The Political Impact of Immigration: Evidence from the United States

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Introduction

- Political leaders' positions on the issue of immigration can be an important determinant of their electoral success or failure.

- Immigration took center stage in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections and its aftermath as now President Donald Trump took strong stands on illegal immigration, the construction of a border wall, refugees from Syria, and "sanctuary cities".

- The Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and recent political elections in Germany (2017) and Italy (2018) have confirmed the political role of immigration and shown the electoral success of strong anti-immigration stands.

What we do

- No study looks directly and systematically at one crucial aspect of the political effect of immigrants in the U.S.

  - their impact on election outcomes and specifically on the share of votes to political parties

- We analyze the link between migration and the vote share of the Republican Party between 1990 and 2016 across U.S. counties.

  - We estimate the causal effect of immigrants on the share of votes using a modified version of the shift share instrument à la Card.

What do we expect? Puzzle!

- The narrative in political circles in the U.S. has mostly been that the Republican Party is negatively affected by migration

  - "... the enormous flow of legal immigrants to the country has remade and continues to remake the nation's electorate in favor of the Democratic Party." (Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) Background Paper by James G. Gimpel, April 2014)

  - This may explain the reluctance of the Republican party to push forward with migration policy reform.

- The evidence from European countries suggests that immigrant inflows improve the electoral success of right-wing parties.

  - see Barone, D'Ignazio, De Blasio and Naticchioni 2016, Halla, Wagner and Zweimuller 2017, Otto and Steinhardt 2014.

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  - see Barone, D'Ignazio, De Blasio and Naticchioni 2016, Halla, Wagner and Zweimuller 2017, Otto and Steinhardt 2014.

- We hypothesize: It depends on **the type of immigrants**

  - we distinguish between <u>low-skilled</u> and <u>high-skilled</u> immigrants

The impact of immigration: Broad picture

- Immigration to the U.S. likely has had sizable effects on its economy and society, through several different channels:

  - Labor market

    - Immigrants may affect native workers' opportunities in the labor market, their productivity and their specialization (Borjas 2014, Peri 2016).

  - Government budget

    - Immigrants are also likely to impact the destination country's government budget, by paying taxes, receiving public welfare and transfers and using public goods (NASEM 2016).

  - Non-economic channel

    - The literature points out several potential social effects of immigration on culture, social norms and on crime and security (Giuliano 2007, Alesina and Giuliano 2011)

The Impact of Immigration: Broad picture (cont.)

- Political effect of immigrants:

  - Indirect political effect: which works through the impact of immigrants on existing voters' votes.
    - Through their votes, existing voters respond to what they perceive as the costs and benefits – through the labor-market, fiscal and non-economic mechanisms – of having more immigrants in their county.
    - We posit that their probability of voting for the Republican Party goes up if the perceived cost of an increase in immigrants (high-skilled or low-skilled) is larger than the perceived benefit.
    - We associate the Republican Party with more restrictive immigration policies (see Facchini and Steinhardt 2011 and Conconi et al. 2012).

  - Direct political effect: which works through the inclusion of new voters, i.e. recently naturalized migrants, who may have different preferences from existing voters.

Main results

- On average, immigration to the U.S. has a significant and negative impact on the Republican vote share.
  - This result holds for all election types: House, Senate, or Presidential elections

Main results

- On average, immigration to the U.S. has a significant and negative impact on the Republican vote share.
  - This result holds for all election types: House, Senate, or Presidential elections

- Next, we distinguish between low-skilled and high-skilled immigrants and find that the Republican vote share:
  - **decreases** when the share of **skilled** migrants increases
  - **increases** when the share of **unskilled** migrants increases

- These effects are mainly due to the *indirect* impact on existing citizens' votes and seem independent of the country of origin and race of immigrants.

Outline of the presentation

- Literature related to this paper

- Data

- First look at the data: the correlation between the immigrant share and voting outcomes (without differentiating between low-skilled and high-skilled immigrants)

- The impact of low-skilled and high-skilled immigration (on average across counties)

- Heterogeneous effects across counties

Literature

- Political economy models of migration policy: Benhabib 1996, Ortega 2005, Facchini and Willmann 2005, Razin et al. 2011.

- Empirical literature on attitudes towards migrants: Scheve and Slaughter 2001, Hanson et al. 2007, Mayda 2006, Facchini and Mayda 2009, O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006, Card et al. 2012.

- Papers on voting behavior of U.S. politicians on topics related to immigration policies (Facchini and Steinhardt (2011), Conconi et al. (2012)).

