristics.

5.9- Summary

The analysis of the unconditional effect of both the proximity and directional models of immigration voting has offered three important findings. The first one is that a perception of immigration based on the individual traits of migrants making them adaptable, similar and functional is more relevant in electoral terms than discourses and attitudes based on a sociotropic vision of immigration and on how superior or inferior the societal outcomes will be. According to the results shown in the previous chapter, this dimension was better integrated into the left-right dimension of political discourse. This first finding confirms the issue constraint hypothesis (H3) developed in chapter 4, which predicted that attitudinal dimensions more properly constrained within broad ideological categories like left-right are more likely to have an impact on vote choice.

The second conclusion is that the proximity model seems to have a stronger effect than the directional one. This would contradict the image of the immigration issue as a political question which only polarises and affects one extreme of the political continuum, and which just impinges on radical right voting. The centripetal dynamic predicted by the Downsian account of spatial competition suggests that the immigration issue can also be very important in moderate and mainstream parts of the spectrum. This confirms the proximity hypothesis developed in the theoretical chapter before (H4a), and rejects the directional hypothesis (H4b), though directional voting was found to be not without importance.

The third conclusion is that the immigration issue from a spatial perspective can affect the vote choice for a party only among those people who belong already to that party's potential electorate, defined as the group of voters who feel psychologically attached or identified with this party. The mobilisation effect of the immigration issue is thus remarkable, but its capacity to affect electoral results beyond the frontiers delineated by party attachments is weaker (mobilisation hypothesis, H5).

Apart from these three general tendencies, I have tested possible sources of heterogeneity across party types and political systems. The findings summarised in the previous

paragraphs imply that the spatial logic of competition can affect any party. The analysis of issue voting heterogeneity across party families done in this chapter, however, suggests that there are some types of parties that can be particularly affected by attitudes towards immigration. The decentralisation hypothesis suggested here has been confirmed in the case of the directional model. Supporters of regional parties seem to be particularly affected by the immigration issue, but only from a directional perspective, and both for the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales. The axis of competition concerning centre and periphery, centralisation and decentralisation, seems to have an important role in the mediation of the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration. This is so because the immigration phenomenon stresses many economic, cultural and public policy challenges which are already at stake in the dispute between national and sub-national visions of political representation and governance.

On the other hand, green parties seem to be particularly affected by the immigration issue both from a proximity and a directional perspective, but only on the basis of the individual difference scale. The mechanism behind this finding is summarised in the positivity hypothesis. If both negative and positive opinions about immigration can have behavioural consequences, and if the generation of a right-authoritarian electoral market due to post-industrial ideological evolutions explains the emergence of radical right parties, it is likely to expect a counter-balancing effect on new left parties representing an opposite position in this spatial continuum and issue agenda.

As for other party characteristics, the proximity model regarding the individual difference scale has a conditional electoral effect depending on the importance that a given party accords to the immigration issue. When the issue is salient in the party agenda, the likelihood of losing supporters who are distant on this issue is very high. By contrast, when the issue is salient, those who are already close to the party on this issue do not become more likely to vote for it. So, in terms of spatial voting, it is more rational for parties to keep this issue off the agenda. In chapter 6 I will show that the valence mechanism works the other way around, because it is precisely by making this issue salient and projecting a good image of competence regarding this issue that parties can attract non-attached voters. The conclusion is that parties need to adopt a mix of policy-oriented and valence-oriented strategies. Having salient policies can lose voters who were likely to vote for the party but who disagree with the party's issue position. But having a salient competent image (as we will see in the next chapter) can attract voters who otherwise would not have voted for that

party (because they are not attached psychologically) if immigration is an issue that matters to them. At the same time, the analyses in terms of party size reveal that a high coincidence between a voter and a party in terms of direction of issue preference is associated with a very high probability to vote for this party, even if it is very small.

Finally, the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration under a spatial perspective can also be mediated by contextual and institutional features. The hypothesis that the impact will be stronger in less fragmented party systems is confirmed with a strong and linear slope regarding the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy scale. The hypothesis is also confirmed from a more curvilinear and U-shaped perspective regarding the other spatial effects analysed. This means that the higher the fragmentation, the more difficult it is for parties to hold clearly distinguished stances and to represent sufficiently broad electoral spaces, and therefore the weaker the spatial mechanism of voting becomes. On the other hand, the hypothesis that spatial mechanisms of voting according to attitudes towards immigration will be stronger when immigrants are more integrated in political, economic and cultural spheres of the country, and therefore when they constitute a weaker challenge, is partially confirmed. Proximity effects are more likely to vary across these institutional specifications, especially regarding the societal hierarchy scale conditional upon the access of migrants to nationality, the existence of anti-discrimination policies, and the access of migrants to the labour market.

Some of the clearest relationships between the spatial effect of immigration and the legal structure to integrate migrants, however, follow a curvilinear relationship. More specifically, the spatial effect of immigration on the overall dynamic of party competition is stronger when immigrants are less integrated due to the negative impact that this outsider effect generates among the native population. This effect tends to decrease as the institutional setting is more flexible, but it rises again when the institutional setting is extremely flexible and the legal requirements for immigration are too liberal. When the decreasing function of the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy construct seems to follow a linear pattern, the directional (and centrifugal) effect increases at high values of integration. This finding just confirms the curvilinear character of the relationship between spatial voting regarding the immigration issue and the legal integration of migrants. When the integration is very low, conflicts are very visible in party competition. When integration is very high, the issue matters more again. When the integration values are intermediate, the role of the immigration issue in the overall party competition dynamic tends to be weaker.

6. VALENCE MODELS AND THE CONQUEST OF NEW ELECTORATES

“Issue handling competence is the key”

John R. Petrocik (1996:847)

“A valence issue is a nonpartisan issue”

Giovanni Sartori (1976:330)

6.1- From structure to context

Chapter 5 has analysed the impact of attitudes towards immigration on vote choice across almost 20 European systems. One of the main findings in that chapter refers to how established party systems can reshape or mutate once the immigration issue transcends a radical fringe of electoral competition and gets incorporated into mainstream party competition. More specifically, the immigration issue framed under a spatial logic of voting proves to have an impact on vote choice, but only among those people who feel already attached or identified with a party. The appropriate synergy between the position of the voter and the position of the party this voter is identified with can increase very remarkably the probability of this voter to finally choose this party. Thus, the immigration issue under a spatial perspective can generate a significant amount of change in the electoral support of established parties, but only through a mobilisation effect. In other terms, spatial mechanics of voting regarding the immigration issue can generate electoral change but only mobilising or demobilising (rather than reshaping) the established structure of potential electoral markets in terms of psychological identification.

The current chapter goes from the structure implied by settled spaces of issue competition to a more short-term conceptualisation of electoral competition through valence models of voting. While in chapter 5 the immigration issue was conceptualised as an attitude which by definition is stable over time and which can be measured through reliable and consistent positions in a policy continuum, the current chapter departs from the spatial rationale of issue voting and conceptualises immigration as a problem (not suitable to be defined or measured with identifiable policy positions) which becomes salient at a given point in time,

and which becomes associated with the image of competence of a party to successfully manage or solve that problem. Therefore, the distinction between the societal hierarchy and the individual difference scales used before is inapplicable now. The immigration issue is not considered in this chapter as an attitude, but as a social concern in the mind of some voters who do not necessarily have one or another well-defined position on an abstract immigration policy continuum. The main proposition of this chapter is that, when analysing the electoral impact of immigration through valence properties, this issue becomes a powerful tool to understand electoral change through the acquisition by a party of non-aligned electorates. In other words, here I investigate the sort of voters who are not attached to the party that they finally vote for and who may be susceptible to concern over immigration at the time of a given election, and who might be drawn to a particular party by the images of competence in dealing with the immigration issue that they might perceive.

The distinction between electoral change taking place through the mobilisation or demobilisation of structured electoral markets (chapter 5) and electoral change taking place through the acquisition of dealigned voters (current chapter) can shed some light on the ambiguous temporal nature of issues in past research. Some authors consider them as stable attitudes and values, whereas others frame them as short-term electoral factors which depend on the contingency of context (Dan Wood and Vedlitz 2007). In general terms, issue voting can be understood as the independent and exogenous influence of issue opinions on people's vote¹ (see Whiteley 1988 for the different directions of causality suggested in the literature). The rise of issue voting is sometimes considered to have been a consequence of the decline of social cleavages and longstanding psychological attachments to parties (Nie et al. 1976; Franklin 1985; Franklin et al. 1992). Hence, there has been a tendency to conceptualise issues as short-term factors introduced by the parties, the media and interest groups during the electoral campaign (Anduiza and Bosch 2004). The short-term nature of the issue, however, is far from being an absolute property. It is more reasonable to think of

¹ The conceptualisation of issue voting has varied over time. In their groundbreaking defence of the concept of party identification and development of the so-called Michigan model in *The American Voter*, Campbell and his colleagues established three requirements for the existence of issue voting: citizens should be interested in an issue, they should hold an opinion on it, and they should know the party or candidate positions on the issue (Campbell et al. 1964:chapter 8). The empirical conclusion of these three very demanding prerequisites was that issue voting was practically inexistent in mass politics. As time went by, however, scholars evaluation of issue voting changed due to the rise of people's cognitive resources and political sophistication (basically based on an increasing average level of education across the different social strata), the fragmentation and individualisation of ways of life, the subsequent emergence of specialised issue publics, and the relaxation of the theoretical initial conditions of issue voting. Key was one of the first scholars to stress a higher capacity of the public to deal with issues, and he summarised and immortalised his findings through the famous quotation "voters are not fools" (Key 1966:7-8).

issues both as short-term and long-term factors². In spite of the fact that a significant group of scholars talk about issues as the result of short-term rational calculus to maximise utility at a given moment in time, it can also be argued that an issue may exert a stable potential influence in the form of relatively unchanging attitudes³. After having looked at the more structural side of spatial party competition, the current chapter tackles the more volatile and contingent impact of an issue.

6.2- *Expectations*

According to Stokes's original formulation, valence issues are issues "on which parties or leaders are differentiated not by what they advocate but by the degree to which they are linked in the public's mind with conditions or goals or symbols of which almost everyone approves or disapproves" (Stokes 1992:143). The dimension of agreement vs. disagreement, or consensus vs. conflict, is thus explicit in the definition of valence issues and their electoral impact. The consensus attribute is actually the main distinction between valence voting and the theoretical paradigm that it was intended to supplement, namely the spatial theory of voting (Downs 1957).

Valence theory of voting was initially set out as a critique to four axioms of spatial modelling of party competition (Stokes 1963). The first axiom was the assumption of *unidimensionality*, which was considered insufficient to capture the complexity of the issue voting space. The second was the *fixed structure* of the issue content of politics, which was unable to capture dynamic changes in the policy agenda. The third was the assumption of *common reference*, which overlooked the fact that the space of political competition can be differently perceived by leaders and voters. Finally, the fourth axiom was the assumption of *ordered dimensions* (Stokes 1992:142). Ordered dimensions (or position issues) were opposed to cardinal dimensions (or valence issues) in the sense that the latter could not be

² Apart from the unresolved long-term vs. short-term characterisation of issues, the literature has identified at least 5 different criteria to classify issues, which, again, are far from consensual: the degree of conflict about issue preferences (Stokes 1963), their thematic or substantive nature (Budge and Farlie 1983), their mediatic form adopted in the public sphere Canel et. al. 2004), their degree of proximity to the voter (the classic distinction between easy and hard issues by Carmines and Stimson 1980; see also Martin 2000), and their temporality (like retrospective and prospective, see Fiorina 1981). The framing and analyses of immigration under a valence rationale in this chapter helps to shed light on the conflict vs. consensus and on the temporal characterisation of issues.

