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The Impact of Native Attitudes on Return Migration

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ABSTRACT

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This paper addresses the link between native attitudes and return migration. We exploit the variation in xenophobia using information on media consumption by migrants in Italy. A widely documented crime provides a quasi-experimental setting to identify the impact of Italian attitudes on migrants' settlement intentions. Our results suggest a significant effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on the intended duration of stay in the host country. The impact is more pronounced for low-skilled migrants, which has consequences for how migration affects the long run convergence between sending and destination countries.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In this paper we investigate the impact of native attitudes on return intention of immigrants. We use a situation where immigrants have been exposed to particularly hostile media coverage following a tragic murder in Roma (Italy) at the end of the year 2007. Our main result is that immigrants react fast by curtailing their intentions to stay following hostile media coverage. Our headlines result is a decrease of 10 percentage points in intention to stay following the media coverage of the murder. Immigrants revising downwards their intention to stay are predominantly those not exposed to negative media feedbacks before the event. And we also found that less skilled migrants were revising their intentions to stay much more than more highly skilled migrants.

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1 Introduction

Do changes in natives' attitudes towards immigrants affect the plans of foreign born to return to their countries of origin? There is little evidence in the current literature to answer this question. This is puzzling considering the economic importance of return migration and the impact of return intentions on the integration of immigrants in their host society. The self-selection of return migrants leads to important compositional changes in the cohorts of foreign born who remain in their destination country (Borjas and Bratsberg 1996, Lubotsky 2007, Dustmann and Gorlach 2013). These compositional changes have major consequences for labour markets in the host countries as well as for economic development in the sending (often transition or developing) countries. Return intentions are positively correlated with return realisations and are driven by the same determinants (Dustmann 2003). However, none of the models of return migration (e.g. Borjas and Bratsberg 1996, Yang 2006, Dustmann et al. 2011) incorporates the role of natives' attitudes in the out-migration decisions of foreign born. There is to date no empirical study on the effects of natives' attitudes on the flows of return migration. The formation of public attitudes towards migration and their interaction with migration policy making have been the subject of considerable research in economics (Facchini and Mayda 2008, Hanson et al. 2009, Facchini et al. 2013, Gang et al. 2013). In this paper we address precisely the missing link between explaining public attitudes towards migration and assessing their impact on return migration.

We use the case of Romanian migrants in Italy to illustrate how a strong negative shock in attitudes of Italians towards a specific group of foreigners impacts on their plans to return to their home country or to settle at destination. Specifically, we compare migrants with and without previous exposure to anti-immigrant stereotypes before and after a strong negative shock in natives' attitudes. The shock developed as a response to a crime committed by a Romanian migrant in October 2007. The extensive media coverage of this event and the duopolistic nature of Italian television provide us with a quasi-experimental setting to identify the impact of natives' attitudes on return intentions. We find a significant impact of the change in attitudes on migrants' plans to stay in Italy. Moreover, unskilled migrants seem to be affected more by the shock than highly skilled migrants.

The paper most related to ours in spirit is Friebel et al. (2013). They use a similar set-up to analyse the impact of xenophobic attacks in the host country on emigration from the source country. For the case of Mozambique, they identify a significant reduction in migration intentions to South Africa after a series of xenophobic attacks targeting immigrants in the regions of destination. Our paper provides, to our knowledge, the first empirical evidence linking natives' attitudes to return intentions.

In this context, the case of Romanian migration to Italy is particularly relevant. Starting from the turn of the century in 2000, Romanian migrants became the largest group of foreign born in Italy. Italy is by far the most important destination country for emigrants leaving Romania. The overall share of the foreign-born residents in Italy grew dramatically from

0.8 per cent in 1990 to more than 7 per cent in 2010. This sharp increase in a short period of time was accompanied by raising anti-immigrant attitudes among the native population. For example, in 2007, Italians where overwhelmingly considering immigration as a worrying problem in their country. Migrants from the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe were perceived as having a detrimental impact on Italy (Horowitz 2010).

The immigration-crime nexus has been a salient issue of the Italian media landscape. It is historically highly polarized (Hallin and Mancini 2004) and characterised by partisan bias (Durante and Knight 2012). The TV is the most used medium and represents the exclusive source of information for a large proportion of the population (D'Avanzo 2007, CENSIS 2007). Italian TV is dominated by two networks – RAI, the state broadcaster and Mediaset, the largest commercial media company in Italy, controlled by Silvio Berlusconi. The RAI channels abide to a public service mission and attempt to cover in a balanced way themes around race, immigration and diversity. These themes did not feature in any of the Mediaset programmes during the period of interest for our study. On the contrary, Mediaset news programmes in particular devoted much more prime transmission time than RAI programmes to crime and security issues (Durante and Knight 2012) often linked to crimes committed by immigrants or to illegal immigration (Diamanti 2008). We use this contrast in the representation of immigrants between RAI and Mediaset along with increased coverage by the RAI following the event to account for immigrants' exposure to stereotyping and negative attitudes towards their own community. More precisely, we draw on results using simple difference-in-differences (DID) approach exploiting the increased coverage by RAI after the Tor di Cinto event as a main source of variation. Our control group are made of immigrants exposed to Mediaset whose tone remained largely negative and anti-immigrants pre- and post- the event.

