

The Effects of Global Competition on Attitudes in Western Europe*

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Abstract

We investigate the impact of globalization on people's attitudes in fifteen Western European countries, over 1988-2009. We employ data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and the European Values Study (EVS). We compute a region-specific measure of exposure to Chinese imports, based on the historical industry specialization of each region. We attribute to each individual the import shock in the region of residence in the years prior to the interview. To identify the causal impact of the import shock, we instrument imports to Europe using Chinese imports to the United States. We find that respondents residing in regions that received stronger globalization shocks are systematically less supportive of democracy, more in favor of strong leaders, and particularly concerned with immigration, especially with the *cultural* threat posed by it. These results are robust to controlling for the initial average attitudes of each region, computed from the oldest available survey for each country. Moreover, we obtain the same findings when we interact the initial attitudes with country-year dummies, thus capturing any differential trajectories across regions based on pre-sample conditions.

Keywords: Globalization; Attitudes; Authoritarianism.

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1 Introduction

Colantone and Stanig (2018a; 2018b) show that distress caused by globalization is one of the drivers of support for nationalist platforms and radical-right parties in Western Europe, as well as a key factor behind Leave support in the Brexit referendum. In this short note, we provide some initial evidence about the effects of globalization –as captured by the “China shock”– on people’s attitudes in fifteen Western European countries, with specific attention to authoritarian and nativist attitudes.

Our first aim is to shed light on the link between economic shocks and voting behavior, as mediated by changes in attitudes. By so doing, we also aim to contribute to the debate on the economic vs. cultural roots of the political realignment observed in advanced Western economies: what is often referred to as a “populist Zeitgeist”. We take the moves from two documented facts. First of all, the surge of nationalist, nativist, illiberal and radical-right parties is empirically linked to economic distress, and to trade globalization in particular. Second, evidence exists that there is a cultural dimension that plays an important role in the backlash (Gidron and Hall 2017; Inglehart and Norris 2017). The argument we support is that cultural and economic explanations should be seen as tightly related rather than dichotomic. Indeed, cultural-backlash related variables are themselves affected by economic distress.

A first result in this respect is provided by Colantone and Stanig (2018a) in their paper on Brexit. Specifically, using data from the British Election Survey (BES), they find that globalization, besides having an impact on voting, also affects attitudes and perceptions about immigration. In particular, the globalization shock received by the region of residence of an individual is a strong predictor of: opposition to immigration, perceptions of immigration as a threat to the national culture and the economy, and, importantly, inflated perceptions of the immigrants’ arrival rate. These attitudes and perceptions, at

the same time, are not clearly related to the actual presence or arrival rate of immigrants.

Opposition to immigration is often the centerpiece of the rhetoric of the radical right. This fact provides an important entry point for researchers to understand these processes, and to explore how psychological syndromes mediate between material conditions and political platforms. As a matter of fact, there might exist economic drivers of opposition to immigration that are not only related, as the literature often assumed, to labor market competition. For instance, evidence from psychology and political science shows that a perception of vulnerability, like the one induced by economic hardship, can induce the activation of an authoritarian syndrome (Ballard-Rosa et al. 2017; Hetherington and Suhay 2011; Napier and Jost 2008). Importantly, one element of the “authoritarian personality” syndrome is nativism and out-group hostility. The preoccupation with immigration might then be just one facet of this more complicated set of traits.

In a nutshell, economic distress leads to authoritarianism and opposition to immigration, and breeds support for other policies proposed (or other stances postured) by the radical right. For this reason, demands for cultural protectionism, or positive responses to appeals to cultural protectionism –let alone appeals to racial superiority– cannot be interpreted at face value as consequences of a concern for “culture” however defined. Rather, they might simply be the “cultural” manifestation of grievances that are linked to and driven by economic distress.

In this contribution, we start to sketch a roadmap for a deeper understanding of the relationship between economic shocks, attitudes about immigration, and authoritarian attitudes. Importantly, we differentiate between authoritarianism that is clearly political (e.g., preferences for strong leaders, or doubts about democracy as a desirable political system) and authoritarianism in other realms, like, for instance, punitiveness of criminal justice and child-rearing preferences.

Importantly, the surge of China as a global exporter, with the consequent decline of

manufacturing in advanced economies, provides a plausibly exogenous source of variation in economic conditions across regions, based on their historical industry specialization. This allows us to investigate the causal link between an exogenous structural change in economic conditions and people’s attitudes.

