Pane e Cioccolata: The Impact of Native Attitudes on Return Migration

Augustin de Coulon, Dragos Radu, Max Steinhardt

Corresponding author:
Dragos Radu
UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies
16 Taviton Street | London | WC1H 0BW
Phone: +44 (0)20 7679 - 1523
d.radu@ucl.ac.uk | http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees

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The Impact of Native Attitudes on Return Migration**

Augustin de Coulon
King's College London
and IZA

Dragos Radu
University College London
and HWWI

Max Steinhardt
Helmut Schmidt University,
HWWI and LdA

December, 2013

Abstract

This paper addresses the potentially causal link between native attitudes and migrants' intended duration of stay. We exploit the variation in perceived anti-immigrant sentiments using information on the media exposure of Romanian migrants in Italy. A unique shock in public attitudes towards Romanian migrants allows us to identify the impact of a change in attitudes on out-migration plans. Our results suggest a significant impact of native attitudes on settlement intentions in Italy. The subgroup analysis indicates a particularly pronounced impact for low-skilled migrants, which has important consequences for the integration prospects of migrants in Italy.

Key Words: Return migration, public attitudes, media consumption, crime
JEL Codes: F22, J61

1 Introduction

The out-migration patterns of foreign born and the nature of selection into return migration are crucial determinants of the long term impacts of migration. A wealth of recently re-evaluated evidence suggests that out-migration rates played historically a considerably more important role for traditional destination countries during the age of mass migration than was recognised until now (Bandeira et al. 2013, Abramitzky et al. 2013). The estimations carried out by Bandeira et al. (2013) imply rates of return migration from the US of about 60% and 75% for each of the first decades of the 20th century, double the magnitude of previously reported out-migration rates for this period. Studies for more recent periods confirm that the self-selection of return migrants leads to important compositional changes in the cohorts of foreign born who remain in the host country (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996, Lubotsky 2007, Abramitzky et al. 2012, Biavaschi 2013, Dustmann and Gorlach 2013). These changes have major consequences for the impact of migration on labour markets at destination as well as for economic development in the sending countries.

Explaining the determinants of return migration received therefore increasingly attention in the economics of migration. Given the persistence of negative wage differentials between home and host countries, return migration does not easily fit into the framework of traditional human capital models of migration. Several models attempt to overcome such inconsistencies by employing either an optimal life cycle planning perspective (e.g. Dustmann and Weiss 2007) with complementarities between consumption and location (Djajic and Milbourne 1988, Dustmann 2003), failed migration plans (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996), target saving (Yang 2006) or differential returns to multi-dimensional skills (Dustmann et al. 2011). However, none of these models explicitly incorporates the role of native attitudes in shaping out-migration decisions and there is to date no empirical evidence on their relevance for return migration. In a study related to our question but looking at emigration intentions rather than return migration, Friebel et al. (2013) use a similar set up to identify the impact of xenophobic attacks in the destination county. For the case of Mozambique they identify a significant reduction in migration intentions to South Africa after a series of xenophobic attacks targeting immigrants in the regions of destination.

A separate broad strand of research in economics and political sciences addresses the formation of public attitudes towards migration and how these interact with migration policy making (Dustmann and Preston 2007, Facchini and Mayda 2008, Hanson et al. 2009, O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006, Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Essentially, this literature identifies three main factors which are likely to shape native's preferences about immigration: labour market competition, fiscal concerns and prejudices related to cultural and ethnic differences or perceived threats to cultural homogeneity and stability. Many empirical studies use the standard framework of the Hecksher-Ohlin model of trade to test the consistency of observed individual attitudes towards skilled and unskilled migration with the predictions of the factor proportions theory.

The aim of this paper is to provide some first empirical evidence to bridge these two strands of literature in economics, which look separately at the determinants of return migration and at public attitudes towards immigration.

In this context, the case of Romanian migration to Italy is particularly relevant for several reasons. First, after around the year 2000 Romanian migrants became the largest group of foreign born in Italy. Since about the same period of time, Italy represents by far the most important destination country of migrants leaving Romania on either a short or a long term basis. Second, the overall share of the foreign-born residents in Italy grew dramatically over the last decades, from 0.8% in 1990 to more than 7% in 2010. This sharp increase in a relative short period of time was accompanied by raising fears and anti-immigrant attitudes among the native population. At the level of 2007, Italians where overwhelmingly considering immigration as a big problem in their country and that migrants from both the Middle East and North African and from Eastern Europe were having a bad impact on their country (Horowitz 2010). Third, due to the specificities of the Italian media landscape, the type of coverage immigration receives there represents a special case (Campani 2001, King and Wood 2001). This becomes even more relevant when it comes to linking immigration issues with crime, which suggest that the media might play an important role in shaping migration choices.

Indeed, a number of recent studies have stressed the role of media exposure in shaping migration choices as well as attitudes. Farré and Fasani (2013) uncover a causal negative relationship between TV exposure and internal migration decisions in Indonesia. They can attribute this to imperfect information suggesting that TV exposure mitigated the overestimation of individual gains from migration. Facchini et al. (2009) find evidence supporting the correlation between media exposure and attitudes towards illegal migration in the US. Héricourt and Spielvogel (2014) find evidence that media is a crucial explanatory factor in the formation of beliefs about the economic impact of immigration. For the case of Italy, Mai (2001, 2004) describes how the Italian media, especially the television, had a major impact on the expectations, perceptions and overall migration experience of Albanian migrants.

Our paper focuses on the effects of native attitudes on the out-migration of foreign born. We use the case of Italy to illustrate how a change in public attitudes toward migration leads migrants to change their intended duration of stay in the destination country. A shock in Italian's attitudes towards Romanian migrants, following a terrible crime committed by a Romanian migrant in Rome on October 30th 2007 allows us to identify the impact of native attitudes on return and settlement intentions of migrants. While our results cannot be used to predict actual out-migration migration, we argue that return and settlement intentions can be equally relevant for the long term integration prospects and intergenerational mobility of migrants who eventually remain at destination.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents some stylized facts on flows and stocks of Romanian migrants in Italy. It also introduces the motivation of our paper and the context of the analysis. Section 3 presents the data, some descriptive evidence
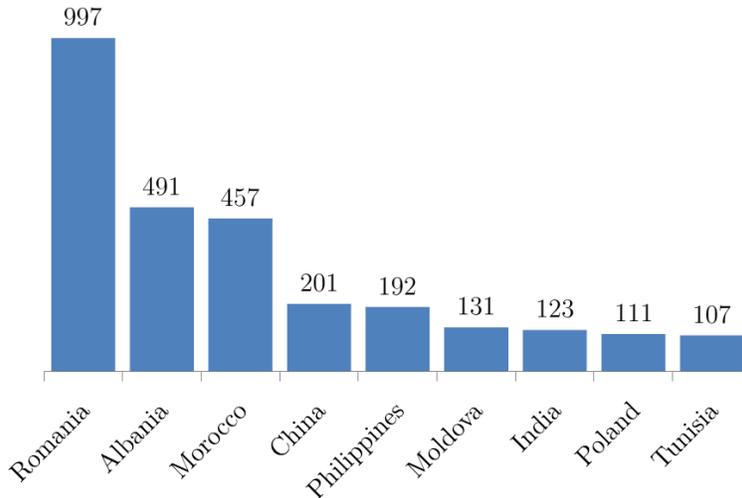
Figure 1: Main countries of origin of migrants in Italy 2011 (stocks in thousands; Source: Istat)

and the method applied for the estimation. Section 4 discusses the results and the limitations of our approach. Section 5 concludes.

