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### Authors

Citrin, Jack  
Levy, Morris  
Wright, Matthew

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# Multicultural Policy and Political Support in European Democracies

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Jack Citrin<sup>1</sup>, Morris Levy<sup>1</sup>, and Matthew Wright<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

In response to growing demographic diversity, European countries have selectively implemented political multiculturalism, a set of policies that seek to redefine prevailing conceptions of national identity. We explore the consequences of such policies for mass political support. Applying multi-level modeling to the 2002 and 2010 waves of the European Social Survey and analyzing multiple dependent variables including trust in regime institutions and assessments of the government of the day and the political system's performance, we show that the extensive adoption of multicultural policies magnifies the degree to which hostility to immigration is negatively associated with political support. This finding, robust to multiple specifications, is corroborated using European Values Survey data. It underscores how policies that challenge citizens' conceptions of national identity strengthen the link between opposition to immigration and political discontent, furnishing ongoing opportunities for rightist fringe parties to capitalize on anti-immigrant sentiment among the politically alienated.

## Keywords

diversity, multiculturalism, political trust, political support, public opinion

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<sup>1</sup>University of California, Berkeley, USA

<sup>2</sup>American University, Washington, DC, USA

## Corresponding Author:

Jack Citrin, University of California, Berkeley, 102 Moses Hall; Berkeley, CA 94720, USA.

Email: gojack@berkeley.edu

A decades-long influx of immigrants and refugees has transformed the ethnic, linguistic, and religious composition of European democracies. *Demographic* multiculturalism, the presence of many ethnic groups in a single polity, has raised questions about the content of national identity, the boundaries between “us” and “them.” Opposition to immigration often is founded on a sense of cultural threat to a dominant way of life, and these fears have fueled both alienation from mainstream elites and support for radical right wing parties that combine anti-immigrant sentiment with an anti-system outlook (Schain, Zolberg, & Hossay, 2002).

Since the 1980s, European governments have selectively adopted *political* multiculturalism as a formula for addressing the social and cultural challenges of mass immigration. Often described as the “politics of recognition,” this ideology endorses the coexistence of plural cultures or “ways of life” within a single polity (Kymlicka, 1995; Taylor, 1994) rather than prioritizing a common cultural core as the foundation of national unity and social cohesion. Its policies are deployed in part to disarm conceptions of national identity based on ethnic and cultural homogeneity that have been linked with hostility to immigration (Citrin & Sides, 2008; Wright, 2011a) and to incorporate official respect for minority cultures into the nation’s self-concept. Specific multiculturalism policies (MCPs) designed to legitimate and preserve cultural diversity vary in scope and intensity and range from symbolic gestures to substantive mandates (Kymlicka, 2012; Tolley, 2010). Their common purpose, however, is the inclusion of immigrant minorities as full-fledged members of the political community without forcing them to shed their original customs. Whether MCP actually has such salutary effects<sup>1</sup> or stimulates inter-group hostility and erodes national community<sup>2</sup> is the subject of much scholarly debate (see, for example, Harell & Stolle, 2010).

Taking as its point of departure the documented association between anti-immigrant sentiment and political disaffection in European publics, this article explores how political multiculturalism influences the relationship between citizens’ attitudes toward immigration and allegiance to political institutions (e.g., Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999). We argue that the rhetoric of political multiculturalism and its substantive policies may make salient the linkage between immigration and feelings about the proper makeup of the political community, partly through the activity of right-wing political entrepreneurs. Consequently, we hypothesize that the extent to which governments commit themselves to political multiculturalism conditions the degree to which immigration attitudes and political support are associated in European public opinion. Using data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and the European Values Survey (EVS) and leveraging both cross-country and within-country temporal variation in a measure of multicultural policy

regime strength, we confirm this expectation. Mass publics in countries with extensive multicultural policy regimes exhibit a more pronounced negative relationship between opposition to immigration and political support than do publics in countries with fewer multicultural policies.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond demonstrating how multicultural policy shapes an important aspect of public opinion, our finding contributes to the broader literature on political support. Easton (1965) claimed that over the long-term support for the different levels of the political system become intertwined. Support for the regime protects incumbents, but consistent perception of failure or mismanagement will gradually erode authorities' legitimacy. Disgruntled citizens may in turn raise questions about whether it is the regime rather than just the incumbent government that should be blamed. Consistent with Easton's surmise, we show how controversial public policies that engage conceptions of national identity can tighten the linkage between support for a particular notion of political community and support for a country's governing institutions and incumbents. Widespread dissatisfaction with the weakened boundaries of the political community erodes the sense of "we-feeling" that is the foundation of nationhood. If citizens believe that political authorities and institutions have had a hand in altering those boundaries, regime support becomes vulnerable.

The resulting convergence of disenchantment with the political community and distrust of the regime has potentially far-reaching implications for political stability. In contemporary European politics, the fusion of anti-immigrant sentiment and political discontent furnishes an ongoing opportunity for parties of the extreme right to mobilize support and channel anti-immigrant sentiment against mainstream political arrangements.

## **Multicultural Policy and Political Support**

Legitimacy is a resource that frees governments to undertake programs that are unpopular in the short run (Dalton, 2004; Hetherington, 1998; Hetherington & Husser, 2011; Levi & Stoker, 2000). Enduring support for a regime's institutions and values thus contributes to its effectiveness and stability, as well as to a polity's ability to fend off non-democratic challenges (Easton, 1965; Lipset, 1959). Dissatisfaction with incumbent authorities has clear short-run effects on more generalized trust in government. Perceived performance on "valence" issues such as peace and prosperity has an across-the-board impact on political trust, although this is tempered by partisan attitudes toward those in office (Citrin, 1974; Citrin & Green, 1986; Levi & Stoker, 2000). With respect to "position" issues, regime support is shaken when governments embark on policy programs that conflict with pervasive, deeply held public

sentiments (Citrin, 1974; Citrin & Green, 1986; A. Miller, 1974; Norris, 1999; Nye, Zelikow, & King, 1997).

However, when the public is deeply divided over a policy, the overall impact on support will reflect the balance of opinion, as proponents become more supportive and opponents less so. Especially where emotion-laden and personally salient issues are at stake, preference-related gaps in support should be expected when governments take polarizing positions. In McLaren's (2012) analysis, for example, concern about the effects of immigration on national identity and culture lowers trust in political institutions in Great Britain. Moreover, her analysis of panel data with the use of an instrumental variable for immigration attitudes allows her to argue convincingly that the immigration-related beliefs are causally prior to the individual's loss of political trust. In other words, in this theoretical account, the path runs from policy opinions to regime support, possibly mediated by the activism of anti-immigrant political entrepreneurs such as Le Pen, Haider, Fortuyn, and Wilders.