³ The notion of attitude is central and highly consensual in the social and psychological literature applied to the study of politics, and refers precisely to a certain continuity in time among other features (Eckstein 1988).

represented on a policy continuum going from a minimal to a maximal preferred policy outcome. The fourth axiom was the most fundamental critical point and the main attribute used to distinguish valence from spatial models of issue voting in the tradition of research that followed Stokes.

The tradition of research that has followed Stokes has acquired new prominence in the last decade (van der Brug 2004; Sanders et al. 2004; Thomassen 2005; Carmines and Wagner 2006; Green 2007; Green-Pedersen 2007; Bélanger and Meguid 2008; Green and Hobolt 2008). This tradition has continued to interpret valence voting as contrary to spatial voting, and resulting from the consensual nature of the issue space composed of generally positively valued policy goals. More specifically, three of the most common explanations for the rise of valence politics in recent literature are the convergence of preferred policy outcomes in contemporary societies, the weakness of the association between left–right position and vote, and the low electoral explanatory power of structural divides like social class.

There is a quite generalised tendency to attribute the increasing relevance of valence voting to apparently rising consensus regarding desirable policy outcomes in advanced democracies (Fiorina 1981; Borre 2001:111; Aardal and van Wijnen 2005:196). Most of the research supporting this interpretation has been conducted in Britain, and has concluded that party convergence has occurred within a period of gradually increasing consensus among voters in terms of the key left–right dimension (Green 2007:630). According to this explanation, increasing consensus on issues captured by the left–right axis has important implications for party competition. Not only does it strengthen the explanatory power of competence evaluations in party choice, but it also casts doubt on the constraining function of general ideological axes governing party competition (Endersby and Galatas 1998; Bara and Budge 2001). Green underlines some reasons explaining ideological convergence (2007:632). One reason is the need for party organisations to become *catch-all* or *electoral-professional*, and the consequent process of *de-ideologisation* and concentration upon valence issues at the centre of the political spectrum. Another reason mentioned by Green is that issues may fail to capture modern political disagreement given the exogenous economic and political environment. For instance, questions relating to inflation and employment levels are now viewed less as a trade-off and more as reconcilable in economic terms.

There is a second and related interpretation of the emergence of valence politics. Since voters “cannot determine which party is closer to them in policy terms, because parties offer similar policies, voters will more likely choose between parties on the basis of which can deliver” (Green and Hobolt 2008:461). In other words, recent stress on valence voting has been associated with a claimed low explanatory power of spatial voting models, especially those based upon the proximity between voters’ and parties’ ideological stances. As stated above, the rival conceptualisation of valence and spatial models of issue voting is explicit in the formalisation of the former. The idea that more valence politics necessarily needs to be linked to a weak connection between voters’ ideological positions and vote choice is explicitly mentioned in previous research on British politics (Sanders 1999; Clarke et al. 2004). Recent formal models of party competition also tend to assume an *a priori* orthogonal relationship between policy and valence dimensions (Serra 2010).

Political consensus and conflict, however, are not only defined in terms of distribution of ideological preferences (Evans 2002). There is a well-known tradition of research in political behaviour studies analysing the impact of conflict and consensus from a social-structural perspective (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Kriesi 1998; Evans 2000; Oskarson 2005; Enyedi 2008). Again, there is a tendency to link the growing explanatory power of issues with the decline of other structural factors like class voting (Franklin 1992). The intuitive association between the strength of issue voting and the weakness of mechanisms like class voting is also explicit in research on valence politics more specifically (Stokes 1992:158). Green-Pedersen (2007:608) argues that “the clearest finding on the Western European electorate in the literature is the decline of social-structural voting, especially class voting”. This author adds that the decline explains the success of issue ownership theories of party competition. According to Green-Pedersen, the issues usually linked to positional competition are precisely social-economic, and the importance of these issues is lower today (2007:607).

Immigration is not a good example of a valence issue defined in a classical sense. It is well-known that electorates and parties tend to be polarised about the issue, and the previous chapter showed that different policy stances on immigration do indeed have an impact on voting behaviour. Nevertheless, it is wrong to consider that voting mechanisms usually framed under valence theories of voting (basically issue saliency and images of party competence) are irrelevant to understand the electoral impact of immigration. This brings

me to challenge the assumption that valence politics is a consequence of, or a parallel process to consensus.

There are reasons to think that valence mechanisms of voting (perceptions of issue saliency and images of party competence in dealing with salient issues) are not exclusive to valence issues defined as consensual (H6a articulated in chapter 2 above). There are at least three reasons to doubt the theoretical consistency and generaliseability of the relationship between valence and consensus. The first is a theoretical proposition emerging from previous contributions on formal theory about party strategies in multiparty elections – a proposition that has not previously been translated into comparative empirical research. Adams and Merrill's numerical calculations suggest that under a range of assumptions, equilibrium positions are generally similar to the parties' preferred positions. Moreover, it has been argued that parties with depressed valence attributes may moderate their policy stances. When facing a decline in valence, "a strategic move towards the median voter might be expected to help balance this loss, augmenting the party's probability of being the median parliamentary party" (Adams and Merrill 2009:546). Such parties might again radicalise their position when their images improve, but the implication of this reasoning is that valence can be theoretically associated with ideologically dispersed positions far from the centre of the spectrum. This proposition is coherent with previous theoretical works by Londregan and Romer (1993) and by Riker (1996). Riker identified the dominance and dispersion principles of issue competition, and considered that these two principles are not mutually exclusive but can take place at the same time. Drawing attention to an issue upon which all parties agree is not always attractive. To a political party it can be much more beneficial to draw attention to an issue where there is conflict with other parties. Thus, positional competition should not rule out issue emphasis (Borre 2001:103; Green-Pedersen 2007:610; Ezrow 2008; Meguid 2008; Tavits 2008). The formal intuition that dispersion of policy preferences can be coherent with the electoral strength of individual images of issue saliency and party competence has crucial implications for empirical research on valence politics. However, this intuition has never been tested in a systematic and cross-sectional comparative perspective.

The second doubt about the consistency of the hypotheses linking ideological and social-structural consensus to the strength of valence politics concerns the framing of political issues. If a researcher asks a random sample of voters if they agree with low unemployment, he is likely to obtain a highly clustered distribution of favourable answers. However, if a

researcher asks the same sample of voters if they agree with making the labour market more flexible in order to reach low unemployment, he is likely to obtain a more dispersed distribution of issue preferences. The distinction between goals (which can be consensual) and means to reach the goals (which can be positional) within a single issue is old and still conceptually unresolved (Robertson 1976; Alt 1979). Previous empirical research on valence politics tends to assume that party competence should matter more in elections primarily fought on valence issues, whereas spatial models are expected to be more relevant in elections dominated by position issues (Green and Hobolt 2008:462). Since it is difficult to disentangle the positional and the valence components of a single issue, however, the framing of the debate between position and valence issues as a zero-sum game risks involving an excessively strong logical assumption – perhaps even hinging on a measurement artefact.

Finally, the third reason to doubt the consistency and external validity of the link between valence and consensus concerns the design of previous research on valence politics. The empirical attempts to assess the nature and strength of images of issue saliency and party competence have been almost exclusively focused on Anglo-American democracies, and usually implemented through single-country analyses. The aggregate and systemic nature of the arguments linking valence and consensus (ideological convergence of parties and voters, strength of proximity voting, and class voting) calls for a cross-national comparison of aggregate features affecting individual behaviour which has not so far been conducted, to the best of my knowledge. The link between consensus and valence politics has been mainly found in two-party and plurality democracies, which could favour ideological and social-structural convergence due to the presumably higher tendency of this kind of system to bring about centripetal and centrist modes of competition (Sartori 1976). The essentially multiparty and proportional character of the majority of European polities included in the analysis below allows a stronger and stricter test of the common explanations given in the valence politics literature. As I will show below, the expectations summarised in this section not only apply to the immigration issue but also to other issues.

But, if valence is not about consensus, what then is a valence mechanism of voting telling us about politics? Valence voting has been linked to a number of other attributes. The dimensions of honesty, charisma, and unity have been used by researchers using leaders or parties as units of analyses (Adams and Merrill 2009). Incumbency advantage, the state of the economy (Clark 2009), and indirect proxies like candidates' campaign funds (Serra

2010) are other examples of valence attributes. The variety and heterogeneity of dimensions associated with valence voting risks overstretching the concept. There is one attribute, however, which is also usually assumed to be related to valence politics and which can be useful in understanding the nature of this kind of behaviour: low party attachment (Stokes 1992:158). Even if intuitive, the idea that valence voting is a more contingent and volatile behaviour that requires weak psychological attachments to parties has not been systematically tested yet. In H6b articulated in chapter 2 I hypothesised that voters without strong party attachment, who are not necessarily constrained to vote for one particular party due to habit or socialisation, are more responsive to valence signals. If valence voting and low individual party attachments are systematically linked, valence voting can become an appropriate conceptual tool to understand unresolved puzzles regarding individual electoral change, rather than a mechanism to understand a supposed decline in political conflict.

Stokes acknowledged that “valence politics has almost certainly contributed to the fluidity of party support and the greater amplitude of electoral swings” (Stokes 1992:157-8). In spite of this intuitive expectation, the link between valence and change has not been empirically proved and is not a commonly used explanation for the strength of valence voting. Partisan de-alignment is an argument raised in empirical research on valence, but, once again, it is used to explain the increase of political consensus rather than to explain valence voting itself (Green 2007:631). Even if the interaction between valence and party attachment is not explicitly modelled in previous research, the notion of party attachment in studies on valence is clearly more dynamic and malleable (Clarke et al. 2004; Clarke et al. 2009) than the original psycho-sociological notion of party identification in the Michigan tradition of research based on habit and socialisation processes (Campbell et al. 1964; Berglund et al. 2005:108; Dalton 2007a; Dalton 2007b).

6.3- Data and measurement

The dataset used here is the European Election Study (EES) 2004. It contains relevant data to construct all the indicators needed for 28,861 individuals nested in 24 political systems⁴. The main reason to use this dataset is the availability of comparable data on issue saliency (the most important problem facing the country) and party competence (the party best at

⁴ All (then) EU member countries except Malta. From these I could use only 20 countries because the dependent variable used in the analyses was not asked in 4 of them: Belgium, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Sweden. These systems have thus been dropped from the analysis.

solving the most important problem facing the country) obtained through identical question wordings and sampling techniques across all the political systems included in the analysis⁵. Apart from individual images of issue saliency and party competence, the EES 2004 also permits me to integrate, in a single additive model, a proximity term regarding the left-right dimension and a large number of control variables commonly employed in electoral studies.

Voting behaviour is usually conceptualised as choice, and the dependent variable is usually operationalised through the classic nominal vote recall answers like in chapter 5 (“which party did you vote for in the last national election?”). Since its original but sometimes forgotten formulation (Downs 1957), however, voting behaviour can be understood as a two-step process followed by an individual in order to decide which party to vote for in an election. This process consists first in the formation of the preference (also called propensity to vote, PTV or party preference) and second in actual vote choice (Van der Brug et al. 2007; Van der Eijk et al. 2006)⁶. The preference is considered as a *non-ipsative* measure, in the sense that the respondent in a survey is not forced to choose just one of the alternatives. The voter can thus articulate a number of preferences or utilities to vote for each of the parties competing in a given political system. By contrast, choice is considered to be an *ipsative* measure because citizens are forced to pick just one of the alternatives⁷. The availability and technical advantages of PTVs over vote recall summarised below explains why I use them as a dependent variable in this chapter.