2 Background and motivation

2.1 Stylised facts on Romanian migration to Italy

According to the World Bank - Migration Factbook 2011, international migration flows between Romania and Italy form one of the top ten European "migration corridors". While these flows started by the mid 1990s, they developed continuously until Romania's EU accession in 2007. Between 1992 and 2007, Romanians together with Albanians were the two nationality groups experiencing the largest increase among the foreign born population in Italy (Bettin 2011).

However, during this period, Romanians became the largest immigrant community in Italy. Figure 1 illustrates the stocks of migrants in Italy by country of origin at the level of 2011. The incidence of Romanian migrants rose by more than 15 times, while the overall foreign population in Italy rose in the decade preceding the year 2008 by around 400 per cent.

Over the same period of time, Italy represented by far the most important destination country for Romanian migrants. Data from the 2011 Romanian census suggest that almost 50 per cent of the Romanian migrants identified as being abroad in the census year were residing in Italy. These massive flows were accompanied by temporary back and forth movements and return migration (Anghel 2013). Both micro-level evidence from surveys (Martin and Radu 2012) and aggregate data (Ambrosini et al. 2013), suggest that for Romania as well as other East and Central European countries, return migration is a substantial share of total gross
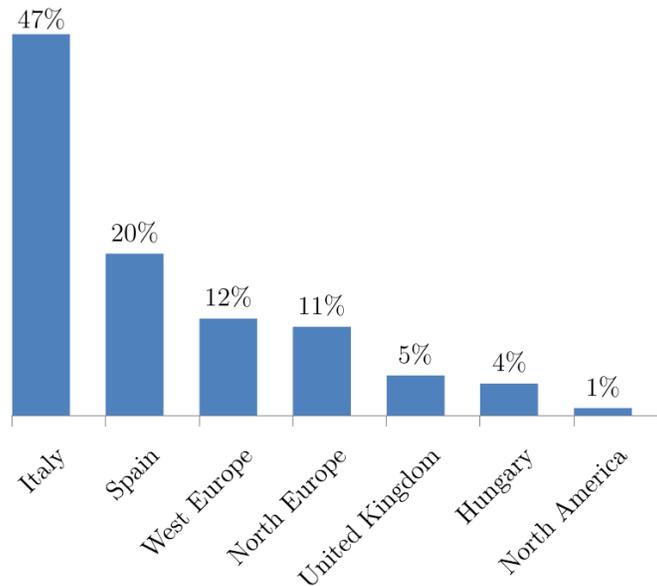
Figure 2: Romanian migrants abroad at the level of 2011 (Source: Sandu 2013 with INS data). West Europe includes: France, Belgium, Portugal, Austria. North Europe includes: Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Ireland. N=363,000 valid observations.

migration flows. In Romania at the level of 2008, the share of returnees in the total working age population was about 10 per cent (Martin and Radu 2012).

The Romanian migration to Italy was characterised by a negative selection: most migrants were less skilled, already had a longer migration history, often involving informal or illegal employment spells, and made use of network ties established in their communities of origin (Anghel 2013; Elrick and Ciobanu 2009).

There were notable peaks over the last decade. Most of these correspond to past regularisation programmes. Fasani (2010) uses an NGO database to analyse the main features of undocumented migration in Italy[1]. Figure 3 indicates that the year 2007 was also a peek year in term of net migration, with registered flows double in size compared to the year before. The stock of Romanians in Italy grew thus by about 100 per cent in 2007 only (according to OECD SOPEMI 2009 figures, 760,000 Romanian citizens resided in Italy by 2008). An increase of this magnitude is most probably cased mainly by statistical reasons: Romanian migrants who resided in Italy before January 2007 could regularise their status under the free movement of labour in the EU after Romania joined the EU. However, due to its sheer magnitude and its visibility in statistics and public debates, this sharp increase in the official number of Romanian migrants is likely to have led to strong anti-immigration sentiments.

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[1]See also Reyneri (1998) for a discussion of previous regularisation programmes in Italy.
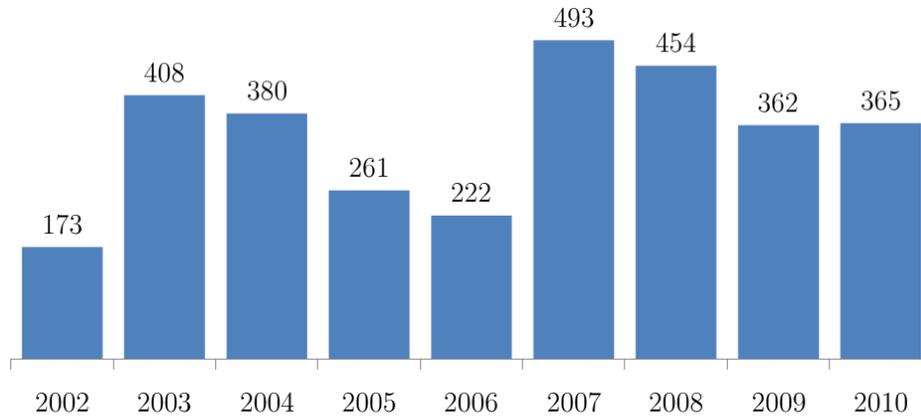
Figure 3: Net migration to Italy (Source: Istat)

2.2 Media, attitudes and immigration in Italy

This is in fact confirmed by the available evidence on public attitudes towards migration in Italy. Between 1990 and 2010 the overall share of the foreign-born residents in Italy grew dramatically, from 0.8% in 1990 to more than 7% in 2010. This sharp increase in a relative short period of time was accompanied by raising fears and anti-immigrant attitudes among the native population. At the level of 2007, Italians where overwhelmingly considering immigration as a big problem in their country and that migrants from both the Middle East and North African and from Eastern Europe were having a bad impact on their country (Horowitz 2010). Data from the PEW Global Attitudes Survey suggest that at the level of 2007 (the data were collected before the events upon which we focus in this paper) Italians were on average the strongest supporters of tightening immigration controls among all European countries(figure 4): 87 per cent were in favour of tightening migration controls, compared to "only" 77 per cent in Spain and 75 per cent in the UK, the other two countries which received massive inflows of labour migrants from Eastern Europe.