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

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents relevant stylized facts on flows and stocks of Romanian migrants in Italy. It also introduces the particular context of the analysis. Section 3 presents the data, some descriptive evidence and the method applied for the estimation. Section 4 discusses the results and the limitations of our approach. In Section 5 we present additional results and robustness checks. Section 6 presents our conclusions.
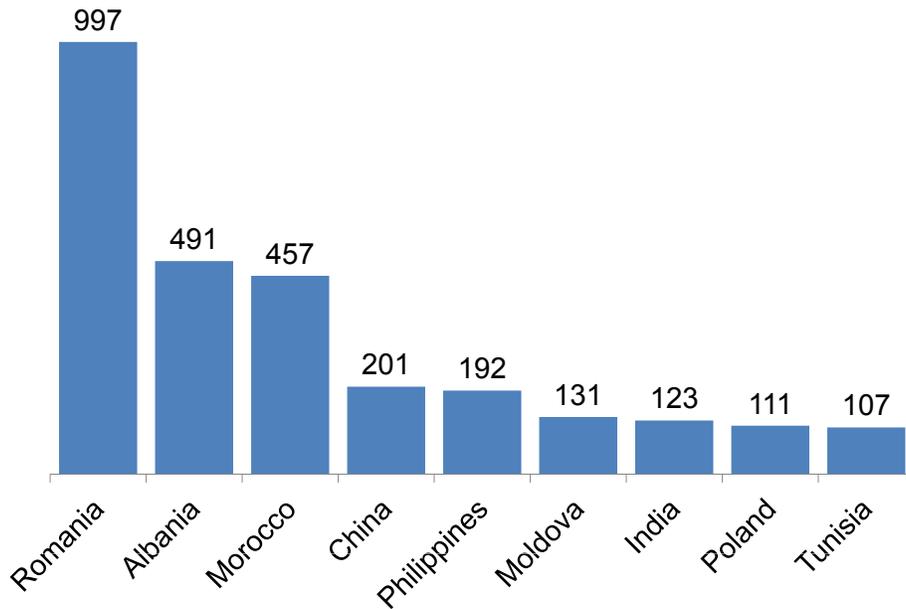
Figure 1: Main countries of origin of migrants in Italy 2011 (stocks in thousands; Source: Istat)

2 Background and motivation

2.1 Stylized facts on Romanian migration to Italy

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

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

Over the same period of time, Italy represented by far the most important destination country for Romanian migrants. Data from the 2011 Romanian census suggest that almost 50 per cent of the Romanian migrants identified as being abroad in the census year were residing in Italy (see figure 2). These very large flows were accompanied by temporary back
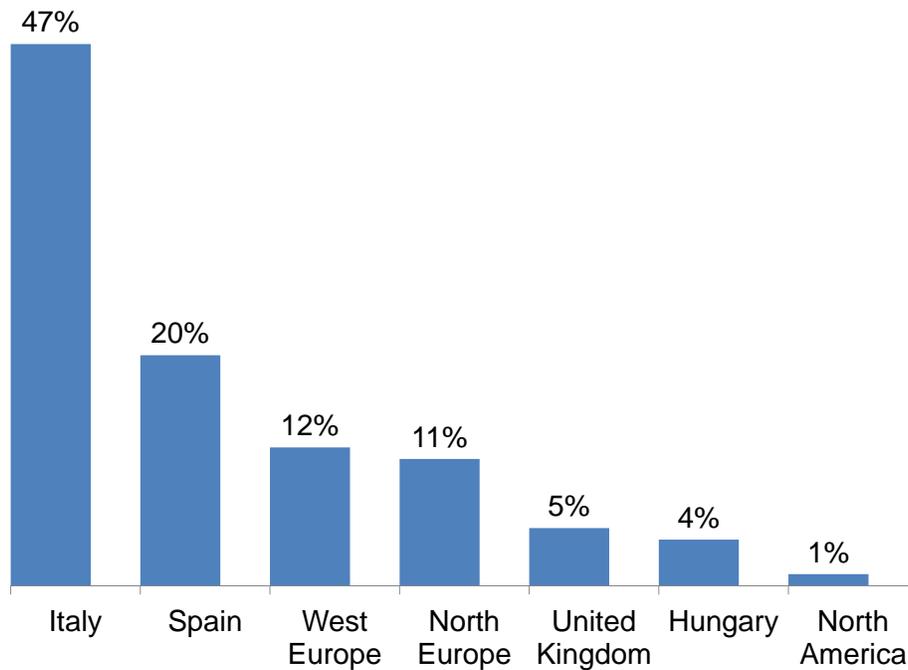
Figure 2: Romanian migrants abroad at the level of 2011 (Source: Sandu 2013 with INS data). West Europe includes: France, Belgium, Portugal, Austria. North Europe includes: Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Ireland. N=363,000 valid observations.

and forth movements and return migration (Anghel 2013). Both micro-level evidence from surveys (Martin and Radu 2012) and aggregate data (Ambrosini et al. 2013), suggest that for Romania as well as other East and Central European countries, return migration is a substantial share of total gross migration flows. In Romania at the level of 2008, the share of returnees in the total working age population was about 10 per cent (Martin and Radu 2012).