All EES datasets contain the so-called propensity to vote (PTV) questions, which are designed to measure party preference rather than choice. The question is asked for each of the parties competing in each political system and its specific wording is: “please tell me for each of the following [parties] how probable it is that you will ever vote for this party?”. According to the proponents of this dependent variable, it has a number of advantages (van der Eijk et al. 2006; van der Eijk and Marsh 2007). The first is that it allows the study of small parties for which there are usually too few respondents in the traditional vote recall

⁵ www.ees-homepage.net (03/04/2010)

⁶ In fact, the three theoretical traditions which have guided the evolution of electoral behaviour studies since the end of the Second World War (sociological, psychological and rational) implicitly take into account in their theorisations a distinction between preference and choice. The empirical implementation of this theoretical distinction, however, has been much less clear. This theoretical discussion can be linked to an older controversy within the domain of probabilistic choice theory between the so-called *constant utility* and *random utility* approaches. The difference between them is precisely the location of the probabilistic aspect of the theory: in the assessment of utilities (first stage) or in the application of the decision rule (second stage) (van der Eijk et al. 2006:426, 429, 432).

⁷ It could be argued that this is so except for relatively exceptional electoral systems like the single transferable vote in Ireland or Malta.

questions. Secondly, it allows one to integrate an intra-individual level of competition in the analyses, namely the variation of preferences towards different parties within a single individual. This makes it possible to not only distinguish voter A, who voted for Labour, from voter B who voted Conservative, for instance, but also by how much voter A preferred Labour over Conservative. Even if the intra-individual level of variation has also been taken into account in the conditional logit techniques implemented in chapter 5, the variation in the preference for non-supported parties (which invariably took the value 0) was impossible to account for. Thirdly and more importantly, it allows one to obtain a single statistical coefficient for each independent variable explaining the overall pattern of party preferences within and across individuals and political systems. By contrast, vote recall variables could only be analysed with a non-parsimonious strategy consisting essentially of one analysis for each political party within each country, as has to be done with categorical techniques like multinomial logit or probit. The use of PTV questions as the dependent variable permits investigation of the determinants of party preference as a generic concept rather than the determinants of specific party choices (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009). Such a focus would seem to be justified in any voting behaviour study, but especially when the effect of systemic or aggregate features need to be combined with an individual-level analysis (as in H6a above) and in order to investigate short-term influences that are more likely to affect preference rather than final choice (as in H6b).

In order to profit from the advantages of PTV questions, it is necessary to stack the dataset and structure it on the basis of an individual response conditional on a party preference (as is usually done for conditional logit analysis, for instance, but with the advantage that PTV questions are continuous and contain more information than categorical variables). This means that the actual unit of analysis is an individual*party preference, instead of an individual as such. There are two ways to model the variables included in such models. Those variables with values related to each party preference (such as images of party competence or ideological left-right proximity) have to be integrated party by party, with each row of the dataset containing values given by a specific individual to a specific party. However, those variables without a specific party nature (like the religiosity or the gender of the respondent, for instance) need to be modelled differently (van der Eijk 1996; van der Brug et al. 2000; van der Brug and Mugan 2007). Generally this is achieved by regressing each of these variables on each party utility. The predicted values from these different OLS regressions are then centred, saved, and stacked to become party-specific covariates. In practical terms, this procedure can be understood as involving a linear transformation of

these specific independent variables into corresponding variables expressed in terms of the impact that each of them has on the dependent variable.

Table 6.1: An example of how the original data-matrix is transformed into a stacked format (for linear analysis):

a) Original dataset

<i>N of cases</i>	<i>PTV for party 1</i>	<i>PTV for party 2</i>	<i>PTV for party 3</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity party 1)</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity party 2)</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity party 3)</i>	<i>Individual-specific variable (e.g., age)</i>
Indiv. 1	9	1	0	-2	-32	-46	24
Indiv. 2	2	8	0	-30	-9	-27	67
Indiv. 3	3	4	6	-50	-43	-5	54
Indiv. 4	8	3	3	-13	-89	-19	33

b) Stacked dataset

<i>N of cases</i>	<i>PTV</i>	<i>Party-specific variable (e.g., left-right proximity)</i>	<i>Individual-specific variable (e.g., age)</i>
Indiv. 1 (party 1)	9	-2	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 1 (party 2)	1	-32	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 1 (party 3)	0	-46	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 2 (party 1)	2	-30	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 2 (party 2)	8	-9	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 2 (party 3)	0	-27	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 3 (party 1)	3	-50	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 3 (party 2)	4	-43	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 3 (party 3)	6	-5	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 4 (party 1)	8	-13	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 4 (party 2)	3	-89	Centred E(PTV age)
Indiv. 4 (party 3)	3	-19	Centred E(PTV age)

The main independent variable is valence voting, which is composed of two properties: issue saliency and party competence (Petrocik 1996; Schmitt 1998; Schmitt 2001; Freire 2004; Sanders et al. 2004; van der Brug 2004:211). Even if these two components need to be integrated in the same model, the constituencies of the parties and their handling reputations have to be distinguished theoretically (Borre 2001:119; Bellucci 2006:548-569). The former refers to the policy interests of the electoral bases to which parties respond, whereas the latter is a more specific factor regarding the parties' reputation for solving,

managing, handling or dealing with problems associated with these policy interests. The saliency component in valence voting has been articulated through issue ownership theories, which predict that parties selectively emphasize those topics on which they feel they have a good reputation and deemphasize others, and that voters will make their electoral choices on this basis (Hibbs 1977; Budge and Farlie 1983; Green-Pedersen 2007; Bélanger and Meguid 2008). The party competence component is linked to issue ownership theory and refers to the perceived capacity of a given party to competently deal with certain problems and issues (van der Brug 2004:213). It is assumed in issue voting models based on the idea of party competence that any kind of issue can affect the electoral fortune of any kind of party, but that their success depends on the image of credibility and competence that these parties generate (Schmitt 1998).

The saliency component is captured through an open-ended question asking which is the most important problem facing the country. The questionnaire allows the respondent to mention several salient problems but then asks him to choose the most important one, which is the one I select for the analysis. As a second step, the party competence question is a follow-up to the most important problem question: “Which party do you think would be best at [solving that problem]?”. Answers to this question yield a dummy variable for each salient issue coded 1 if the party is mentioned as the best at dealing with that problem and 0 otherwise. Apart from using this dummy variable as a general indicator of valence voting, I also disaggregate it on the basis of different issues in order to account for issue heterogeneity. Apart from immigration, the issues modelled here are also unemployment, economy, EU integration, environment and crime. These issues are each mentioned as salient by a relevant number of respondents in the sample. They also offer a good balance between *a priori* valence issues (economy, unemployment, crime) and issues that might more readily be thought of as position issues (immigration, EU integration and environment) in order to observe whether party preference based on images of saliency and competence are indeed an exclusive domain of the former.

Even if the aim here is not to compare the relative strength of valence and spatial models, the theoretical articulation of valence as a competing theory *vis-à-vis* spatial voting requires modelling the latter as a control. Adapting equation 5 in chapter 2 to a multi-issue context represented by the left-right continuum, the electoral utility derived from the proximity model regarding the left-right axis is usually represented through a quadratic form (Adams 2001):

$$U_{ij} = -(V_i - P_j)^2 \quad (16)$$

where U_{ij} is voter i 's utility for party j , V_i is voter i 's position on the left-right axis, and P_j is party j 's position on the same axis.

In order to model equation 16, which is the one I include in the models, I use voters' self-placements and voters' views regarding parties' placements on the left-right axis. It has been argued that voters' perceptions of parties can be endogenous (Evans and Andersen 2004). This would indeed be a problem if the purpose here was to compare the strength of valence and spatial theories, since the explanatory power of the latter might be artificially increased by a possible projection bias of voters perceiving the parties they vote for as more ideologically proximal than they really are. Since the aim here is rather to analyse the nature of valence and to observe its performance conditional on some circumstances regarding political consensus and party attachment, a possibly overrated spatial effect constitutes at once a stronger control and a stricter test for the hypotheses.

The other control variables included in the models are: party attachment (a dummy coded 1 for those who feel close to any party and 0 otherwise); interest in politics; satisfaction with democracy; religiosity; education; sex; age; and party size (measured as the share of votes obtained in the most recent national election prior to the survey)⁸.

Testing H6a (*valence voting can be associated with low levels of consensus*) requires an aggregate measure of consensus. I will operationalise consensus with six indicators. Three of them capture ideological consensus, and the three other indicators capture class voting (social-structural cleavages aligned with the vote). As for ideological consensus, it is widely assumed and has been repeatedly demonstrated that the left-right axis is a valid, reliable and comparable indicator summarising a number of issue positions (Converse 1964; Nie et al. 1976; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Huber 1989; Bennet and Bennet 1990; Sniderman et al. 1991; Sears 1993). The position of voters and parties on the left-right axis has been used in

⁸ It might be argued that specifying party size as a predictor of party preference is tautological. Tillie (1995) and Van der Eijk Franklin and Oppenhuis (1996:352), however, suggest that this is not the case. These authors show that the tautological argument would only apply to ipsative party preferences, as would happen in chapter 5, where the dependent variable was vote recall and where party size was therefore not modelled. There is no tautology between parties' strength and preference scores when the latter also involve voters' second, third and following choices.

previous research on valence politics as a valid measure of ideological dispersion or convergence of issue preferences in a given political system (Green 2007; Green and Hobolt 2008). I use the variance of left-right self-placements in each political system analysed as an appropriate systemic measure of voter ideological dispersion. By modelling the variance I follow a tradition of research on ideological dispersion and polarisation of party systems which takes the extremes into account, and not only the average points of a given statistical distribution (Taylor and Herman 1971; Sani and Sartori 1983). The variance of left-right self-placements can thus be interpreted as the level of conflict or consensus regarding issue preferences in a given political system. As for the parties, I once again use the variance of left-right party placements weighted by the electoral strength of the parties⁹. More specifically, I model the weighted electoral polarisation index proposed by Hazan (1995:426), which can be expressed as follows:

$$\sum_{i=1}^N p_i (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \quad (17)$$

where N is the number of parties in the system, p_i is the percentage of votes won by each party, x_i is the respective ideological position of each party, and \bar{x} is the weighted system mean, i.e. the mean of the product between each party's percentage of the vote and its position on the specific ideological scale.

As explained in section 6.2, another assumption linking valence voting with consensus expects that valence voting will be stronger when spatial considerations are weaker. In order to test this assumption I also use a country-level measure of the electoral strength of spatial theories predicting voting behaviour. This has been obtained by estimating the effect of the spatial term (equation 16 above) as the only independent variable predicting propensity to vote, seen as a random slope that can be different in different countries and so can be interpreted as the explanatory power in each country of spatial thinking in addressing the vote. More specifically, the indicator is an Empirical Bayes estimation of the random slope which takes into account the uncertainty of the effect of left-right proximity across contextual units (Luke 2004:43-4; Hoff 2009; Jackman 2009)¹⁰.

⁹ I have replicated all the analyses without weighting the variance of party left-right placements, and the conclusions remained unchanged.

¹⁰ The estimation of the random slope has been defined in equation 13 and 14 in chapter 4:

Finally, I also use three measures of class voting: the Alford, Thomsen and Kappa indexes (Evans 1999). EES 2004 includes a question on subjective social class with the following categories: working class, lower-middle class, middle class, upper-middle class, and upper class. The Alford index is the difference between the percentage of manual workers that voted for left-wing parties, and the percentage of non-manual workers that voted for left-wing parties. The analysis of the vote for left-wing parties follows one of the mainstream lines of research on class voting over recent decades that, even if criticized, has proved to give very similar results to those of other operationalisations (Franklin 1985; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Franklin 1991). More specifically, I take left parties to be those located below the fifth point on the ten-point left-right scale and consider the respondent to be likely to vote for a left party if he gives a PTV score above 7 to any such party.