An alternative basis for divergence in political support between proponents and opponents of a policy is that responses to new events and policies depend in part on one's prior level of support. Supportive citizens are more likely to adopt the position the government proposes, while those already low in trust will be prone to take the regime's stance as a negative cue. The net result again, all else being equal, is a divide in disaffection levels between proponents and opponents of government policy. Hetherington and Husser (2011) have documented such a process in American public opinion regarding defense policy. Citizens whose trust in government was higher in 2002 remained more likely than less trusting citizens to maintain support for the Bush administration's policy in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2004.

Policy responses to immigration present an especially interesting case for studying political support because—in addition to their politically salient and highly divisive character—they (unlike many other political issues) *explicitly* engage and try to reshape deeply-held sentiments about the nature of the political community. Both mechanisms—from opinion to support and from support to opinion—suggest that political multiculturalism will widen the gap in political support between pro- and anti-immigrant publics. Starting with the opinion-to-support channel, mass conceptions of the national “we” are deeply entrenched and emotionally meaningful as social identities (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1991). The stability and pervasiveness of strong attachments to the nation are consistently evident (e.g., Citrin & Sears, 2009; Schildkraut, 2011; Theiss-Morse, 2009; Wong, 2010), and scholars have established strong links between immigration's perceived cultural and economic threats to “the nation” and anti-immigrant sentiment (e.g.,

Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004).

Those who define their nation's identity in ethnic or ascriptive terms tend to oppose immigration (Citrin, Sears, Muste, & Wong, 2001; Wright, 2011a). So to the extent that multicultural policies are perceived as a redefinition of nationhood to accommodate culturally dissimilar groups, they may alienate anti-immigrant publics from political elites and potentially from the regime level of the political system as well. Those for whom immigration and multiculturalism are already politically salient may develop a jaundiced view of a political system that generates policies that challenge primordial conceptions of national identity. Multicultural policies may also raise the political salience of immigration by making visible the role of a country's leaders and political institutions in bringing about demographic and cultural change. To anti-immigrant blocs, everyday manifestations of policies preserving cultural divides may appear as evidence that the government is overlooking their preferences and undermining national values. Thus, political institutions and incumbents become more closely tied to immigration and multiculturalism, and these issues become more salient in citizens' assessment of how the political system is performing or whether government can be trusted (cf. Hetherington & Husser, 2011). In either case, a predictable outcome is alienation in the form of decreased political trust.

By contrast, those whose conception of national identity emphasizes common political principles tend to have more favorable views of immigration and immigrants (Citrin et al., 2001; Wright, 2011a). While surveys in Europe show that very few respondents are completely sanguine about immigration or favor a general increase in the level of immigration (Freeman, 1995), an official embrace of multiculturalism should be less threatening to those who do not define belonging to their country on ethnic lines. Those who accept culturally dissimilar immigrants may welcome political multiculturalism as enrichment to the national culture, a boost to tolerance and human rights, and a sign of more cosmopolitan values' ascendancy. We therefore expect that implementing extensive multicultural policies will engender disproportionately more disaffection among anti-immigrant than pro-immigrant blocs.

The support-to-opinion channel, on the other hand, suggests that multicultural policies may have some role in shaping immigration attitudes, conditional on how much individuals trust the political system and elites that put it in place. In Canada, which has a stronger set of multicultural policies than the United States or any European country, the public is relatively positive about immigrants and their impact on society (Banting, 2010; Citrin, Johnston, & Wright, 2012). Other cross-national studies argue that multicultural policies increase social trust (Kesler & Bloemraad, 2010) and decrease anti-minority

prejudice (Weldon, 2006). These cross-sectional studies are unable to disentangle issues of reciprocal causation, but they assume a long-term socializing effect of government and elite discourse: if governments affirm the value of cultural diversity, the public will eventually be socialized into accepting it as a part of its national identity.

In this model, multicultural policy serves as a cue indicating what the official norms concerning immigrants are. Regime support enters the equation because there is no reason to expect that such a cue will operate uniformly. Instead, policy cues regarding the official recognition of minority groups are more likely to be internalized by the politically trusting and ignored by those who are cynical and disaffected. Thus, the differential impact of political support on opinion formation due to this cueing mechanism also predicts a greater gap in satisfaction with regime institutions and performance between pro- and anti-immigrant constituencies in contexts of extensive multiculturalism.

To summarize, two alternative perspectives on the dynamics of opinion formation lead us to hypothesize that the observed negative association between hostility to immigration and political support (McLaren, 2012) will be stronger where governments opt for multiculturalism rather than assimilation in coping with ethnic diversity. The two mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and may occur simultaneously, likely among different segments of the public. The opinion-to-support path is likely to prevail where prior attitudes are well formed, emotionally charged, and engage deeply entrenched political predispositions. Given the centrality of national identity in European masses' self-concept and the intense feelings it arouses in some segments of the public, issues concerning immigration and multiculturalism are good candidates for this mechanism. The support-to-opinion path, by contrast, is more likely to prevail among those whose prior policy attitudes tend to be weak or uninformed and consequently susceptible to attitude change based on consistency bias or learning once the official position is made salient. Thus, it could apply in general to any policy domain in which mass attitudes can be shaped by the positions governments take and the public esteem they evoke and not only to issues such as immigration or multiculturalism that engage core political predispositions.

Importantly, this reasoning makes no strong prediction about the *net* effect of multicultural policy on political support, in contrast to studies on multicultural policies' effects on welfare spending (Banting et al., 2006), generalized trust (Kesler & Bloemraad, 2010), anti-minority sentiment (Weldon, 2006), immigrant integration (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2011; Koopmans, 2010; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012), or conceptions of national identity (Wright, 2011b). Instead, it argues for a heterogeneous response among mass publics

depending on their immigration-related predispositions, with the net effect presumably related to the balance of opinion about immigration.

The key statistical evidence for our core proposition would be a significant negative association between the *interaction* of individual-level hostility toward immigration and the strength of a country's multicultural policies, on the one hand, and individual-level political support, on the other. We shall use a range of political support measures to try to assess whether the strength of this negative association varies depending on whether the "object" of trust or support refers to the incumbent or the regime level of the political system (Citrin, 1974; Dalton, 2004; Easton, 1965; Norris, 1999).