- Papers on immigrants and electoral success of right-wing parties in Europe (Barone et al. 2014, Halla et al. 2012, Otto and Steinhardt 2014). See also Baerg et al. 2014 for the U.S. state of Georgia.

- Papers on the impact of international trade on election outcomes in the US: (Che, Lu, Pierce, Schott and Tao 2015, Autor, Dorn, Hanson and Majlesi 2016 and Jensen, Quinn and Weymouth 2016).

Data

- US Census

  - Immigrants are foreign born people (we exclude children born abroad of U.S. citizens)

    - Low-skilled immigrants did not finish high school
    - High-skilled immigrants have at least finished high school

  - county and commuting zone level data

    - every 2 years between 1990 and 2016

- National Library of Congress Election data

  - Number of votes for each party candidate from 1990 to 2016 for every election.

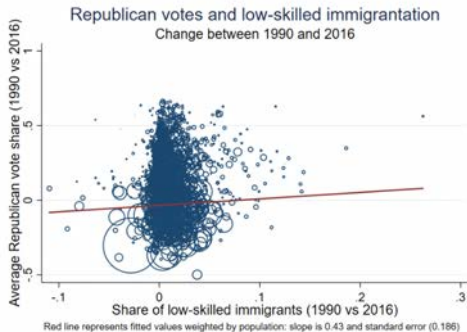# Correlation between the change in the Republican vote share and the change in the immigrant population share between 1990 and 2016
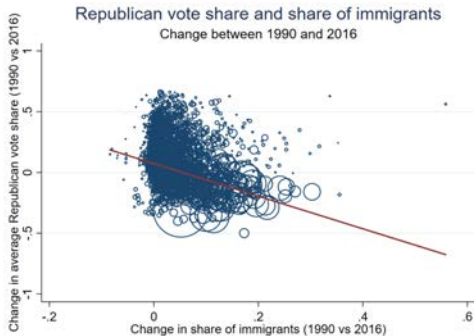
Note: Each point represents a U.S. county weighted by its voting age population. The vertical axis shows the average change in the share of Republican vote in all elections, and the horizontal axis shows the change in the share of immigrants in the adult population.

Figure 1: Correlation between the change in the Republican vote share and the change in the low-skilled and high-skilled immigrant population share between 1990 and 2016

Panel (a): Change in share of low-skilled immigrants in population (1990-2016)

Republican votes and low-skilled immigrantation
Change between 1990 and 2016

Red line represents fitted values weighted by population: slope is 0.43 and standard error (0.186)
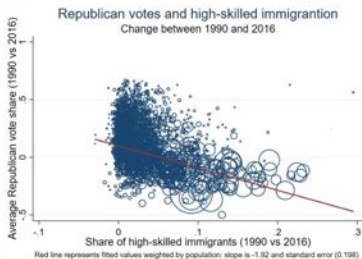
Figure 1: Correlation between the change in the Republican vote share and the change in the low-skilled and high-skilled immigrant population share between 1990 and 2016

Panel (b): Change in share of high-skilled immigrants in voting population (1990-2016)

Note: Each point represents a U.S. county weighted by its voting age population. The vertical axis shows the average change in the share of Republican vote in all elections, and the horizontal axis shows the change in the share of low-skilled immigrants in the adult population and the change in the share of high-skilled immigrants in the voting population respectively.

OLS regressions

- Dependent variable: Share of votes for the Republican Party in House (HE), Senate (SE) and Presidential Election (PE), and also pooled elections.

- Commuting Zone controls: share of voters who are married, male, unemployed, African-American, urban, low-skilled; average income.

- County Controls: Labor demand shocks (Bartik), Exposure to international trade shocks (Autor, Dorn and Hanson)

- All regressions are weighed by the voting population. Standard errors are clustered at the state level.

- We model the Republican vote share in county i at time t as:

$$r_{it} = s_i + q_t + \beta_L \frac{L_{it}}{Pop_{it}} + \beta_H \frac{H_{it}}{Pop_{it}} + \beta_x X_{jt} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

  - β_L and β_H are the effects of, respectively, low and high-skilled immigrants
  - s_i ... county-fixed effect
  - q_t ... time-fixed effect
  - X_{jt} ... county and commuting zone controls

