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IMMIGRATION AND EUROSCEPTICISM – HAND IN HAND?

A research on the effect of the refugee crisis on the relationship between attitudes toward immigration and public Euroscepticism.

Kristoffer Otter

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Abstract

The refugee crisis of 2015 proved to be a tough challenge for Europe and the EU. All EU member states were affected, although to varying degrees. This article seeks to examine the impact of the refugee crisis on the relationship between immigration attitudes and public Euroscepticism. Given that a record number of refugees came to Sweden in 2015, Sweden constitutes an interesting case. Earlier research shows that Euroscepticism has been growing in the wake of European crises. However, a majority of earlier research discusses party-based Euroscepticism. This paper instead looks further into the less researched field of public Euroscepticism. In doing so, it applies ethnic threat theory. This paper uses OLS regression analyses of European Social Survey data (2016) to assess differences in the relationship between immigration attitudes and public Euroscepticism, as immigration increases. Applying a “most similar case design”, it compares Swedish regions which received few to those which received many asylum seekers, relative to their regional population size. The primary finding of this research is that the number of refugees taken in by the regions does not affect the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism, which contradicts the ethnic threat theory.

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1. Introduction

Euroscepticism is no longer in the political periphery but is instead an obvious and noticeable part of European politics. While the majority of the citizens of Europe still remain positive, or at least not negative to the European Union (EU), the most recent election for the European Parliament show us that Eurosceptic forces is still to be reckoned with in the upcoming years (Treib, 2020). The most obvious sign of Euroscepticism is the Brexit referendum where a majority of the British voters opted to vote for a British exit from the EU. But Brexit is not unique as the only anti-EU phenomena in European top politics. The Eurosceptical and immigration critical governing parties of both Poland and Hungary are sharpening their tone towards the EU and the various crises have put even more pressure on the EU.

In this paper, Euroscepticism is defined as *“the term to describe one side of a continuum that ranges from very positive to very negative dispositions towards European integration, its policies, its institutions, or its principles”* (Hooghe & Marks, 2007, p. 120).

Sweden has a history of varying Euroscepticism. At the referendum on joining the EU in 1995, the country was very divided on the issue. The fact that Sweden is one of the few countries that have opposed joining the European Monetary Union (EMU) also points to a well-established scepticism towards the EU and European integration, which is not as widespread now but still a factor to keep in mind (Raunio, 2007; European Commission, 2019). It is interesting to view Euroscepticism, in regard to the 2015 refugee crisis, from a Swedish perspective since Sweden was one of the countries that took in most refugees during the 2015 crisis. It could therefore be argued that Sweden was one of the countries which were heavily affected by the refugee crisis. Notwithstanding that Mediterranean countries, such as Greece and Italy obviously were very overwhelmed by the large number of refugees reaching Europe by boat. The Swedish government was at the time of the crisis one of the strongest voices for distributing refugees across the EU and thereby seeing the crisis as a European crisis in which all EU members should take responsibility (Von Der Burchard, 2015).

Even though EU member states were differently affected, the refugee crisis can be considered a European crisis. Since the EU is a key player in handling these pan-European crises, it might also be criticized if they are not solved quickly and effectively (Trauner, 2016; Taggart

& Sczserbiak, 2018). The refugee crisis is therefore described by Stockemer et al., (2019, p.886) as: “...more than a refugee crisis, it also led to a European crisis of governance”. A growing literature examines the role of different crises in the evolution of public Euroscepticism. But since especially the refugee crisis is so close in time, there are some different explanations and factors that have yet to be examined. The effect of the refugee crisis on public Euroscepticism is therefore contested.

1. 1. Aim

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of the refugee crisis, operationalised as the number of asylum seekers in a region, on the relationship between people’s immigration attitudes and attitudes toward European integration. Sweden is an interesting case due to the refugee crisis high influx in refugees, but hopefully the study can tell us something more general about the relationship between significant increases in immigration and Euroscepticism. By applying a most similar case design, this study makes use of regional data on numbers of asylum seekers in Swedish regions to see the impact of migrants on the relationship between attitudes towards migration and Euroscepticism. To do so, it applies ESS 2016 individual level survey data in an OLS regression analysis. Using an interaction term, regions that, relative to their population, received few refugees are compared to those regions that, on the contrary, have received many refugees. The research question is therefore: ***Do people’s attitudes towards immigration affect their Euroscepticism more in regions that took in a lot of refugees than in regions that didn’t take in a lot of refugees?***

1. 2. Structure

This paper will first present previous research about Euroscepticism from different perspectives and the ethnic threat theory which is the theory this paper is inspired by. Thereafter, it presents the case of Sweden, the choice of material and the use of method discussed before moving forward to the results. Finally, the results are discussed, followed by a conclusion.

2. Theory and previous research

This section will first discuss the previous research regarding party-based Euroscepticism. Since a vast majority of previous research focuses on party-based Euroscepticism, it is crucial for the understanding of Euroscepticism as a phenomenon. It also highlights the evolution of Euroscepticism from being (close to) insignificant to being a serious threat to continued European integration, and thus an interesting area of research. Thereafter this section reviews public Euroscepticism research and how Euroscepticism relates to anti-immigration attitudes. Finally, this section discusses “ethnic threat theory” (in relation to immigration research) which this paper’s research question is inspired and influenced by.

2. 1. Party-based Euroscepticism

The research field of Euroscepticism would definitely be less rich and less developed if it were not for the research on party-based Euroscepticism. Besides mapping out Eurosceptic parties and their relative importance, much of the early research discussed whether party movements toward more or less Euroscepticism were due to ideology or strategy.

Two prominent figures in the early debate were Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak. They argued that changes in attitudes regarding European integration are strategy-related (Taggart, 1998; Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002). According to them, political parties may move towards being more Eurosceptic if it is strategically important to them in order to gain votes or to distinguish the party from other (often oppositional) parties. Other papers from this period strengthen the case of Eurosceptic positioning being a strategic choice for political parties. Not least a study by Nick Sitter who defines Euroscepticism to be “*the politics of opposition*”- (Sitter, 2001, p. 36). Sitter is stating that the Scandinavian countries did not have any parties, or even bigger fractions within parties, that could be labelled as mainstream parties that were Eurosceptic at the time of his study. The parties that were the most critical to European integration at the time were all minor opposition parties at the political far left or right.

One thing that the research papers from the turn of the millennium have in common, is that most of them downplay the influence of Euroscepticism in domestic politics. By then, Euroscepticism was still a generally unimportant factor of domestic party politics and parties

that were outspoken Eurosceptics were mostly from the radical left and right of the political spectrum (Taggart, 1998; Sitter 2001). However, one thing that is particularly interesting for this study is that the early studies on this topic found discrepancies between public opinion about European integration and the voting share of Eurosceptic parties with far more people which states that they are Eurosceptic compared to people actually voting for Eurosceptic parties (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002). The discovery tells us that public Euroscepticism was noticeable long before any major studies treated the subject.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that party-based Euroscepticism has seen a long-term rise just as public Euroscepticism has. They are obviously connected to each other. Even when Euroscepticism was not the powerful force it is now, research showed that electoral opinion about European integration had an impact on party positioning in the matter (Carrubba, 2001). As mentioned earlier, the parties most affiliated with Euroscepticism are the parties of the radical right and left. What we have seen in the last years is that (mostly) radical right parties have gained ground and their political opinions about European integration, often in connection with anti-immigration views, have therefore increased polarisation while becoming more widespread (Vasilopoulou, 2018; Meijer, 2017). Maurits J Meijer's (2017) paper paints a similar picture of the influence of Euroscepticism and Eurosceptic parties on mainstream parties. He indicates that voter support for Eurosceptic parties indeed can have a considerable impact on mainstream parties' stances in questions regarding European integration (Meijers, 2017). This is an interesting point since it indicates that, even though public Euroscepticism is not very strong in different countries, in this case Sweden, it can still affect the governing parties' positions on the matter. Trying to identify explanations for the growing phenomena of public Euroscepticism (Usherwood & Startin, 2012) is therefore of great interest.

2. 2. Public Euroscepticism

Although party-based Euroscepticism is a far more researched area than public Euroscepticism, there is a trend towards more focus on public Euroscepticism, its prevalence and explanatory models. By public Euroscepticism, I mean individual level attitudes towards European integration and unification. The growing literature on the area is testing different driving forces behind Euroscepticism. Both the prevalence of immigration and attitudes

towards immigration are generally accepted as good predictors of Euroscepticism (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; McLaren, 2002). However, there is no consensus on the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and public Euroscepticism or the causes behind that relationship.

The aforementioned duo Taggart & Szcerbiak (2018) discuss the effect of the recent European crises (Eurozone, Brexit, and the refugee crises) on public Euroscepticism. They present some movements toward more Euroscepticism but mainly in the East-European EU member states. No clear signs of Eurosceptic movements due to the refugee crisis are reported in Sweden. However, Taggart & Szcerbiak's (2018) study is a qualitative study based on expert survey data, which should not be equated with quantitative data from surveys. Therefore, a complimentary study with a quantitative approach would be interesting.