One of the main criticisms of the Alford index, however, is that it is sensitive to changes in the popularity of the parties and of the sizes of the social classes considered. The Thomsen index of class voting was designed to correct the first problem and consists of the natural logarithm of the odds ratio linking manual workers to votes for left parties versus non-manual workers to votes for a left parties.

The Thomsen index, however, can be criticised because it still just considers two very broad social classes (manual versus non-manual) which might not capture the complexity of socio-economic and productive relationships in contemporary societies. This is what the Kappa index aims to correct. This index consists of the standard deviation of the log odds

$$\beta_{1j}^{EB} = \lambda_j \beta_{1j}^{OLS} + (1 - \lambda_j) y_{00}$$

where β_{1j}^{EB} is the Empirical Bayes estimation of the effect of left-right proximity on PTVs, y_{00} is the mean level of PTVs across countries, β_{1j}^{OLS} is the estimate obtained through a standard OLS estimator in country j , and λ is the reliability of Y in group j . This reliability component can be interpreted as the portion of the variance of the estimate across groups over the total variance. Formally, this can be expressed as:

$$\lambda_j = \frac{\sigma_{u0}^2}{(\sigma_{u0}^2 + \sigma_r^2 / n_j)}$$

where σ_{u0}^2 is the variance of the parameter, σ_r^2 is the variance of the errors, and n is the number of level 1 units in country j .

ratios linking each social class¹¹ to votes for left parties. The higher this standard deviation, the more different the electoral behaviour of the different classes and the higher the level of class voting. The correlation between the Alford and Thomsen indexes in the pooled EES 2004 sample is 0.98, between the Kappa and the Alford indexes is 0.91, and between the Kappa and the Thomsen indexes is 0.95.

6.4- Valence is not about consensus

The first model I implement in order to visualise the relationship between valence voting and systemic political consensus is a two-step hierarchical linear model. This sort of model is a macro-level test using countries as units of analysis. The aggregate nature of the argument and the measures used to test H6a makes two-step hierarchical models particularly suited for a parsimonious analysis in which it is easy to visualise patterns of associations and contributions of individual cases to the overall model fit (Achen 2005). I first estimate a slope per country of the effect of the party competence variable (coded 1 if the party is mentioned as the best at dealing with a salient problem and 0 otherwise). This indicator, obtained by postestimation after fitting a random slopes model, can be interpreted as the power of images of issue saliency and party competence in explaining the vote in each country. Then, I correlate this measure with the ideological and social-structural consensus variables described in the previous section. In order to validate H6a, valence voting should not be related to high levels of consensus. This would mean that, contrary to common explanations in the literature, highly polarised ideological issue preferences, stronger effects of spatial thinking, and higher levels of class voting are not associated with a weak role of valence explaining electoral outcomes.

Figure 6.1 presents the relationship between the random slope of images of party competence predicting PTVs (or the strength of valence politics) on the Y axis, and measures of systemic consensus on the X axis. All the variables are coded from more consensus to more conflict. If the hypotheses expecting that valence thinking results from higher consensus or lower conflict are correct, the slope of the relationships should be negative. The results show that the relationship between valence voting and consensus is actually the opposite of what was assumed in previous research. Voting on the basis of issue saliency and perception of party competence is consistent with comparatively high levels of

¹¹ Considering the middle class as the reference category.

conflict, both in ideological and social-structural terms. Thus H6a is validated. The association is clearer with ideological conceptions of conflict, namely party and voter polarisation on the left-right axis and strength of ideological proximity voting. The only relationship reaching statistical significance is the one between valence voting and party polarisation ($r=0.65$, $p=0.001$), which is in the completely opposite direction than expected. The correlation is 0.45 with voter polarisation and 0.27 with the left-right proximity slope. The association between valence and social-structural conflict understood as class voting is less clear and never reaches statistical significance: 0.19 with the Alford index, 0.18 with the Thomsen index, and 0.14 with the Kappa index.

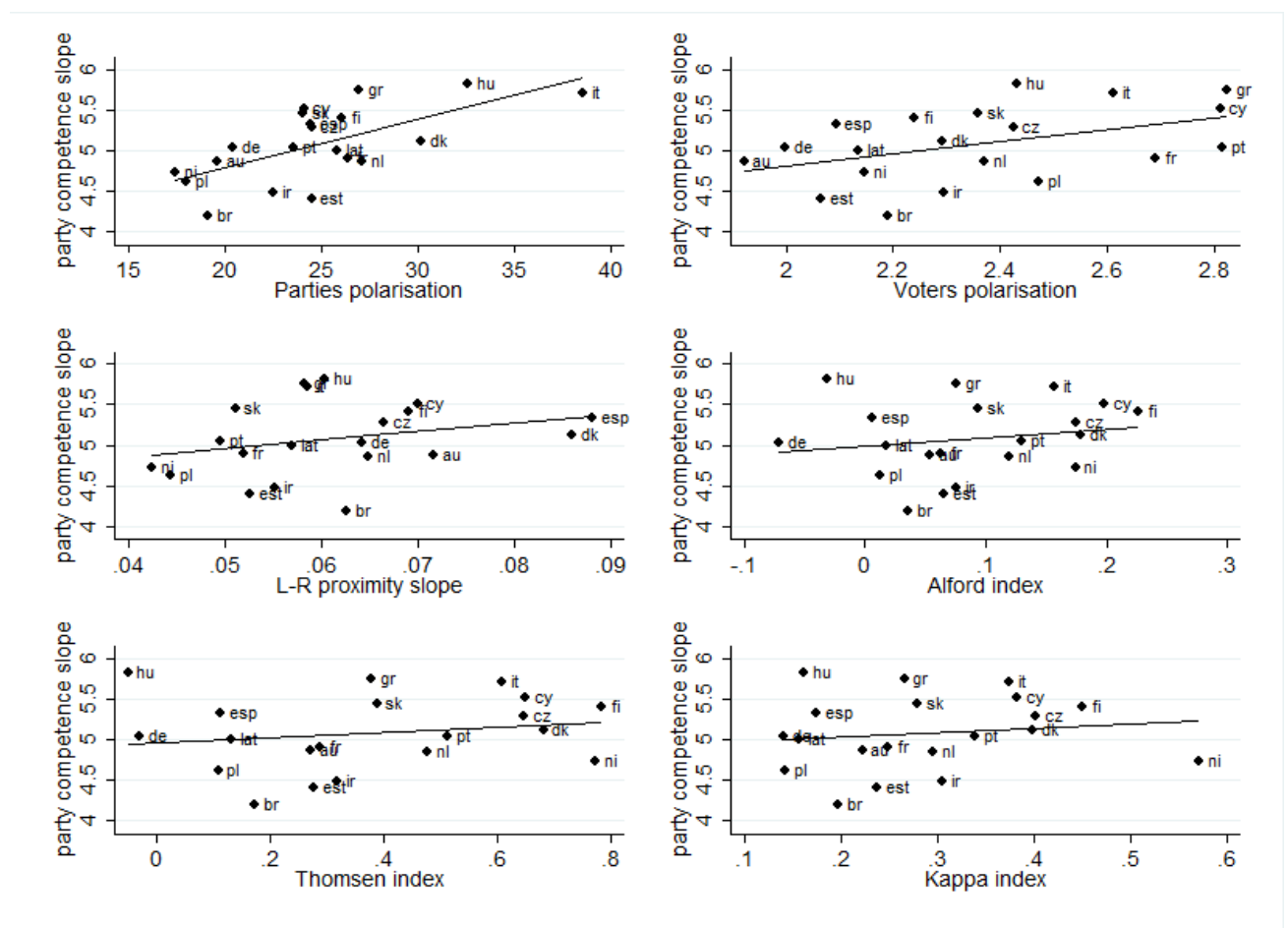


Figure 6.1- Two-step hierarchical models predicting party competence slope with aggregate measures of consensus

Slovenia is the only country not represented in this graph because it is an outlier with a very low value in the party competence slope measure (1.49, whereas the average in the pooled sample is 4.91). Even if the exclusion of Slovenia does not affect the sign and the statistical significance of the relationships, the visualisation of figure 1 is more straightforward without this country since it affects the scaling of this graph.

The first conclusion from this first macro-level analysis is that the direction of the association between valence and consensus usually assumed in the valence literature is wrong. Rather than a feature linked to political consensus, valence is positively associated with high ideological polarisation, strength of spatial voting, and social-structural divisions addressing the vote. In general, however, the relationship between valence and consensus is statistically insignificant and therefore difficult to generalise. Only the relationship with party polarisation is strong and significant- instead of depressing the role of valence attributes in electoral competition, high polarisation strengthens them.

Though the aggregate measure of valence obtained by fitting a random slopes model of individual-level perceptions is statistically valid, it could be argued that two-step hierarchical analyses are still a macro approach which disregards too much individual-level information and which could even result in ecological fallacies in case the grouping of individuals within countries did not follow a similar pattern across the different political systems analysed. Moreover, it could also be argued that an aggregate and general measure of valence may disguise some heterogeneity due to the specific issue considered as salient by the voter. In order to address these two possible concerns, to focus on the specific role of the immigration issue, and conduct a robustness check of the previous two-step design, I also implement a micro-macro analysis with a mixed effects hierarchical linear model. In this case the lowest unit of analysis is the individual*party choice case described above, the second level is the individual, and the third level is the country. The use of 3-level hierarchical models with a maximum likelihood method of estimation allows me to properly and simultaneously calculate the standard errors of variables included at different levels, as well as the interactions between them (Steenbergen and Jones 2002). The test of H6a will be implemented precisely through cross-level interactions between the party competence variable regarding the six issues considered here (immigration, unemployment, economy, EU integration, environment and crime) and the different country-level measures of consensus. Finally, since it involves two individual-level variables, the test of H6b will be implemented through a micro analysis consisting of an interaction between the party

competence variable and party attachment. If H6a is correct, the marginal effect of valence voting should not be stronger when consensus is higher. If H6b is correct, the effect of valence voting should be stronger when party attachment is lower. I report the effects and confidence intervals of the significant interactions following Brambor et al.'s advice (2006).

Table 6.2- Hierarchical linear models predicting PTVs (unconditional effects and interactions with ideological consensus)

	Without interactions	Interactions with parties left-right polarisation	Interactions with voters left-right polarisation	Interactions with left-right proximity strength
Immigration competence	1.93** (0.17)	-1.44 (0.95)	-1.66 (2.15)	0.49 (0.9)
Unemployment competence	1.7** (0.06)	0.01 (0.25)	3.11** (0.6)	1.42* (0.28)
Economy competence	1.91** (0.17)	2.06* (1.01)	5.92* (2.99)	3.07 (2.56)
EU competence	2.17** (0.38)	3.27 (2.04)	-11.28** (4.46)	4.75 (2.23)
Environment competence	2.05** (0.32)	-2.54 (1.91)	-8.08* (4.18)	3.08 (1.69)
Crime competence	1.61** (0.16)	1.72** (0.69)	0.86 (2.18)	3.1* (0.83)
Parties left-right polarisation		-0.01 (0.01)		
Voter left-right polarisation			0.24 (0.23)	
Left-right proximity strength				1.01 (5.25)
Immigration competence interaction		0.11** (0.03)	1.52 (0.9)	19.45 (11.91)
Unemployment competence interaction		0.06** (0.01)	-0.59* (0.25)	4.55 (4.47)
Economy competence interaction		-0.004 (0.03)	-1.59 (1.18)	-20.01 (43.92)
EU competence interaction		-0.04 (0.08)	5.78** (1.91)	-45.89 (39.13)
Environment competence interaction		0.16* (0.07)	4.39* (1.8)	-14.02 (22.6)
Crime competence interaction		-0.004 (0.02)	0.32 (0.91)	-23.39 (12.81)
Intercept	4.05** (0.08)	4.35** (0.29)	3.49** (0.54)	3.99* (0.33)
N (indiv*party)	104,777	104,777	104,777	104,777
N (individuals)	17,856	17,856	17,856	17,856
N (countries)	21	21	21	21
AIC	484096.6	484042.5	484084.2	484101.5
BIC	484278.2	484291.1	484332.7	484350.1
Intercept variance (individuals)	0.86** (0.02)	0.86** (0.02)	0.86** (0.02)	0.86* (0.02)
Intercept variance (countries)	0.08** (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)	0.08* (0.02)
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (individuals)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (countries)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

Controls not shown
 standard errors between brackets
 ** = $p \leq 0.01$
 * = $p \leq 0.05$

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 report the results of several mixed effects hierarchical linear models. Table 6.2 shows the unconditional effect of images of party competence on immigration

and the other five issues considered, as well as the cross-level interactions between these party competence images and measures of ideological consensus. Table 6.3 shows the cross-level interactions between party competence and the three class voting measures, as well as the interaction between party competence and party attachment (testing H6b).