OLS regressions

OLS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Election type	Pooled	PE	SE	HE	Pooled	PE	SE	HE
				Panel A				
Share of immigrants	-0.721***	-0.769***	-0.579***	-0.765***	-0.743***	-0.721***	-0.581***	-0.850***
	[0.137]	[0.158]	[0.140]	[0.220]	[0.206]	[0.254]	[0.176]	[0.246]
Election fixed effects	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Commuting zone time trends	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Commuting zone control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
County fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	92,982	21,484	28,483	43,015	92,982	21,484	28,483	43,015
Number of counties	0.649	0.910	0.702	0.690	0.682	0.941	0.763	0.742

OLS regressions by immigrants' skills

OLS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Election type	Pooled	PE	SE	HE	Pooled	PE	SE	HE
				Panel B				
Share of low-skilled immigrants	1.058***	0.963**	0.848***	1.348***	0.182	1.263***	-0.511	0.158
	[0.258]	[0.361]	[0.284]	[0.350]	[0.247]	[0.285]	[0.473]	[0.429]
Share of high-skilled immigrants	-1.235***	-1.282***	-1.008***	-1.361***	-1.152***	-1.684***	-0.548	-1.296***
	[0.152]	[0.165]	[0.212]	[0.214]	[0.234]	[0.237]	[0.374]	[0.257]
Election fixed effects	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Commuting zone time trends	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Commuting zone control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
County fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
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OLS regressions by immigrants' skills and group

OLS	1	2	3	4	5
Election type	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled
Group	industrial countries (cty)	Latin America	Mexico	white immigrants	non-citizen immigrants
Non-group	non-industrial cty	non-Latin America	Rest of the World	non-white immigrants	citizen immigrants
Share of low skilled immigrants	-0.237	1.229***	1.500***	1.231**	1.121***
from group	[0.647]	[0.263]	[0.308]	[0.557]	[0.300]
Share of high skilled immigrants	-1.141***	-0.672***	-1.431***	-1.334***	-1.321***
from group	[0.167]	[0.162]	[0.247]	[0.226]	[0.219]
Share of low skilled immigrants	1.632***	1.321*	0.536	0.967***	1.010**
from non-group	[0.303]	[0.712]	[0.528]	[0.278]	[0.473]
Share of high skilled immigrants	-1.295***	-1.991***	-1.204***	-1.069***	-0.916***
from non-group	[0.247]	[0.213]	[0.148]	[0.242]	[0.176]
Election fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Commuting Zone control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
County fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	92,982	92,982	92,982	92,982	92,982
R-squared	0.654	0.655	0.654	0.653	0.653

Summary OLS results

- low-skilled immigrants increase Republican vote share

- high-skilled immigrants decrease Republican vote share

- These effects are mainly due to the indirect impact on existing citizens' votes and seem independent of the country of origin and race of immigrants

IV strategy: Card instrument

- New immigrants tend to settle close to previous immigrants from the same country of origin because of network effects

- IV immigrant share:

$$\frac{M_{it}}{Pop_{it}} = h\left(\frac{\widehat{M_{it}}}{\widehat{M_{it}} + \widehat{N_{it}}}\right) \tag{1}$$

  - where the predicted number of natives:
  $$\widehat{N_{it}} = N_{i,t-10} + sh_{US,i,1980}\Delta N_{t-10,t} \tag{2}$$

  - and the predicted number of immigrants:
  $$\widehat{M_{it}} = \sum_c \left(M_{i,c,t-10} + sh_{c,i,1980}\Delta M_{c,t}\right) \tag{3}$$

- The terms $sh_{US,i,1980}$ and $sh_{c,i,1980}$ are the constant shares that we use to "apportion" to each county i the natives and the immigrants from country c in each year t.

Refined IV strategy for skills

- IV for low-skilled immigrant share:

$$\widehat{L_{it}} = \sum_c \left(sh_{c,i,1980} L_{ct} \right) \qquad (4)$$

  - where L_{ct} is the number of low-skilled immigrants from country c in year t

- IV for high-skilled immigrant share:

$$\widehat{H_{it}} = \sum_c \left(sh_{c,i,1980} H_{ct} \right) \qquad (5)$$

  - where H_{ct} is the number of high-skilled immigrants from country c in year t

- The predicted shares are given by:

$$\frac{L_{it}}{Pop_{it}} = f \left(\frac{\widehat{L_{it}}}{\widehat{M_{it}} + \widehat{N_{it}}} \right), \text{ and } \frac{H_{it}}{Pop_{it}} = g \left(\frac{\widehat{H_{it}}}{\widehat{M_{it}} + \widehat{N_{it}}} \right)$$

2nd stage IV results:

Second stage	1 2SLS	2 Trend 2SLS	3 Trend 2SLS	4 Reduced form
Share of low-skilled immigrants at county level	3.053***	3.081***	6.125*	0.866***
	[0.797]	[0.699]	[3.109]	[0.132]
Share of high-skilled immigrants at county level	-1.708***	-3.281***	-7.233*	-1.391***
	[0.341]	[1.006]	[3.757]	[0.217]
Election fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
County time trends	no	no	yes	no
Commuting zone time trends	no	yes	no	no
Commuting zone control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
County fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	92,982	92,982	92,982	92,982
R-squared	0.136	0.050	0.029	0.655
IV F-stat	67.80	16.41	3.366	

Pre-1990 trends: Low-skilled immigrant share

	Change in the predicted share of low-skilled immigrants (1990-2016)										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(12)	(13)
VARIABLES: Change (1980-1990) in:	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled
Republican Vote share	0.00457 [0.00708]										
Rural population share		0.000612 [0.000449]									
unemployment rate			0.00884 [0.00711]								
av. income per capita (%)				-0.00130 [0.000859]							
trade shock					-0.00266 [0.00165]						
share of black voters						-0.0221 [0.0184]					
white voters							0.000556 [0.00200]				
share of low-skilled natives								-0.000360 [0.00173]			
share of high-skilled natives									0.000343 [0.00414]		
share of white low-skilled natives										0.00147 [0.00218]	
share of white low-skilled men											0.00747 [0.0139]
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027
R-squared	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.441	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440

Pre-1990 trends: High-skilled immigrant share

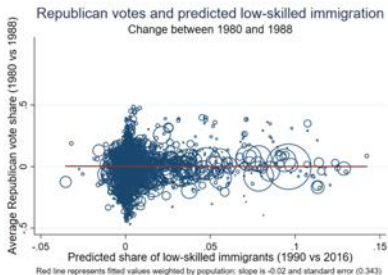|	Change in the predicted share of high-skilled immigrants (1990-2016)										
	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(26)
VARIABLES: Change (1980-1990) in:	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled	Pooled
Republican Vote share	-0.0105 [0.0144]										
Rural population share		-0.00150 [0.00116]									
unemployment rate			0.0369 [0.0227]								
av. income per capita (%)				-0.000997 [0.00202]							
trade shock					0.00374 [0.00464]						
share of black voters						0.0277 [0.0413]					
white voters							-0.00983 [0.00683]				
share of low-skilled natives								0.000130 [0.00409]			
share of high-skilled natives									-0.0186* [0.0106]		
share of white low-skilled natives										-0.00568 [0.00551]	
share of white low-skilled men											-0.0445 [0.0329]
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027	40,027
R-squared	0.421	0.422	0.423	0.421	0.420	0.421	0.429	0.419	0.436	0.421	0.423

Pre-1990 trends: Summary

- No evidence of a statistically significant relationship between the predicted changes in the immigrant shares by skill level and previous changes in local economic and demographic conditions – which supports the exclusion restriction of the instrument.

Visualizing the pre-1990 trends

Figure B4: Correlation between the change in the Republican vote share between 1980 and 1990 versus the change in the predicted low-skilled and the predicted high-skilled immigrant population share between 1990 and 2016

Panel (a): Change in the predicted share of low-skilled immigrants in population (1990-2016)

Visualizing the pre-1990 trends

Figure B4: Correlation between the change in the Republican vote share between 1980 and 1990 versus the change in the predicted low-skilled and the predicted high-skilled immigrant population share between 1990 and 2016

Panel (b): Change in the predicted share of high-skilled immigrants in voting population (1990-2016)
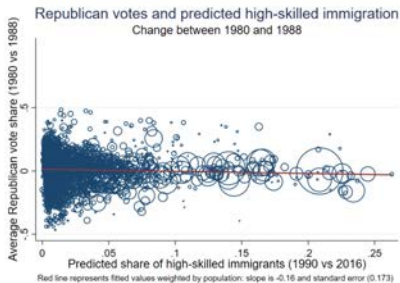
Note: Each point represents a U.S. county weighted by its voting age population. The vertical axis shows the average change in the share of Republican vote in all elections, and the horizontal axis shows the change in the share of low-skilled immigrants in the adult population and the change in the share of high-skilled immigrants in the voting population respectively.