Our own estimates based on data from the Flash Eurobarometer 257/2009, support this finding indicating that Italians consider migration (free movement of persons) to be one of the most problematic issues when it comes to (future) EU enlargements. This strong opinion on migration in relation to EU enlargement is shared with citizens of the UK, another main destination country of migration flows from Eastern Europe after the Eastern enlargement of the EU. The same holds true when it comes to opinions on the relationship of migration and crime. According to the figures of the Transatlantic Trend Survey on Immigration in 2008, about one third of the respondents in UK and Italy agreed strongly to the statement that immigration in general will increase crime in their society. On average, only 22 per cent of European and 25 per cent of US respondents shared this pessimistic view. In addition to this the figures of the Transatlantic survey suggest, that the broad majority of Italians (68 per cent) think that most immigrants in illegally staying in Italy. For comparison, only 15

	Disagree	Agree
Italy	10	87
Spain	18	77
Britain	22	75
France	31	68
Germany	33	66
Sweden	43	53

We Should Further Restrict and Control Immigration
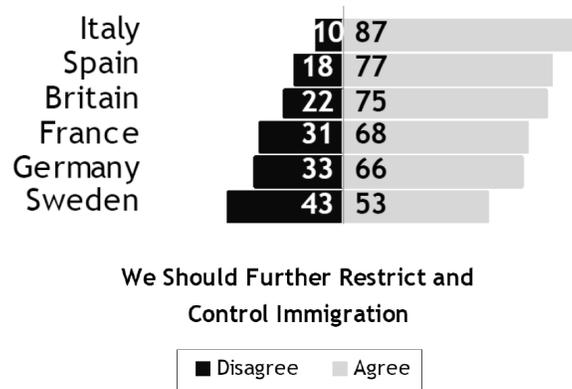
■ Disagree　　■ Agree

Figure 4: Attitudes towards tighter immigration controls (Source: PEW Global Attitudes Survey, 2007)

per cent of the German and 34 per cent UK respondents think in a similar way about the migrants in their country.

Against this background, it is easy to understand how a widely publicised crime committed by a Romanian migrant can fuel a national press campaign and trigger a public outrage against Romanian migrants living in Italy.

Another particularity of the Italian case is the prominence of the immigration - crime nexus in public debates and particularly in the way this is presented in the media (Campani 2001).

2.3   The "Tor di Quinto" events

On the 30th October 2007, a Romanian migrant of Roma origin robbed and savagely beat an Italian woman, wife of a navy officer, as she was returning home along a poorly lit road in the Tor di Quinto periphery of Rome. The victim subsequently died in hospital.

This incident appeared to be the "final straw that resulted in an explosive debate on safety and security in Italy, coinciding with the presentation by the government of its Security Package on 30 October" (Sartori 2008). The case spurred an unprecedented negative public reaction against Romanian immigrants. At the same time, the media reaction went well beyond the specific case both in Italy (generating a debate around the so called 'Romanian emergency') as well as in Romania, having European wide echoes in the press (e.g. the headline of Corriere della Sera: 'The spectre of monsters from Europe: Is the Romanian bogeyman destined to become Italians' nightmare?).[2]

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[2]Specifically dealing with the Tor di Quinto events and their aftermath, some selected headlines from across the major international press include:

"Italy starts deporting Romanians", *BBC-News*, 05.11.2007

"Italian woman's murder prompts expulsion threat to Romanians", *The Guardian*, 02.11.2007

"Brutal Attack in Rome: Italy Cracks Down on Immigrant Crime Wave", *Der Spiegel*, 02.11.2007

"Rome veut d'urgence expulser les immigrés délinquants", *Le Figaro*, 05.11.2007

"Italy: Prodi Defends Expulsions of Romanians", *AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE*, 06.11.2007
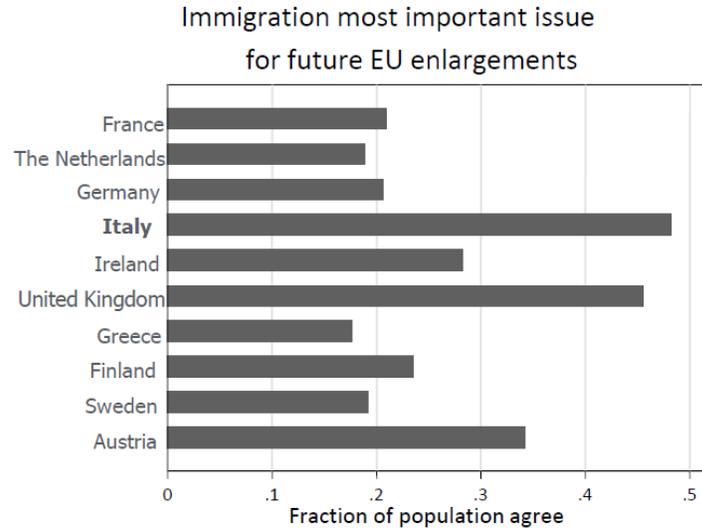
Figure 5: Attitudes towards immigration and EU enlargement (Source: own presentation, data from Flash Eurobarometer 257/2009)

Only three weeks later, the Italian government passed a decree to allow the police and judiciary to expel immigrants who are deemed to be a threat to public order. Then opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi urged Italy to close its borders to Romanian workers and his conservative ally called for the expulsion of tens of thousands of immigrants. The crisis brought at that time the Romanian Prime Minister to Rome for an emergency meeting with his Italian counterpart.

What singled out this decree and shocked the public opinion was that it aimed so openly at Romanians. Its preamble claimed that "the proportion of crimes committed by foreigners has increased, and those who commit most crimes are the Romanians." Newspapers reported this to be true only in absolute terms, Romanians being the most numerous group of migrants in Italy, but not in relative terms. La Stampa's own analysis finds that the proportion of Romanians reported to, or arrested by, the police in 2006 was lower than in most other foreign groups.