The Romanian migration to Italy was characterized by a negative selection: most migrants were less skilled, already had a longer migration history, often involving informal or illegal employment spells, and made use of network ties established in their communities of origin (Anghel 2013; Elrick and Ciobanu 2009). There were notable peaks over the last decade. Most of these correspond to past regularization programmes. Fasani (2010) uses an NGO database to analyze the main features of undocumented migration in Italy[1]. Figure 3 indicates that the year 2007 was also a peek year in term of net migration, with registered flows double in size compared to the year before. The stock of Romanians in Italy grew thus by about 100 per cent in 2007 only (according to OECD SOPEMI 2009 figures, 760,000 Romanian citizens resided in Italy by 2008). An increase of this magnitude is most probably cased mainly

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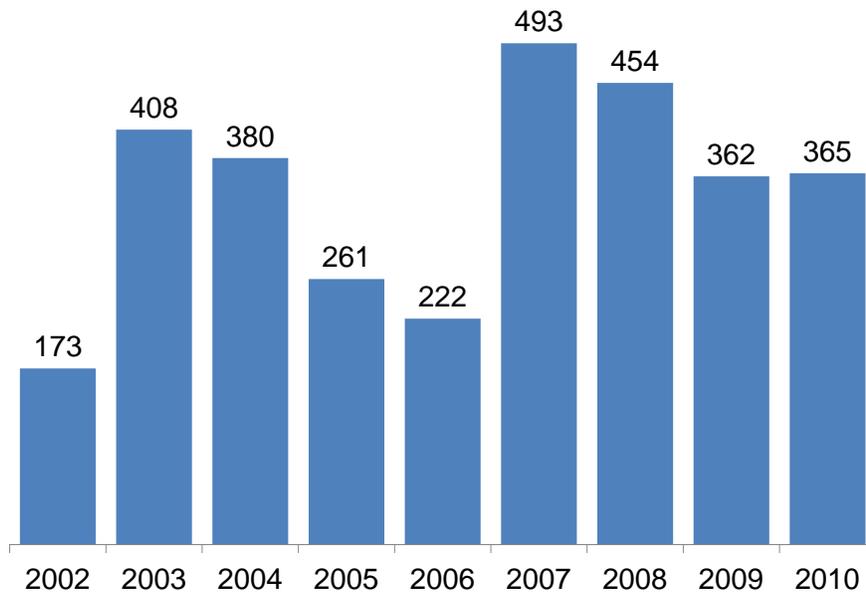
Figure 3: Net migration to Italy (Source: Istat)

by statistical reasons: Romanian migrants who resided in Italy before January 2007 could regularize their status under the free movement of labor in the EU after Romania joined the EU. However, due to its sheer magnitude and its visibility in statistics and public debates, this sharp increase in the official number of Romanian migrants is likely to have led to strong anti-immigration sentiments.

2.2 Media, attitudes and immigration in Italy

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

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Immigration most important issue
for future EU enlargements
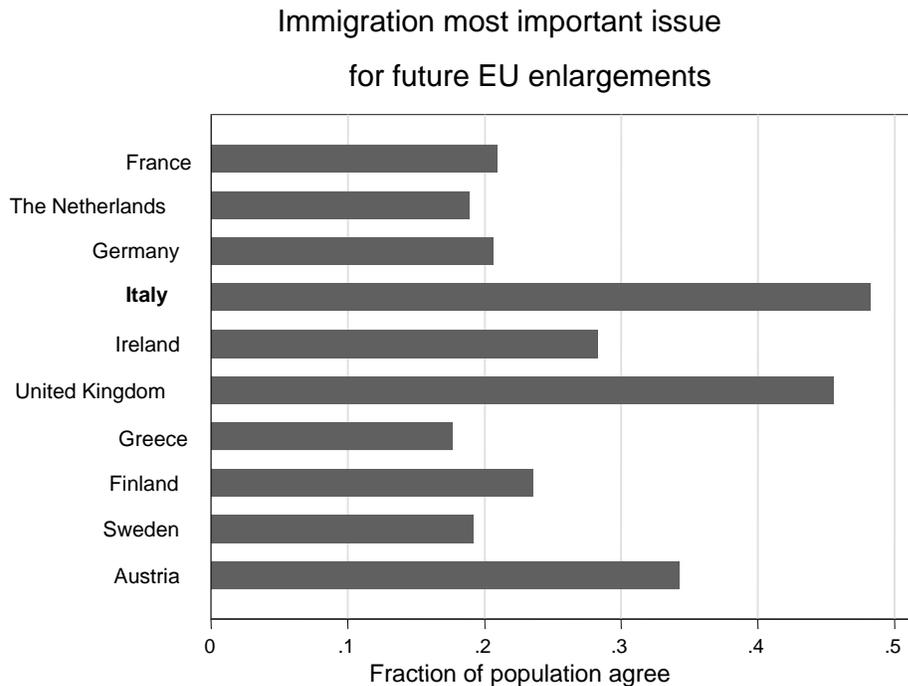
Figure 4: Attitudes towards immigration and EU enlargement (Source: own presentation, data from Flash Eurobarometer 257/2009)

labor migrants from Eastern Europe.

Our own estimates based on data from the Flash Eurobarometer 257/2009, support this finding indicating that Italians consider migration (free movement of persons) to be one of the most problematic issues when it comes to (future) EU enlargements. This strong opinion on migration in relation to EU enlargement is shared with citizens of the UK, another main destination country of migration flows from Eastern Europe after the Eastern enlargement of the EU. The same holds true when it comes to opinions on the relationship of migration and crime. According to the figures of the Transatlantic Trend Survey on Immigration in 2008, about one third of the respondents in UK and Italy agreed strongly to the statement that immigration in general will increase crime in their society. On average, only 22 per cent of European and 25 per cent of US respondents shared this pessimistic view. In addition to this the figures of the Transatlantic survey suggest, that the broad majority of Italians (68 per cent) think that most immigrants are residing illegally in Italy. For comparison, only 15 per cent of the German and 34 per cent UK respondents think in a similar way about the migrants in their country.