## Data, Measures, and Method

For analysis, we draw on cross-national studies of public opinion in 16 European democracies that have experienced significant immigration in the past decade.<sup>4</sup> To address both continuity and change in beliefs, we analyze the first wave of the ESS, fielded in 2002-2003 and the wave most recently available.<sup>5</sup> Pooling these waves allows us to explore both cross-country variation in multicultural policy and political attitudes in a particular wave, as well as within-country variation over time. Thus, we may compare countries with different levels of MCP with one another and compare the same country in two different years to observe whether changes in multicultural policy are associated with the changes in the distribution of political support we have predicted. As a robustness check, we also examine the fourth and sixth waves of the EVS (1999 and 2008), which contain broadly comparable measures on both sides of the equation (key measures are described below in the Robustness section and elaborated in Online Appendix B).

### *Immigration Preference (IP)*

In the ESS, IP is measured by the mean score on six items, three referring to whether the level of admission of specific categories of newcomers (defined by ethnicity, geographic origin, and wealth) should be reduced, increased, or kept the same, and three asking whether the consequences of immigration for a country are positive or negative for its economy, its cultural life, and its overall quality of life. Factor analysis confirmed that these items tap a single underlying construct but that immigration attitudes and the political support measures described below appear distinct and not likely to both be capturing some generalized disaffection. (For means and trends for these measures, see Online Appendix A, Table 2; for full wording of all items used in the analyses, see Online Appendix B).<sup>6</sup>



## Measures of Political Support

Questions in the ESS generated three measures of political support. Four items about respondents' *trust* in parliament, politicians, the judicial system, and the police comprised an index of support for regime institutions (Norris, 1999). Each respondent's score on this Institutional Trust (IT) Index is the mean of his or her four responses (for descriptive statistics regarding means and trends of all measures, see Online Appendix A, Table 1. For precise wording and response options of items used in constructing the support measures, consult Online Appendix B).<sup>7</sup> A second measure of political support in the ESS, Regime Performance (RP), is a single question asking respondents how satisfied they were with the way democracy is working in their country. Finally, responses to the ESS question about satisfaction with "the national government" constitute the Government Support (GS) measure. Pooling across countries and time periods, IT was correlated at .58 with RP and at .55 with GS, with RP and GS correlated at .58, a confirmation of the substantial overlap between measures intended to assess support for regime and incumbents respectively (Citrin, 1974). All three items are scaled from 0 (*least support*) to 100 (*most support*).

## Multicultural Policy

We use the Multicultural Policy Index (MCP) created by Banting and his colleagues to measure a country's implementation of immigrant multiculturalism (Banting et al., 2006; Tolley, 2010). Banting et al. build a country-level score of "polyethnic rights" by assigning for each of eight policy areas one point if a country fully adopted and implemented a policy, half a point if it had done so in a token manner, and zero if the policy had not been adopted at all.<sup>8</sup> The index includes all countries in our analysis and measures the extent of multicultural policy at two discrete points in time, 2000 and 2010, but is unavailable in the intervening years.<sup>9</sup> Some measurement error could result from the consequently imperfect correspondence between the years in which most survey data were gathered (2001-2002 and 2010-2011) and the precise years for which the MCP index is provided (2000 and 2010). However, the measures are sufficiently proximate in time to permit us to observe a gradual adjustment of attitudes in response to change in policy.

Comparing the MCP Index scores for each country between these periods (see Online Appendix A, Table 3) shows that there were considerable and varied within-country changes in policy over the period of study and that these changes varied in both magnitude and direction. The correlation between the 2000 and 2010 MCP Index scores pooled across 16 countries is

only .54, indicating substantial over-time variation. While virtually every earlier study of country-level MCP has relied on static policy measures (e.g., Crepaz, 2008; Kesler & Bloemraad, 2010; Wright, 2011b; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012), we leverage this dynamic policy measure to perform tests of the paper's core hypothesis that use both spatial cross-country and temporal within-country variation in MCP.

### *Statistical Models*

The fact that respondents are “nested” within countries and our interest in cross-level interactions lead us to estimate multi-level random slope and intercept models for empirical tests, grouping and allowing the effect of IP to vary by country and year.<sup>10</sup> The models incorporate individual-level control variables known to correlate with both anti-immigrant sentiment and political trust. These include standard demographic characteristics, political interest, ideological self-placement, beliefs about government's role in reducing income inequality, satisfaction with life, economic well-being, personal happiness, and interpersonal trust (see Online Appendix B). The multi-level models also control for certain contextual factors and their interaction with individual-level anti-immigrant sentiment: the size of the foreign-born population as a share of the total population, the unemployment rate, and the share of legislative seats held by right-wing political parties.<sup>11</sup>

Our analysis relies on a relatively small number of higher-level units (16 countries at Level 2 and two time periods at Level 3). This limits statistical power available for testing the impact of contextual variables and cross-level interactions. As a result, statistically null results may in fact be substantively meaningful, and statistically significant results are almost certainly substantively important. Simple descriptive presentation of the finding in cross-tabular form as well as a series of robustness checks including fixed-effects specifications and replication of the key result using EVS data help rule out a wide range of potential confounds, dependence on a particular specification, and other statistical artifacts as explanations for our results.

### **Results**

Table 1 provides descriptive evidence concerning the relationship of opposition to immigration (IP) and political support and the influence of multicultural policy on the strength of this relationship (following Banting et al.'s “weak,” “moderate,” and “strong” classification scheme for MCP). For respondents in minimal (“weak”) and more extensive (“moderate” and “strong”) multicultural policy regimes, it shows the mean score on each of

the three ESS political support measures among those scoring in each fifth of the IP scale.

Confirming prior research by McLaren (2012), there is clear evidence in both sets of countries of a negative association between opposition to immigration and multiple measures of political support. On average, those scoring in the top fifth on the IP scale are approximately 20 points lower in political trust than those scoring in the bottom fifth of the IP scale, express similarly more negative views of the regime's performance, and take a more modestly negative view of the government of the day.

As hypothesized, this negative relationship between opposition to immigration and political support is considerably more pronounced among respondents living in countries with more extensive multicultural policy regimes. In weak MCP regimes the most anti-immigrant respondents are a substantial 17, 19, and 12 points lower in IT, RP, and GS, respectively, than the most pro-immigrant respondents. However, in countries with stronger MCP regimes, these gaps increase to 25, 27, and 23. This suggests that a substantial negative relationship between opposition to immigration and political support would exist in Europe irrespective of multicultural policy but also that multicultural policy can widen the extent to which those favorable toward immigration exhibit higher political support than those opposed do. Pro-immigrant citizens have similar levels of political support in both sets of countries, but the anti-immigrant public in strong or moderate multiculturalism countries is substantially more dissatisfied and less trusting than the anti-immigrant public in weak multicultural regimes.