2 The China shock

2.1 The import shock

Our empirical strategy involves regressing individual-level attitudes against the Chinese import shock. To this purpose, we build a region-specific indicator for the exposure to Chinese imports following the methodology introduced by Autor et al. (2013), and later applied by Colantone and Stanig (2018a; 2018b). In particular, we define:

$$\text{Import Shock}_{crt} = \sum_j \frac{L_{rj(\text{pre-sample})}}{L_{r(\text{pre-sample})}} * \frac{\Delta \text{IMPChina}_{cjt}}{L_{cj(\text{pre-sample})}}, \quad (1)$$

where c indexes countries, r NUTS-2 regions, j industries, and t years.

$\Delta \text{IMPChina}_{cjt}$ is the change in (real) imports from China over the past n years, in country c and industry j . This is normalized by the number of workers in the same country and industry at the beginning of the sample period, $L_{cj(\text{pre-sample})}$. In order to back out the region-specific trade shock, we take the weighted sum of the change in imports per worker across industries, where the weights capture the relative importance of each industry in a given region. Specifically, the weights are defined as the ratio of the number of workers in region r and industry j , $L_{rj(\text{pre-sample})}$, over the total number of workers in the region, $L_{r(\text{pre-sample})}$, both measured at the beginning of the sample period.

This measurement approach is based on a theoretical model developed by Autor et al. (2013) and has a very intuitive interpretation. The underlying idea is as follows: dif-

ferent regions are more or less exposed to the growth in Chinese imports depending on their ex-ante industry specialization. In particular, any given change in imports at the country-industry level (i.e. $\Delta \text{IMPChina}_{cjt} / L_{cj(\text{pre-sample})}$) at a given point in time is going to affect more those regions in which more workers were initially employed in that industry. Intuitively, larger import shocks are attributed to regions characterized by larger shares of workers employed in the manufacturing sector. However, given the same share of manufacturing workers, cross-regional variation in exposure to Chinese imports will stem from differences in industry specialization within manufacturing. In particular, the shock will be stronger for regions in which relatively more workers were initially employed in those industries for which subsequent growth in imports from China has been stronger (e.g. textiles or electronic goods, as can be seen in Table A2), and in years in which the surge in Chinese imports in those industries was sharper.

To compute the import shock, we combine regional employment data and import data at the industry level for each country. We perform the analysis at the level of NUTS-2 administrative regions, which have population between 800,000 and 3 million. In total, our analysis covers 198 regions.¹ Depending on the country, we source employment data either from Eurostat or from national sources, with the initial year varying accordingly between 1988 and 1995.² The industry level of disaggregation is the NACE Rev. 1.1 subsection level. Subsections are identified by two-character alphabetical codes (from DA to DN for the manufacturing sector), and correspond to 2-digit industries or aggregations of them (see Table A2).

Import data are sourced either from Eurostat Comext (for EU countries) or from CEPII-BACI (for Norway and Switzerland). Starting from product-level values, import flows are computed at the same level of industry disaggregation as the employment data.

¹For Germany, the required data are only available at the more aggregated NUTS-1 level, hence 16 out of 198 regions in our sample correspond to NUTS-1 regions.

²Detailed information is available in Table A1.

This allows us to retrieve $\text{Import Shock}_{crt}$ according to Equation (1). There is substantial variation in exposure to the shock, both across regions and over time. This is key for our identification. The average import shock, evaluated over 2 years, is equal to 0.063, corresponding to an increase in Chinese imports by 63 (real) euros per worker.³ The standard deviation is 0.133.

2.2 Endogeneity

We address the possible endogeneity of the trade shock with respect to electoral outcomes by instrumenting *Import Shock* using the growth in imports from China to the United States. Our instrument is defined as:

$$\text{Instrument for Shock}_{crt} = \sum_j \frac{L_{rj(\text{pre-sample})}}{L_{r(\text{pre-sample})}} * \frac{\Delta \text{IMPChinaUSA}_{jt}}{L_{cj(\text{pre-sample})}}. \quad (2)$$

With respect to the previous formula for the import shock, here we have substituted $\Delta \text{IMPChinaUSA}_{jt}$ for $\Delta \text{IMPChina}_{cjt}$. US import data are sourced from the Center for International Data of UC Davis. Motivated by earlier literature (e.g. Autor et al. 2013, 2016; Colantone et al., 2015; Hummels et al., 2014), this instrument is meant to capture the variation in Chinese imports due to exogenous changes in supply conditions in China, rather than to domestic factors that could be correlated with attitudes and voting behavior.

3 Data and models

Our analysis covers fifteen Western European countries (listed in Table A1). Individual-level data are sourced from the European Social Survey (ESS) and the European Values

³The base year for deflating is 2006, so all figures are in 2006 euros.