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

We Should Further Restrict and Control Immigration

■ Disagree   ▨ Agree
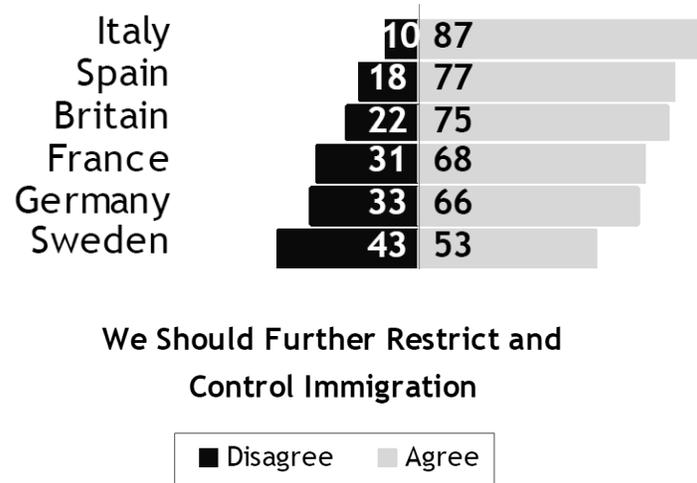
Figure 5: Attitudes towards tighter immmigration controls (Source: PEW Global Attitudes Survey, 2007

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

The immigration-crime nexus is a contentious issue in the Italian media. During the period around 2007, 60 per cent of news related to any form of crime had an immigrant as protagonist (Morcellini coord. 2009). The coverage of immigration was related in 36 percent of the news to terrorism and criminality and in other 36 per cent to illegal migration (Morcellini coord. 2009). The TV is the most used medium and represents the exclusive source of information for a large proportion of the population (D'Avanzo 2007, CENSIS 2007). The media in Italy is historically highly polarised (Hallin and Mancini 2004) and characterised by partisan bias (Durante and Knight 2012). The Italian TV was characterised by a duopoly between the public service broadcaster RAI and the media network controlled by former prime-minister Silvio Berlusconi. Particularly during the period around 2007, the two networks differed considerably in the way they represented immigration in Italy. During this period, the Prodi II Cabinet (2006-2008) governed Italy supported by coalition of the entire parliamentary left wing. Berlusconi did not control the public broadcaster RAI, like he did after his return to office in May 2008.

The RAI channels (Rai1, Rai2, Rai3) abide to a public service mission and attempted to cover themes around race, immigration and diversity in a balanced way. Themes around diversity or addressing problems from the perspective of migrants hardly featured in any Mediaset programmes. These are more leaning towards the ideological right and use a more pronounced stereotyping perspective on immigration. Only RAI channels devoted transmission time to immigration specific programmes: 93 percent of this time was on Rai2 and 7

percent of it on Rai3 (Morcellini coord. 2009). The Mediaset channels (Rettequattro, Canale cinque, Italia Uno) devoted two times more prime transmission time than RAI to crime and security issues (Durante and Knight 2012) often linked to crimes committed by immigrants or to illegal immigration (Diamanti 2008). The Mediaset news programmes "telegiornali" (TG4, TG5 and Studio Aperto) covered 60 percent more news on crime and migration than their RAI counterparts taken together (TG1, TG2 and TG3). Our empirical analysis confirms this divide between RAI and Mediaset. Romanian migrants using Mediaset channels for information on Italy are significantly more likely to consider media reports on immigration as tendentious, compared to those watching RAI channels (we present our data in section 3.1 and this comparison for the variable "Media tendentious" in table 1).

2.3   The "Tor di Quinto" events

Compared to the first semester of 2007, the number of news on migration and crime increased dramatically on both networks. On RAI news programmes it almost doubled, from 888 to 1400 (Diamanti 2008). The reason for this was a crime committed on October the 30th 2007 by a Romanian migrant of Roma origin. He robbed and savagely beat an Italian woman, the wife of a navy officer who was returning home along a poorly lit road in the Tor di Quinto periphery of Rome. The victim subsequently died in hospital.

This incident appeared to be the "final straw that resulted in an explosive debate on safety and security in Italy, coinciding with the presentation by the government of its Security Package on 30 October" (Sartori 2008). The case spurred an unprecedented negative public reaction against Romanian immigrants. At the same time, the media reaction went well beyond the specific case both in Italy (generating a debate around the so called 'Romanian emergency') as well as in Romania, having European wide echoes in the press (not only via the TV but also in the print media e.g. the headline of Corriere della Sera: 'The spectre of monsters from Europe: Is the Romanian bogeyman destined to become Italians' nightmare?).[2]

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Italy: Prodi Defends Expulsions of Romanians", *AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE*, 06.11.2007

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

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

What singled out this decree and shocked the public opinion was that it aimed so openly at Romanians leading to the "securitization" (Boswell 2007) of the debate on Romanian migrants in Italy. Its preamble claimed that "the proportion of crimes committed by foreigners has increased, and those who commit most crimes are the Romanians." Newspapers reported this to be true only in absolute terms, Romanians being the most numerous group of migrants in Italy, but not in relative terms. La Stampa's own analysis finds that the proportion of Romanians reported to, or arrested by, the police in 2006 was lower than in most other foreign groups.

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

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

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

3 Data and method

3.1 The RCI survey

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

For the RCI survey, a two-stage sample design was used to select first regions and four

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

The RCI survey gathered detailed information on socio-demographic characteristics, migration biographies, employment in Italy, ties to the region of origin in Romania, social interactions in the Romanian community and with the Italian society, general life satisfaction, and several questions covering migration plans before and after the Tor di Quinto events. These include: settlement plans in Italy, intentions to return to Romania or to move onwards to a third destination country. It also includes detailed questions about media consumption including the type of media and the TV channels used as main sources of information.