Robustness checks: Additional IV results

VARIABLES	(1) No controls	(2) Low-skilled natives	(3) Democrat vote share	(4) Unweighted	(5) Drop sanctuary cities	(6) Rural	(7) Urban	(8) Turnout
Share of low skilled immigrants at County Level	2.003**	2.443***	-1.610***	5.697***	3.275***	3.172***	3.442**	-0.0807
	[0.873]	[0.823]	[0.492]	[1.847]	[0.559]	[0.841]	[1.375]	[1.038]
Share of high skilled immigrants at County Level	-2.512***	-1.875***	1.437***	-2.562***	-2.297***	-1.889***	-4.519***	-0.234
	[0.269]	[0.342]	[0.295]	[0.532]	[0.341]	[0.321]	[1.438]	[0.216]
Election fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Commuting zone control variables	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
County fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	92,982	92,982	92,982	92,982	91,856	38,573	54,409	61,985
R-squared	0.116	0.133	0.136	0.164	0.126	0.136	0.111	0.780
IV F-stat	34.33	21.96	67.80	5.132	62.56	62.90	9.993	39.34

Robust standard errors in brackets
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Channels

- So far we looked at heterogeneity across immigrants, now heterogeneity across native population and location.

- Labor-market channel :
  - Labor-market competition and complementarity
    - In low-skilled counties the average voter should respond to low-skilled immigration with a larger shift of votes towards the Republican Party relative to high-skilled counties.
    - In low-skilled counties the average voter should respond to high-skilled immigration with a larger shift of votes towards the Democratic Party relative to high-skilled counties.
  - Density/thickness of the labor market as proxied by the share of urban area in the county. Denser labor market in urban areas helps absorb immigrants.

Channels (cont.)

- Welfare-state channel
  - In the county with the least generous welfare state, fiscal effects should play a small role, relative to counties where the welfare state is very generous.
  - Since low-skilled immigration is likely to represent a fiscal burden, the pro-Republican impact of low-skilled immigration should be larger in the more generous counties relative to the least generous ones.
  - Since high-skilled immigration is likely to represent a net fiscal transfer, the pro-Democrat impact of high-skilled immigration should be larger in the more generous counties relative to the least generous ones.

- Cultural (linguistic) differences channel
  - Cultural differences may have different impacts depending on whether immigration is high-skilled or low-skilled.

Estimating equation for the channels

- The Republican vote share in county i at the time t as:

$$r_{it} = \beta_1 \frac{L_{it}}{Pop_{it}} + \beta_2 \frac{H_{it}}{Pop_{it}} + \beta_3 \frac{L_{it}}{Pop_{it}} Chan_j + \beta_4 \frac{H_{it}}{Pop_{it}} Chan_j + X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

  - $Chan_j$ ... is a variable which captures each of the channels and is standardized across Commuting Zones (CZs) in 1980 so that it varies between 0 and 1

    - $Channel_j^1$ ... ratio of unskilled to skilled in CZ in 1980

    - $Channel_j^2$ ... share of rural area in CZ in 1980

    - $Channel_j^3$ ... public expenditure to GDP ratio per CZ in 1980

    - $Channel_j^4$ ... language diversity in CZ in 1980

Accounting for heterogenous effects (channels results)

- We find evidence of a pro-Republican impact of low-skilled immigrants and a pro-Democrat impact of high-skilled immigrants across different types of counties – consistent with an overall perceived negative effect of low-skilled immigrants and positive effect of high-skilled immigrants.

- The pro-Republican impact of low-skilled immigrants is stronger in low-skilled and rural counties and in counties where public spending is larger.

- The pro-Democrat impact of high-skilled immigrants is stronger in more (linguistically) diverse counties and in counties where public spending is larger.

- Heterogenous effects are consistent with the economic and non-economic effects of low-skilled and high-skilled immigration.

Channels results: IV

Channel	Labor market		Welfare	Cultural differences
Election type	1 Pooled	2 Pooled	3 Pooled	4 Pooled
Share of low-skilled immigrants at county level (CL)	1.714*	2.503***	2.593***	3.162***
	[0.928]	[0.677]	[0.550]	[0.818]
Share of high-skilled immigrants at CL	-2.045***	-2.019***	-1.988***	-1.958***
	[0.214]	[0.215]	[0.164]	[0.213]
Share of low-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with low-to-high-skilled ratio in 1980	5.113**			
	[2.578]			
Share of high-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with low-to-high-skilled ratio in 1980	-0.00732			
	[0.891]			
Share of low-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with share of rural population in 1980		3.994*		
		[2.101]		
Share of high-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with share of rural population in 1980		-1.296		
		[0.853]		
Share of low-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with ratio of govt. exp. to total income in 1980			9.517***	
			[2.478]	
Share of high-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with ratio of govt. exp. to total income in 1980			-4.235***	
			[1.117]	
Share of low-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with language differences in 1980				-3.481
				[2.951]
Share of high-skilled immigrants at CL interacted with language differences in 1980				-1.921***
				[0.701]
Election fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
Commuting zone control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
County fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	92,982	92,982	92,982	92,982
R-squared	0.122	0.116	0.095	0.127
IV F-stat	9.495	5.227	8.804	4.793