Catherine De Vries & Erica Edwards (2009) look at Euroscepticism from both the party and the public spectrum. They note that Euroscepticism is a force to reckon with. Not least are the Eurosceptic parties of the extreme left and right, while perhaps not strong political candidates, very good at swinging public opinion towards a more Eurosceptic stance. Logically, the radical left and the radical right parties use different arguments to convince voters that further European unification is bad for their own country. Previous research (e.g., De Vries & Edwards, 2009; McLaren: 2002) highlights that the extreme right parties' main argument to why we should stop further European integration is focused on the protection of the national culture and identity. This take (in regard to the refugee crisis) is supported by Marianne Kneuer (2018) who examined the effects of both the Eurozone crisis and refugee crisis. She found that Euroscepticism increased more during the refugee crisis than the Eurozone crisis, suggesting that cultural/identity unrest is more important than economic unrest. The EU is in this context an actor who can directly and indirectly damage the national identity. This argumentation is in line with the ethnic threat theory that this study is built upon. The EU is closely linked to concepts such as openness and free movement and could therefore be portrayed as an actor who decomposes the nation state and national identity since the EU "allow" immigrants into the different EU member states (which came to be extra visible in the refugee crisis 2015). Research papers from after the refugee crisis points in that direction, saying that the inability of the EU to handle the crisis successfully probably contributed to

increased Euroscepticism, not least in the states most affected by the crisis (Stockemer et al., 2019; Trauner, 2016).

Two interesting articles are worth mentioning regarding the Brexit referendum. The first one is written before the referendum and highlights that immigration is one of the most important factors for the British people when voting for stay or leave in the referendum (Vasilopoulou, 2016). Vasilopoulou's paper uses similar data to mine when controlling for Euroscepticism. The second article is a very interesting one in the light of this essay. Matthew Goodwin & Caitlin Milazzo (2017) examines explanations to why a majority of the voters voted to leave, which indeed could be seen as a sign of Euroscepticism. They find that regions with a higher rate of immigrants voted to leave the EU to a greater extent than regions where the proportion of immigrants is lower. An increase in Eurosceptic attitudes, which is partly due to a higher immigrant ratio in those regions, supports the hypothesis that Euroscepticism is likely to be more significant in regions that took in a lot of refugees compared to regions which did not.

There seems however to be interdisciplinary contradictions in the matter regarding immigration's role in increasing Euroscepticism. A recently published paper by Stockemer et al. (2019) did not find evidence that the refugee crisis increased Eurosceptic attitudes, which would seem logical based on the findings from Goodwin and Milazzo. They did however, in line with previous research, find a correlation between negative attitudes toward immigration overall and Euroscepticism. It is suggested that the respondents in their data do not blame the EU for the crisis or how it is handled even though there is strong incitement to believe that EU-citizens would at least partially blame the EU, which is a theory supported by Niemann & Zaun (2018). The paper by Stockemer et al. (2019) examines the problem from a European perspective without taking into account regional differences. Furthermore, the study does not include the number of immigrants in each country/region in the calculation, a factor that Goodwin & Milazzo (2017) take into account. Since the scope goes from Europe as a whole in the Stockemer et al. (2019) paper to regional differences in this study, there is reason to believe that differences not found in the "bigger picture" could arise when regions are examined more closely. This reasoning is in line with both Taggart & Szczerbiak's (2018) assumptions that national variations in consequences of the refugee crisis can be expected to be found (although in their case primarily focused on party politics), and the regional data

presented by Goodwin & Milazzo (2017) which demonstrate that people living in regions with more immigrants are more Eurosceptic in general.

2. 3. *Ethnic threat theory*

Immigration is as noted above, a possible explanation to, and potentially an important force behind, Euroscepticism. Earlier research has shifted from explaining a rise in Eurosceptic attitudes as a consequence of the perceived threat immigrants pose to economic factors (deprive jobs etc), to instead focusing on cultural and identity explanations (Van Klingeren, Boomgarden, & De Vreese, 2013; McLaren, 2002).

Social identity theory says that people naturally identify themselves as part of different groups which are favored over other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The ethnic threat theory which this study builds upon is a development of the social identity theory which focuses on natives as an ethnic “in-group” to which other ethnic “out-groups” become “threats” (Stockemer et al., 2019). These perceived threats could differ both in type and strength. The ethnic threat theory primarily focuses on threats of other ethnic groups towards the own ethnic group in terms of weakening the national identity, culture and language (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2008; Scheepers, Gijsberts, & Coenders, 2002). One important finding from Scheepers et al., (2002) that endorse the ethnic threat theory is that the support for ethnic exclusionism of non EU-citizens was higher in countries with a bigger proportion of non EU-citizens. Sweden was one of the countries who took in most immigrants in 2015/2016 (Eurostat, 2016), which makes the ethnic threat theory both applicable and interesting in this case.

Another reason why the ethnic threat theory is more applicable than theories regarding (socio)economic factors is due to the nature of the immigrants in focus of this study. A majority of the immigrants in 2015 were refugees from Syria. If a majority of immigrants were to be labor migrants from the EU, then perhaps purely economic factors such as the fear of losing jobs would be more useful to explain a Eurosceptic development. Immigrants from other parts of the world can of course also compete for jobs but are likely to face greater social and administrative obstacles than labor immigrants from the EU's internal market. Most immigrants in 2015 were from another continent, ethnically and religiously different from the

majority of the Swedish people. This indicates that ethnic threat theory is useful in explaining why the arrival of immigrants, in this case primarily refugees, could influence Eurosceptic attitudes. Furthermore, as previous research (e.g., Kneuer, 2018; de Vreese, Boomgarden & Semetko, 2008) suggests, economic factors are not as important explanatory models as cultural factors when it comes to how Euroscepticism increases.

2015 saw the largest inflow of asylum seekers to Europe since World War 2 (Niemann & Zaun, 2018). The perceived ethnic threat most likely becomes more tangible due to the sudden increase in refugee immigration that leads to both more negative attitudes towards immigrants and a rise in Eurosceptic attitudes, which is a trusted combination (De Master & Le Roy, 2000; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007).

It should be noted that the ethnic threat theory is disputed. A theory that contradicts the ethnic threat theory is contact theory. The bottom line in contact theory is that prejudice and negative attitudes towards different groups of people is reduced when they interact and get to know each other (Pettigrew, 2008). Attitudes towards immigrants would therefore, according to the contact theory, improve as the share of immigrants rises, given that the groups interact. The contact theory more or less points to the opposite effects of "out-group" immigration as the ethnic threat theory.

2. 4. Research hypotheses

Although there are disagreements in research on the subject of public Euroscepticism and immigration, there are also some general trends in previous research and theory that allow me to formulate and investigate the following hypotheses:

1. Respondents with anti-immigration attitudes are more likely to hold Eurosceptical attitudes.

2. Based on previous research; respondents in regions who took in many refugees are more Eurosceptical than respondents in regions who took in few refugees.

3. Based on the ethnic threat theory; the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism is stronger in regions which took in many refugees.

3. Case selection, data and method

3. 1. Case selection – Why Sweden?

The simple answer to why Sweden with its regions was selected as the case for this study is that Sweden was one of the countries who took in most asylum seekers per capita in the EU in the year of 2015 (Eurostat, 2016). Sweden is therefore an interesting country to investigate more deeply since the aim of the study is to see if Euroscepticism rises due to a big inflow of immigrants as is suggested by the logic of the ethnic threat theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Scheepers et al., 2002). Besides having easy access to regional data on the number of asylum seekers, the number of regions (21) and variation in the quantity of asylum seekers in those regions (Migrationsverket, 2020), were also something that contributed to Sweden being a suitable country to focus on. Fewer regions and smaller differences in regard to number of asylum seekers would make it harder to analyse and find statistically significant patterns.

As mentioned in the introduction, Sweden has a peculiar relationship to the EU and Euroscepticism. Besides choosing to not be a part of the EMU, the Swedish population has also historically been divided in their support for the EU (Raunio, 2007). In a Eurobarometer survey from 2015, the proportion of the population who were either clearly positive or clearly negative towards the EU was greater in Sweden than in both states that joined the EU at the same time as Sweden, i.e. Austria and the Swedish neighbour Finland (European Commission, 2015). There should thus be considerable variation in the outcome variable, i.e. Euroscepticism in Sweden.

Furthermore, it should be argued that there are reasons to study this area at a regional level. Amengay & Stockemer (2018) review frequently used structural variables for explanations to extreme right-wing party voting. Those parties are often both immigration critical and Eurosceptic (van Elsas, Hakhverdian, & van der Brug, 2016; De Vries and Edwards, 2009). According to Amengay & Stockemer (2018), a large part of previous studies is at the national level, while they believe that previous studies indicate that many of the explanations for extreme right - wing voting can be found at the regional and municipal level. This indicates that it can be useful to study attitudes towards immigration at the regional level. Differences

in regard to the number of refugees might be even more noticeable at the municipal level compared to the regional levels. Nonetheless, as is presented below, there are in terms of how many refugees the regions took in, considerable differences at the regional level as well.