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

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

Two additional features make the RCI data particularly interesting for our research question. First, the survey included detailed questions on media consumption, including the main sources used for information about current affairs in Italy, the exact names of the main TV channels and the frequency of use. The survey allocated a special weight to this section because it initially aimed at covering the formation of attitudes among Romanian migrants in relation to the overwhelmingly bad press they faced in host countries across Europe. These questions allow us to identify migrants who were exposed to the Mediaset channels (controlled by Silvio Berlusconi) and those who were not exposed to these media but used instead the state TV (Rai) as their source of information about Italy. All respondents indicate to have been using the TV as source of information on current affairs in Italy. More than eighty per cent mention it as the single main source and more than ninety per cent use the TV daily or

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

more times a week. The two groups we are constructing (i.e. those with exposure to Mediaset channels and those without it) are of similar size and we present descriptives of their main characteristics in table 1.

The t-tests included in the last two columns of table 1 indicate that the two groups are similar also with regard to some individual characteristics like gender, household income, work effort, attitudes towards the situation and perception of Romanian migrants in the Italian society. They are also no statistically significant differences between the two groups with regard to variables we expect to be highly correlated with return migration: remittances, integration in Italy (having or not Italian friends), to be or not a tied migrant (family migration decisions), religious affiliation (documented to be a strong predictor of migration and return due to specific network ties in Romania and abroad) and house ownership in Romania. As expected migrants exposed to Mediaset channels are more likely to be younger, to have been residents in Italy for longer periods, to be on average slightly more fluent in Italian, less likely to be informally employed and also, as expected, more likely to consider that the Italian media reacted in a tendentious way to the Tor di Quinto events. However, with regard to the selection into media exposure based on education there is no clear pattern. Mediaset exposed migrants are at the same time less likely to have only a low level of education and to be highly skilled compared to migrants who were not exposed to Mediaset channels. As a consequence they are significantly more likely to have a medium level of education. We will control for all these observable characteristics in the various specifications of our regression based difference-in-differences models, but the otherwise rather neutral selection into media exposure is worth noting and important for the discussion of our results.

3.2   The Difference-in-Differences approach

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

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

Migrants who use Mediaset controlled TV channels as their main source of information are more frequently exposed to anti-immigrant sentiments and used to the stereotyping attitudes propagated by this media. We expect them to be therefore less likely to react to

Table 1: Characteristics of Romanian migrants in Italy

	Group					
	Without Mediaset exposure		With Mediaset exposure			
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	Difference	p-value
Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1) - (3)	(t-test)
Age	33.281	(9.256)	32.060	(8.703)	1.221	0.028
Woman	0.430	(0.496)	0.432	(0.496)	-0.002	0.957
Low education	0.150	(0.357)	0.106	(0.308)	0.044	0.033
Medium education	0.672	(0.469)	0.791	(0.406)	-0.118	0.000
High education	0.176	(0,381)	0.102	(0.303)	0.021	0.000
Ethnic Roma	0.119	(0.324)	0.084	(0.278)	0.034	0.066
Informally employed	0.343	(0.475)	0.235	(0.424)	0.108	0.000
Log wage / month	5.281	(0.419)	5.342	(0.476)	-0.060	0.071
Hours work / day	8.179	(1.717)	8.342	(1.468)	-0.163	0.130
HH income / month	1663.292	(1008.958)	1774.420	(1079.339)	-111.128	0.147
Years in Italy	3.809	(3.162)	4.547	(3.345)	-0.738	0.000
Fluent in Italian	0.699	(0.459)	0.755	(0.431)	-0.056	0.042
Minority religion	0.166	(0.373)	0.195	(0.396)	-0.028	0.229
Overall trust	4.743	(2.189)	4.802	(2.126)	-0.060	0.654
Negative Roma	0.687	(0.464)	0.759	(0.428)	-0.072	0.009
Don't migrate	0.487	(0.500)	0.376	(0.485)	0.111	0.000
Worsening opinion	0.717	(0.451)	0.681	(0.467)	0.036	0.200
Media tendentious	0.573	(0.495)	0.647	(0.479)	-0.073	0.015
Deportation justified	0.393	(0.489)	0.442	(0.497)	-0.049	0.107
No Italian contacts	0.628	(0.484)	0.610	(0.488)	0.018	0.549
Poor health	0.177	(0.382)	0.139	(0.346)	0.038	0.087
Tied migrant	0.048	(0.214)	0.066	(0.249)	-0.018	0.193
Migration negative	0.641	(0.480)	0.687	(0.464)	-0.046	0.113
Roma neighbor	0.156	(0.363)	0.080	(0.272)	0.075	0.000
Annual remittances	1668.214	(2966.224)	1541.694	(2585.070)	126.521	0.463
Owns house in Ro.	0.423	(0.494)	0.396	(0.489)	0.027	0.365
Owns land in Ro.	0.320	(0.467)	0.269	(0.444)	0.051	0.068
Share foreign born*	6.409	(1.446)	6.577	(0.931)	-0.169	0.026
Share Ro. migrants*	24.049	(10.306)	25.798	(10.041)	-1.749	0.005
Unemployment rate*	4.769	(2.167)	4.365	(1.480)	0.404	0.000
Observations	565		498			

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

the shock in attitudes after 30.10.2007 as their counterparts who used other TV channels as main source of information in Italy. We define the group exposed to Mediaset channels as our control group. For those who did not use Mediaset channels, the Tor di Quinto events and the reaction afterwards came as a massive shock. They are our treatment group because they were not exposed to negative attitudes from Italians before "Tor di Quinto". This definition of treatment and control groups informs our baseline difference-in-differences approach.