Effect of skilled and unskilled immigrants

Figure 3: Marginal effect of the change in the share of immigrants between 1990 and 2016 (separated between low-skilled and high-skilled immigrants) on the Republican vote share across counties with 95% confidence, 2016
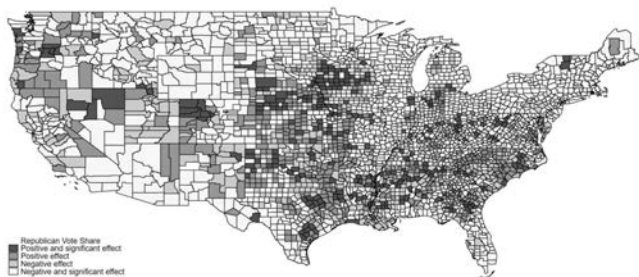
Note: The continuous impact is calculated using the coefficients in Table 4, i.e. (XXX x change in share of low-skilled immigrants between 1990 and 2016 + XXX x change in share of high-skilled immigrants between 1990 and 2016.

Micro evidence from individual-attitudes data

Dependent variable	In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself as Republican		Immigrants threaten traditional American values		Immigrants are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health	
	1 IV	2 IV	3 IV	4 IV	5 IV	6 IV
Share of Immigrants	-0.310*** [0.0732]		-0.271*** [0.0663]		-0.118*** [0.0361]	
Share of low-skilled immigrants at County Level		1.180*** [0.362]		0.577*** [0.206]		0.439*** [0.131]
Share of high-skilled immigrants at County Level		-0.971*** [0.147]		-0.806*** [0.136]		-0.470*** [0.102]
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Year Fixed Effect	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
R-squared	18,400	18,400	18,400	18,400	18,400	18,400
Observations	0.063	0.066	0.107	0.110	0.208	0.209

Conclusions

- By providing systematic and robust evidence on the relationship between U.S. immigration and voting outcomes, we are also able to shed light on "conventional wisdom" on the topic.

- Anecdotal evidence suggests, and we confirm in our data, that on average immigration in U.S. counties reduces the Republican vote share.

- This may explain why Republicans are hesitant to push forward with migration policy reform.

Conclusions (cont.)

- Political scientists and analysts seem to interpret the negative association as driven by a "pro-Democratic Party" direct political effect - i.e. the idea that naturalized immigrants vote predominantly for the Democratic party which has a pro-immigrants platform

- Our results show that the main impact of immigration on voting outcomes comes from the skill level of immigrants – which affects the voting behavior of *existing* voters – and not from whether or how naturalized immigrants vote.

- It is larger increases in high-skilled relative to low-skilled immigration that explain why immigration has hurt the Republican party, *on average*.

Conclusions (cont.)

- ▶ Our results also shed light on puzzles in the literature.

- ▶ Several papers on European countries find that immigrants increased the electoral vote share of conservative, anti-immigration, parties.

- ▶ What explains the opposite results across the two sides of the Atlantic? Why is the average political impact of immigration (on conservative parties' votes) positive in the case of European countries and negative in the case of the United States?

- ▶ Our analysis shows that the two sets of results are not inconsistent with each other.

- ▶ They can be reconciled by noting that immigrants to the European countries (analyzed in the literature) are, on average, less skilled than immigrants to the United States, and the local labor force in Europe is also less skilled than in the United States.

Appendix

Skill composition of immigrants

- Detailed data on skill composition of immigrants at county level is not available

- Assume skill composition at the county level is the same as at the commuting zone level:

$$\frac{H_{it}}{Pop_{it}} = \frac{H_{jt}}{M_{jt}} \frac{M_{it}}{Pop_{jt}} \tag{6}$$

  - where the H_{ji}/M_{jt} is the share of high-skilled immigrants at the commuting zone level

- Remarks:
  - the definition of low-skilled immigrants is similar.
  - a commuting zone consists on average of 4.16 counties (3082 / 741)
    - a county is a proper subset of a commuting zone
  - IV strategy addresses potential aggregation bias