If multicultural policy widens the gap in political support between pro- and anti-immigrant publics, the pattern shown in Table 1 should be evident across countries (and not simply a product of one or two extreme cases that drive the aggregate result) and must be robust to controls for social and political attitudes and demographics. To establish these points, each of the three measures of political support was regressed (ordinary least squares [OLS]), in each country-year, on the IP measure. We control for a measure of left-right ideology, a question about government's role in reducing income inequality, general satisfaction with one's own life, and the national economy, happiness, interpersonal trust, political interest, and standard demographics (sex, age, education, nativity, citizenship status, and whether the respondent was an ethnic minority; for more information, see Online Appendix B). Each of the regression coefficients on IP measures the strength of the net negative association between opposition to immigration and political support in a given country-year. These coefficients were then plotted against the extensiveness of each country's multicultural policy regime, as shown in Figure 1. While the left-most panel taps both cross-country and over-time variation,

**Table 1.** Political Support by Opposition to Immigration in Weak Versus Moderate or Strong Multicultural Policy Regimes, European Social Survey.

Opposition to immigration (IP)	Measures of political support											
	Institutional trust (IT)			Regime performance (RP)			Government support (GS)					
	Weak MCP	Moderate or strong MCP	Total	Weak MCP	Moderate or strong MCP	Total	Weak MCP	Moderate or strong MCP	Total			
Lowest (0-20)	57.1 (0.3)	58.3 (0.4)	57.5 (0.3)	61.0 (0.4)	61.6 (0.5)	61.2 (0.3)	42.8 (0.4)	48.2 (0.6)	44.8 (0.4)			
21-40	58.2 (0.2)	54.7 (0.2)	57.0 (0.1)	62.1 (0.2)	58.6 (0.3)	61.0 (0.2)	47.7 (0.2)	46.0 (0.3)	47.1 (0.2)			
41-60	54.3 (0.1)	48.0 (0.2)	52.4 (0.1)	58.4 (0.2)	51.5 (0.3)	56.3 (0.2)	45.7 (0.2)	40.5 (0.3)	44.1 (0.2)			
61-80	47.7 (0.2)	40.9 (0.3)	45.6 (0.2)	51.1 (0.3)	44.0 (0.4)	49.0 (0.2)	38.9 (0.3)	34.2 (0.4)	37.4 (0.2)			
Highest (81-100)	39.9 (0.4)	33.2 (0.5)	37.6 (0.3)	41.7 (0.5)	34.1 (0.6)	39.2 (0.4)	30.9 (0.5)	25.2 (0.6)	29.0 (0.4)			
Highest-Lowest Mean Diff in Support	-17.2 (0.5)	-25.1 (0.7)	-19.9 (0.4)	-19.3 (0.7)	-27.4 (0.8)	-22.0 (0.5)	-11.8 (0.7)	-23.1 (0.8)	-15.9 (0.5)			

Immigrant Minorities MCP Index, <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/> (accessed April 17, 2013) classifies country-years as weak, moderate, or strong MCP regimes. *Weak:* Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland (2000), Finland (2000), Italy, Netherlands (2010), Norway, Portugal (2000), Spain (2000), Switzerland. *Moderate or strong:* Belgium, Finland (2010), Ireland (2010), Netherlands (2000), Portugal (2010), Spain (2010), Sweden, Great Britain. The mean score for each measure of political support (with standard error in parentheses) is shown among subjects scoring in each fifth of the opposition to immigration (IP) scale, pooling weak and moderate-to-strong MCP regimes, respectively. The bottom row displays the gap in political support between the strongest supporters and opponents of immigration, which is consistently larger (more negative) in regimes with more extensive multicultural policy. IP = immigration preference; MCP = multiculturalism policy.

the cross-sectional relationships in each year are also shown separately, in part to indicate the greater strength of the relationship in the latter period and in part simply for clarity of presentation.

Figure 1 demonstrates the near ubiquity of the negative relationship between hostility to immigration and political support. There are almost no significantly positive relationships between IP and the support measures, as shown by the concentration of point estimates below the horizontal zero line in each graph. Tellingly, the few exceptions to this rule occur when IP scores are related to the support for the national government (GS) measure rather than to feelings about objects that putatively refer to the regime itself. Although most measures of political support are colored by partisan sentiments and attitudes toward the incumbent government, the GS measure is the closest to Easton's notion of support for authorities. Thus, this nuance in the data suggests that incumbent officials may reap the political dividend of greater trust by moving to accommodate anti-immigrant sentiment.

To illustrate, one country where we find a significantly *positive* association between satisfaction with the government and opposition to immigration in both periods is Denmark, where the liberal-conservative coalition government bowed to the right-wing Danish People's Party and passed a set of Europe's strictest immigration laws. Danes opposed to immigration were satisfied with their government but nonetheless join Marcellus in finding something "rotten" in their state's institutions. In Italy, the positive correlation may be attributable to Silvio Berlusconi's occasional appeasement of the anti-immigrant Lega Nord. In Austria, the trajectory of the association between opposition to immigration and support for the government seems to follow the political fortunes of Jorg Haider and the Austrian Freedom Party. When the Conservative David Cameron replaced a Labor Prime Minister in Britain, the strength of the negative association between immigration attitudes and the GS measure weakened. On the other hand, when Spain shifted in mid-decade from a conservative to a socialist government, the opposite trajectory is evident, with the negative relationship between IP and GS becoming stronger. Overall, however, the cross-national evidence is consistent with McLaren's (2012) finding in the British case. While we cannot test this directly in the present context, it is plausible that this results from the long-term clash between restrictionist public opinion and de facto expansionist immigrant policies (Freeman, 1995).