Study (EVS). Specifically, we use the first four waves of the ESS, which cover the years from 2002 to 2008. For EVS, we employ the cumulative trend file, which spans the period 1981-2009. From the latter collection, in the econometric analysis we only use data starting from the 1990s, which can be matched to import shock data at the regional level. Importantly, though, we use earlier surveys to calculate the initial (regional-level) summaries of attitudes that we include as controls.

Based on the region of residence of the respondent, we attribute to each voter the relevant import shock at the NUTS-2 level.⁴ The ESS and the EVS also contain information on demographic characteristics (age and gender), education, labor market status, and occupation.

The individual-level regressions have the general form:

$$\text{Attitude}_{icrt} = \alpha_{ct} + \beta_1 \text{Import Shock}_{cr(i)t} + \mathbf{X}_{it}\boldsymbol{\gamma}' + \varepsilon_{icrt}, \quad (3)$$

where i indexes individuals, c countries, r regions, t years, and ε_{icrt} is an error term.

Depending on the specification, Attitude_{icrt} is one of those described in the following section.

The function $r(\cdot)$ maps each individual (i) to her NUTS-2 region of residence (r). $\text{Import Shock}_{cr(i)t}$ is the growth in Chinese imports at the regional level over the two years prior to the survey. α_{ct} are country-year fixed effects, which are equivalent to survey fixed effects. These are meant to control for any factors that affect symmetrically all the districts within a country at the time of a given survey. Examples of such factors are the political climate in the country, the orientation of the incumbent government, and the general economic performance at the national level. The country-year fixed effects imply that we identify the effect of the import shock only out of variations across regions

⁴In some cases, the region is only available at the NUTS-1 level, and the import shock is computed accordingly.

within the same country and year. To account for possible correlation across respondents within the same region, standard errors are clustered at the NUTS-2-year level.

Finally, \mathbf{X}_{it} is a vector of individual-level controls. This includes age, a dummy for females, and a set of dummies indicating different levels of educational attainment, as classified by ISCED in the case of the ESS, and as a coarser four-category variable in the case of the EVS. We only control for individual-level covariates that are either pre-treatment (gender and age) or plausibly unaffected by the globalization shock (education level).

A concern one might have with our analysis, due to the way we measure the China shock, is that there are stable differences across regions which are correlated with the time-invariant part of the import shock measure, that is, the sectoral composition of the economy of a given region in the late 1980s or early 1990s. In order to address this concern, we estimate models with the following form:

$$\text{Attitude}_{icrt} = \alpha_{0ct} + \delta Z_{cr(i)0} + \beta_1 \text{Import Shock}_{cr(i)t} + \mathbf{X}_{it}\boldsymbol{\gamma}' + \varepsilon_{icrt}, \quad (4)$$

where $Z_{cr(i)0}$ is the regional-level average of the outcome variable at time $t = 0$, namely in the oldest survey for which it is available in each collection. In this way, we can account for possible persistent patterns in attitudes across regions, which in turn might be correlated with the strength of the China shock, since this is driven, at least in part, by the initial composition of the regional economy. The exact survey from which the initial average is taken varies by item in the case of the EVS, dating back to the early 1980s for those items that are included in each wave. For the ESS, on the other hand, we calculate initial values in 2002. Consistently, when the initial value of the responses is included in the estimation, we drop observations from the 2002 wave of the ESS.

Finally, in the most demanding specifications, we estimate:

$$\text{Attitude}_{icrt} = \alpha_{ct} Z_{cr(i)0} + \beta_1 \text{Import Shock}_{cr(i)t} + \mathbf{X}_{it} \boldsymbol{\gamma}' + \varepsilon_{icrt}, \quad (5)$$

where we interact the country-year fixed effects with the region-specific initial attitudes. In this way, we can account for differential trajectories across different regions, based on their initial configuration of public opinion.

4 Results

4.1 Political attitudes

Tables 1 and 2 report, respectively, the OLS and 2SLS estimates of Equations 3 to 5, based on EVS data. We focus on three outcome variables: (1) preference for a strong leader, with lower values indicating more authoritarian attitudes; (2) attitudes about democracy, with higher values indicating more authoritarian attitudes; and (3) an index called *Anti-Democracy*, which is the sum of the two previous items (after appropriate rescaling), with lower values indicating more authoritarian attitudes.

For each dependent variable we report results from three different specifications, both in OLS and IV. The first specification includes all the standard controls for age, gender, and education, plus the country-year fixed effects, as specified in Equation 3. In the second specification, we add the pre-sample average attitudes in the region, as in Equation 4. Finally, in the third model we interact the initial values of attitudes with the country-year fixed effects, as in Equation 5.