By exploiting this variation in media consumption among Romanian migrants, our intention is to establish a causal link between changes in public attitudes and settlement intentions. The validity of our approach is based on the assumption that, other things being equal, the trend in settlement intentions in the group of migrants who are exposed to the Mediaset channels will be the same as among those who are not exposed. The common trend assumption would therefore imply that the settlement intentions in each of the two groups were moving in a parallel way before the shock. Due to the limitations of our data, we cannot directly test for the validity of this assumption. We do however assume that individuals in the control group would always have slightly lower settlement intentions than individuals in our treated group and, more importantly, that this difference between treatment and control group (Δ settlement) would be constant across time, e.g. at various points in time, $t - 5$, $t - 4$, $t - 3$, $t - 2$, $t - 1$ Δ settlement would be the same, with $t = 30$ *October* 2007, and $-1, -2 \ldots$ being months or years before.

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

$$P\left(\text{settlement}_{it} = 1\right) = \Phi[\alpha + \beta \cdot Z_{it} + \gamma_0 \cdot \text{No mediaset exposure}_i \tag{1}$$
$$+ \gamma_1 \cdot \text{post"} Tor\ di\ Quinto"_t$$
$$+ \gamma_2 \cdot (\text{No mediaset exposure} \times \text{post"} Tor\ di\ Quinto")_{it}] + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where settlement$_{it}$ is a dichotomous variable taking the value one if the respondent i plans to stay in Italy at time t. Z is a vector of personal characteristics (in our data most of them time invariant), while No mediaset exposure$_i$ is a dummy variable taking the value one if the respondent does not use Berlusconi owned Mediaset programs as the main source of information and post"Tor di Quinto"$_t$ takes the value one for the time after 30.10.2007. The coefficient for the interaction of these two dummy variables, γ_2 is of interest for our analysis but its magnitude does not represent the partial effect. We therefore estimated the predicted response in settlement intentions for those who were not exposed to Mediaset channels at the means of the covariates and report this in the last row of table 3.

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

Media consumption	Before "Tor di Quinto" (1)	After "Tor di Quinto" (2)	Difference (2) −(1) (3)	Diff.-in-differences (4)
Treatment group				
Non-Mediaset [N = 1,118]	.660 (.020)	.459 (.021)	-.200 (.029)	
Control group				
Mediaset [N = 930]	.641 (.022)	.533 (.023)	-.108 (.032)	-.092 (.043)

Notes: The table reports mean intentions to settle in Italy of Romanian migrants.
Intention to settle equals one if migrants plan to stay in Italy on a medium to long term basis and have no concrete plans to return during the next twelve months.
Standard errors in parentheses.

4 Discussion of the results

We present some prima facie evidence on the impact of Tor di Quinto on settlement intentions of Romanian migrants in table 2. This includes the unconditional differences in average settlement intentions in Italy before and after the Tor di Quinto events for our treatment and control groups, as well as the simple difference-in-differences (DiD).

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

indicates a reduction of 9 percentage points and significantly different from nil (p-value= .032). The size of the corresponding impact on intentions to settle in Italy equals 14 per cent.

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

Full sample: Romanian Migrants in Italy

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
No mediaset exposure (γ_0)	0.052 (0.079)	0.050 (0.080)	0.128 (0.082)	0.137 (0.083)	0.225 (0.088)
Post (γ_1)	-0.514 (0.076)	-0.518 (0.076)	-0.539 (0.077)	-0.545 (0.078)	-0.596 (0.081)
Post ×.No mediaset (γ_2)	-0.249 (0.111)	-0.251 (0.111)	-0.260 (0.113)	-0.262 (0.113)	-0.282 (0.118)
Constant	0.423 (0.054)	0.710 (0.145)	0.535 (0.185)	0.656 (0.200)	1.119 (0.350)
Observations	2,126	2,126	2,120	2,120	2,058
Log likelihood	-1418	-1407	-1354	-1341	-1227
Predicted settlement response for no Mediaset exposure	-0.092 (0.043)	-0.097 (0.043)	-0.101 (0.044)	-0.102 (0.044)	-0.110 (0.046)

Notes: The dependent variable is settlement intentions in Italy. It equals one if migrants plan to stay in Italy on either medium or long term basis and have no concrete plans to return during the next twelve months. Standard errors in parentheses. Post equals one for the period after the "*Tor di Quinto events*" (30.10.2007). "*No Mediaset exposure*" equals one for those who do not use Mediaset controlled channels as their main source of information about current affairs in Italy and the Italian society.

Column (5) includes dummies for the regions of residence in Italy as well as for the 43 counties representing the regions of origin in Romania.

The predicted response in settlement intentions for no Mediaset exposure is the treatment effect on the treated group, i.e. $\Phi(\gamma_0 + \gamma_1 + \gamma_2) - \Phi(\gamma_0 + \gamma_1)$. It is estimated at the means of the covariates.