3. 1. 2. Case selection – Year

Considering this paper aims to examine the connection between attitudes toward immigration and Euroscepticism, it is advantageous that 2015, the year that Sweden received the most immigrants ever, is in the spotlight. In addition, as mentioned earlier, there is some previous research that discusses Euroscepticism in connection with the refugee crisis that comes to mixed conclusions and this study intends to contribute to the discussion. It could definitely be argued that the refugee crisis is a crisis that affects society on many different levels, from municipal and regional politics to EU politics. Increased knowledge about the crisis' potential effects on Euroscepticism contributes not only to research in the field but also has real-world relevance.

3. 2. Material

3. 2. 1. Choice of data

The material used in this study is primarily data from European Social Survey (ESS), but the data on regional numbers of refugees is from the Swedish Bureau of statistics (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2015). ESS is a survey conducted every two years. The survey is based on face-to-face interviews with more than 40 000 people in over 30 European countries. In Sweden's case, there are 1551 respondents, a number that constitutes a good basis for research. It is also positive for the study that the respondents in the ESS dataset are not only representative at the nation, but also at the regional level, which makes it possible to compare regions against each other (European Social Survey, 2016). This is positive since good representativeness strengthens the research validity.

The latest published ESS survey is from 2018 but this study uses the ESS 2016 survey since it is focused on the refugee crisis which had its peak in 2015, the year before the 2016 survey was conducted. Since the interaction variable (regarding number of refugees each region took in) is based on the year 2015 it is crucial for the interaction between the variables that the ESS Survey was implemented shortly thereafter. In this way the possible consequences of the refugee crisis in terms of changes in attitudes towards immigration and European integration are close in time and can more accurately be said to be related to the significant increase in asylum-seeking immigrants. It is therefore positive that the questionnaire is conducted between August 2016 – February 2017, just a year after the fall of 2015 in which the number of asylum seekers in Sweden was record high (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2020). It could be seen as a problem that the data of number of asylum seekers in each region is from December 2015 and that the survey is from the year after but there are reasons as to why that does not have negative implications on the results of the study. Even though the refugee crisis saw its peak in Sweden in 2015, the effects on society and the national debate about refugees were obviously still very current the year after.

3. 3. Methods

3. 3. 1. Variables

The variables in ESS 2016 used for this study are:

- *Y: (European) Unification already gone too far – should go further*
- *X: Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority*
- *Z: Dummy variable with regions based on number of granted asylum refugees each region took in*
- (Interaction term): $X*Z$
- + Control variables

The Y variable effectively measures Eurosceptical attitudes by measuring feelings about European unification on an ordinal 0-10 scale. However, I have reversed the variable values so that a higher value indicates that the respondent is more Eurosceptic. 0 therefore indicates positive feelings about European unification and believes it should go further while 10 is the equivalent of believing that European unification has already gone too far. The most chosen alternative on the scale is 5 which could be seen as neither very Eurosceptic nor Euro-enthusiastic. With the same logic, those who stated one of the highest values can be seen as Eurosceptic.

Both the X and the Y variables are measured on an ordinal scale which is positive since it is easier to spot differences due to more variation in the data. The X variable measures attitudes towards immigration by the respondent saying whether he/she thinks that Sweden should allow more or less immigrants of different race/ ethnic group as the majority. Even though the respondents do not explicitly say that they are for or against immigration, it is reasonable to believe that the question still gives a clear message about the person's general attitudes toward immigration and not least immigration of people who are ethnically different. After all, a cornerstone of ethnic threat theory is fear that groups from other countries and cultures will come and worsen the condition of their own group (Scheepers et al., 2002; Stockemer et al., 2019).

The Z variable is a measure of the number of refugees/asylum cases in each region. The data used for the Z variable is from the Swedish migration agency's yearly report and includes all the refugees who were granted asylum in Sweden in 2015 (Migrationsverket, 2020). It is important to note that the data regards asylum seekers and not all types of immigrants. The Z variable is used as a binary variable. This means that the regions are recoded in SPSS as 0 if the regions took in few refugees and 1 if they took in a lot of refugees (relative to the population). There are several reasons as to why it is more effective to have the Z (interaction) variable as a binary variable, but the most important factor is that the binary Z variable alleviates a meaningful interpretation of the research result. It was therefore necessary to set several regions together.

Which regions are merged together is based upon how many people with granted asylum the regions took in divided by the number of people living in that region. The statistics of people living in each region is from the Swedish central bureau of statistics (SCB) from September 2015 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2015). For example: region Stockholm had 2 224 156 inhabitants in 2015 and took in 6152 refugees with granted asylum (approximately 2.8 refugees per 1000 inhabitants). It can be compared to the national average of 5.2 refugees with granted asylum per 1000 inhabitants. The mean value of 5.2 operates as a dividing line. This division seems logical when the regional differences regarding the number of granted asylum refugees admitted to the regions are visualized in *table 3* in the results section. Regions who took in less than 5.2 granted asylum refugees per 1000 inhabitants is thus coded as 0 and vice versa for the region who took in more than 5.2 granted asylum refugees per 1000 inhabitants. Since ethnic threat theory is based on the majority group feeling threatened by a minority group with a different ethnic background (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it would have been misleading to only look at the total number. The ethnic minority group's presence will most likely be more pronounced if it constitutes a larger proportion of the total population.

Overall, the average reception was, on average, twice as large (8.0 per 1000 inhabitants vs 4.0 per 1000 inhabitants) among the regions that make up group 1 in the binary variable compared with group 0. This indicates that there are considerable differences between the regions. Previous research suggests that it is both interesting to look for explanations for such

issues in the regional differences (Amengay & Stockemer, 2018) and that the proportion of immigrants in a region has an impact on the degree of public Euroscepticism (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, the Z variable is a vital part of the most similar case design. The most similar case design is effective in its way of getting reliable results which are not as susceptible to external factors because it focuses on cases as similar to each other as possible (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). It gives us an opportunity to look at regional differences in a specific issue with "all other things being equal". Different regions in Sweden automatically have a lot more in common compared to if the research would compare regions in Sweden with for example regions in another European country. Many confounding factors would probably play a much bigger role in a comparison between two countries, which are controlled for in a subnational comparison.

The interaction term variable ($X*Z$) is used in regard to the research question as well as the third hypothesis; "the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism is stronger in regions which took in many refugees". When adding the interaction variable to the regression analysis, the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism can be controlled for with the regional division in mind.

3. 3. 2. Control variables

This paper makes use of some control variables in relation to the dependent variable. Since this study is inspired by the Stockemer et al. (2019) study and that study also has Euroscepticism as its dependent variable, my study will largely use the same control variables. The control variables that Stockemer et al. (2019) use and which I believe are also relevant to this study are: age, gender, unemployment, perceived economic situation, political ideology, political interest, level of urbanization, if the respondent is currently in paid work, and education. I also added a control variable for birthplace (Sweden or abroad) which could be of interest in light of the ethnic threat theory. Earlier research by Werts, Scheepers & Lubbers, (2012) point out political ideology (right), low education and unemployment as strong indicators to higher grades of Euroscepticism. Low interest in politics overall is likewise objected as a firm indicator (Boomgarden, Schuck, Elenbaas, & de Vreese, 2011).

While gender might have a low effect on attitudes towards European integration (Boomgarder et al., 2011), age is widely objected as a strong indicator. Older people are in general more Eurosceptic than young people (Fox & Pearce, 2018). The level of urbanization does not have a strong relation to Euroscepticism in earlier research, but it is suggested that people in general are more Eurosceptic the less urban they live (Hooghe & Marks, 2005).

The variables are coded as follows: **Y variable:** Euroscepticism (European unification) 0-10 scale, 0: go further, 10: gone too far. **X variable:** Attitudes toward immigration from other race/ethnic group from majority. 1-4 scale, 1: allow many, 4: allow none. **Z variable:** dummy variable, 0: people living in regions who took in few granted asylum refugees, 1: people living in regions who took in many granted asylum refugees. **Interaction model X*Z,** interaction between X and Z. **Political interest:** 1-4 scale, 1: very interested, 4: not at all interested. **Political ideology:** left-right scale 0-10, 0: left, 10 right. **Income satisfaction** (household): 1-4 scale, 1: living comfortably on present income, 4: very difficult on present income. **Unemployment:** ever unemployed and seeking work for a period more than three months, 1: no, 2: yes. **In paid work:** 1: in paid work, 2: not in paid work. **Urban/rural:** 1-5 scale, 1: big city, 5: farm or home in countryside. **Level of education:** highest level of education 1: no university degree, 2: university degree. **Gender:** 1: men, 2: women. **Age:** respondents actual age. **Sweden as native country:** born in Sweden, 1: yes, 2: no. It should be noted that while it might seem like the variables “Unemployment” and “In paid work” measure the same thing, there are considerable differences between the variables. While the first one refers to if the respondent has ever been unemployed and job seeking for at least a period of three months, “in paid work” refers to if the respondent is currently in paid work or not.