The first column of table 6.2 reveals that all six issues have a strong and significant effect on voting behaviour. More interestingly, the effect of images of party competence in dealing with *a priori* position issues (immigration, European Union and environment) is stronger than images of competence in managing supposed valence issues (economy, unemployment and crime). The sign and significance of the interactions between party competence and the measures of ideological consensus reported in columns 2-4 in table 6.2 are inconsistent. The interactions are in general statistically insignificant, confirming once again that valence voting is not associated with aggregate consensus. The only interactions that emerge as significant in table 6.2 have again an opposite sign to what would usually be expected in valence politics theories. The marginal electoral effect of images of party competence on the immigration, unemployment and environment issues increases with higher levels of party ideological polarisation. Similarly, the marginal effect of competence on the European Union and environment issues increases with higher levels of voters' polarisation, even if with a practically insignificant interaction regarding the environment. The only significant interaction with the negative sign expected by valence politics theories is the one between unemployment and voters' polarisation. The slope of this conditional relationship, however, is practically 0. All these conditional relationships are shown in figure 6.2.

Table 6.3- Hierarchical linear models predicting PTVs (interactions with class voting and party attachment)

	Interactions with class voting (Alford index)	Interactions with class voting (Thomsen index)	Interactions with class voting (Kappa index)	Interactions with party attachment
Immigration competence	-0.15 (0.41)	-0.59 (0.48)	-2.17** (0.8)	3.68** (0.25)
Unemployment competence	1.82** (0.08)	1.87** (0.1)	1.99** (0.16)	3.4** (0.09)
Economy competence	2.98** (0.61)	3.1** (0.7)	3.7** (0.98)	3.76** (0.3)
EU competence	2.78** (0.48)	2.97** (0.54)	3.88** (0.99)	3.83** (0.49)
Environment competence	0.33 (0.69)	-0.11 (0.81)	-1.63 (1.29)	3.7** (0.45)
Crime competence	1.78** (0.31)	1.85** (0.36)	2.1** (0.65)	3.44** (0.26)
Alford index	0.12 (0.8)			
Thomsen index		-0.05 (0.25)		
Kappa index			-0.23 (0.55)	
Party attachment				4.93** (0.03)
Immigration competence interaction	15.54** (2.80)	4.74** (0.84)	11.84** (2.25)	-3.6** (0.34)
Unemployment competence interaction	-1.46* (0.69)	-0.48* (0.21)	-1.08* (0.54)	-3.02** (0.12)
Economy competence interaction	-7.65 (4.19)	-2.17 (1.24)	-5.13 (2.76)	-2.97** (0.37)
EU competence interaction	-10.79* (5.08)	-3.2* (1.55)	-7.39 (3.91)	-4.33** (0.77)
Environment competence interaction	12.22** (4.36)	3.95** (1.37)	10.47** (3.55)	-3.4** (0.63)
Crime competence interaction	-1.58 (2.53)	-0.57 (0.76)	-1.54 (1.98)	-3.2** (0.33)
Intercept	4.04** (0.1)	4.07 (0.12)	4.11** (0.18)	4.02** (0.08)
N (indiv*party)	104,777	104,777	104,777	104,777
N (individuals)	17,856	17,856	17,856	17,856
N (countries)	21	21	21	21
AIC	484059.2	484057.7	484062.3	483189.2
BIC	484307.7	484306.2	484310.9	483428.2
Intercept variance (individuals)	0.86** (0.02)	0.86** (0.02)	0.86** (0.02)	0.86** (0.02)
Intercept variance (countries)	0.08** (0.02)	0.08** (0.02)	0.08** (0.02)	0.08** (0.02)
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (individuals)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (countries)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

Controls not shown

standard errors between brackets

** = $p \leq 0.01$

* = $p \leq 0.05$

Similarly to the interactions between party competence and measures of ideological consensus, the interactions with class voting reported in the three first columns of table 6.3 are inconsistent in terms of sign and significance. In general, all of them are insignificant. The only significant interactions which are consistent across the three measures of class voting used here are those with the immigration, unemployment and the environment issues¹². Again, the sign of the interactions with immigration and environment are contrary to the sign expected in valence voting theories. The effect of valence politics can be stronger in countries where social-structural conflict is comparatively more important in addressing the vote. The interaction with unemployment is the only one apparently following the expected direction by valence theories of voting, but its marginal effect reported in figure 6.2 appears to be very weak. All the marginal effects of the significant cross-level interactions between valence and consensus are plotted in figure 6.2.

¹² Only the interactions with the Kappa index are reported in figure 2, since this index is considered the most complete one among the three measures of class voting used here.

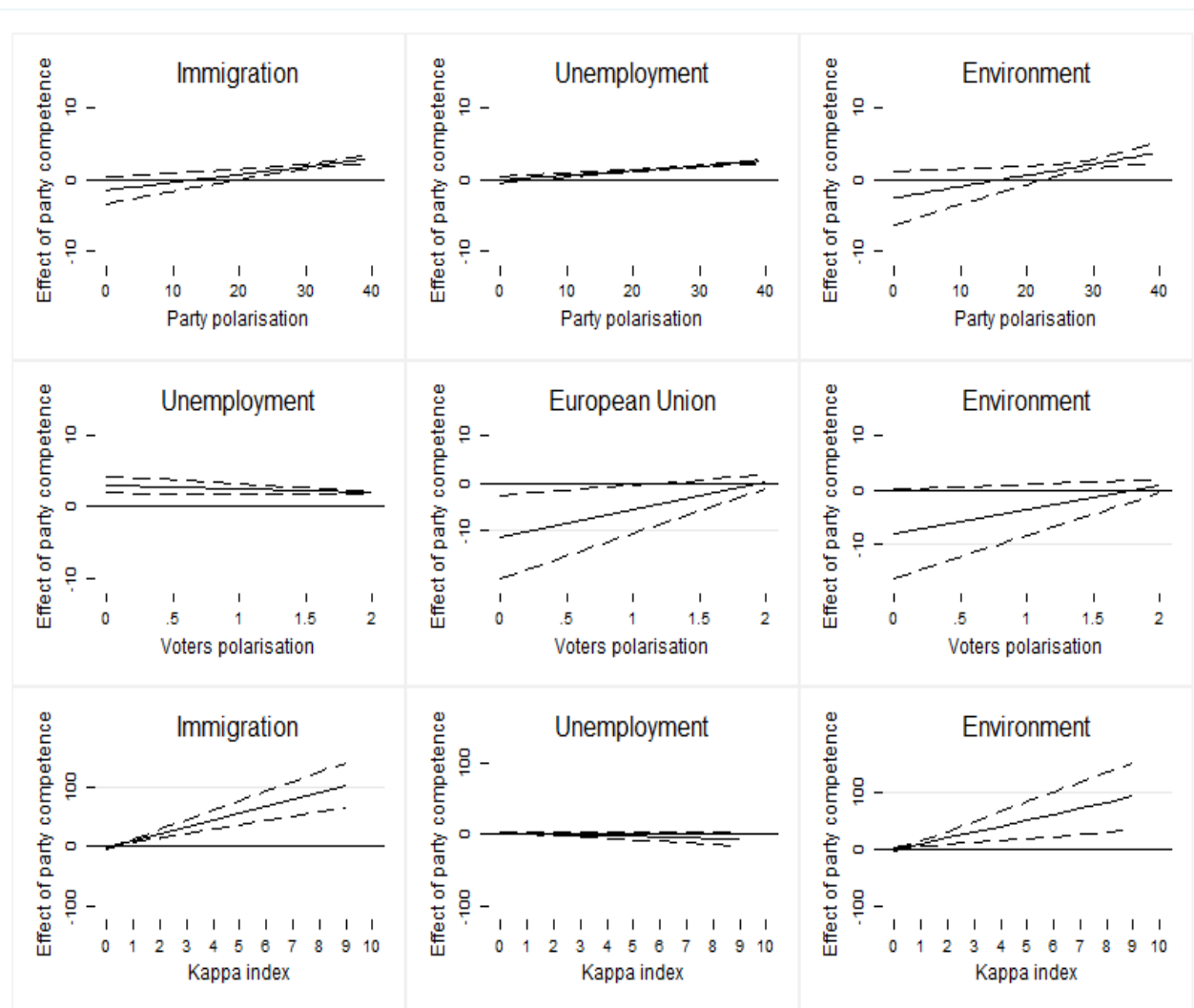


Figure 6.2- Marginal effect of party competence conditional on measures of aggregate consensus

Finally, the last column tests H6b as an alternative explanation of the performance of valence models of voting. As expected, images of party competence on immigration and the other six issues analysed are systematically dependent on party attachment. The sign of the interaction is always negative and significant- valence voting decreases when voters have developed a psychological attachment with the party they prefer the most. Figure 6.3 shows that this conditional relationship is remarkably strong and significant over all the issues considered.