The coefficient of the import shock is precisely estimated across the board in the IV regressions of Table 2. The sign of the coefficient is always consistent with stronger import shocks leading to more authoritarian attitudes. As compared to the OLS estimates of Table 1, the IV coefficients are systematically higher in absolute value. This is con-

sistent with there being unobserved factors, such as positive demand shocks, that correlate at the same time with higher imports from China and less authoritarian political attitudes. The first-stage coefficient on our instrument is positive and significant, and the F-statistic does not signal a weakness problem, in line with earlier studies (e.g. Autor et al. 2013; Colantone and Stanig 2018a; 2018b). Importantly, the inclusion of initial attitudes and region-specific trajectories does not affect our results, neither in the OLS estimations nor in the IV ones.

The message that can be drawn from this first set of models is that the China shock is associated with, and plausibly causally affects these (meta-)political attitudes about strong leaders and democracy. Respondents residing in regions that received a stronger import shock tend to be more sympathetic to the idea of a strong leader, and less unequivocally supportive of democracy than otherwise similar individuals residing in areas that were subjected to a smaller import shock.

Importantly, as we said, the fact that the effect survives the inclusion of controls for initial public opinion in each region reassures us that the effect is not simply driven by a more authoritarian streak in areas where manufacturing has historically played a larger economic role. In other words, it does not seem to be just some “blue-collar culture” effect that we mistake for a globalization effect. In addition, it is worth keeping in mind that the China shock does not hit in the same way all manufacturing regions, but varies with their historical industry specialization. For instance, Chinese import pressure is not so relevant in automotive or machine tools industries, which might be, stereotypically, the industries where a “blue-collar authoritarian” culture would be expected to flourish.

Table 1: Political authoritarianism - OLS

Dep var.:	Strong Leader			Democracy			Anti-Democracy		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Import Shock	-0.073* [0.044]	-0.096** [0.046]	-0.070 [0.046]	0.100*** [0.019]	0.108*** [0.019]	0.093*** [0.022]	-0.185*** [0.057]	-0.221*** [0.060]	-0.173*** [0.061]
Female	0.020** [0.010]	0.015 [0.010]	0.014 [0.010]	0.042*** [0.007]	0.043*** [0.007]	0.043*** [0.008]	-0.020 [0.014]	-0.025* [0.014]	-0.025* [0.014]
Age	-0.001** [0.000]	-0.001* [0.000]	-0.001* [0.000]	-0.002*** [0.000]	-0.003*** [0.000]	-0.003*** [0.000]	0.002*** [0.001]	0.002*** [0.001]	0.002*** [0.001]
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes	-	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	-	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes * Country-Year Effects	-	-	yes	-	-	yes	-	-	yes
Obs.	46,867	43,639	43,639	47,104	44,154	44,154	44,805	41,669	41,669
R2	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.12	0.12	0.13

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 2: Political authoritarianism - IV

Dep var.:	Strong Leader			Democracy			Anti-Democracy		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Import Shock	-0.283** [0.115]	-0.293*** [0.112]	-0.241** [0.103]	0.226*** [0.067]	0.225*** [0.062]	0.180*** [0.054]	-0.514*** [0.164]	-0.530*** [0.152]	-0.404*** [0.135]
Female	0.019** [0.009]	0.015 [0.010]	0.014 [0.010]	0.042*** [0.007]	0.043*** [0.007]	0.043*** [0.007]	-0.020 [0.014]	-0.025* [0.014]	-0.026* [0.014]
Age	-0.001** [0.000]	-0.001* [0.000]	-0.001* [0.000]	-0.002*** [0.000]	-0.003*** [0.000]	-0.003*** [0.000]	0.002*** [0.001]	0.002*** [0.001]	0.002*** [0.001]
Estimator	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes	-	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	-	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes * Country-Year Effects	-	-	yes	-	-	yes	-	-	yes
Obs.	46,867	43,639	43,639	47,104	44,154	44,154	44,805	41,669	41,669
R2	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.12	0.12	0.13
First-stage results									
US imports from China	0.093*** [0.021]	0.114*** [0.023]	0.124*** [0.024]	0.092*** [0.021]	0.114*** [0.023]	0.133*** [0.022]	0.092*** [0.021]	0.113*** [0.023]	0.125*** [0.023]
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	19.22	23.71	26.06	19.06	23.96	35.62	19.21	24.07	29.25

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

4.2 Immigration attitudes

In Table 3, we focus on people's attitudes about immigration. Specifically, we consider two different outcome variables: (1) attitudes about the cultural threat posed by immigrants; and (2) attitudes about the economic threat posed by immigrants. In order to work with a larger sample, for these regressions we combine data from the European Social Survey and the European Values Study.