3. 3. 3. The model

Since the research idea is to examine the relationship between individuals' attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism from a regional perspective, taking into account how many refugees the region has received, is it logical to do a quantitative study. By doing a quantitative study, it makes it easier to do future research based on this study. Similar studies to mine that focus on attitudes towards immigration (Rydgren & Tyrberg, 2020) Euroscepticism (Stockemer, et al., 2019) on an individual level have also done quantitative

studies. A quantitative analysis makes it possible to consider a representative sample of individuals from all the Swedish regions. It would be interesting with a qualitative analysis with the same purpose as well as it could have gone more into depth on the subject with each individual, but it would have been very time consuming and complicated to implement. Moreover, the research is carried out in the statistical program SPSS, which is a prerequisite for being able to carry out the study as it is intended, since the data material used is extensive. In order to test the hypotheses, an OLS (ordinary least squares) regression is used to study the relationship between the variables. OLS is a linear regression method where the closer the data points are to the regression line, the stronger is the relationship between the variables. The choice of method is inspired by Stockemer et al. (2019) which, like this study, looks at the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism in light of the refugee crisis, using OLS regression analysis. This study extends the study of Stockemer et al. (2019) by a) focussing on the regional level, and b) using an interaction term between immigration attitudes and regional data on number of asylum seekers.

The model that is used for the regression analysis is:

$$Y = \text{constant} + X + Z + X*Z + \text{control variables} + \text{error}$$

$$(Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + \beta_3 X * Z + \beta_4 C + \beta_5 D + \beta_6 E + \varepsilon)$$

A simple explanation follows: X, the independent variable, is *attitudes towards immigration*, which is measured on a 1-4 scale where 1 indicates that the respondents want to take in many immigrants from different ethnic group from majority, while the respondents selecting 4 in the questionnaire believe Sweden should not take in any immigrants from different ethnic group than majority. Z, the dummy coded binary variable, is *group of regions based on number of immigrants in relation to population size*. The X*Z variable is an interaction term with the two aforementioned variables which makes it possible to see how the effect of the X variable on the Y variable depends on the other independent variable Z. At last, the dependent Y variable is *the level of Euroscepticism*. The model visualizes how I intend to investigate the independent variables (X: attitudes towards immigration, Z: regional number of immigrants in relation to population size) relationships with Euroscepticism. Furthermore, control variables are added in subsequent models in order to test how the primary findings stand when checked for other variables, such as demographic factors.

3. 4. Critical reflection

3. 4. 1. Critical reflection – Method

The regression analysis is very useful when the strength of the relationship between different variables is to be investigated. Therefore, this study benefits from using this type of analysis tool as I am interested in how attitudes towards immigration affect Euroscepticism when the number of migrants increases sharply. Although, what cannot be ascertained with the help of an OLS regression is in which direction the causal relationship goes. Whether Y leads to X or whether X actually leads to Y increasing is difficult to determine. It does not necessarily have to be something negative for the study, but it is important to keep in mind.

3. 4. 2. Critical reflection – Variables

The X variable measures attitudes towards immigration very well, but it should be noted that the question asks about immigration in quite general terms since the question refers to immigrants that are ethnically different from the majority without specifying which ethnic group. There are different kinds of immigration which could possibly have different effects on the attitudes towards immigration (Scheepers, Gijsberts & Coenders, 2002). One option would therefore be to change to a different survey question for the X variable. However, there were only one other suitable question in the ESS 2016 dataset that could have been used, which more specifically measure attitudes toward immigration from poor countries outside the EU. Anyhow, that question does not address the ethnic aspect, which is desirable since the study is based on ethnic threat theory. There is also far more previous research on attitudes towards immigration as a whole compared to research about, in this case immigration specifically from the Middle East. With that said, it would have been interesting for future studies to take a closer look at attitudes towards migrants from the Middle East in relation to the refugee crisis if there is useful and accurate data available. An additional factor in deciding which question would be used as a X variable is that the Z variable refers to people with granted asylum and thus not a specific ethnic group. It is therefore appropriate that the X variable also does so in order to harmonize the variables.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Y variable; *Unification go further – gone too far*, does not specifically mention Euroscepticism. None of the questions in ESS 2016 involve the

term Euroscepticism. It thus becomes a question of interpretation which answer alternatives are to be assessed as Eurosceptic. However, it is reasonable to assume that the higher value a respondent give, the more Eurosceptic can the respondent be considered to be since the recoded scale goes from 0-10 and 10 indicates that one thinks that European integration has already gone too far. Which in turn could be interpreted as an indicator of Euroscepticism. Since the definition of Euroscepticism that this study is using describes Euroscepticism as “...one side of a continuum that ranges from very positive to very negative dispositions towards European intregation...” (Hooghe & Marks, 2007, p. 120), a 0-10 scale measuring feelings about European unification is convenient. It should however be taken into consideration that the results could have been different if the X variable was designed so that the question in the questionnaire uses the word “scepticism”, to measure attitudes towards European integration.

The Z variable is as mentioned earlier a binary variable where the regions are dummy-coded to 0 if they took in few asylum seekers and 1 if they took in more asylum seekers (relative to their population and dependent on if the region took in more or less granted asylum refugees than the mean for the regions). However, the data does not tell us how many asylum seekers actually stayed in the region after 2015. Nor does it say what proportion of the population in the region are immigrants before 2015. That could be a significant factor according to earlier research, pointing out that the number of immigrants at regional level can affect both the degree of Euroscepticism (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017) and the proportion of votes on right-wing extremist parties that often have an anti-immigration policy (Rydgren & Tyrberg 2020).

4. Results

This section consists of two parts, the result section first present descriptive statistics for the main variables (Y, X, Z). In section two, the OLS regression is presented with a guide to interpreting the variables and the results. The OLS regression consists of 6 models and the results of these will be commented on separately. Finally, the result section make use of, and discuss, an interaction plot based on the results from the OLS regression.

4. 1. Descriptive statistics

Table 4.1 regards the dependent (Y) variable *European unification go further or gone too far*, which this study uses to measure Eurosceptic attitudes. The variable takes values ranging from 0 to 10 since the variable is, as mentioned, measured on a 0-10 scale where 0 indicates that the respondent thinks European unification should go even further, in other words a positive standpoint towards European integration. 10 indicates on the other hand that the respondent believes European unification has already gone too far.

Table 4.1. Euroscepticism: European unification go further (0) or gone too far (10). Data from ESS (2016).

N	Valid	1450
Missing		101
Median		5.0
Mode		5
Range		0-10
Skewness		1.64
Std. Error of Skewness		0.64
Percentiles	25	3.00
	50	5.00
	75	7.00

Statistics from Table 1 show us that the mode is 5 which indicates that the most common answer on the 0-10 scale is 5 which could be interpreted as neither Eurosceptic nor Euro-enthusiastic. The number of valid observations is 1450 and 101 observations are missing. The median is 5.0 and 50 % of the respondents chose a value between 3 and 6. A majority of the respondents cannot be said to be Eurosceptic but the statistics from Figure 4.1 (in the appendix) indicate that more respondents are clearly against European unification than clearly in favor of European unification. 3.24% have chosen 0 or 1 on the scale while 7.52% have

chosen 9 or 10. The skew is negative and left-tailed which indicates that the Eurosceptic response categories make up a slightly larger share than the Euro-enthusiastic.