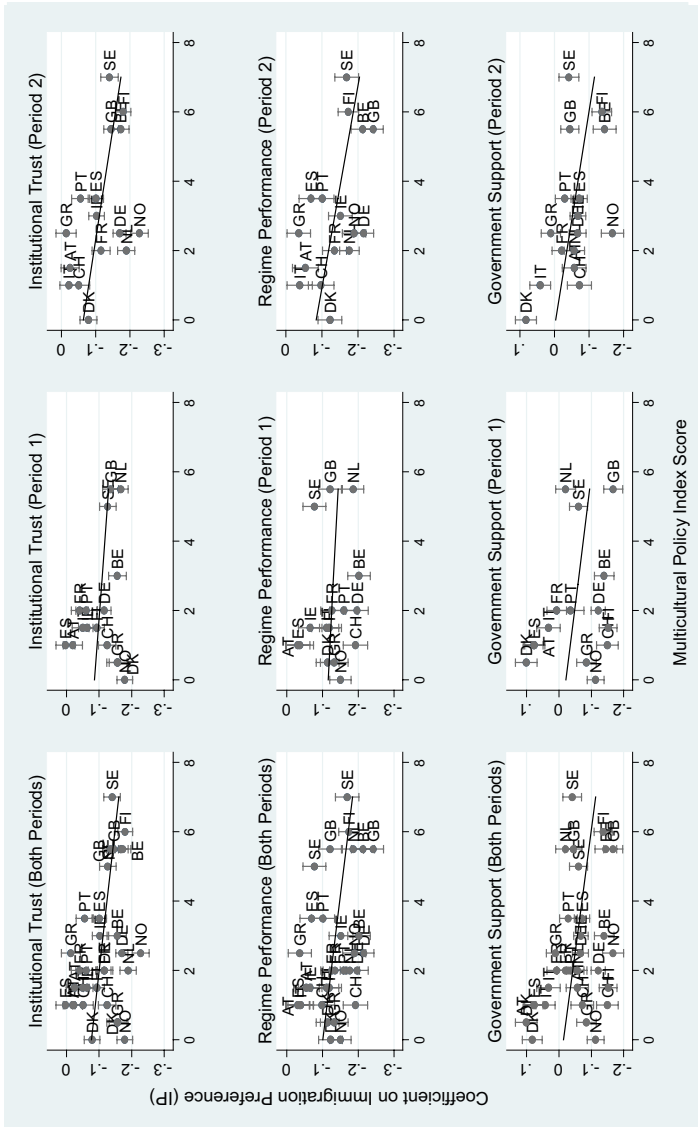
Crucially, Figure 1 also indicates that countries in which there are more extensive multicultural policy regimes exhibit, on average, stronger negative relationships between one's attitudes toward immigration and one's level of trust in regime institutions, assessment of how democracy is functioning, and satisfaction with the government of the day. Every regression line is

downward sloping, and the temporally pooled graphs predict that the gap in political support between the most pro- and anti-immigrant constituents will be approximately 10 points out of a possible 100 greater in a country at the high end of the observed range of multicultural policy in Europe than in a country at the very low end of the scale. Only in the case of the RP measure in the first period of analysis do the 25th and 75th percentile coefficients on IP fail to differ from one another significantly (at  $p < .05$ ).

Needless to say, multicultural policy is not the sole driver of the relationship between immigration attitudes and political support, and so there are some exceptions to the general pattern. A few countries with weak multicultural policy regimes (e.g., Norway in the first period of the analysis) nevertheless show strong relationships between IP and political support, and across countries, the relationship is weak in the first period (2002). However, the relationships in the pooled data and the second period are consistent with the notion that multicultural policies strengthen the connection of hostility to immigration and political disaffection. The temporal difference may reflect the greater salience of controversy over multicultural policy in right-wing party rhetoric during the later period as well as the paucity of moderately strong multicultural policy regimes in the earlier period.

Multi-level modeling furnishes a more rigorous test of multiculturalism's wedge effect on the political support of pro- and anti-immigrant publics and can help us rule out spurious correlation driven by a number of individual-level characteristics, contextual characteristics, and their interactions. Table 2 shows the results of models grouped by country and year that allow a random intercept and a random slope for the IP index and include the individual-level covariates described in the country-level models reflected in Figure 1 (these variables are listed and explained in Online Appendix B, variables used in ESS analyses) as well as several country-level controls: the unemployment rate, the share of seats in the legislature controlled by parties of the far right, and the immigrant population share.

Models 3, 6, and 9 also include controls for interactions of these contextual variables with IP. Each interaction has a plausible theoretical basis. Higher volumes of immigrants are associated with MCP and might be expected to exacerbate the link between immigration attitudes and support for regime institutions. Right-wing parties may help channel anti-immigrant sentiment into opposition to mainstream political arrangements, thus further expanding the gap in public support between pro- and anti-immigrant constituents. And a weak economy might raise the political salience of immigration through the tendency to scapegoat immigrants for economic distress, again widening the gap in support. Exploring the role of these additional contextual factors yields further confidence in the distinctive robustness of



**Figure 1.** Multicultural policy and the relationship between immigration preferences and political support.

Source: ESS 2002 and 2010.

Each data point is a regression coefficient and 95% confidence interval on immigration preference from an OLS model run on each country-year of the analysis with the controls listed in Online Appendix B (variables used in ESS analyses). ESS = European Social Survey; OLS = ordinary least squares.

**Table 2.** Random Effects Estimation of the Conditional Effect of Multicultural Policy on Political Support.

	Institutional trust (IT)			Regime performance (RP)			Government support (GS)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Opposition to immigration (IP)	-0.116*** (0.018)	-0.081*** (0.021)	-0.041 (0.034)	-0.137*** (0.017)	-0.103*** (0.019)	-0.079* (0.032)	-0.051* (0.025)	-0.009 (0.037)	0.066 (0.077)
Multicultural policy (MCP)	-0.132 (0.479)	-0.009 (0.471)	-0.028 (0.468)	-0.153 (0.454)	0.035 (0.442)	0.044 (0.442)	0.425 (0.787)	0.468 (0.785)	0.469 (0.785)
MCP x IP		-0.014** (0.005)	-0.011* (0.005)		-0.013** (0.005)	-0.012* (0.005)		-0.016 (0.011)	-0.015 (0.011)
Imm share x IP			-0.001 (0.004)			-0.002 (0.003)			-0.009 (0.006)
Right wing x IP			-0.001 (0.002)			-0.001 (0.002)			0.000 (0.004)
Unemp x IP			-0.004 (0.003)			-0.000 (0.003)			-0.002 (0.007)
Level 1 n	52,727	52,727	52,727	52,113	52,113	52,113	50,508	50,508	50,508
Level 2 n	16	16	16	16	16	16	15	15	15
Level 3 n	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Source: ESS, 2002 and 2010.

Results are for random-slope and intercept models using restricted maximum likelihood estimation. Standard errors are in parentheses. Includes all individual-level covariates described in Online Appendix B, variables used in ESS analyses (not shown). Right wing refers to the fringe right-wing party share of seats in the country's parliament. Unemp is the unemployment rate in January of the relevant year. Imm share is the foreign-born share of the country's population. Controls are also included for the main effect of each of these three contextual variables (not shown). IP = immigration preference; MCP = multicultural policy index; ESS = European Social Survey.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.



the negative interaction effect of MCP with IP on support across specifications and measures of the dependent variable.