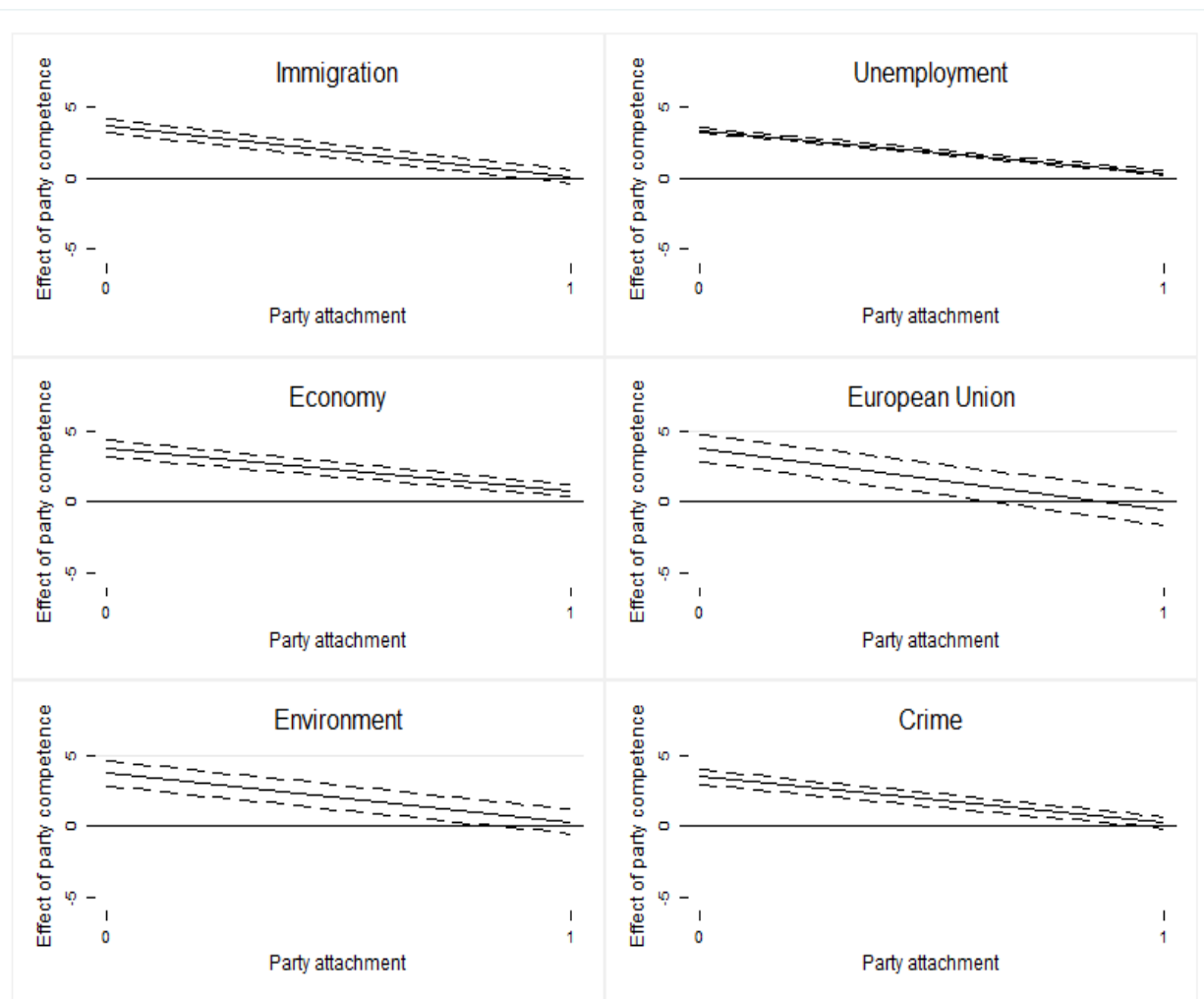


Figure 6.3- Marginal effect of party competence conditional on party attachment

6.5- Ruling out endogeneity

Some scholars have cast doubt on the exogeneity of issue voting (Evans 2000) and, more in particular, on party competence perceptions (van der Eijk et al. 1999). It could be argued that the image of party competence does not have an independent and exogenous effect, but that it is rather an endogenous product of previous and stronger voting factors. Moreover, since the interaction between party competence and party attachment reported in the previous section is a crucial element in understanding what valence politics is about, it is important to make sure that the former variable is not a mere mirror image of the latter¹³. In

¹³ The suspicion of endogeneity would be stronger if the interaction between party competence and party attachment had been positive. The fact that it is negative reveals that the effects of these two variables do not reinforce each other, but that are actually contradictory. Estimating the effect of party competence

order to rule out the possibility of endogenous contamination of the party competence variable, I have implemented a quasi-experimental sensitivity test with propensity score matching. The strategy is to match those cases with a similar score on propensity to mention a party as most competent to deal with a given issue (no matter which), and to calculate the average treatment effects on the vote among those respondents mentioning a party in the party competence variable. The score for propensity to mention a party as the most competent is calculated through a probit model that includes potentially confounding factors. Once this propensity score is calculated, it is stratified in blocks where the included cases have no significant differences in the average outcome (PTV) and in the independent variables included in the model. After this balancing property is satisfied, the aggregate magnitude and significance of the party competence variable on party preference is calculated through a nearest neighbour matching procedure (Becker and Ichino 2002).

The propensity score has been calculated on the basis of variables which could be suspected of contaminating the party competence effect. These variables are party attachment, proximity in left-right position, education, government approval, interest in politics and gender. This specification fulfils three requirements of propensity score models: parsimony, inclusion of relevant potential confounding factors, and proper balancing of the covariates (no significant differences in the distribution of these covariates across propensity score blocks). Obviously, propensity score matching is only based on observables and can never guarantee a complete exogeneity of the treatment. However, I control for important theoretical determinants of party competence perceptions like party related variables (attachment and left-right proximity), respondent sophistication (education and interest in politics), and higher capacity of incumbent parties to control the agenda and project credibility (government approval). As shown in table 6.4, the average treatment effect of party competence perceptions is highly significant and can imply an increase of 2 points in the utility of voting for a given party if that is the party considered most competent. This is a smaller than the average effect of party competence perceptions per country shown in figure 6.1 (4.9 points) implying that there was indeed some endogeneity embedded in those estimates, but the difference is by no means great.

among matched cases with very similar values on party attachment and other possibly previous confounding factors, however, is a stronger exogeneity test, especially taking into account that Spearman's rank correlation between party competence and party attachment is sufficiently high ($\rho = 0.54$).

Table 6.4- Average treatment effect of the treated of party competence on PTV with nearest neighbour matching method

<i>Number of treated cases</i>	<i>Number of control cases</i>	<i>Average Treatment Effect on the Treated</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>t</i>
12,354	133,287	2.023	0.031	65.279

6.6- Summary

This chapter has focused on the potentiality of immigration to generate electoral change and to be related to the most contextually contingent dimension of electoral competition across 20 European political systems. When framed and analysed under the perspective of valence models of issue voting, the results show that the perception of saliency of immigration and the perception of high competence of a given party in dealing with it increases significantly the likelihood of voting for that party. Most interestingly, this effect seems to be stronger among those voters who do not feel identified with that party (acquisition hypothesis). Moreover, this finding also shows that the perception of party competence in handling immigration among those voters who are concerned with this issue can enable a party to cross natural electoral markets and conquer new groups of electors who were in principle not likely to vote for that party. This is precisely the opposite dynamic observed in the previous chapter on spatial models of issue voting. The maximisation of electoral utility on the basis of geometrical spaces and party and voter positions on the immigration issue can mobilise a party's own potential electorate, but can hardly affect people who are by default far from that party.

The conditional negative relationship between perceptions of party competence and party attachment applies to all the issues analysed, and not only to immigration. Contrary to an intuitive idea existing since the first formalisation of models based on valence issues, the perceptions of saliency and party competence can exert a strong influence on party preference also in political systems with a high degree of divergence in preferred policy outcomes. It thus cannot be asserted that the consensus over policy outcomes is the main attribute of valence politics. The electoral effect of *a priori* position issues like immigration is strongly mediated by valence mechanisms of voting. Contrary to what is usually assumed, conflict can be associated with patterns of electoral competition based on issue saliency and images of party competence.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Immigration is not about extremeness. This is the first and most general conclusion of one of the first comparative and comprehensive analysis of an issue which is too often considered by political behaviour scholars as a mere catalyst of extremes forms of behaviour. Attitudes towards immigration have thus become a relevant predictor of vote choice in the mainstream side of contemporary European political systems, and a good tool to unlock theoretical puzzles regarding the incorporation of a new policy area into mainstream political competition. In this sense, the immigration issue may be less specific than is sometimes implied, and may resemble the performance of other important issues. Issues like religion (either in terms of sociological denomination or in terms of religiosity) or the environment, for instance, may have followed a similar path towards normality. First, they appeared to be owned by very specific parties and to affect very particular portions of the political spectrum. Later, they were incorporated into mainstream party competition and seemed to be able to reshape the competitive dynamics of some party systems.

The second general conclusion is that a recently incorporated issue can generate complex mechanisms of electoral change and significantly reshape the morphology of an established party system. The immigration issue is a good tool to analyse the implications of a new issue for the still poorly understood processes of individual electoral change in contemporary democracies. This is so thanks to the different degrees of historical embedding of immigration as a social and demographic phenomenon across European political systems (systemic variation), its cross-cutting nature regarding the classical divide between economic and cultural issues (issue and ideological framing variation), and the broad range of party strategies that it has generated due to the uncertainty that immigration issue has implied for political elites (voter and party variation). These multiple sources of variation have allowed me to observe two complex mechanisms of change. The first one concerns the mobilisation of established party supporters through spatial types of voting. In other terms, the maximisation of electoral utility through well-defined issue attitudes and spatial calculi (basically proximity and direction) can only affect voters who have already developed a sense of attachment to their party due to habit or socialisation. The issue preferences of such a voter can determine whether he finally opts for his party or whether he abstains, but very rarely will these preferences generate a shift in party support.

By contrast, the second mechanism of change works differently and can strongly direct the vote of non-partisan voters (voters who have not developed any sense of party attachment *vis-à-vis* the party they finally vote for) towards parties felt to show competence in dealing with the issue. This mechanism works through valence properties, namely issue saliency and party images of good performance. Valence voting thus proves to be strongly related to the effect of the immigration issue, even in systems with conflictive rather than consensual distributions of issue preferences, and even in systems with comparatively higher levels of cleavage voting. Valence voting thus lies behind the success of extreme parties trying to dominate and even monopolise the constituency of the issue, but can also affect mainstream parties and can be observed even in countries where radical parties have not emerged. While spatial models of voting account for the effect of immigration on established party electorates (mobilisation), valence voting sheds light on how a non-identified voter can be drawn to vote for one or another party on the basis of an issue concern (acquisition).

Finally, the third main conclusion is that not all types of attitudes towards immigration can generate an electoral effect. Such an effect is conditional upon the specific semantic and ideological construction of the issue, which can be complex and multidimensional. More specifically, only perceptions based on characteristics of migrants as individuals in terms of functionality and compatibility seem to have a tangible effect, rather than sociotropic constructions of the impact of immigration on the host country life. Moreover, this individual outlook seems to follow a logic of differentiation between natives and immigrants, whereas sociotropic constructions are rather articulated in terms of hierarchy (how superior or inferior, good or bad are societal outcomes due to immigration). According to theories on issue framing and issue constraint, the higher impact of individual-difference perceptions of immigration is partly due to a stronger relationship between people's attitudes and their ideological predispositions in terms of left and right. This implies that for a new policy area to have an electoral impact, it is necessary for citizens' opinions to be coherently embedded in general ideological axes structuring political competition and summarising a number of issue preferences.

7.1- Immigration is not about extremeness: centripetal and centrifugal rationales of competition

Immigration has received much less attention from political science than from other neighbouring disciplines like sociology or economics. Moreover, when immigration has been an object of study from a political behaviour perspective, it has usually been conceptualised exclusively as a catalyst of extreme forms of behaviour and not as an issue likely to reshape established parties and party systems. The radical right literature has framed immigration as an issue which reflected the exceptionality of the radical voter, the pivotal role of radical parties (so only addressing mainstream parties in terms of their strategies and the power of their radical counterparts, which have only emerged in some European countries), and focused largely on negative or xenophobic attitudes as the ones that generate an electoral impact.

This study has thus tried to fill a gap between the intuition that the immigration issue matters in mainstream electoral dynamics¹, and the relatively narrow focus of existing studies on the extremeness of the issue. The two rival hypotheses articulated in chapter 2 in order to shed light on the potential of the immigration issue to stretch ideologically the political spectrum (centrifugal dynamics) or to rather affect more moderate parties close to the median voter (centripetal dynamics) were the directional and the proximity hypotheses. Direction and proximity refer to two well-established theories of voting behaviour within the spatial voting paradigm, which respectively predict centrifugal and centripetal patterns of competition. Directional theory of voting expects citizens to vote on the basis of the direction and intensity of their issue preference, and for parties with clear stances far from a neutral status quo usually represented by the median point of the political spectrum. Proximity theory rather expects voters to choose the party representing the closest stance to their own.