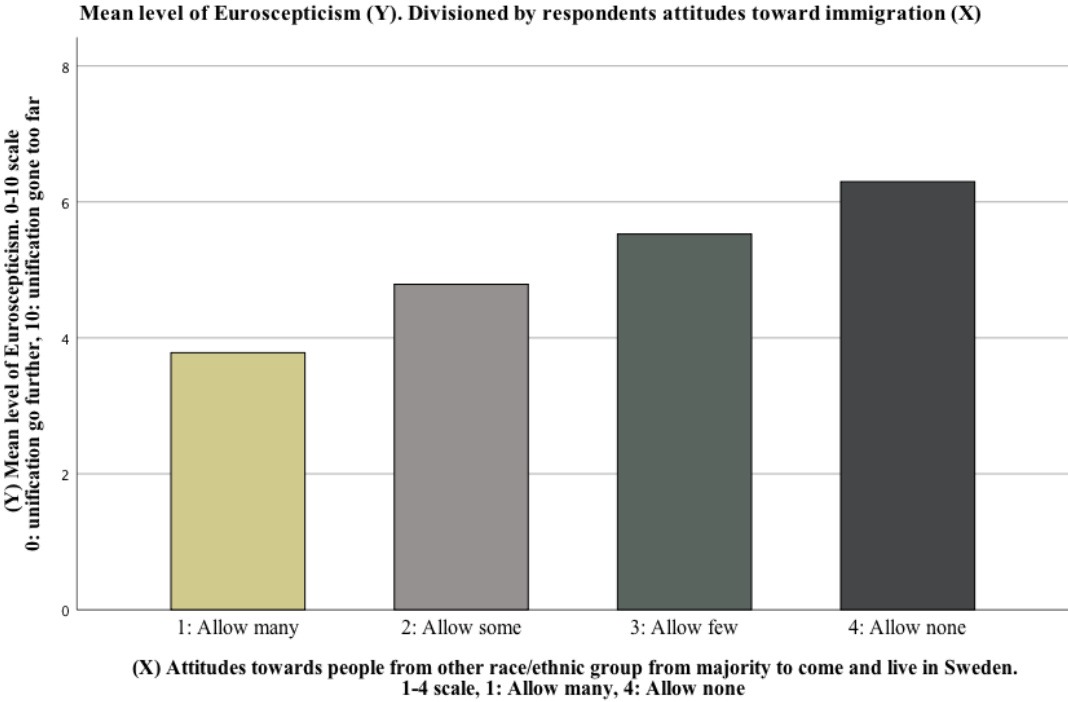
The independent (X) variable measures the respondents' attitudes towards immigration of people from different race/ethnic groups than the majority. The width of variation is 4, since there are four response categories from the first to the last alternative. The categories are; 1. Allow many to come and live here, 2. Allow some, 3. Allow a few, 4. Allow none. As is visible in *Figure 4.2* (in the appendix) the mode is 2. Over 50% of the respondents believe Sweden should allow some immigrants that are ethnically different than the majority. The median is 2.0 and the quartiles tell us that 75% is either saying that Sweden should allow many or some immigrants from different race/ethnic groups to come and live in Sweden. This indicates that Swedes in general are positive to immigration from different race/ethnic groups than the majority. This is also shown in *Figure 4.2* where the skewness points to positive and quite noticeable right-skewed distribution. The number of valid observations is 1508 with just 43 missing.

Table 4.2. Attitudes towards immigration from another ethnic/cultural group from majority (1-4 scale, 1: allow many to come and live here, 2: allow some, 3: allow a few, 4: Allow none). Data from (ESS 2016).

N	Valid	1508
	Missing	43
Median		2.0
Mode		2
Range		3
Skewness		.520
Std. Error of Skewness		0.063
Percentiles	25	1.00
	50	2.00
	75	2.00

By studying the mean values of euroscepticism (Y) for each response group for the X variable, it is apparent that hypothesis 1: "Respondents with anti-immigration attitudes are more likely to hold eurosceptical attitudes" is relevant to explore. When comparing the mean values in *Figure 4.3* below, a clear positive relationship between anti-immigration attitudes and Euroscepticism is presented. The mean value for Euroscepticism among respondents who chose "Allow many" is less than 4, while the average value of Euroscepticism among respondents who chose "Allow none" is above 6 on the 0-10 scale.

Figure 4.3. Respondents mean level of Euroscepticism (Y) where respondents are categorized based on attitudes toward immigration from other ethnic group from majority. Data from ESS (2016).

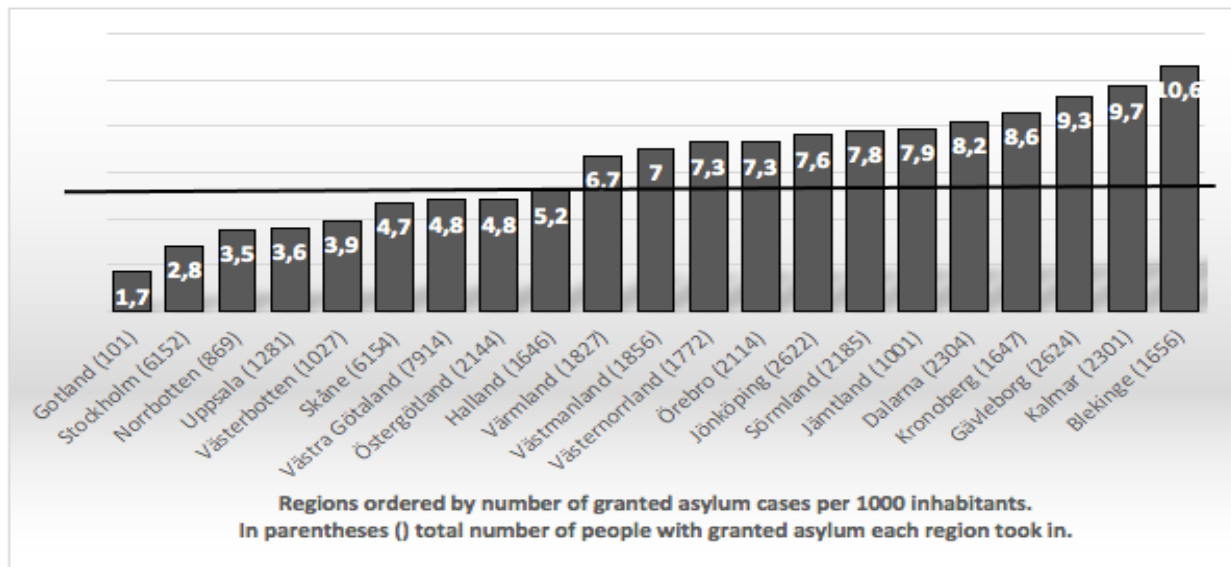


Finally, the moderating Z variable is presented below in *Figure 4.4*. The moderating variable is, as mentioned earlier, a dummy coded variable where the 21 Swedish regions is coded as 0 if they took in few refugees and 1 if they took in many refugees relative to the total population of the region. The horizontal line in *Figure 4.4* shows the average number of granted asylum refugees that the regions have taken in. Besides that, is it also dividing the regions into two groups, as the regions that are below the line constitute the group of regions that received fewer number of granted asylum refugees relative to the total number of inhabitants in the region, and vice versa for the regions above the horizontal line.

There are considerable differences between the regions which becomes clear in *Figure 4.4*. For example, did region Blekinge take in more than six times as many refugees than region Gotland, relative to their population. The average number of refugees with granted asylum the regions took in is 5.2 per 1000 inhabitants. The regions who took in as much as, or lower than the average is coded as 0 (9 regions) and the regions who took in more than average is coded as 1 (12 regions). As the table shows, there is a big difference in the number of refugees per 1000 inhabitants between the region closest below/at the mean; Halland (5.2) and the region closest over the mean; Värmland (6.7). It is therefore natural to use the mean as the tipping

point. The regions coded as 0 are generally more populated, which has the effect that the number of respondents coded as 0 is 1061 (68.4%) while the number of respondents coded as 1 is 490 (31.6%).

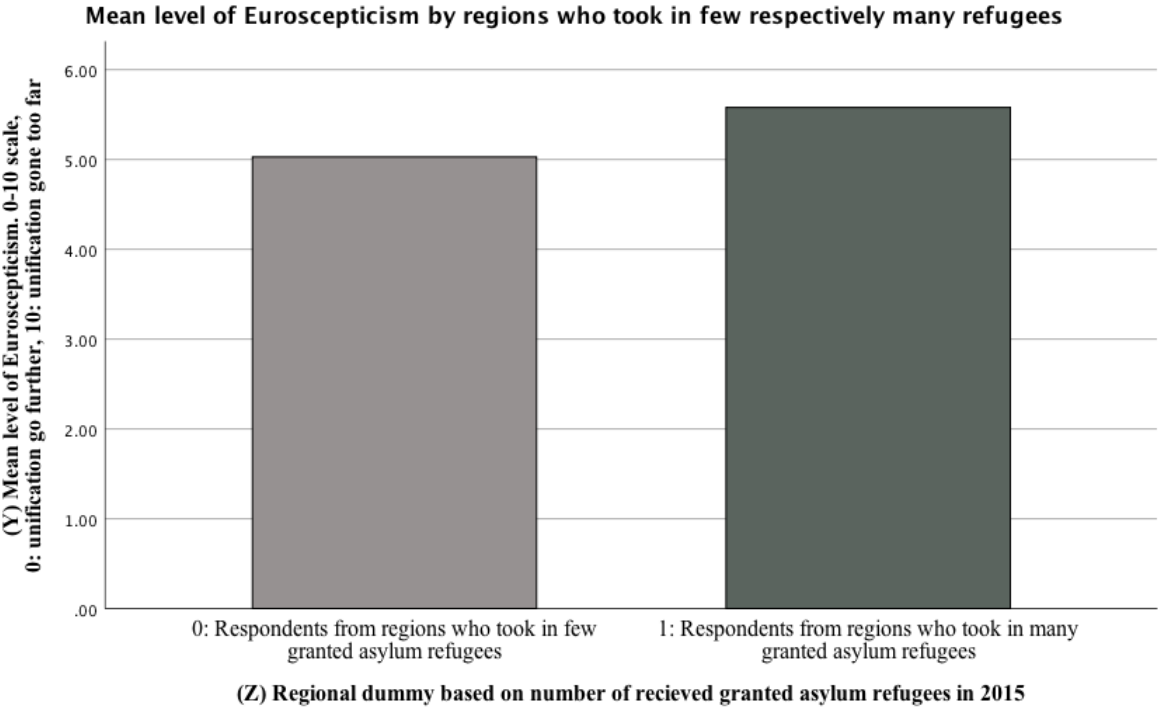
Figure 4.4. Data on the regions number of granted asylum cases in 2015 per 1000 inhabitants. Data from Migrationsverket (2020).