There were some voices raised against the decree. These included the Pope warning against racism and paranoia in Italy and the head of Italy's criminal lawyer's association who initiated a protest against the emergency decree. The number of actual deportations is not available, but during the month following the Tor di Quinto events, less than 200 deportations were reported, in contrast to the 200,000 demanded by Fini and the 20,000 promised by the government. While the policy reaction remained at the level of rhetoric, the public reaction via discourses, media and general attitudes was massive. Since the at that time suspect was of Roma origin and resided in a temporary Roma camp, the wave of hatred

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"Italy and immigration: Disharmony and tension", *The Economist*, 08.11.2007

"Romanian Premier Tries to Calm Italy After a Killing", *The New York* Times, 08.11.2007

was target against this group, but also led to a backlash against Romanians in general.

In these circumstances, it seems worth while to try to analyse the impact of such a shock in public attitudes on the return intentions of Romanian migrants.

In order to do so, we use data from a survey on Romanian migrants in Italy carried out only a few weeks after the events. The survey and the variables included is described in the next section. It includes a battery of questions on media consumption in Italy which will enables us to identify respondents with previous exposure to xenophobic manifestations The data allow us to uncover the underlying factors in the variation of return and settlement intentions as a reaction to the shock in public opinion. We will use a broader understanding of native attitudes to incorporate both the public opinion reflected by the media and the policy level attitudes reflected in governmental reactions (like the emergency decree for the expulsion of EU citizens).

3   Data and method

3.1   The RCI survey

Our analysis relies on data from a broad-purpose survey covering the Romanian Community in Italy (RCI). The survey was commissioned by the Romanian government through the Agency for Government Strategies ("Agenţia pentru Strategii Guvernamentale"). It's purpose was to gather accurate and detailed information on the situation of Romanian migrants residing in Italy after Romania joined the EU. It was carried out in the period 20 November – 15 December 2007 on a country wide representative sample of Romanian migrants (over 18 years of age), excluding short term seasonal migrants and tourists.

For the RCI survey, a two-stage sample design was used to select first regions and four types of local administrative units ("comuni") based on their total population size. The sampling frame was constructed using Istat data on the distribution of Romanian migrants across Italian regions, localities and neighbourhoods. Within neighbourhoods, blocks of buildings and households were selected randomly and the persons interviewed were sampled using a date of birth criterion. No more than five persons were included from the same street and no more than two from the same block. Regions with a very small number of Romanian migrants were not sampled[3], questionnaires being eventually distributed in fifteen regions and sixty "comuni".

The RCI survey gathered detailed information on sociodemographic characteristics, migration biographies, employment in Italy, ties to the region of origin in Romania, social interactions in the Romanian community and with the Italian society, general live satisfaction, and several questions on previous and current intentions with regard to: settlement plans in Italy, intentions to return to Romania or move onwards to a third destination country. It also includes detailed questions about media consumption including the type of media and the TV channels used as main sources of information.

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[3] These are: Basilicata, Calabria, Molise, Puglia, Valle D'Aosta.

Fortunately for the purpose of our study, the RCI survey was carried out one month after the "Tor di Quinto" events, after the peak of the media scandal and after the debates around the emergency decree for the immediate expulsion of citizens of other European Union countries. It was therefore possible to include an additional battery of questions in the RCI survey to cover the perception of and reaction to recent developments in the aftermath of the Tor di Quinto events. These include attitudes towards the political and media campaign and their impact upon out-migration intentions.

We are therefore able to identify changes in migration plans and to compare out-migration intentions before and after the "Tor di Quinto" events for a sample of 1,066 Romanian migrants. For these, we have valid observations on our main variable of interest which will be settlement intentions in Italy. This is a dummy variable coded one for all those who plan to settle in Italy on a medium to long term basis and have no concrete plans to either return to Romania or move to a third destination during the next two years.

Two additional features make the RCI data particularly interesting for our research question. First, the survey included detailed questions on media consumption, including the main sources used for information about current affairs in Italy, the exact names of the main TV channels and the frequency of use. The survey allocated a special weight to this section because it initially aimed at covering the formation attitudes among Romanian migrants in relation the overwhelmingly bad press they faced in host countries across Europe. These questions allow us to identify migrants who were exposed to the Mediaset channels (controlled by Silvio Berlusconi) and those who were not exposed to these media but used instead the state TV (Rai) as their source of information about Italy. All respondents indicate to have been using the TV as source of information on current affairs in Italy. More than eighty per cent mention it as the single main source and more than ninety per cent use the TV daily or more times a week. The two groups we are constructing (with versus without exposure to Mediaset channels) are of similar size and we present descriptives of their main characteristics in table 1.

The t-tests included in the last two columns of table 1 indicate that the two groups are similar also with regard to some individual characteristics like gender, household income, work effort, attitudes towards the situation and perception of Romanian migrants in the Italian society. They are also no statistically significant differences between the two groups with regard to variables we expect to be highly correlated with return migration: remittances, integration in Italy (having or not Italian friends), to be or not a tied migrant (family migration decisions), religious affiliation (documented to be a strong predictor of migration and return due to specific network ties in Romania and abroad) and house ownership in Romania. As expected migrants exposed to Mediaset channels are more likely to be younger, to have been residents in Italy for longer periods, to be on average slightly more fluent in Italian, less likely to be informally employed and also, as expected, more likely to consider that the Italian media reacted in a tendentious way to the Tor di Quinto events. However, with regard to the selection into media exposure based on education there is no clear pattern. Mediaset

Table 1: Characteristics of Romanian migrants in Italy

	Group					
	Without Mediaset exposure		With Mediaset exposure			
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	Difference	p-value
Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1) - (3)	(t-test)
Age	33.281	(9.256)	32.060	(8.703)	1.221	0.028
Woman	0.430	(0.496)	0.432	(0.496)	-0.002	0.957
Ethnic Roma	0.119	(0.324)	0.084	(0.278)	0.034	0.066
Years in Italy	3.809	(3.162)	4.547	(3.345)	-0.738	0.000
Log wage / month	5.281	(0.419)	5.342	(0.476)	-0.060	0.071
Low education	0.150	(0.357)	0.106	(0.308)	0.044	0.033
Medium education	0.672	(0.469)	0.791	(0.406)	-0.118	0.000
High education	0.176	(0,381)	0.102	(0.303)	0.021	0.000
Hours work / day	8.179	(1.717)	8.342	(1.468)	-0.163	0.130
HH income / month	1663.292	(1008.958)	1774.420	(1079.339)	-111.128	0.147
Fluent in Italian	0.699	(0.459)	0.755	(0.431)	-0.056	0.042
Minority religion	0.166	(0.373)	0.195	(0.396)	-0.028	0.229
Overall trust	4.743	(2.189)	4.802	(2.126)	-0.060	0.654
Poor health	0.177	(0.382)	0.139	(0.346)	0.038	0.087
Annual remittances	1668.214	(2966.224)	1541.694	(2585.070)	126.521	0.463
Informally employed	0.343	(0.475)	0.235	(0.424)	0.108	0.000
Owns house in Ro.	0.423	(0.494)	0.396	(0.489)	0.027	0.365
Owns land in Ro.	0.320	(0.467)	0.269	(0.444)	0.051	0.068
Tied migrant	0.048	(0.214)	0.066	(0.249)	-0.018	0.193
Migration negative	0.641	(0.480)	0.687	(0.464)	-0.046	0.113
Negative Roma	0.687	(0.464)	0.759	(0.428)	-0.072	0.009
Roma neighbour	0.156	(0.363)	0.080	(0.272)	0.075	0.000
No Italian contacts	0.628	(0.484)	0.610	(0.488)	0.018	0.549
dontcome	0.487	(0.500)	0.376	(0.485)	0.111	0.000
Worsening opinion	0.717	(0.451)	0.681	(0.467)	0.036	0.200
Media tendentious	0.573	(0.495)	0.647	(0.479)	-0.073	0.015
Deportation justified	0.393	(0.489)	0.442	(0.497)	-0.049	0.107
Share foreign born*	6.409	(1.446)	6.577	(0.931)	-0.169	0.026
Share Ro. migrants*	24.049	(10.306)	25.798	(10.041)	-1.749	0.005
Unemployment rate*	4.769	(2.167)	4.365	(1.480)	0.404	0.000
Observations	565		498			