Table 3 reports the results from our probit model outlined in equation (1). The first column in table 3 re-produces the coefficient corresponding to the difference-in-differences reported in table 2. In column 2, we add the socio-demographic controls available in our data set. We observe that the coefficient of interest tends to increase slightly and remains highly significant. In columns (3) to (5) we introduce more variables that can potentially reverse or affect the tendency to settle in the host country. The addition of variables capturing links to the Italian society as well as the migrants' own perception of native attitudes and of the media reaction (column 3) tends to increase slightly the main coefficient of interest. The same holds true if we control for additional migration characteristics (column 4) like the type of migration (tied migrant), household links to Romania (land and house ownership) as well as the migrants' revealed own views on the impact of migration. Adding regional fixed effects, controlling for regions of origin in Romania and regions of residence in Italy, tend to further increase the main coefficient of interest and the corresponding predicted response in settlement intentions. Overall, the addition of a large number of control variables does not greatly affect the value and significance of coefficients. Our preferred estimate of the response in settlement intentions is .11 per cent, with a standard-error of .046 and consequently a p-value of .017. This means that intentions to settle have decreased amongst the Romanian immigrants following the media coverage of Tore di Quinto by 11 percentage points with a base value of 66 per cent, i.e. an impact of almost 17 per cent.

5   Extensions and falsification tests

The nature of selection into return migration is of crucial importance for the long term developmental impact of migration on the sending countries. We are therefore particularly interested if the impact of native attitudes on settlement intentions is random or if it affects the selection of return migrants.

In order to investigate this, we need to find the partial effects on sub-groups based on education, age, Italian language fluency and labor market experience proxied by years since migration in Italy. We estimate therefore probit models similar to that from equation (1) but incorporating triple interaction terms (DDD) with dummy variables which define the sub-group of interest:

$$
\begin{aligned}
P\left(\text{settlement}_{it} = 1\right) = \Phi[\alpha + \beta \cdot Z_{it} &+ \gamma_1 \cdot \text{No mediaset exposure}_i \quad\quad\quad (2)\\
&+ \gamma_2 \cdot \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"}_t + \gamma_3 \cdot \text{subgroup}_i\\
&+ \gamma_{12} \cdot (\text{No mediaset exposure} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"})_{it}\\
&+ \gamma_{13} \cdot (\text{No mediaset exposure} \times \text{subgroup})_i\\
&+ \gamma_{23} \cdot (\text{subgroup} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"})_{it}\\
&+ \gamma_{123} \cdot (\text{No mediaset exposure} \times \text{post"}\textit{Tor di Quinto"} \times \text{subgroup})_{it}] + \varepsilon_{it}
\end{aligned}
$$

Table 4: Treatment effects for subgroups

	No covariates (1)	Regression DiD Demographic characteristics (2)	Regional characteristics (3)
Baseline treatment group			
No mediaset×post×low education	-.133	-.132	-.138
	(.061)	(.060)	(.061)
No mediaset×post×med. education	.083	.088	.093
	(.097)	(.102)	(.105)
No mediaset×post×high education	.016	.034	.046
	(.127)	(.137)	(.138)
No mediaset×post×language	.037	.041	.120
(fluent in Italian)	(.094)	(.099)	(.253)
No mediaset×post×recent migrant	-.004	-.023	-.058
(in Italy less than 3 years)	(.090)	(.079)	(.208)
No mediaset×post×over 40	-.076	-.074	-.071
(older than 40)	(.143)	(.138)	(.141)

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

where all variables are the same as in (1) and subgroup$_i$ takes the value one if respondent i belongs to the sub-group of interest.

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

The first column in table 4 present the raw difference-in-differences for the sub-groups while columns (2) and (3) include covariates. [4] These results were estimated using triple interaction terms and predicting the marginal effects at the means of the covariates using third differentials. Given our interest in the implications of our results for the potential self-selection into (having intentions to) out-migration, it is worth noting that hardly any sub-group effects are statistically significant. Most effects are much smaller than our baseline results for the whole sample.

The only group for which the impact is statistically significant at 5 per cent is that for low education. After the inclusion of covariates the magnitude of the effect for this group is above the one estimated for the whole sample being 13 percentage points, with a corresponding p-value of .03. In other words, low educated migrants were decreasing their intentions to settle

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[4]In column 2 we control for socio-demographic and migration characteristics as well as for variables measuring integration. The results in column 2 are therefore comparable with the results in column 4 of table 3. The results reported in column 3 are comparable to those of column 5 in table 3.

in Italy on a medium to long term basis by 13 percentage points which given the base value of 70 per cent in the group, suggest a reduction of settlement intentions by about 20 per cent. The implications for the selection into settlement and out-migration are straightforward. The implied positive selection into settlement means that without accounting for out-migration any predictions of the integration prospects of migrants in Italy will be biased upwards. Even if out-migration intentions are not realized, those belonging to the lower educated might have less incentives to invest in specific skills or language and will face a long term disadvantage.

Moreover, the described selection pattern is likely to reduce the potential gains of return migration for the sending country. Piracha and Vadean (2010) have shown that low skilled return migrants are less likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities than skilled returners. The same holds true for failed migrants who leave the destination country before they have reached their savings goal. For the case of Egypt, Marchetta (2012) has demonstrated that migration experience also increases the survival rate of entrepreneurial activities and by this generates a long-term contribution to employment creation. The fact that return migrants are negatively selected in terms of education and leave the destination earlier is likely to reduce two main benefits of return migration: entrepreneurial take-up and sustainability of self-employment. It is also very likely to impact on the saving behavior of migrants (Piracha and Zhu 2012) and eventually on both the magnitude and the use of remittances in the home country (Piracha and Randazzo 2011).