The combination is straightforward for the cultural threat variable, as the formulation of the corresponding question is very similar in the two surveys. Instead, for the economic threat variable we are combining two non-perfectly-overlapping survey items. Specifically, from the ESS we use a question on the general threat posed by immigrants to the economy; from the EVS, we employ the question as to whether "immigrants steal jobs". Such a combination is clearly sub-optimal; yet, the two items are certainly capturing a similar dimension of immigration concerns, which is more related to economic considerations rather than cultural ones. The combination of data for the control variables is not problematic. Age and gender are obviously measured in the same way in the two surveys, while for education we include the ISCED dummies in the ESS and the dummies for the coarser classification in the EVS.

The dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 of Table 3 is the cultural threat of immigration. As can be seen, the estimated coefficient on the import shock is negative and significant both in the OLS and in the IV estimation. This points to a significant effect of the China shock on perceptions of immigrants as a threat to the national culture. All else equal, respondents who reside in regions that received a stronger import shock are more concerned with the "cultural threat" posed by immigrants. When it comes to the economic threat variable, in columns 3 and 4, the coefficient on the import shock is negative but not statistically significant. We do not regard this evidence as conclusive though, especially considering the sub-optimal combination of survey items.

The key message of this section is the following: our findings, based on a quite large sample, point to the existence of a detectable effect of economic distress driven by globalization on “cultural backlash” aspects of public opinion.

Table 3: Immigration attitudes

Dep var.:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Immigration Culture		Immigration Economy	
Import Shock	-0.149** [0.072]	-0.413** [0.162]	-0.014 [0.078]	-0.201 [0.172]
Female	0.033 [0.024]	0.033 [0.024]	-0.283*** [0.022]	-0.283*** [0.022]
Age	-0.015*** [0.001]	-0.015*** [0.001]	-0.006*** [0.001]	-0.006*** [0.001]
Estimator	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
Obs.	109,654	109,654	109,541	109,541
R2	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.09
First-stage results				
US imports from China	-	0.079*** [0.012]	-	0.079*** [0.012]
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	-	41.09	-	40.77

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

4.3 Private life attitudes

Tables 4 and 5 report a set of regressions using as dependent variables attitudes regarding the desirability of two qualities in children: having good manners, and obedience. Both variables come from the EVS. For both of them, higher values correspond to more authoritarian orientations. These items are often used as measures of authoritarianism at a low level. Indeed, the type of authoritarianism that is measured via these questions is related to a general psychological orientation rather than directly to political matters. Yet, work in political psychology suggests that it might be possible for the globalization shock, and the feeling of economic insecurity it induces, to elicit more authoritarianism

also in these basic orientations.

For both variables we estimate three different specifications, according to Equations 3 to 5, both in OLS and in 2SLS. Interestingly, regardless of the estimation method and the model, we do not detect any significant effect of the import shock on attitudes concerning the education of children. This evidence suggests that the China shock does not lead to more authoritarianism in this dimension, differently from what we have found in terms of political and immigration attitudes.

These findings are reassuring in two ways. First, our significant results on political attitudes and immigration, reported in the previous subsections, are not driven by some stable differences in life orientations in areas hit harder by globalization, at least as captured by preferences for child qualities. Second, the detected effect of the import shock is plausibly not the consequence of a general shift in the direction of the “authoritarian personality” as per the conventional wisdom in political psychology: the import shock might plausibly cause *political* authoritarianism, but the skepticism regarding democracy and the desire for strong leaders is a properly political response to economic distress.

4.4 Other facets of authoritarian orientation

In Tables 6 and 7, we exploit ESS data in order to investigate the impact of the import shock on seven additional items related to the overall orientation of respondents.

In Table 6 we explore patterns in the importance assigned to: (1) equality and equal opportunities; (2) following rules; and (3) being creative. The dependent variable on equality is such that lower values indicate more importance attached to equality and equal opportunities. Thus, the positive and significant coefficients on the import shock in columns 1 and 2 indicate that, all else equal, respondents in areas with stronger import shocks assign less importance to equality than otherwise similar respondents in less