The histogram also visualize why it is important to group the variables based on granted asylum cases relative to the total population in the region and not the grand total in the region. For example, region Stockholm took in the third most refugees with granted asylum in total but second least as proportion of the total population.

Furthermore, when taking the regional data into consideration, the difference in means of the regions in *Figure 4.5* and *Figure 4.6* (below) in regard to Euroscepticism insinuate that it is of interest to explore hypotheses 2 and 3 in a regression analysis. *Figure 4.5* include the variables Y and Z, the primary variables for hypothesis 2: "respondents in regions who took in many refugees are more Eurosceptical than respondents in regions who took in few refugees". The mean values for the two different regional groups indicate the expected result; the respondents in group 1 (regions that took in many granted asylum refugees in 2015) are generally a little more Eurosceptic.

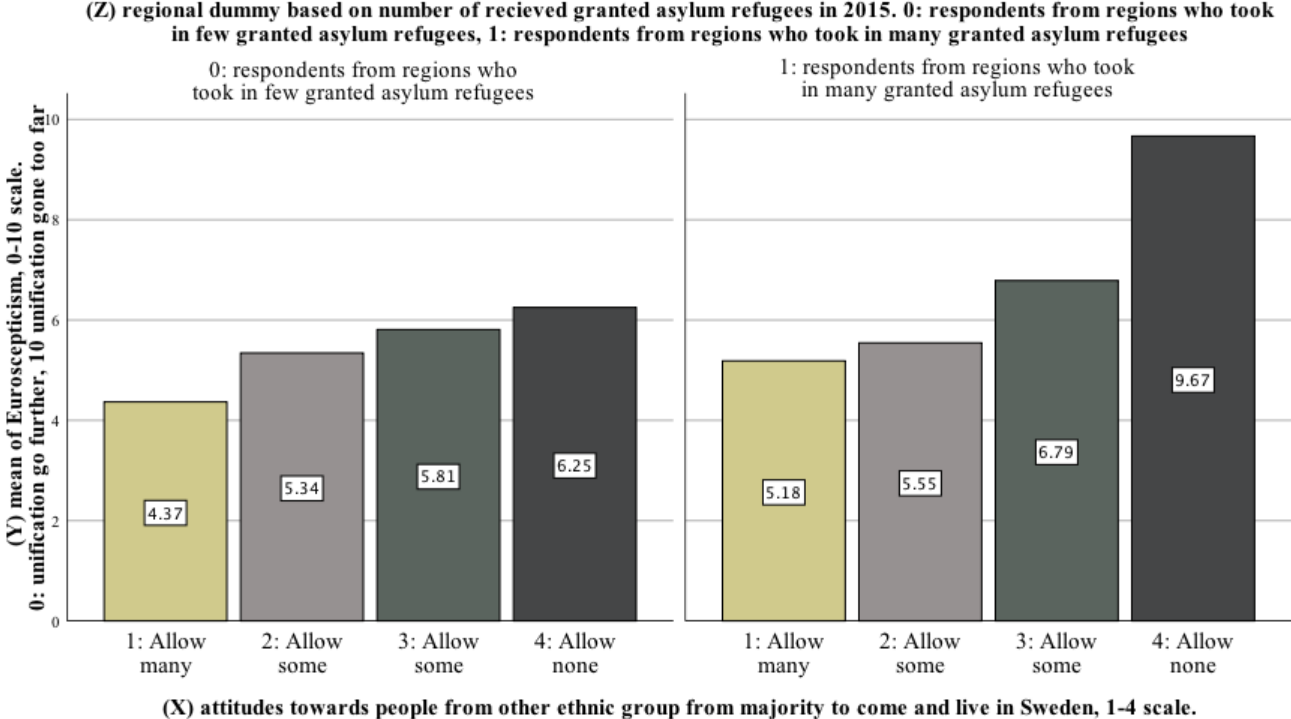
Figure 4.5. Regional differences (Z) in mean levels of Euroscepticism (Y) between regions who took in few or many refugees in 2015. Data from ESS (2016).



The mean values in *Figure 4.6* also indicate that Hypothesis 3; “the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism is stronger in regions which took in many refugees” is justified and interesting to investigate further. The data points to clear differences between the regional groups. As presented in *Figure 4.6*, the mean values for respondents living in regions who took in relatively many refugees is higher on the y axis (more Eurosceptic) in all the subgroups of the X variable (attitude to immigration) compared to respondents living in regions who took in few refugees. Hypothesis 3 is based on the ethnic threat theory and respondents in regions that received more granted asylum refugees in 2015 tend to be more Eurosceptic. It is therefore relevant to analyze whether regional differences in public Euroscepticism are due to immigration (and the refugee crisis) itself and thus be able to answer the central research question; “Do people’s attitudes towards immigration affect their Euroscepticism more in regions that took in a lot of refugees than in regions that didn’t take in a lot of refugees?”

Figure 4.6. Differences in mean level of Euroscepticism between people with different attitudes towards immigration from other ethnic group from majority (X). Respondents are furthermore divided on two sides dependent on if their region took in few or many refugees (Y). Data from ESS (2016)

Mean levels of Euroscepticism (Y) by Attitudes towards immigration (X) and division by group of regions (Z)



4. 2. OLS regression analysis

Table 4.3. OLS regression analysis, Dependent variable: Euroscepticism (0-10 scale). Data from ESS (2016)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Allow many/few immigrants	.804*** (.086)	.786*** (.085)	.805*** (.104)	.829*** (.107)	.798*** (.109)	.724*** (.109)
Region (dummy)		.523*** (.119)	.625* (.339)	.726* (.344)	.728* (.347)	.472 (.346)
Interaction			-.059 (.182)	-.116 (.185)	-.126 (.187)	-.078 (.185)
Interest in politics				.065 (.073)	.057 (.074)	.060 (.075)
Political ideology				-.025 (.025)	-.018 (.026)	-.016 (.025)
Income satisfaction					.088 (.090)	.136 (.089)
Unemployment					.425** (.131)	.505*** (.131)
In paid work					.259* (.119)	.023* (.128)
Education level					.131 (.133)	-.065 (.134)
Urban/rural						.193*** (.050)
Born in Sweden or abroad						-.481* (.178)
Gender						.081 (.114)
Age						.014*** (.003)
Constant	3.800*** (.157)	3.666*** (.159)	3.634*** (.188)	3.583*** (.255)	2.768*** (.458)	2.153*** (.534)
N	1412	1412	1412	1372	1359	1353
R ² (Adjusted)	.058	.070	.070	.069	.081	.110

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Model 1 confirms the expected relationship between the dependent variable Y measuring Euroscepticism and the independent variable X measuring attitudes towards immigration from different ethnic/cultural groups. As the R² suggest, attitudes towards immigration from different ethnic/cultural groups can to some extent (5.8%) explain the variation in the dependent variable. The significance level of 0.01 indicates that the result of the regression in model 1 is statistically significant. In other words, we could be certain that there is a positive relationship between the main variables Y and X and therefore could hypothesis 1; *”respondents with anti-immigration attitudes are more likely to hold Eurosceptic attitudes”* be accepted. A more restrictive stance to immigration from different ethnic/cultural groups, measured as one step on the X scale is related to an increase in the level of Euroscepticism by .804 points. This relationship is robust to the inclusion of control variables, as it stays statistically significant at the 99 percent level in models 2 to 6.

Model 2 adds the Z dummy variable which enables for interpreting differences between the regions. The regression shows that respondents living in regions who took in many refugees (as opposed to respondents living in regions who took in fewer) in general are more Eurosceptic and this relationship is also, with a P value of 0.01 statistically significant. The X and the Z variables combined explains 7% of the variation in the Y variable. The results from the regression analysis in model 2 points to that hypothesis 2 which suggests that people living in regions that took in many refugees are more Eurosceptic, can be accepted. The fact that the X variable specifically talks about immigration from ethnically and culturally different groups than the majority and that the Z variable divides the regions based on the number of granted asylum immigrants that the regions have taken in strengthens confidence in ethnic threat theory. However, it should be noted that Model 2 does not take the control variables into consideration as to why we cannot be certain about the ethnic threat theory.