Models 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 include the key cross-level interaction between IP and MCP and alternately include and omit controls for other cross-level interactions. The consistent negatively signed coefficients on the key interactions of IP with MCP in each model provide evidence that multicultural policy strengthens the negative association between hostility to immigration and each measure of political support. These coefficients are thus all in the theoretically predicted direction and, despite the limited statistical power available in a sample of only 16 countries, only those coefficients pertaining to the GS measure miss conventional levels of statistical significance. This contrasts starkly with the null coefficients estimated for the interactions of IP with other contextual controls (Models 3, 6, and 9).<sup>12</sup> Finally, as shown in Models 1, 4, and 7, which do not include cross-level interactions, there is no discernible *net* effect of a country's MCP index score on aggregate levels of political support.

Figure 2 presents the substantive meaning of the key interaction term between IP and MCP, using the estimates from Table 2, Model 3 above. That both lines for weak and strong MCP regimes are downward sloping shows that whatever a country's level of multicultural policies, the expected relationship between opposition to immigration and trust in political institutions is negative. However, the downward slope is considerably steeper in countries with the most extensive multicultural policy regimes, corroborating our main hypothesis. In effect, Figure 2 closely approximates the substantively large impact of MCP on the relationship between immigration attitudes and political support suggested in Table 1's cross-tabulations. In low MCP regimes, those most opposed to immigration are approximately 9 points (out of a possible 100) lower in IT than those most supportive of immigration. In high MCP regimes, this gap increases to approximately 18 points.

Also consistent with Table 1, there is no evidence of symmetric and countervailing effects of multicultural policy on citizens more sanguine about immigration. The most pro-immigrant citizens in low and high multicultural policy regimes are predicted to be nearly identical in political support. Although anti-immigrant citizens have considerably lower levels of political support in high than low multicultural policy regimes, the difference for the average citizen in high and low multicultural policy regimes is not significant.

## Robustness

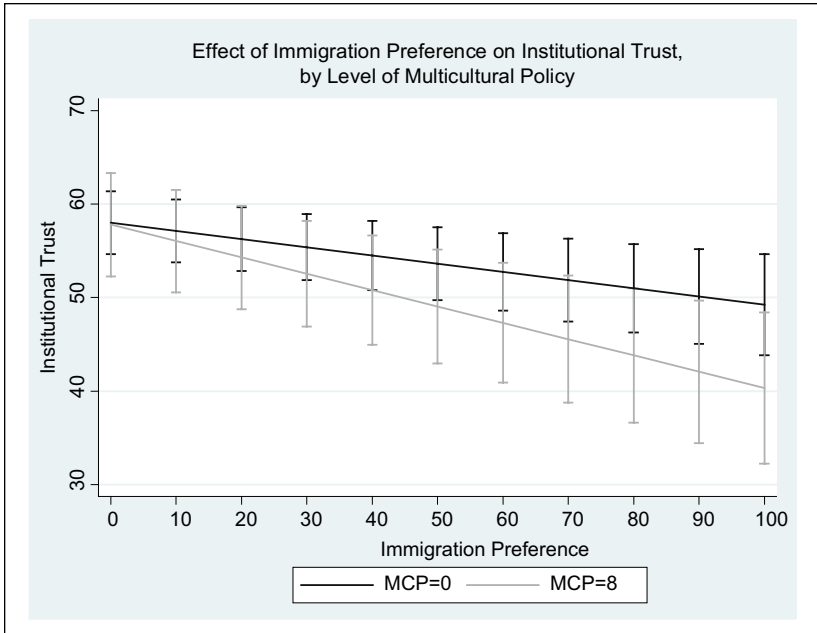
Several additional analyses were conducted to assess the robustness of our core result. We here detail the procedures and results from these supplemental analyses.

### Fixed-Effects Specification

As a dynamic measure of multicultural policy is available, we are able to estimate the key interaction effect using OLS models (with standard errors clustered by country) that include fixed-effects for country and year. Such tests are rare in comparative studies because contemporaneous contextual and survey measures are seldom present for more than a single time period. Moreover, fixed-effects models can also be quite costly in degrees of freedom—especially so with only 16 contextual units to work with.

On the other hand, where it is feasible, this approach mitigates endogeneity concerns by controlling for stable differences among countries, yielding a quite conservative test of the significance of the interaction term. Specifically, country dummies control for such features of countries as strong liberal traditions, patterns of socialization, or the structure of political institutions that could be associated both with the distribution of political support and the adoption of multicultural policies. A dummy variable identifying the later-period (2010) data controls for trends that occurred across many or all countries in the sample between 2000 and 2010. For example, the 2010 dummy would control for a roughly uniform increase between 2000 and 2010 in the salience of immigration or multicultural policy in European democracies and for an across-the-board drop in political trust. The coefficient on the key interaction term in these models therefore identifies variation *relative to any such trends*, the appropriate test of our argument that countries whose MCP regimes grow the most should experience the largest changes in the distribution of political support.

The results (shown in Online Appendix A, Table 4) for the key interaction effect are, if anything, sharper in the fixed-effects models. The coefficients are even larger in magnitude than in the random-effects models and are always statistically significant. Because we are interested in both cross- and within-country variation, we believe that the random-effects estimates shown in Table 2 are preferable, but the robustness of these results to fixed-effects specifications is strong evidence that within-country changes in multicultural policy widen the gap in political support between pro- and anti-immigrant citizens. We note that the main effect of multicultural policy is positive in two of the three cases, although still statistically insignificant. Consequently, although there is still no evidence that pro-immigrant publics' political support would increase in extensive multicultural policy regimes, this possibility cannot be rejected either. Thus, the fixed-effects models underscore the sensitivity of estimates on multicultural policy's net effects even as they strongly affirm the article's core hypothesis that multicultural policies have strengthened the association between hostility to immigration and political support in European democracies.



**Figure 2.** Illustration of the conditional effect of multicultural policy on political support.

Source: European Social Survey, 2002 and 2010.

Shows the predicted effect of IP on institutional trust in regimes scoring at the highest and lowest points on the MCP scale, with 95% confidence intervals. Predictions are based on Model 3 in Table 2. IP = immigration preference; MCP = multiculturalism policy.