Table 4: Children manners

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dep var.:	Children Manners					
Import Shock	0.027 [0.018]	0.017 [0.019]	0.016 [0.021]	0.101* [0.060]	0.080 [0.052]	0.068 [0.044]
Female	0.018*** [0.004]	0.017*** [0.004]	0.017*** [0.004]	0.012*** [0.005]	0.010** [0.005]	0.010** [0.005]
Age	0.002*** [0.000]	0.002*** [0.000]	0.002*** [0.000]	0.001*** [0.000]	0.001*** [0.000]	0.001*** [0.000]
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes	-	yes	yes	-	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes * Country-Year Effects	-	-	yes	-	-	yes
Obs.	56,245	47,793	47,793	39,485	32,283	32,283
R2	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.06
First-stage results						
US imports from China	-	-	-	0.068*** [0.021]	0.083*** [0.024]	0.089*** [0.021]
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	-	-	-	10.16	12.41	18.21

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 5: Children obedience

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dep var.:	Children Obedience					
Import Shock	-0.013 [0.012]	-0.007 [0.013]	-0.008 [0.013]	0.006 [0.031]	-0.003 [0.029]	-0.016 [0.025]
Female	-0.003 [0.004]	-0.001 [0.004]	-0.002 [0.004]	-0.011** [0.004]	-0.009** [0.004]	-0.010** [0.004]
Age	0.001*** [0.000]	0.001*** [0.000]	0.001*** [0.000]	0.000* [0.000]	0.000 [0.000]	0.000 [0.000]
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes	-	yes	yes	-	yes	yes
Initial Attitudes * Country-Year Effects	-	-	yes	-	-	yes
Obs.	67,413	56,637	56,637	50,653	41,127	41,127
R2	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.11	0.11
First-stage results						
US imports from China	-	-	-	0.093*** [0.021]	0.115*** [0.024]	0.125*** [0.023]
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	-	-	-	19.07	23.44	28.91

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

shocked areas. This is again consistent with increased (loosely meant) authoritarianism as a consequence of economic distress driven by globalization.

For the second outcome variable in the table, concerning rules, higher values indicate less importance assigned to following rules. The coefficient on the import shock is positive and statistically significant in the 2SLS estimation. This indicates that, all else equal, respondents in areas that received a stronger import shock assign less importance to following rules. Finally, there is no statistically detectable relationship between the importance assigned to creativity and the import shock.

In Table 7, we tap four final items: (1) the importance of understanding others; (2) the importance of traditions; (3) the importance of freedom; and (4) preferences regarding the punitiveness of criminal justice. In none of the estimations there is any detectable relationship between the import shock and authoritarian attitudes. Overall, these regressions point to the fact that the relationship between economic distress and attitudes can only be detected in some dimensions, and there is a far from straightforward relationship between a broadly-defined authoritarian orientation and economic distress driven by globalization.

Generally speaking, what our results show is that the globalization shock seems to be playing a role in some realms, especially in what we can define “meta-political” preferences. That is, preferences for regime type, and those regarding especially the *cultural* threat posed by immigrants. On the other hand, there are few indications that political authoritarianism and nativism are part of a broader authoritarian syndrome. Indeed, no association with the import shock can be detected in public opinion about more private decisions like desirable qualities in children nor, importantly, in the preferred punitiveness of the criminal justice system.

Table 6: Authoritarianism - other dimensions

Dep var.:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Equality		Rules		Creativity	
Import Shock	0.059** [0.030]	0.142** [0.066]	0.085* [0.050]	0.173** [0.087]	-0.007 [0.027]	-0.118* [0.067]
Female	-0.135*** [0.010]	-0.135*** [0.010]	0.087*** [0.013]	0.087*** [0.013]	0.075*** [0.011]	0.075*** [0.011]
Age	0.001* [0.000]	0.001* [0.000]	-0.014*** [0.000]	-0.014*** [0.000]	0.007*** [0.000]	0.007*** [0.000]
Estimator	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Obs.	87,349	87,349	86,981	86,981	87,253	87,253
R2	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.09	0.040	0.040
First-stage results						
US imports from China	-	0.083*** [0.014]	-	0.083*** [0.014]	-	0.083*** [0.014]
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	-	34.00	-	33.96	-	33.96

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 7: Authoritarianism - other dimensions

Dep var.:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Understand Others		Traditions		Freedom		Punishment	
Import Shock	0.029 [0.025]	0.060 [0.060]	0.026 [0.041]	0.064 [0.072]	0.021 [0.028]	-0.009 [0.059]	0.128 [0.123]	0.140 [0.147]
Female	-0.152*** [0.011]	-0.152*** [0.011]	-0.092*** [0.013]	-0.092*** [0.013]	0.038*** [0.012]	0.038*** [0.012]	-0.053*** [0.020]	-0.053*** [0.020]
Age	-0.000 [0.000]	-0.000 [0.000]	-0.020*** [0.000]	-0.020*** [0.000]	0.003*** [0.000]	0.003*** [0.000]	-0.004*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]
Estimator	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Obs.	87,274	87,274	87,331	87,331	87,343	87,343	21,103	21,103
R2	0.03	0.03	0.12	0.12	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.10
First-stage results								
US imports from China	-	0.083*** [0.014]	-	0.083*** [0.014]	-	0.083*** [0.014]	-	0.101*** [0.029]
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	-	33.99	-	33.96	-	34.00	-	11.99