The findings in this study show that immigration can generate both centrifugal and centripetal effects. In spite of being generally presented as rival theories of spatial calculus, statistically significant directional and proximity effects on voting can be observed across

¹ As defined in chapters 1 and 2, by electoral dynamic I mean a configuration of issue-related opinions both among voters and parties, that in interaction with exogenous systemic features gives rise to a particular pattern of electoral competition affecting the overall political spectrum.

the pooled European sample of political systems analysed here. However, the magnitude of the effects is stronger in the proximity case thus supporting the proximity hypothesis, which was framed in comparative terms and which expected a stronger capacity to predict vote choice than directional accounts of issue voting. The average probability to vote for a party can increase 40% when going from a minimum to a maximum value in terms of proximity to a party regarding the immigration issue. By contrast, the increase in probability to vote for a party from minimum to a maximum synergy in terms of issue direction does not reach 30%. Moreover, the aggregate effect of proximity has to be necessarily stronger, since there is an overwhelming majority of voters located around the median voter rather than at the extremes of the spectrum. As for sociotropic constructions of the immigration issue in public opinion, the average probability to vote for a party can increase almost 30% when going from a minimum to a maximum value in this issue dimension. By contrast, the average increase to vote for a party on the basis of this dimension and in terms of issue direction is almost insignificant and does not reach 10%.

These findings are presented in chapter 5, and show that by analysing the immigration issue in a comprehensive manner (so analysing not only negative opinions about the issue and not only one extreme of the spectrum), this issue proves to be much less polarising and radical, and much more influential on mainstream party dynamics than some interpretations provided by the radical right literature might imply.

7.2- On party heterogeneity: the issue saliency dilemma

The findings and implications for political competition summarised in the previous section refer to averages and significance thresholds across pooled European samples. Chapter 5, however, explores important sources of heterogeneity in the effect of attitudes towards immigration on vote choice. One of the crucial sources of heterogeneity to take into account in a voting behaviour study is obviously the party level. Surprisingly enough, however, the survey analysis orientation and the influence of methodological individualism in voting behaviour studies over the last decades has too often omitted the party level of analysis, and has overlooked the fact that party choice mechanisms may vary across parties.

The stacked nature of the dataset and the conditional logit techniques used in chapter 5 allowed me to take into account the party-specific nature of vote choices. Even if the

findings presented there were not derived from the specific hypotheses presented in chapter 2, they are important to understand the complexity and the robustness of the general behavioural effects of attitudes towards immigration summarised above. More specifically, one important party characteristic proved to have relevant implications, namely the stress (saliency) given by parties to the issue.

As regards the first important source of party heterogeneity to be considered here, the proximity model regarding the individual difference scale (the one with stronger behavioural consequences) has a conditional electoral effect depending on the saliency that a given party gives to the immigration issue. When the issue is salient in the party agenda, the likelihood of losing partisans who are distant on this issue is very high (70% of probability decrease when going from minimal to maximal issue saliency). For partisans with middle proximity vis-à-vis the party a very high saliency of the issue in the party agenda can imply a 35% decrease of the electoral prospects of the party. By contrast, those who are already close to the party on this issue do not become much more likely to vote for it (the variation hardly reaches 10% of probability increase). These findings imply that, from a spatial voting perspective, it is more rational for mainstream parties to keep a new, cross-cutting and polarising issue like immigration off the agenda. This is so because voters having a similar position on the issue as the party will vote for it anyway. But by stressing the issue, the party can lose a dramatic share of partisans who disagree with the official party position.

Unfortunately, however, this is just a part of the story regarding the strategic considerations that a given party has to face in terms of position and saliency. From a spatial perspective, among voters who are able to develop a quite refined attitude towards immigration, identify party positions, and maximise the utility of voting by calculating distances between them and parties, it is rational for political elites to keep the issue off the agenda. However, this is exactly the opposite from considerations that arise regarding the effect of valence properties on vote choice analysed in chapter 6. Valence voting is understood as the effect of two linked properties: considering an issue as salient in a given time point around an election, and connecting this concern with the image of party competence in dealing and finding a solution for that general concern. The findings in chapter 6 show that positive valence properties of a party (when it is perceived as competent in handling a salient issue like immigration) are able to attract voters who are not psychologically identified with this

party. So issue voting can increase the electoral support for a party (over and above the number of people who feel identified with this party due to socialisation or habit of voting) by projecting good valence images of competence and performance. This means that by stressing the importance of immigration, parties can lose core supporters who disagree but can win new voters who trust the party in that particular important problem.

The saliency dilemma for a party thus concerns whether its priority is to preserve core supporters or to conquer new electorates. In Sani and Sartori's words, whether it is time to opt for a *defensive* or for an *expansive* competition (1983:331). The decision on whether it is time to reinforce loyalty and mobilise core supporters rather than acquire new electorates, however, will depend on a number of factors like the size of this loyal group (if it is enough to win elections, or if it rather is in decline giving rise to a need to conquer new spaces) and whether the party is in a cycle of recession (where it cannot afford losing core supporters) or rather growth (where it can afford to lose some core supporters). If the party wants or needs to use the immigration issue to conquer new electorates beyond its group of loyal supporters, it will have to rely on valence mechanisms of voting. The party will have to target in its campaigning those people who are concerned with the immigration issue (so that it becomes for them a salient issue) and project an image of competence and reliability in managing, handling or finding solutions to this problem. The projection of competence as a valence property does not necessarily imply becoming negative or positive in positional terms. The image of competence refers to a more general political attribute beyond policy positions, like how serious the party is, how reliable and trustworthy the candidate is, etc. Positional ambiguity will actually be an asset to such a party, since a very salient policy position which does not please core supporters will be problematic.

Stressing the issue of immigration can thus be a very attractive strategy for extremist parties with little established support. But note that this is not because such parties are extremist. Rather it is because they have few established supporters and thus have little to lose.

7.3- On party heterogeneity: party size and the decentralisation hypothesis

The analyses on party heterogeneity implemented in chapter 5 also revealed a significant interaction between the directional model regarding the individual difference scale and

party size (understood as the share of votes obtained by parties in a national general election close to when the survey fieldwork was conducted). Two implications were derived from this interaction. The first one is a very general confirmation of strategic considerations mediating the impact of an issue. Differences in directionality (coincidence of issue direction and intensity between voters and parties) imply on average quite different vote choice probabilities regarding the different parties competing in a given political system. These differences, however, diminish and become statistically insignificant as the size of the party increases. This just means that bigger parties can obtain votes from citizens in spite of a low coincidence of issue preference, probably because such issue divergences are a minor evil when weighed against other policy preferences.

The second and probably more interesting finding for issue voting scholars consists of reading this interaction backwards. The fact that bigger parties get more votes than other parties in spite some divergence of issue preferences with their supporters may sound obvious. However, viewing the relationship the other way around, it is precisely when parties are small that directional theory better predicts vote choice. Even when parties are small, a high agreement in terms of directionality regarding the immigration issue can imply slightly above 70% probabilities to vote for that party. This means that strategic considerations are almost completely disregarded by voters when the connection in terms of issue preference is strong. By contrast, a very low coincidence of issue preference direction can only imply a 20% chance to vote for a party. Holding party size constant at a low level, the immigration issue in directional terms can imply an increase of 50% of probability to vote for the same party if the issue preference is highly coincident. It is worth stressing that this interaction between issue voting and party size only affects directional voting, which, as explained above, benefits parties that are further from the median voter and are generally smaller.

Another relevant finding concerning possible sources of party heterogeneity is the interactions between issue voting and party families presented in chapter 5. The stronger tendency of the immigration issue to generate centripetal dynamics and to affect mainstream party dynamics was confirmed above. Are there thus any mainstream types of parties that can be particularly affected by the immigration issue? The attempt to answer this question from a party family perspective singled out regional parties in an unexpected and robust finding to be developed in further research. The interaction between issue voting

and regionalist parties is confirmed in the case of the directional model, and for the two attitudinal dimensions of the immigration issue considered in this thesis. This finding gives rise to the decentralisation hypothesis. The electorate of regionalist parties seems to be particularly affected by the immigration issue, but only from a directional perspective, and both for the societal hierarchy and individual difference scales. The axis of competition concerning centre and periphery, centralisation and decentralisation, seems to have an important role in the mediation of the electoral impact of attitudes towards immigration. This may well be because the immigration phenomenon stresses many economic, cultural and public policy challenges which are already at stake in the dispute between national and sub-national visions of political decision-making.

7.4- On systemic heterogeneity: immigration policy and party system fragmentation

Still in terms of possible sources of heterogeneity regarding the spatial effect of attitudes towards immigration, chapter 5 also explored the mediation of contextual and institutional features. Surprisingly, however, contextual heterogeneity in the behavioural impact of immigration from a spatial perspective is much more limited than what might have been expected. The two-step hierarchical logistic models implemented in chapter 5 can just partially validate two hypotheses: the liberalisation of national immigration policies, and the fragmentation of the party system.

By liberalisation of national immigration policies I mean the degree to which integration of immigrants is easier from a legal point of view. More specifically, I have tested the performance of several indicators compiled by the European Migrant Integration Policy Index, namely labour market access, family reunion, long-term residence, political participation, access to nationality, and existence of anti-discrimination policies. It is reasonable to expect a very different electoral reaction to an issue depending on whether it is apparently under control and less likely to generate blunt social and political conflicts, or whether it is not. In the case of immigration, if foreigners are well-integrated into a society it is reasonable to expect less conflict and therefore less of a basis for electoral competition on this issue. By contrast, if immigrants do not have access to a normal status in social, political and cultural spheres of the host society they are more likely to be perceived as outsiders and even as dangerous challenges to the *status quo*. It is important to note that this

argument is not equivalent to ethnic competition theory, which states that socio-economically vulnerable strata are more likely to perceive immigrants as a threat and therefore vote for radical right parties. In this case, the lack of integration of migrants into the host society can affect a number of social strata, including non-vulnerable ones. In this case, the un-resolved situation of the immigration issue is more likely to be in the public agenda and in the overall structure of spatial political competition.

The findings regarding effects of immigration across different legal systems showed 3 provisional conclusions to be developed in future research. First, the proximity effect seems to vary more across legal settings regarding the integration of migrants, especially on the basis of the societal hierarchy construct. This is so even if the societal hierarchy scale has a weaker effect than the individual difference scale on average. This finding just shows that, even if societal hierarchy perceptions of immigration are weaker on average, their effects vary quite a bit depending on how the integration of migrants is approached from a public policy perspective. Second, when a clearer relationship is found between a spatial effect and a legal dimension of the integration of migrants in the host society, it tends to be curvilinear rather than linear. More specifically, low values of integration are associated with stronger electoral effects of the immigration issue. This might be so because when the immigration phenomenon is not properly integrated it becomes an outsider phenomenon stressing the potential disagreements and conflicts that may derive from it. The strength of the immigration issue tends to decrease as migrants have more legal opportunities to integrate, even if maximum levels of integration tend to enhance the influence of the immigration issue on party competition. This relationship, however, is not clear on all the legal dimensions analysed. It is clearer regarding the access to nationality and the existence of anti-discrimination policies. As a third and unexpected finding, it has to be noted that precisely when the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy construct tends to decrease, even with high values of ethnic integration, the directional effect goes up precisely on these values. This would mean that even when, from a proximity perspective, the immigration issue seems to be less relevant when integration values are higher, the issue is in reality acquiring more prominence from a directional (and eventually more centrifugal) perspective. This just confirms the curvilinear relationship between the spatial effect of the issue and legal integration of migrants. When integration is very low or very high, the issue has more effect. By contrast, intermediate values of migrants' legal integration tend to depress the relevance of the issue.

The second partially confirmed contextual hypothesis concerns the fragmentation of the party system. The hypothesis that the impact will be stronger in less fragmented party systems is confirmed with a steep, negative and linear slope regarding the proximity effect of the societal hierarchy scale. The hypothesis is also confirmed from a more curvilinear and U-shaped perspective regarding the other spatial effects analysed. This means that the higher the fragmentation, the more difficult it is for parties to hold clearly distinguished stances and to represent sufficiently broad electoral spaces, and therefore the weaker the spatial mechanism of voting becomes.