Model 3 shows that there is no significant relationship between the interaction term variable and the dependent variable since deviation value suggests that the relationship is not statistically significant. Thus, the relationship between the two interacting variables is insignificant, which means that the attitudes towards immigration is not dependent on which region you live in. In regard to the research question, the outcome is that the regression analysis does not find significant support for the hypothesis that the relationship between Euroscepticism and attitudes towards immigration is stronger in regions who took in many granted asylum refugees in 2015. Hypothesis 3 can therefore be rejected.

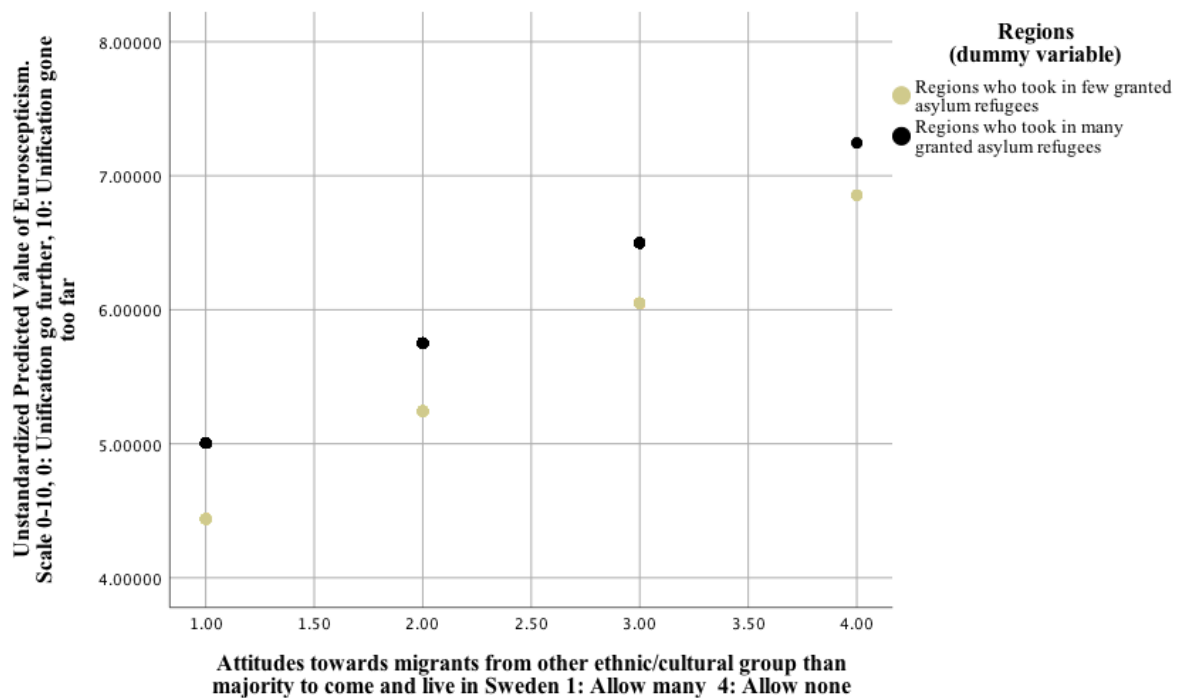
Furthermore, in model 4, two control variables are added which take political interest and political ideology into consideration. The “political interest” variable measures overall political interest while “political ideology” is a variable in which the respondents place themselves on the political left-right scale. Both variables are, as mentioned earlier, thought to have an impact on attitudes towards both Euroscepticism and immigration. However, neither one of those variables seems to have a large, or statistically significant impact on Euroscepticism in this regression analysis. A possible explanation to that is that the “attitudes toward immigration” variable capture some of the effect of the political interest/political ideology variables on Euroscepticism.

On the other hand, some socio-economic explanations are estimated to have a significant impact on the dependent variable. As model 5 indicates, both the variable for “unemployment” and whether or not the respondent is currently “in paid work” is significant at 1% and 5%, respectively. The level of education and whether or not the respondents are satisfied with their household income is however not statistically significantly related to Euroscepticism according to the analysis. Still, the model combined explains 8.1 % of the variation in the Y variable when various socioeconomic explanations are taken into the equation.

Model 6 adds demographic control variables. In line with previous research, this regression analysis does not find clear evidence that gender is explanatory for attitudes toward Euroscepticism but that both age and place of living to some extent explains variation in Euroscepticism. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that whether or not the respondents themselves are born in Sweden show a relatively strong negative relationship with Euroscepticism (-.481, p-value <0.10) People who have come to Sweden as immigrants are less Eurosceptical than Swedes born in Sweden.

Altogether the variables used in this regression analysis explain 11% of the variation in public Euroscepticism. The R2 number was thus raised from .070 to .110 when all the variables were included in the regression. Moreover, the dependent X variable; ”attitudes towards immigration from other ethnic/cultural groups than majority” remained significant at 0.01 and proved that it is a robust correlator. The number of respondents declines from 1412 to 1353 from the baseline model to the last model, which must be taken into account in terms of the validity of the research, but the fact that relatively many variables are significant in model 6 indicates that the N number is not too small and that the results are credible.

Figure 4.7. Interaction plot, Relationship between Y and X variable. Data from ESS (2016).



The interaction plot visualises some of the main findings from the OLS regression. It depicts the positive relationship between the Y variable and the X variable as well as the differences between the group of regions for each value on the X-axis. Respondents from regions who took in many granted asylum refugees are constantly more Euroceptic than their counterparts. However, the interaction plot also indicates that as we move along the X-axis, the difference between the regions decreases and cannot be said to be significant for the higher x-values. This finding is supported by the regression analysis which also indicates that the interaction coefficient is not statistically significant. To conclude, the interaction plot suggests that people with the same attitude towards immigration from different race/ethnic group from majority will not show statistically different level of Eurocepticism depending on if they live in a region who took in few or many granted asylum refugees during the refugee crisis.

5. Discussion

The findings from the OLS regression analysis confirms hypothesis 2; “*respondents in regions who took in many refugees are more eurosceptical than respondents in regions who took in few refugees*”. However, the relationship is not significant when controlling for demographic factors which is probably due to the fact that some demographic factors; age, whether or not the respondent is born in Sweden and where the respondent live (urban/rural) proved to be strong and significant coefficients. At a first glance, the ethnic threat theory seems appropriate as an explanation for the positive relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and Euroscepticism. Not least since the regional data on number of refugees is taken into consideration in model 2 and the regions that have received more granted asylum refugees are more Eurosceptic. But the fact that the interaction variable is not significant means that we cannot fully accept the ethnic threat theory, and with the same logic, the counter-theory "contact theory" cannot be applied either. Rather, whether a respondent lives in a region that took in many or few asylum seekers does not seem to affect the relationship between immigration attitudes and Euroscepticism. Respondents with anti-immigration attitudes are more likely to hold Eurosceptic attitudes independent of their region of residence. Hypothesis 3; *the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism is stronger in regions which took in many refugees* can thus be rejected. This finding contradicts the ethnic threat theory (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2008). If the asylum reception during the refugee crisis affected the respondents' attitudes, it was the attitude towards the EU and European integration that was affected and not the relationship between anti- immigration attitudes and Euroscepticism.

The above-mentioned findings have implications from both a domestic- and EU political standpoint. As the results indicate that the number of refugees does not affect the relationship between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration attitudes, politicians at a regional level should not be particularly concerned about strengthening Eurosceptic attitudes when deciding to increase or decrease immigration. Furthermore, does it suggest that it is the “perceived” threat rather than the “actual” threat of immigration from other ethnic groups that matters, which could be objected as a serious limit to the ethnic threat theory. On the other hand, the findings are positive for the European integration process and integration proponents overall, as the “actual” threat of increased immigration does not strengthen the relationship between

attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism. It is also positive for the EU in general since often portrayed cornerstones of the EU is free movement and integration across borders. A possible explanation as to why respondents in regions that received many refugees are not more Eurosceptic due to larger number of immigrants can be that Swedes may primarily identify themselves as Swedes rather than as a citizen of a specific region. Swedes may thus react more strongly to the fact that the country as a whole receives many refugees than that their own region receives many refugees. In that case, it could to some extent explain why the entrenched relationship between anti-immigration attitudes and Euroscepticism does not seem to be more pronounced at the regional level depending on the number of refugees. But it is a topic for future research.

Since the baseline model is significant when controlling for all variables, this study confirms the previously suggested positive relationship between Euroscepticism and negative attitudes towards immigration (e.g., Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007). Hypothesis 1; “*Respondents with anti-immigration attitudes are more likely to hold Eurosceptic attitudes*” can thus be accepted. The result indicates that the perceived threat of immigration is still an issue for the EU and further European integration.

An interesting discovery in this context is that the question of whether one was born in Sweden or abroad plays a significant role in the degree of Euroscepticism a respondent state. Foreign-born are less Eurosceptic and one explanation for this could be that foreign-born in general may be more positive about open borders and immigration as they themselves have migrated to Sweden and also primarily belong to ethnic/cultural minorities. Thus, ethnic threat theory might not be as applicable in their case.