### *Party in Power*

Given the relationship of partisanship to political support (see, for example, Citrin, 1974), Models 2, 5, and 8 from Table 2 were also run with a measure of the individual's partisan position on a left-right continuum and with a cross-level interaction of the individual's partisan position and the orientation (left to right) of the political party with the most legislative seats at the time of the ESS interviews.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, the interaction term entered the model with a positive and significant coefficient (the greater the ideological concordance between an individual's party affiliation and the party most prominently holding the reins of government the greater the individual's political support). Yet including these terms did not materially affect the IP-multicultural policy interaction.

## Underlying Pro-Immigration Orientation

The apparent heterogeneous effects of MCP on support might reflect the underlying pro-immigrant orientation of a country's citizens and a resulting institutional leaning toward pro-immigrant policies, which might in turn generate disaffection among anti-immigrant publics through channels other than MCP. The robustness of the key result to fixed-effects specifications helps dispel this concern, because the distribution of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe did not, by and large, change substantially over the period of our study (see Online Appendix A, Tables 3 and 4). However, Models 2, 5, and 8 from Table 2 were also run with a contextual control for countries' aggregate levels of anti-immigrant sentiment and with an interaction between this aggregate measure and individual-level anti-immigrant sentiment. The inclusion of these covariates again did not alter the core results.

## Immigration Policy Versus Multicultural Policy

One of our country-level controls takes into account the size of the immigrant share of the population as well as recent changes in that share. However, it is also useful to juxtapose the effects of *immigration* policies and *multicultural* policies, because there is a conceptual difference between states' willingness to accept and integrate large numbers of immigrants and their willingness to grant those immigrants cultural rights (versus emphasizing cultural assimilation). Thus, a potential concern is that expansionist policies (rather than multicultural policies *per se*) may influence the distribution of political support.

The theoretical framework we have proposed by no means rules out liberal immigration policies' having effects similar to those we have identified for multicultural policy, but we wish to isolate the apparent effect of MCP to the fullest possible extent by controlling for other facets of immigration policy. To do so, we re-estimate Models 2, 5, and 8 in Table 2 including both the main effects of two measures of immigration policy for available countries as well as the interactions of those measures with IP as additional controls. We measure immigration policy with the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) measure, available in the middle of our period of study (2007). Liberal access to citizenship is measured by Marc Howard's (2010) Citizenship Policy Index (CPI), also available for the middle period of our study (2008).

As reported in Helbling (2013), countries tend to overlap substantially in terms of how they score on various aspects of immigration policy. MCP and MIPEX are correlated across countries at .71, MCP and CPI at .63, and MIPEX and CPI at .53, so multicollinearity is a serious concern. Nevertheless, even with the MCP and MIPEX measures and their interactions with

anti-immigrant sentiment controlled, the point estimate on the interaction between MCP and IP is virtually unchanged, and it remains significant at  $p < .1$  in two of the three cases, the exception being in the model predicting the GS measure. Although the other two interactions do not emerge independently statistically significant in any of the three models, an  $F$ -test showed that the three interactions are jointly significant at  $p < .05$  in all three cases.

### *EVS Replication*

The timing of EVS Waves 4 and 6 affords a rare opportunity to corroborate these results using a second cross-national data set. Using EVS data, we replicate as closely as possible, all random-effects models from Table 2. A four-item institutional confidence (IC) index takes the mean of respondents' confidence in parliament, the judicial system, the police, and the civil service. A two-item index labeled System Rating (SR) averages responses to how satisfied respondents are with (1) how well "the system for governing our country is working" and "how democracy is developing." IC and SR are correlated at .42 in the pooled EVS data. A three-item index measuring belief in democracy as the preferred *form* of government, labeled Democratic Values (DV), averages how respondents feel about the worth of democracy as a system of government, the desirability of military rule, and the advantage of having a "strong leader who doesn't need to bother with parliament or elections." The correlations between IC and System Performance, on the one hand, and DV, on the other, were only .06 and .01 respectively, consistent with the fact that an abstract commitment to democracy as a desirable form of government was pervasive despite widely varying levels of trust in specific institutions and authorities (Citrin, 1974). Immigration attitudes are captured by a single question<sup>14</sup> about the desired level of immigration of people from "less developed countries coming here to work."

The results, shown in Online Appendix A, Table 5, bolster our core finding: the association between anti-immigrant sentiment and political support is more strongly negative in countries with extensive multicultural policy regimes than in countries with limited multicultural policy. The coefficients for the IP-multicultural policy interaction are similar in direction and magnitude to the effects found in the ESS and hold across all three EVS measures of political support. That these effects carry over to the EVS' broader measure of DV is striking testimony to the consistency and scope of MCP's heterogeneous effects on regime support.

## Conclusion

In virtually all European democracies, there is a significant and robust association between hostility to immigration and political dissatisfaction. This exhaustive set of analyses confirms that multicultural policy strengthens this association, fostering a tighter link between political support and attitudes toward immigrants. For anti-immigrant publics, visible multicultural policies are likely to exacerbate resentment over ethnic change and channel these hostile feelings toward the political system. By contrast, those favorable to immigration are untroubled by multicultural policies and may even increase their support for government in response to their implementation, although the results do not furnish clear evidence for this mechanism. At the same time, as suggested above, one's prior level of trust may affect, through learning and consistency bias, how one responds to multicultural policies and, concomitantly, to immigration.

The core finding holds for multiple measures of political support that putatively tap feelings about different political objects. It survives the imposition of controls reflecting alternate explanations such as right-wing party influence, economic boom and bust, immigrant shares and inflows, and an indicator of immigrant integration policy. And although our main empirical approach was multi-level modeling, which allows us to take into account variation across countries and within countries over time, the core finding is also fully robust to fixed-effects specifications.

Even so, there is no evidence of a net change in overall levels of support due to multicultural policy. This appears to be because although the trend in the political support gap between extensive and limited multicultural regimes grows significantly, as one moves from those least to those most hostile to immigration, the mean differences in political support between citizens of extensive and limited multicultural regimes are more modest for the majority of citizens whose views about immigration are less extreme (see Figure 2).

Previous research has established that poor performance on valence issues such as peace and prosperity lowers political trust (Citrin, 1974; Citrin & Green, 1986; Norris, 1999), with the implication that disaffection from the authorities may spill over onto low of support for the regime. Here, we suggest that concern about the impact of policies on the political *community* can have similar consequences. Our analyses indicate that government policy with respect to position issues such as multiculturalism, which engage deep-seated beliefs about the appropriate contours of nationhood, can foster the gradual convergence of support for—or disenchantment with—different aspects of the political system. In this case, hostility to redefinitions of the political community that favor ethnocultural diversity over traditional

primordial versions of ethnic nationhood spills over into disaffection from regime institutions and officials.