Notes: The table reports mean values of the descriptive variables for those with and without exposure to Mediaset controlled media. The p-values correspond to two-tailed t-test of the equality of the means for the two groups.
* refers to regional characteristics in Italy for 2007 provided by Istat.

exposed migrants are at the same time less likely to have only a low level of education and to be highly skilled compared to migrants who were not exposed to Mediaset channels. As a consequence they are significantly more likely to have a medium level of education. We will control for all these observable characteristics in the various specifications of our regression based difference-in-differences models, but the otherwise rather neutral selection into media exposure is worth noting and important for the discussion of our results.

3.2   The Difference-in-Differences approach

One reason why migrants choose either of the two types of TV channels can be due to different preferences making them more likely to consume mass media with a specific content. However, based on the perceptions about Italy facilitated by the media, they will also form expectations with regard to their optimal migration and integration strategies and the constraints they might face in the host society. Given the potential self-selection into the type of media migrants consume, we have no a priori expectations about the correlation between the frequency of anti-immigrant expressions in the chosen media and the intended duration of stay in the destination country. The RCI data suggest a small difference between migrants exposed to Mediaset and those exposed to the state TV - the former being slightly less likely to have settlement intentions in Italy (see table 2), but the difference is not statistically significant ($t = 0.654$).

However, we would expect migrants exposed to different media to react in different ways to a shock in public attitudes of the magnitude reached after the Tor di Quinto events.

Migrants who use Mediaset controlled TV channels as their main source of information are more frequently exposed to anti-immigrant sentiments and used to the stereotyping attitudes propagated by this media. We expect them to be therefore less likely to react to the shock in attitudes after 30.10.2007 as their counterparts who used other TV channels as main source of information in Italy. We define the group exposed to Mediaset channels as our control group. For those who did not use Mediaset channels, the Tor di Quinto events and the reaction afterwards came as a massive shock. They are our treatment group because they were not exposed to negative attitudes from Italians before "Tod di Quinto". This definition of treatment and control groups informs our baseline difference-in-differences approach.

By exploiting this variation in media consumption among Romanian migrants, our intention is to establish a a causal link between changes in public attitudes and settlement intentions. The validity of our approach is based on the assumption that, other things being equal, the trend in settlement intentions in the group of migrants who are exposed to the Mediaset channels will be the same as among those who are not exposed. The common trend assumption would therefore imply that the settlement intentions in each of the two groups were moving in a parallel way before the shock. Due to the limitations of our data, we cannot directly test for the validity of this assumption. We do however assume that individuals in the control group would always have slightly lower settlement intentions than individuals in our treated group and, more importantly, that this difference across time would be constant,
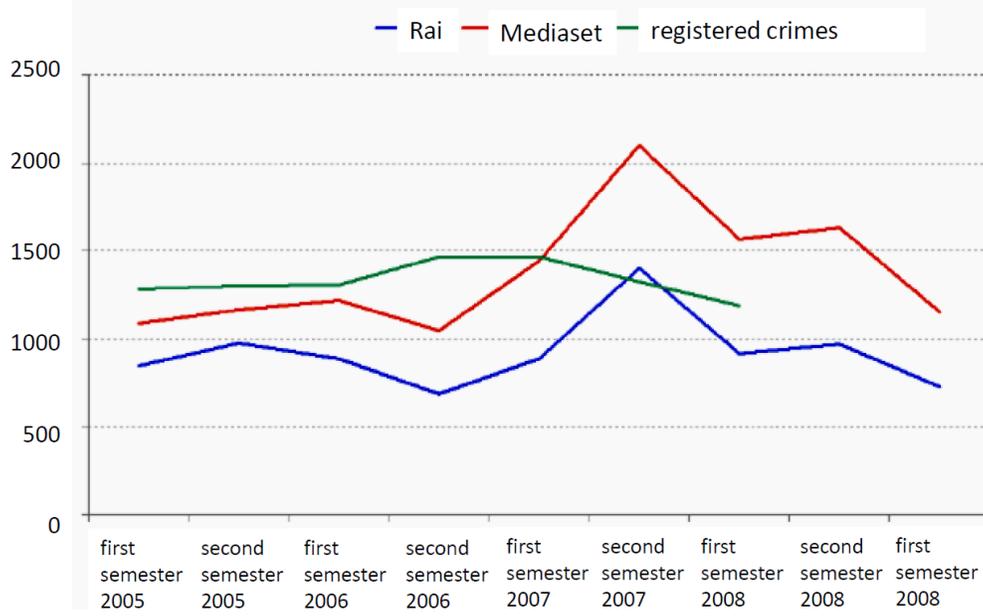
Figure 6: Frequency of news about immigration and crime, Mediaset vs. RAI (Source:De Philippis 2009, data from "Osservatorio di Pavia)

e.g. at various points in time, $t-5$, $t-4$, $t-3$, $t-2$, $t-1$ would be constant, with $t=30$ *October* 2007, and $-1, -2 \ldots$ being months or years before. In addition, figure 4 depicts the frequency with which the two types of media we contrast in our approach present news linking with immigration issues and crime. The trend over time is similar for the Mediaset and non-Mediaset channels (Rai), but the Berlusconi controlled media is presenting such news more often. This supports the underlying assumption of our approach. The figure covers also the peak in the frequency of immigration-crime news around the type of the Tor di Quinto events, i.e. the second semester of 2007.