Furthermore, a possible reason why the R number is not very high either in the baseline model or in model 6 when several factors are checked for may well be due to the fact that the study is deliberately designed according to the principle of most similar case design. Factors that may differ in comparisons between different countries such as religion and whether the current government is left or right-wing is thus "automatically" controlled for since the scope in this study is regions within the same country. It is likewise an advantage in the model that

the coefficients do not differ explicitly between the models, which could be seen as a proof of stability in the estimates.

Another dataset with a more specific EU focus could be interesting to use in the future but there are not, from what I have seen, a lot of questionnaires which is extensive enough. And if the reliability of the variables is taken into consideration, there are probably even less. Other datasets this study considered using did not include satisfactory questions for the independent variable (attitudes towards immigration from different ethnic/cultural group from majority) which is necessary for this study as it is testing the ethnic threat theory. Also, a variable that more specifically measure Eurosceptic attitudes would definitely be of interest for future studies on the topic. However, feelings and attitudes towards something is more or less inevitably subjective and should therefore always be interpreted carefully.

One important limitation of this study is that it does not take historical immigration numbers into consideration, which could be interesting for several reasons. First of all, could the regional effect on the refugee crisis on Euroscepticism and attitudes towards immigration be measured if the year 2015/2016 was compared to a few years before/after. Secondly, according to the logic of ethnic threat theory, a rise in immigrants with another ethnic/cultural background than the majority would prosper more negative attitudes. It could therefore be of importance for the classification of the regions (if they take in few/many refugees), and the interpretation of the dependent variable, to look at previous asylum reception statistics. However, since the focus of this study is about whether or not the relationship between Euroscepticism and immigration attitudes is stronger in regions who took in many refugees as opposed to few, there is good reason to use data from when the crisis was at its peak and the role of the EU were highly debated. It was then already objected as a European crisis (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2018) and not just Sweden but the EU in general saw record-breaking numbers of refugees entering Europe. 2015 is thus a logical year to start for future research with other countries as a research case. Differences in public opinion regarding European integration will most likely be greater in countries where social differences are more pronounced than in Sweden, which for example in terms of gender and education are among the world's most equal (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020; OECD, 2020).

6. Conclusion

This research contributes to the somewhat overlooked research branch of public Euroscepticism by determining and emphasizing the relationship between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration attitudes. In line with previous research, it can be stated that Euroscepticism and anti-immigration attitudes go hand in hand and that anti-immigration attitudes are a relatively strong predictor of Euroscepticism. However, it cannot be stated that Euroscepticism and immigration itself go hand in hand. This study measured the impact of the refugee crisis in a more specific way by taking into account the number of refugees taken in by the research objects, in this case the regions. It found that the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism did not depend on if the respondents are living in regions that received many or fewer granted asylum refugees. This finding contradicts the ethnic threat theory which would suggest that the relationship between Euroscepticism and immigration attitudes would be stronger in regions who took in many refugees. The answer to the research question is thereby that people's attitudes towards immigration does not affect their Euroscepticism significantly depending on the number on refugees their region took in.

However, the relationship between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration attitudes, which previous research (e.g., Vasilopoulou, 2018; Boomgarden et al., 2011) supports, indicates that this question is of interest for the EU and further European integration. Since it is believed that Eurosceptics partially blame the EU for the refugee crisis (Niemann & Zaun, 2018), the findings suggest that challenges regarding refugees which affect all of the EU, needs to be dealt with at the EU level. A better coordinated refugee reception at the EU level could improve attitudes towards European integration in the future.

Further, this research has contributed by taking into account a, for all I know, previously untested factor; number of refugees each region took in as a contributing factor for explaining public Euroscepticism. It is somewhat a surprise that the number of refugees taken in by each region does not have a significant effect on the relationship between immigration attitudes and Euroscepticism. The finding suggests that the actual threat of immigration does not matter but rather the perceived threat since people that expresses an anti-immigration stance will perceive immigration as a threat regardless of how many refugees their region took in during

the crisis. However, it is possible that the differences suggested by the logic of ethnic threat theory could be more pronounced when measured at the municipal level where the societal effect becomes more evident. Obviously, there are considerable differences between number of granted asylum cases taken in at the municipal level as well (Migrationsverket, 2020). A strengthened relationship between negative immigration attitudes and Euroscepticism due to more refugees at the regional level, would otherwise help explain the rise of party-based Euroscepticism, which oppose a threat to the European integration. One possible, but not in this study investigated explanation, is that those who vote for extreme right-wing parties (who are often both Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant) recognize the domestic political leadership as primarily responsible for the crisis.

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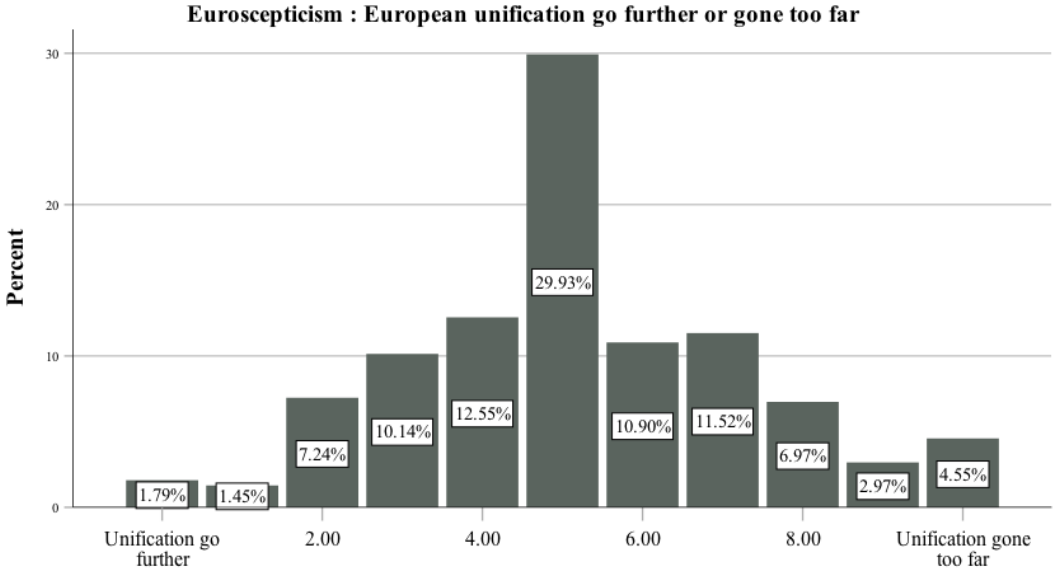
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Appendix

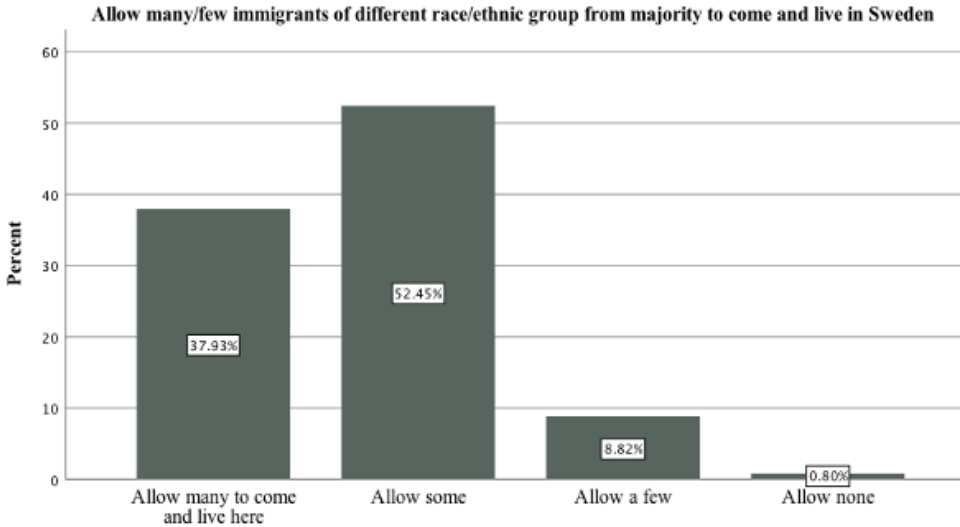
Appendix 1

Figure 4.1. Histogram, Euroscepticism go further or gone too far, 0-10 scale. Data from ESS (2016) that shows the distribution of attitudes towards European unification (Y variable).



Appendix 2

Figure 4.2. Attitudes towards immigration from different ethnic group from majority, 1-4 scale. Data from ESS (2016) that shows the distribution of respondents by attitudes towards immigration from other ethnic group from majority (X variable).



Number of respondents: Allow many to come and live here (572), Allow some (791), Allow a few (133), Allow none (12).
 Total number of valid respondents: 1508