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

4.5 Low-level response or party cues? Preliminary evidence

In this section, we start investigating the interaction between party cues and economic distress driven by the import shock. We focus on immigration attitudes, and specifically on the cultural threat of immigration, as employed in columns 1 and 2 of Table 3.

To capture party cues, we measure the center of gravity (COG) of each country in terms of Nationalism, computed at the national level in the last election prior to the year of each survey. In order to compute the center of gravity, we proceed in two steps. In the first step, we assign a Nationalism score to each party, analogous to the one in Colantone and Stanig (2018b). This score is calculated following the method by Lowe et al. (2011), based on data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP).⁵ In the second step, we compute the center of gravity as the weighted average of parties' scores, where the weights are the national vote shares of the parties. This measure is meant to capture the importance of nationalism-oriented party cues for voters' opinion formation.

In the regressions presented in Table 8, we augment the specifications of columns 1-2 of Table 3 with interactions between the import shock and the nationalism center of gravity of each country. The dependent variable is the attitude about the cultural threat posed by immigrants, evaluated over the joint ESS-EVS sample. This variable is coded in such a way that lower values correspond to stronger concerns about immigrants. In columns 1 and 3 of Table 8 we interact the import shock with a continuous measure of center of gravity, while in column 2 we interact the import shock with dummies for each quartile of the COG distribution.

From the first column of Table 8, we observe that the main effect of the import shock is positive and statistically distinguishable from zero, while the interaction is negative and statistically significant. How to interpret these findings? The center of gravity for

⁵The items that enter the calculation are 601, 603, 605 and 608 in one direction, and 602, 604, and 607 in the other.

nationalism varies between approximately 0 and 3, with a mean of 1.8 and standard deviation equal to 0.5. Based on the distribution of this variable, the bottom part of Table 8 reports the overall effect of the import shock evaluated at various levels of the center of gravity, with appropriately estimated standard errors. The estimates of column 1 imply that the effect of the import shock is positive (but not statistically distinguishable from zero) for a country below the median center of gravity. The effect becomes negative – indicating that a stronger import shock is associated with more hostility to immigrants – at the median center of gravity, and gets increasingly strong in more nationalist settings.

Clearly, the positive effect of the import shock at low levels of nationalism is plausibly an artifact of the assumption of continuity in the multiplicative interaction model. Indeed, when nationalism enters as a discretized variable, like in the second column of the table, one can appreciate that the China shock has no detectable effect on immigration attitudes at low levels of nationalism in the party system, and a negative effect in those country-years in which the center of gravity of the party system is tilted in a nationalist direction. In addition, the “main effect” of nationalism (unreported) goes in the expected direction: a move to the right of the center of gravity is associated with more hostility toward immigrants even at very low levels of the import shock. This reassures us on the fact that the nationalism center of gravity is picking up a component of political ideology that is relevant for attitudes about immigration.

The third column of Table 8 reports the 2SLS estimates of the same model as in column 1. While the results are quite noisier, the implications in substantive terms are analogous to those of the OLS estimates, as shown by the effects evaluated at various levels of the center of gravity, reported at the bottom of the table.

There are some potential concerns with the analysis in this section. In particular, the center of gravity is pre-determined at a given point in time t , as it is based on party platforms and vote shares at some time $t - s$, when the last election took place. We use

this variable to capture the role of nationalist party cues for voters' opinion formation. At the same time, though, the center of gravity also reflects the state of public opinion at time $t - s$, which may at least partly carry over to time t . Moreover, Colantone and Stanig (2018b) show how the China shock has a positive effect on support for nationalist parties. This would imply that the center of gravity in $t - s$ is itself related to past import shocks.

Ideally, in order to cleanly identify the effect of the interaction between party cues and economic distress, variation that can be treated as-if random would be needed. Party cues (for instance, blaming immigration for economic distress) cannot be considered randomly assigned or haphazard enough to justify an "as-if" assumption. Indeed, parties strategically alter their messages in response to hunches or measures of public opinion on a given subject. In addition, our measure of party cues is indirect, in the sense that we look at the policy platforms (and the past electoral success) of political parties. For all these reasons, we regard this evidence as purely descriptive. Yet, we believe it is sufficiently interesting to motivate further investigation.