Besides the raw difference-in-differences estimation presented in table 2 and discussed in the next section, we also In order to assess how robust these are to the introduction of control variables. In order to do this we estimate a probit equation of the type:

$$P\left(\text{settlement}_{it} = 1\right) = \Phi[\alpha + \beta \cdot Z_{it} + \gamma_0 \cdot \text{media exposure}_i \qquad (1)$$
$$+ \gamma_1 \cdot \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"}_t$$
$$+ \gamma_2 \cdot (\text{media exposure} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"})_{it}] + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where settlement$_{it}$ is a dichotomous variable taking the value one if the respondent i plans to stay in Italy at time t. Z is a vector of personal characteristics (in our data most of them time invariant), while media exposure$_i$ is a dummy variable taking the value one if the respondent uses Berlusconi owned Mediaset programs as the main source of information and post"Tor di Quinto" takes the value one for the time after 30.10.2007. The coefficient for the interaction of these two dummy variables, γ_2 is of interest for our analysis but its magnitude

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does not represent the partial effect. We therefore estimated the predicted response in settlement intentions for those who were not exposed to Mediaset channels at the means of the covariates and report this in the last row of table 3.

Additionally, we are interested in the potential impact of native attitudes on the selection into out-migration. In order to investigate this, we need to find the partial effects on sub-groups based on education, age, Italian language fluency and labour market experience proxied by years since migration in Italy. We estimate therefore probit models similar to that from equation (1) but incorporating triple interaction terms with dummy variables defining the sub-group of interest:

$$
\begin{aligned}
P\left(\text{settlement}_{it} = 1\right) = \Phi[&\alpha + \beta \cdot Z_{it} + \gamma_1 \cdot \text{media exposure}_i \\
& + \gamma_2 \cdot \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"}_t + \gamma_3 \cdot \text{subgroup}_i \\
& + \gamma_{12} \cdot (\text{media exposure} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"})_{it} \\
& + \gamma_{13} \cdot (\text{media exposure} \times \text{subgroup})_i \\
& + \gamma_{23} \cdot (\text{subgroup} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"})_{it} \\
& + \gamma_{123} \cdot (\text{media exposure} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"} \times \text{subgroup})_{it}] + \varepsilon_{it}
\end{aligned}
\tag{2}
$$

where all variables are the same as in (1) and subgroup_i takes the value one if respondent i belongs to the sub-group of interest. The results of these models are summarised in table 4 and discussed in the next section.

Our data do not allow us to include a placebo period in the analysis. As an alternative we try to run falsification tests to refute the possibility that our results are driven by other characteristics of the control group. Since the time period we are concerned with is very short, i.e. one month before and after the Tor di Quinto events, it is highly unlikely that our difference-in-differences results are due to some other events occurring in the same period. We compare therefore migrants from several pairs of regions, with both similar and dissimilar regional characteristics, and find no significant effect of the Tor di Quinto events for such definitions of treatment and control groups. We present the results for two similar regions with regard to the share of Romanian migrants, labour market conditions and media exposure among Romanian migrants in table 5. The two regions compared here are Veneto and Piemont, both of which are well represented in our sample. Table 5 is discussed in next section and includes both the raw difference-in-differences results and the probit models with control and interactions estimated using models (1) and (2).

4   Discussion of the results

We present some prima facie evidence on the impact of Tor di Quinto on settlement intentions of Romanian migrants in table 2. This includes the unconditional differences in average settlement intentions in Italy before and after the Tor di Quinto events for our treatment and

control groups, as well as the simple difference-in-differences (DiD).

Our first treatment group (in sub-panel A.) are all Romanian immigrants who are following the news through media non-affiliated with the Berlusconi press (non-Mediaset). As already mentioned, our assumption is that those media project a more balanced picture of the impact of immigration on Italy. Immigrants who followed those media were therefore not exposed to very negative views towards themselves before the Tor di Quinto events. We find that those immigrants expressed a greater tendency to settle in Italy before the events (the p-value on the difference is 0 up to the fourth decimal point). Quite striking is the reduction in those intentions to settle following the Tor di Quinto events. Around a third of immigrants in this group revised their intention to settle (i.e. a reduction of 20 percentage points from .66 to .46) and expressed intentions to return in their origin country or to move on to third destination countries. This reduction exceeds by far the reduction in settlement intentions amongst Romanian immigrants who were used to negative views on immigration (i.e. our first control group). Immigrants who were regularly using the Berlusconi media did indeed also reduce their intention to settle but by far less than our treated sample. Only 15 per cent changed their mind after Tor di Quinto. One obvious interpretation of these results is that the shock caused by the huge media coverage of the events was much greater for immigrants who were not accustomed to being stereotyped and portrayed in non-favourable light. This is a potentially important and interesting result showing for the first time the size of the impact that media can have on intentions to settle. The difference-in-differences indicates a reduction of 9 percentage points and significantly different from nil (p-value= .032). The size of the corresponding impact on intentions to settle in Italy equals 14 per cent.

Table 2: Intentions to settle (no return plans) in Italy of Romanian migrants

	Before "Tor di Quinto" (1)	After "Tor di Quinto" (2)	Difference (2) − (1) (3)	Difference-in-differences (4)
A. *Treatment group:*				
Media consumption (non-Mediaset) [N = 1,118]	.660 (.020)	.459 (.021)	-.200 (.029)	
Control group:				
Media consumption (Mediaset) [N = 930]	.641 (.022)	.533 (.023)	-.108 (.032)	-.092 (.043)
B. *Treatment group*				
Gender (Woman) ×non-Mediaset [N = 480]	.683 (.030)	.491 (.032)	-.191 (.044)	
Control group:				
Gender (Woman) ×Mediaset [N = 406]	.635 (.033)	.532 (.035)	-.103 (.048)	-.088 (.065)
C. *Treatment group:*				
Ethnicity_1 (Roma) [N = 128]	.781 (.052)	.406 (.061)	-.375 (.080)	
Control group:				
Ethnicity_1 (non-Roma) [N = 1,920]	.633 (.015)	.489 (.016)	-.143 (.022)	-.231 (.089)
D. *Treatment group:*				
Ethnicity_2 (Roma) [N = 210]	.733 (.043)	.438 (.048)	-.295 (.065)	
Control group:				
Ethnicity_2 (non-Roma) [N = 1,838]	.632 (.015)	.489 (.016)	-.142 (.022)	-.154 (.024)

Notes: The table reports mean intentions to settle in Italy of Romanian migrants. Intention to settle equals one if migrants plan to stay in Italy on a medium to long term basis and have no concrete plans to return during the next twelve months. Standard errors in parentheses. Treatment group C (*Ethnicity_1*) covers only self-reported members of the Roma ethnic group (6.45% of the sample). Treatment group D (*Ethnicity_2*) includes also those proficient in the Romani language (10.25% of the sample).