The fusion of anti-immigrant sentiment and political disaffection may help account for right-wing parties' increased focus in recent decades on immigration (see, e.g., Schain et al., 2002). As Mudde (1999) points out, extreme parties of the right are not simply anti-immigrant parties, but their degree of focus on immigration varies with public attention to this issue. Accordingly, the linkage between anti-immigrant support and broader feelings of disaffection may help account for European leaders' increasingly cautious or even negative public tone in discussions of multiculturalism, although it has not generated a substantive retreat from multicultural policies (Kymlicka, 2012). In fact, the divergence of rhetoric and actual policy over the period in question (Kymlicka, 2012), with rhetoric becoming more assimilationist even as multicultural policy has expanded more often than retreated, strongly suggests that the effect we observe emanates from multicultural policy itself rather than from unofficial elite rhetoric. At the same time, official rhetoric is one component of the MCP index we have used, and there is no reason to suppose that it is a less potent influence on mass attitudes than substantive rules and regulations. At present, it is not entirely clear which of the components of the MCP index used here generate disaffection and whether short-run effects may fade if new conceptions of national identity should take root along lines more favorable to multiculturalism.

Our study suggests several avenues for future research. For one, studies making use of repeat observations on individuals may be able to adjudicate the relative strengths of the support-to-opinion and the opinion-to-support paths. More direct evidence about public attitudes toward particular multicultural policies would also help in this regard. Measuring the subjective importance of immigration and multiculturalism to survey respondents would also permit observation of whether the effects of multicultural policy are concentrated among those for whom immigration attitudes are central and important (consistent with the opinion-to-support path), among those for whom they are not (consistent with the support-to-opinion path), or among both groups (consistent with the validity of both mechanisms).

We also need to elaborate on the nature of assimilationist policy regimes, the alternative formula for coping with demographic diversity. Much has been made of the resurgence of assimilationist policies in Europe, with attention focused on language and "culture" tests for immigration and naturalization (Goodman & Howard, 2013). However, assimilationist policies vary in their coerciveness and willingness to allow immigrants to retain elements of their original cultures and identities, and the relationship of these different policy programs to political trust needs theoretical and empirical attention.

“Soft” multiculturalism and “soft” assimilationism may not differ much in tone or substance, which again speaks for the need to discriminate among the effects of particular policies. Finally, while our results can be viewed as indicating one short-run political cost of multicultural policies, what this implies for the longer-run impact of multiculturalism on immigrant integration, political cohesion, or the inculcation of civic conceptions of national identity is another critical topic for research.

### **Supplementary Material**

The online Appendices are available at <http://cps.sagepub.com/supplemental>

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### **Notes**

1. The leading proponent of this position is Kymlicka (1995). For survey evidence on these points see Bloemraad (2006); Soroka, Johnston, Banting, and Kymlicka (2012); Weldon (2006); Wright and Bloemraad (2012).
2. For normative arguments see Barry (2002), Joppke (2004), and D. Miller (1995). For empirical evidence see Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007) and Wright (2011b).
3. We use “political support” as a term of convenience meant to encompass trust or confidence in regime institutions, favorability toward the government of the day, assessments of regime performance, and endorsement of democracy as a system of government. These various aspects of support are tapped by different items, as discussed below, and are analyzed separately.
4. We lack cotemporaneous measures necessary to include the Anglo-American settler societies.



5. For 12 countries, this is the fifth wave (2010-2011). For Austria and Italy, our second period data are from 2006-2007, and for Greece and Ireland, they are from 2008-2009. Re-running the main analysis (see Table 2) without these four country-years does not materially alter the result.
6. To address concerns about the potential multidimensionality of the European Social Survey Immigration Preference (IP) index, we re-ran all analyses substituting indices constructed only from the questions about immigration's consequences or from those relating to preferences over immigrant flows ( $r = .58$  in pooled analysis) for the comprehensive index, with no change in result.
7. For variables comprised by summing responses to several items, exploratory factor analysis (available on request) unambiguously confirmed a single latent factor. When elements of a composite index had different sets of response options, each item was given equal weight.
8. These include official affirmation that a society is "multicultural," revision of school curricula to highlight minority contributions, bilingual education or separate school systems for immigrants, exemptions for ethnic minorities from rules and schedules, ethno-racial diversification of media programming and personnel, and affirmative action for minorities. To help ensure that our results are picking up an effect of multicultural policy broadly rather than a single particular dimension of policy, we also ran the statistical models omitting each of the eight components of the multicultural policy (MCP) index.
9. The index is also available for 1980, but there are no contemporaneous survey data in the ESS, and the European Values Survey (EVS) was administered in only a handful of the countries in our sample in 1980.
10. Specifically, we use the following Stata command: `xtmixed: support-measure individual-level-covariates country-level-covariates cross-level-interactions || country: IP || year: IP, reml var.`
11. Data on foreign-born share of country populations and the unemployment rate are from Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) databases; right-wing party seat shares were furnished by Kim Twist and supplemented with data available on <http://electionresources.org>. Replacing the immigrant share with measures of recent years' growth in immigrant population did not substantially affect any of the results we present.
12. Results for the other individual-level covariates and country-level main effects are not shown but are summarized in Online Appendix B and are generally consistent across measures of political support. No country-level main effect was consistently associated with political support.
13. Individual- and contextual-level partisanship are scored trichotomously, with -1 indicating a party of the left, 0 indicating a party of the center, and 1 indicating a party of the right.
14. The most recent wave of the EVS included six items on immigration that more closely paralleled the ESS index, but the unavailability of those items in the first phase of our EVS analysis precluded our using them in any longitudinal analyses. Where available contemporaneously, the index and single item are highly

correlated ( $r = .51$ ) in pooled analysis, and analyses using the composite measure for the most recent phase yielded similar results.

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## Author Biographies

**Jack Citrin** is Heller professor of political science at the University of California, Berkeley, and director of the Institute of Governmental Studies. His research spans the study of public opinion, political psychology, ethnicity and political conflict, and American politics. He is the author of *American Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, forthcoming, co-authored with David O. Sears).

**Morris Levy** is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on the effects of immigration on support for the welfare state and the provision of local public goods and the origins of mass attitudes toward immigration.

**Matthew Wright** is an assistant professor of political science at American University. His research explores political identity, immigration, civic engagement, and trust. His work has appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Political Psychology*, and *Perspectives on Politics*.