7.5- Two mechanisms of electoral change: mobilisation and acquisition

The incorporation of a new policy area like immigration into mainstream electoral dynamics is likely to reshape the morphology of the party strengths and the patterns of political competition in a given system. The immigration issue is an appropriate tool to observe how and why processes of electoral change can take place from an individual-level perspective. This is so because it is not clear *a priori* how immigration fits into existing ideological axes structuring voter and party strategies, and because of the uncertainty that the issue generates among mainstream political elites due to its potential and apparent extremeness. The original *leit-motive* of this research was not the explicit analysis of the important, changeable and badly understood processes of electoral change in contemporary democracies. However, the multiple variations of the effect of attitudes towards immigration on vote choice showed that the incorporation of a new issue into political competition has a lot to do with change.

Chapter 5 showed that the immigration issue seen in spatial terms can be a relevant vote predictor but only among those people who already feel attached to a party. For those people who are able to identify a salient and consistent position on the immigration issue in spatial terms, immigration can exert a strong mobilising effect - it can mobilise or demobilise voters who already feel psychologically identified or attached to a given party (because of habit or socialisation processes). Immigration under an attitudinal and spatial perspective, however, is unable to generate vote transfers across potential electorates (defined in terms of party identification).

By contrast, chapter 6 shows that among non-attached or non-identified voters, immigration can still exert a remarkable electoral effect through valence voting. This effect is not due to a reliable and well-identified position on an attitudinal continuum, but among unattached voters through a more contingent and eventually volatile concern over the immigration issue at a given moment in time. If this dealigned voter is able to connect concern over immigration to the policies of a party perceived as competent to deal with this issue (the classic properties of a valence mechanism of voting), then the probability to vote for this party increases remarkably. This electoral effect is particularly significant among people who do not feel identified with the party they finally vote for, and this is why I call this mechanism an acquisition effect.

The mechanisms of electoral change generated by the immigration issue have important theoretical and even normative implications for policy representation processes. Bartolini talks about four conditions for the existence of proper and open party competition: *contestability*, *vulnerability* of incumbents, *availability*, and *decidability* of the political offer (Bartolini 2002:89-90). The condition more directly related to the electoral consequences of immigration is availability, which is defined as a certain predisposition to an electoral switch on the voters' side in order to be able to punish incumbents for a bad performance. The incorporation of a new policy area into party competition is a good opportunity to observe whether the availability of voters and the consequent vulnerability of incumbents are existing properties in the system. The relationship between vote switching and party performance is clearly present through valence voting, which is indeed fundamental to understanding the impact of issues on contemporary electoral outcomes. Vote switching as such is more difficult to observe from a spatial perspective. However, the fact that voters with well-defined issue attitudes and to the ability to maximise electoral utilities can decrease to a substantial extent their probability to vote for their usual party is also a sign of availability in the system – though not necessarily a good sign for a mainstream party (perhaps a government party) that wants to address the immigration issue but fears to do so in case it loses support.

The electoral impact of immigration analysed in this study has also important consequences for what Bartolini calls the decidability of the political offer. According to him, candidates or parties' proposals must be different in order to make voter reactions to government and reward a true mechanism of responsiveness, and not a random change in voting habits

(Bartolini 2002:90). The distinct character of party positions and the substantial strength of spatial calculi regarding the immigration issue are coherent with the existence of decidability. More importantly, however, the findings in chapter 6 reveal that, contrary to what it is usually assumed, valence voting is not a product or a parallel process to consensus (or lack of decidability). The electoral strength of issue saliency and images of party competence is sometimes even coherent with distinct and conflictive issue preferences. It is wrong, then, to consider that democracy is about the end of conflict. Democracy is rather about the management of conflict, as it is observed in the incorporation of a new policy area into mainstream political competition through both spatial and valence rationales of voting.

7.6- The bidimensional construction of attitudes towards immigration in Europe: societal hierarchy vs. individual difference

The previous sections have summarised the findings and the implications regarding the impact of attitudes towards immigration in Europe. But, what kind of attitudes are we talking about? Chapters 3 and 4 tried to properly define and understand the *explanans* before properly assessing the *explanandum*.

What are the dimensions of attitudes towards immigration in public opinion? The empirical analyses presented in chapter 3 validated the societal vs. individual hypothesis and the hierarchy vs. difference hypothesis. These 4 components are actually intertwined, in the sense that the societal (very explicit) is linked to the hierarchical (framed in a more subtle manner, focusing on how negative or inferior are the societal consequences for the host country of receiving immigration), and the individual is linked to the difference component. The reliable existence of these 2 constructs does not mean that there are not other ways to construct immigration in specific countries or regions. It rather means that this bidimensional construction of immigration can be generalised across the broad majority of the European systems analysed².

The societal vs. individual axis (present in the analysis on other issues like the economy) and the hierarchy vs. difference axis (which has determined the perception of non-native

² As shown in chapter 3, the societal hierarchy scale does not reach a satisfactory level of homogeneity and reliability in Portugal, whereas the individual difference scale does not reach a satisfactory level in Hungary, Israel and Portugal.

individuals and populations throughout history) have proved to be good conceptual tools to understand how immigration is constructed and framed in people's minds. The first axis distinguishes between different sociotropic ways to perceive immigration. It frames immigration as a phenomenon with collective consequences for the life of a country (both in economic and cultural terms). The second construct rather focuses on individual characteristics of migrants with potential consequences for interacting with them. It focuses on how similar, compatible, easy to integrate, and even useful migrants are, and therefore on the required thresholds for migrants to be accepted into the host society. Therefore, the hostile pole in the first construct perceives migrants as dangerous, negative or inferior, whereas the hostile pole in the second construct perceives migrants as just different or incompatible.

The findings presented in chapter 5 have also important implications for party strategy. If a party wants to benefit from the immigration issue, the first decision concerns what to say about immigration. If this party wants the immigration issue to have a visible effect, it will have to frame its discourse in similarity, adaptability, and functionality terms, since the individual difference construct shows a stronger and more consistent electoral impact than the societal hierarchy construct. That is, the framing of immigration with more potential behavioural consequences should be based on attributes stressing how adaptable and useful will have to be the migrants to be accepted in the country. The individual utility of migrants and the benefit that native citizens can gain from interacting with them is what seems more likely to activate one or another behavioural outcome. By contrast, discourses based on the inherent negativity of societal outcomes derived from immigration will generate less impact. The societal win or loss of immigration understood as a general phenomenon is less important than the individual perspective and the utility derived from accepting one or other types of migrants.

The conceptual distinction between material and cultural threat used in previous literature proves to be less useful than the societal vs. individual and the hierarchy vs. difference rationales proposed here. The former construct explicitly mixes up economic and cultural items. On the other hand, even if it contains an obvious identity component, the second construct is explicitly composed of a utilitarian component which frames migrants as useful or not (work skills, educational background, etc.) beyond a mere perception of cultural threat.

Finally, chapter 3 emphasised the importance of justifying and properly specifying the measure of attitudes towards immigration when analysing its causes. By specifying these two measures as different dependent variables, I have shown that some key variables operationalising established theories of attitudes towards immigration can have contradictory effects. These contradictions have been detected in previous literature, but not attributed to the specification of the dependent variable. One of the most crucial differences is the lack of impact of perceived individual economic insecurity on the societal hierarchy scale. This finding stresses its sociotropic nature, its lack of material character, and suggests that the historical logic of inferiority or negativity towards the foreigner is still present but articulated through a symbolic and covert semantic framing.

7.7- The ideological constraint of attitudes towards immigration: when competition does not matter

Chapter 2 presented the ideological constraint hypothesis, which has been tested in chapters 4 and 5. Between the articulation of a multidimensional attitude towards immigration and the electoral effect of this attitude, there is an intermediate step that needs to be taken into account: the ideological coherence of an attitude with the rest of issue opinions and ideological predispositions of a given individual.

To what extent, then, does an issue have to be embedded in the normal ideological structure of political discourse in a society to generate an electoral effect? The answer to this puzzle is: to a moderately low extent in absolute terms, but to a big extent in comparative terms. The formalisation of the electoral impact of the degree of ideological constraint of a given attitude (the relationship between left-right predispositions and attitudes towards immigration) in chapter 2 shows that, from a proximity perspective, a very high correlation between ideological predispositions and issue attitudes would convert the latter to a mirror image of the former, and would minimise the exogenous electoral impact of the issue. This is why the individual-level and systemic-level correlations between left-right self-placements and attitudes towards immigration are low in absolute terms. However, the differences in magnitude and significance in the correlations between left-right and the two dimensions of attitudes towards immigration proved to be crucial in understanding how and why these attitudes have an electoral impact. The individual difference scale proves to be more systematically and strongly related to left-right predispositions, and not by chance it is

precisely this dimension that shows a stronger electoral impact. By contrast, the societal hierarchy scale, which I consider a symbolic construct of opinions about immigration based on negativity and hierarchy, is not properly captured by left-right. This means that this scale is therefore badly incorporated into mainstream dynamics of competition. It is precisely on this side of competition where attitudes towards immigration have to necessarily be constructed ideologically and not only relying upon a direct experience of threat *vis-à-vis* migrants, which is more likely to be a feature of radical voters.

The construction of attitudes towards immigration has received much scholarly interest over the last decades. Attention, however, has focused almost exclusively on sociological and economic factors while forgetting the systematic and comparative analysis of the effect of cognitive heuristics and ideological predispositions. Chapter 4 suggests that more stable and permanent left-right self-placements help citizens to organise, constrain and articulate their attitudes towards immigration, but especially when the experience of direct competition for scarce resources with migrants is weaker. In other words, when the individual and contextual levels of socio-economic vulnerability are higher, people tend to articulate their (generally negative) attitude towards immigrants without further ideological mediation. By contrast, in situations of low socio-economic vulnerability immigrants are not directly framed as a threat and therefore people need to rely on left-right predispositions in order to make sense of what this issue implies and to construct a coherent opinion on it. This theoretical expectation implies that potential radical voters (i.e., those in a position of socio-economic vulnerability regarding migrants) are particularly those with less need to construct ideologically their attitude towards immigration since they can rely on an experience of perceived threat.

Theoretical expectations regarding the ideological framing of the immigration issue were built upon ethnic competition theory and Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample model (Zaller 1993). The marriage between information and predisposition considered as necessary by Zaller to construct an issue opinion has proved to be a conditional relationship in the ideological framing of attitudes towards immigration in Europe. Socio-economic vulnerability and direct experience of competition with immigrants for scarce material resources are assumed to increase the attention, the saliency, and the exposure to flows of information on the immigration issue. The perception of threat (be it informationally or emotionally based) allows less room for political predispositions to play any role in the

articulation of an associated issue opinion. The absence of competition or perception of threat, however, implies a more limited attention and concern towards the issue, as well as a more limited exposure to classical negative stereotypes regarding immigrants. It is in this case that political predispositions become a stronger shield in resisting (the already limited) external categorisations of immigration, and when ideological categories like left-right play a greater role in articulating an attitude which is coherent with the individual's ideological predispositions.

The conditional relationship between ideological framing and socio-economic status might be considered as a very specific feature of a singular issue with remarkable electoral consequences like immigration. The different analytical steps taken over the study that now comes to an end, however, have moved between the specificity of the immigration issue and the generality of the implications that it may have for political representation. The specific polarising nature of the issue, the deep fears it can generate among voters and leaders, and the variety of agency and systemic ways to deal with the uncertainty that it generates, helped to shed light on how and why the incorporation of a new policy area into mainstream political competition can reshape party systems as we know them nowadays.

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