Table 8: Immigration attitudes and party cues

Dep var.:	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Immigration Culture		
Import Shock	1.357** [0.558]	0.214 [0.450]	-0.182 [0.823]
Import Shock * Nationalism COG - Continuous	-0.832*** [0.312]		-0.128 [0.442]
Import Shock * Nationalism COG - 2nd quartile		0.014 [0.728]	
Import Shock * Nationalism COG - 3rd quartile		-0.316 [0.453]	
Import Shock * Nationalism COG - 4th quartile		-2.284*** [0.872]	
Estimator	OLS	OLS	2SLS
Age and Female Dummy	yes	yes	yes
Education Dummies	yes	yes	yes
Country-Year Effects	yes	yes	yes
Obs.	109,654	109,654	109,654
R2	0.10	0.10	0.10
Kleibergen-Paap F-Statistic	-	-	8.13
Overall effect of Import Shock evaluated at:			
25th percentile of Nationalism COG	1.151 [0.125]	-	-0.368 [0.231]
50th percentile of Nationalism COG	-0.065 [0.078]	-	-0.402** [0.169]
75th percentile of Nationalism COG	-0.448*** [0.147]	-	-0.461** [0.222]
90th percentile of Nationalism COG	-0.689*** [0.229]	-	-0.498 [0.324]

Standard errors are clustered by region-year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

5 Conclusion

In this brief note, we have described a set of findings on the role played by globalization shocks on authoritarian and nativist attitudes in Western European countries.

We have found that respondents residing in regions that received stronger Chinese import shocks are systematically less supportive of democracy, more in favor of strong leaders, and particularly concerned with immigration, especially with the *cultural* threat posed by immigration. These patterns are robust to the instrumentation of the import shock with a variable that uses imports by sector in the United States instead of imports to individual European countries. This allows for a causal interpretation of our findings.

We have found similar effects of the import shock with respect to perceptions of the importance of equality and rules, which become less relevant in contexts witnessing stronger import shocks. On the other hand, the China shock does not affect more private attitudes such as those concerning the education of children. This suggests that the effect of the import shock on (meta-)political attitudes is not purely reflecting a general authoritarian shift. In line with that, we also do not detect any effect of import competition on other dimensions of authoritarianism, most notably on attitudes concerning the punitiveness of criminal justice.

Importantly, our findings reveal that economic distress driven by globalization may drive some aspects of the observed “cultural backlash”, thus supporting the view that cultural and economic explanations of the political realignment should be seen as tightly related rather than dichotomic.

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A Appendix

Table A1: Data availability

Country	Employment Data		Trade Data	
	Initial Year	Source	Availability	Source
Austria	1995	Eurostat	1995 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Belgium	1995	National Bank of Belgium	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Finland	1995	Statfin	1995 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
France	1989	INSEE	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Germany	1993	Federal Employment Agency	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Greece	1988	HSA Statistics Greece	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Ireland	1995	Eurostat	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Italy	1988	ISTAT	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Netherlands	1988	CBS Statistics Netherlands	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Norway	1994	Statistics Norway	1995 - 2007	CEPII - BACI
Portugal	1990	INE Portugal	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Spain	1993	INE Spain	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Sweden	1993	SCB Statistics Sweden	1995 - 2007	Eurostat Comext
Switzerland	1995	SFSO Swiss Statistics	1995 - 2007	CEPII - BACI
United Kingdom	1989	ONS	1988 - 2007	Eurostat Comext

Table A2: Share of imports from China over total imports (average across countries)

Industry description	Nace code	Share in 1989	Share in 2006
Manufacture of leather and leather products	DC	4.16%	22.96%
Manufacturing n.e.c. (furniture, toys etc.)	DN	4.99%	20.87%
Manufacture of textiles and textile products	DB	3.71%	17.15%
Manufacture of electrical and optical equipment	DL	0.71%	13.21%
Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products	DI	0.64%	8.52%
Manufacture of wood and wood products	DD	1.39%	6.15%
Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.	DK	0.28%	5.39%
Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	DH	0.76%	4.56%
Manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products	DJ	0.36%	3.97%
Manufacture of pulp, paper and paper products; publishing and printing	DE	0.11%	1.79%
Manufacture of chemicals, chemical products, and man-made fibres	DG	0.60%	1.57%
Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco	DA	0.68%	1.35%
Manufacture of transport equipment	DM	0.04%	0.84%
Manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel	DF	0.15%	0.42%