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In sub-panel B, we test whether this effect differs across gender groups. We therefore restrict our analysis to the sample of migrant women. We do find a very large reduction in settlement intentions following the incident, the coefficient for the difference-in-differences is however not significantly different from zero. This may be due to the reduced sample size and the corresponding increase in standard-errors. We note indeed that the reduced settlement intentions in the treatment and control group are of very similar size as in the full sample.

We also test whether the sample of Romanian of Roma origin is more or less affected by the massive media coverage of the event. The sample is too small too meaningfully separate the ones following the Berlusconi press and those not following it. We simply therefore show the changed intentions before and after the events. We use two definitions to identify the ethnic Roma among the Romanian migrants. In row C., we only include individuals who declare themselves as being member of the Roma ethnic group, whereas in row D., we add immigrants who said that they are fluent in the Romani language. For both sub-samples, we find that their initial intentions to settle were very high, at around 75 per cent. Both sub-groups tend to appear very responsive to the media coverage and revised very significantly downwards their intentions to settle. The change is a massive 37 percentage points decrease for the first group of Roma only and 30 percentage points when we add those fluent in the Romani language.

This shows again that the shock is affecting more the group of Romanian immigrants who are more directly targeted by the media, even if in many cases the press did not differentiate between Romanian immigrants of Roma and non-Roma origin.

Table 3: DiD Probit results Mediaset exposure versus no Mediaset exposure

Full sample: Romanian Migrants in Italy

Variables	Without covariates (1)	Demographic characteristics (2)	Integration in Italy (3)	Migration characteristics (4)	Regional characteristics (5)
Age	-	-0.011 (0.003)	-0.011 (0.003)	-0.007 (0.004)	-0.011 (0.004)
Woman	-	0.083 (0.056)	0.069 (0.058)	0.055 (0.059)	0.052 (0.063)
Medium education	-	0.081 (0.087)	-0.051 (0.091)	-0.030 (0.092)	0.049 (0.102)
High education	-	0.283 (0.110)	0.118 (0.116)	0.121 (0.118)	0.267 (0.131)
Ethnic Roma	-	0.103 (0.096)	0.157 (0.101)	0.143 (0.103)	-0.006 (0.115)
Informally employed	-	-	-0.217 (0.065)	-0.194 (0.065)	-0.131 (0.072)
Wage last month	-	-	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Years in Italy	-	-	0.007 (0.003)	0.007 (0.003)	0.007 (0.003)
Fluent in Italian	-	-	0.227 (0.067)	0.203 (0.068)	0.188 (0.073)
Minority religion	-	-	-0.133 (0.075)	-0.087 (0.076)	0.079 (0.096)
Overall trust	-	-	0.010 (0.013)	0.003 (0.014)	0.019 (0.015)
Negative to Roma	-	-	0.112 (0.067)	0.127 (0.068)	-0.032 (0.076)
"Don't migrate to Italy"	-	-	-0.356 (0.058)	-0.346 (0.059)	-0.325 (0.064)
Not discriminated	-	-	0.206 (0.061)	0.176 (0.063)	0.098 (0.070)
Attitudes worsening	-	-	0.243 (0.065)	0.267 (0.066)	0.314 (0.071)
Media tendentious	-	-	0.023 (0.059)	0.024 (0.059)	-0.135 (0.065)
Deportation justified	-	-	0.058 (0.060)	0.026 (0.061)	0.006 (0.068)
No Italian contacts	-	-	-0.072 (0.062)	-0.055 (0.061)	-0.021 (0.067)
Poor health	-	-	-	-0.229 (0.081)	-0.140 (0.086)
Tied migrant	-	-	-	0.319 (0.130)	0.169 (0.140)
Negative to migration	-	-	-	-0.134 (0.063)	-0.088 (0.070)
Owns house in Romania	-	-	-	-0.122 (0.064)	-0.089 (0.070)
Owns land in Romania	-	-	-	-0.100 (0.064)	-0.077 (0.069)
Rergion Italy	-	-	-	-	Yes
Region Romania	-	-	-	-	Yes

No mediaset exposure (γ_0)	0.052 (0.079)	0.050 (0.080)	0.128 (0.082)	0.137 (0.083)	0.225 (0.088)
Post (γ_1)	-0.514 (0.076)	-0.518 (0.076)	-0.539 (0.077)	-0.545 (0.078)	-0.596 (0.081)
Post ×.No mediaset (γ_2)	-0.249 (0.111)	-0.251 (0.111)	-0.260 (0.113)	-0.262 (0.113)	-0.282 (0.118)
Constant	0.423 (0.054)	0.710 (0.145)	0.535 (0.185)	0.656 (0.200)	1.119 (0.350)
Observations	2,126	2,126	2,120	2,120	2,058
Log likelihood	-1418	-1407	-1354	-1341	-1227
Predicted settlement response *for no Mediaset exposure*	-0.092 (0.043)	-0.097 (0.043)	-0.101 (0.044)	-0.102 (0.044)	-0.110 (0.046)

Notes: The dependent variable is settlement intentions in Italy. It equals one if migrants plan to stay in Italy on either medium or long term basis and have no concrete plans to return during the next twelve months. Standard errors in parentheses. Post equals one for the period after the "*Tor di Quinto events*" (30.10.2007). "*No Mediaset exposure*" equals one for those who do not use Mediaset controlled channels as their main source of information about current affairs in Italy and the Italian society.
Column (5) includes dummies for the regions of residence in Italy as well as for the 43 counties representing the regions of origin in Romania.
The predicted response in settlement intentions for no Mediaset exposure is the treatment effect on the treated group, i.e. $\Phi(\gamma_0 + \gamma_1 + \gamma_2) - \Phi(\gamma_0 + \gamma_1)$. It is estimated at the means of the covariates.

The first column in table 3 simply re-produces the coefficient reported in table 2, panel A. In column 2, we add the socio-demographic controls available in our data set. We observe that the coefficients tend to increase slightly and remain highly significant. In columns (3) to (5) we introduce more variables that can potentially reverse or affect the tendency to settle in the host country. The addition of variables capturing links to the Italian society as well as the migrants' own perception of native attitudes and of the media reaction (column 3) tends to increase slightly the main coefficient of interest. The same holds true if we control for additional migration characteristics (column 4) like the type of migration (tied migrant), household links to Romania (land and house ownership) as well as the migrants' revealed own views on the impact of migration. Regional fixed effect, controlling for regions of origin in Romania and regions of residence in Italy, tend to further increase the main coefficient of interest and the corresponding predicted response in settlement intentions. Overall, the addition of a large number of control variables does not greatly affect the value and significance of coefficients. Our preferred estimate of the response in settlement intentions is .11 per cent, with a standard-error of .046 and consequently a p-value of .017. This means that intentions to settle have decreased amongst the Romanian immigrants following the media coverage of Tore di Quinto by 11 percentage points with a base value of 66 per cent, i.e. an impact of almost 17 per cent.

Table 4 presents the results of the sub-group analysis. We include the estimates for education groups (low, medium and high), for language fluency (based on a constructed dummy variable indicating weather the respondents are fluent in Italian), for recent migrants (those who arrived earlier than the median number of years since migration in the sample) and age (migrants over forty years of age).

The first column in table 4 present the raw difference-in-differences for the sub-groups while columns (2) and (3) include covariates. These results were estimated using triple interaction terms and predicting the maginal effects at the means of the covariates using third differentials. Given our interest in the implications of our results for the potential self-selection into (having intentions to) out-migration, it is worth noting that hardly any sub-group effects are statistically significant. Most effects are much smaller than our baseline results for the whole sample. The only group for which the impact is statistically significant at 10 per cent is that for low education. After the inclusion of covariates the magnitude of the effect for this group is above the one estimated for the whole sample being 18 percentage points, with a corresponding p-value of .09. In other words, low educated migrants were decreasing their intentions to settle in Italy on a medium to long term basis by 18 percentage points which given the base value of 70 per cent in the group, suggest a reduction of settlement intentions by 25 per cent. The implications for the selection into settlement and out-migration are straightforward. The implied positive selection into settlement means that without accounting for out-migration any predictions of the integration prospects of migrants in Italy will be biased upwards. Even if out-migration intentions are not realised, those belonging to the lower educated might have less incentives to invest in specific skills or language and will face

Table 4: Treatment effects for subgroups

	No covariates	Regression DiD Demographic characteristics	Regional characteristics
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Baseline treatment group			
No mediaset×post×low education	-.160	-.163	-.182
	(.128)	(.111)	(.110)
No mediaset×post×med. education	.083	.088	.093
	(.097)	(.102)	(.105)
No mediaset×post×high education	.016	.034	.046
	(.127)	(.137)	(.138)
No mediaset×post×language	.037	.041	.120
(fluent in Italian)	(.094)	(.099)	(.253)
No mediaset×post×recent migrant	-.004	-.023	-.058
(in Italy less than 3 years)	(.090)	(.079)	(.208)
No mediaset×post×over 40	-.076	-.074	-.071
(older than 40)	(.143)	(.138)	(.141)

Notes: The dependent variable is settlement intentions in Italy. Standard errors in parentheses. The marginal effects in columns (2) and (3) are are from partial interactions in probit models using third differences, calculated at means. (Cornelissen and Sonderhof 2009).

a long term disadvantage.

As already mentioned, one concern with our analysis is that the results are driven by other personal characteristics of the control group. Since we cannot use a placebo period for our analysis we run several models similar to those in equations (1) and (2) but changing the treatment from exposure to Mediaset to different regions of origin as well as other characteristics like gender (this is included in table 2, panel B). Table 5 presents the results for the comparison between two regions with a similar share of Romanian migrants who also have similar exposure levels to Mediaset channels and face similar regional labour market conditions: Veneto and Piemont.

Similar to the results in table 4, the first column presents the raw difference-in-differences estimates for the two regions and for sub-groups. Columns (2) and (3) present results for the same models but including covariates. None of the estimated effects is statistically significant. For some sub-groups, the magnitude of the effect increases, like for low and for high education, but these groups are very small and hence the high standard errors.

Table 5: Treatment effects placebo, subgroups

	Without covariates (1)	Regression DiD	
		Demographic characteristics (2)	Regional characteristics (3)

Placebo treatment group: Region Veneto [$N = 356$]
Control group: Region Piemont [$N = 234$]

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Veneto×post	-.034	-.031	-.032
	(.076)	(.063)	(.063)
Veneto×post×low. education	.286	.286	.295
	(.259)	(.258)	(.257)
Veneto×post×med. education	.056	.056	.046
	(.179)	(.178)	(.178)
Veneto×post×high education	-.320	-.320	-.311
	(.227)	(.226)	(.225)
Veneto×post×language	.043	.043	.032
(fluent in Italian)	(.177)	(.176)	(.176)
Veneto×post×recent migrant	-.005	-.005	.005
(in Italy less than 3 years)	(.164)	(.163)	(.163)
Veneto×post×over 40	-.158	-.158	-.150
(older than 40)	(.298)	(.296)	(.295)

Notes: Dependent variable: settlement intentions in Italy. Standard errors in parentheses. The marginal effects in columns (2) and (3) are are from partial interactions in probit models. For subgroups, these are estimated using third differences.

5 Conclusions

One of the most dynamic research themes in the economics of migration relates the selection into out-migration of the foreign born to the long-term economic impacts of migration on home and destination countries. In this context, the native attitudes towards migration in general and specific migrant groups in particular is likely to play a crucial role in shaping choices over return migration. However, there is to date no empirical evidence about the effects of native attitudes on out-migration decisions.

By exploiting the variation in media consumption among Romanian migrants in Italy and using data after a unique shock in anti-immigrant sentiments, we tried to establish a causal link between changes in public attitudes and settlement intentions. Using a difference-in-differences strategy we find a negative impact on settlement intentions of migrants. In particular, our results indicate that Romanian migrants who have been affected by a shock in native attitudes without having been previously exposed to anti-immigrant manifestations are less likely to plan to stay in Italy than migrants who already have been exposed to negative sentiments prior to the shock. Moreover, unskilled migrants seem to be affected more by a shock in public attitudes than medium and highly skilled migrants.

Our findings complement the results of Friebel et al. (2013) who show that migration intentions from a developing region are affected by xenophobic sentiments in a developed destination country. The same holds true for the work of Gorinas and Pytliková (2013) who analyse the link between native attitudes and migration flows in a cross-country setting. They conclude that natives' hostility, measured by the extent of potential labour market discrimination, reduces migration inflows.

Even if our analysis is based on revealed intentions, we argue that these can be relevant in order to understand out-migration patterns. Sever other studies confirm the importance of migration intentions and their role in predicting actual migration (e.g. Burda et al. 1998 and Manski 1990 for a more general discussion). For our research question, even if intentions to out-migrate are not materialised, these can be in fact even more important for understanding the long-term integration prospects and patterns of intergenerational mobility of migrants trapped in an uncertain status between the host and the home country or even potential third destinations. They will lack incentives to invest in skills facilitating a rapid integration in the host labour market and society, and these group characteristics can be transferred across generations.

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