Our data do not allow us to include a placebo period in the analysis. Since the time period we are concerned with is very short, i.e. one month before and after the Tor di Quinto events, it is highly unlikely that our difference-in-differences results are due to some other events occurring in the same period. However, we want to rule out the possibility that our estimated relationship between a shock in anti-immigrant sentiments and settlement intentions may capture omitted factors that affect for example both the choices over media consumption and the intended duration of stay in Italy. Such factors could be related e.g. to unobserved affinity for the culture or local amenities in the destination country, or to preferences over consumption in the region of origin which affect migrants' attitudes towards the host society. We construct two types of falsification tests in order to increase the confidence that our results are not driven by such hidden biases due to omitted characteristics. First, we perform the same difference-in-differences analysis on our treatment and control groups but using a "fake" outcome, i.e. an outcome known to be unaffected by the treatment (Rosenbaum 2002). Second, we use our outcome of primary interest, settlement intentions in the destination country, but we define the treatment and control groups for the difference-in-differences analysis such that they are not affected by the shock in public attitudes. In both cases we should find no significant impacts. This would support our interpretation that the relationship between a shock in native attitudes and settlement intentions is not coincidental and unlikely to be driven by omitted variables.

We use first three sets of variables which record the perception of Romanian migrants with regard to the politico-economic situation *in Romania* before and after the events. These

Table 5: Falsification tests: unaffected outcomes

	Overall economic conditions (1)	Employment / labor market characteristics (2)	Overall political conditions (3)

dependent variable: negative perception of situation in Romania
treatment group: without Mediaset exposure
control group: with Mediaset exposure

No mediaset×post	.014	.025	.059
	(.033)	(.024)	(.039)
No mediaset×post×low. education	.040	-.023	.043
	(.046)	(.049)	(.079)
No mediaset×post×med. education	.058	.029	.058
	(.051)	(.050)	(.051)
No mediaset×post×high education	.130	.003	.045
	(.144)	(.063)	(.105)
No mediaset×post×language	.080	.021	.080
(fluent in Italian)	(.074)	(.055)	(.074)
No mediaset×post×recent migrant	.003	.012	.004
(in Italy less than 3 years)	(.053)	(.043)	(.053)
No mediaset×post×over 40	-.036	-.006	.114
(older than 40)	(.070)	(.055)	(.085)

Notes: The dependent variable takes the value one if the perceptions on the evolution of economic conditions, the labor market situation and the political context in Romania are respectively negative and zero otherwise. Standard errors in parentheses.
The marginal effects are from partial interactions in probit models.
For subgroups, these are estimated using third differences.

variables cover: (i) the overall economic conditions in Romania, (ii) the employment and labour market situation and (iii) the political context and the functioning of institutions. The change in these perceptions should not be affected by the shock in native attitudes. For all three variables, we run the same models as in equations (1) and (2) using the same controls but the perception variables as "fake" outcome. The results are reported in table 5 for both the DD effects (first row) and the subgroup effects using third differences (DDD). None the effects is statistically significant.

This means that in terms of outcomes which could not reasonably be caused by a shock in native attitudes, our treatment and control groups are not statistically different, which is what we would expect had the media exposure been assigned at random.

Similarly, for the second set of tests, we change the definition of our treatment using those who have negative perceptions on the situations in Romania as our "fake" control group and those with neutral or positive perceptions as treatment while keeping our main outcome of interest (settlement intention in the host country). The main rational here is that people

Table 6: Falsification tests: unaffected groups

	Overall economic conditions (1)	Employment / labor market characteristics (2)	Overall political conditions (3)
dependent variable: settlement intentions at destination			
treatment group: negative perception on Romania (col. 1, 2 and 3)			
control group: stable perception on Romanian conditions			
Negative×post	-.033	-.051	.022
	(.050)	(.058)	(.045)
Negative×post×low. education	-.045	-.008	.134
	(.161)	(.152)	(.132)
Negative×post×med. education	.019	.079	-.054
	(.128)	(.109)	(.100)
Negative×post×high education	.038	-.125	-.026
	(.169)	(.132)	(.128)
Negative×post×language	.002	.059	-.038
(fluent in Italian)	(.130)	(.119)	(.102)
Negative×post×recent migrant	-.025	-.099	-.047
(in Italy less than 3 years)	(.118)	(.108)	(.094)
Negative×post×over 40	-.030	.031	.003
(older than 40)	(.171)	(.163)	(.147)

Notes: The dependent variable is settlement intentions in Italy (same as in tables 2-4).
Standard errors in parentheses.
The marginal effects are from partial interactions in probit models.
For subgroups, these are estimated using third differences.

who have negative opinion on their origin country should not revise their settlement intention following the Tor di Quinto event in comparison to those who have no such negative opinions about their origin country. All three outcomes (i.e. overall economy, labour market and political context) measuring negative perceptions of the situation in Romania are positively correlated to settlement intentions. We run again the same models as in equations (1) and (2) but using the perception variables to define the treatment groups and keeping our outcome of primary interest as dependent variable. The results are reported in Table 6 where each column corresponds to one of the three definitions of treatment and control groups and they show no significance at all. We therefore do not find an impact of the shock in attitudes on settlement intentions when using alternate treated and control groups, which we interpret as further support for our identification strategy.

The results from tables 5 and 6 are consistent with the absence of bias in our estimation. They support our hypothesis that changes in native attitudes have a significant impact on settlement intentions in the destination country and this is not driven by omitted characteristics.

6 Conclusions

The out-migration rate of foreign born after five years of residency varies greatly across the main destinations countries: it was e.g. on average 20 percent in the US, 40 percent in the UK, 60 percent in Ireland (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008). The self-selection of return migrants leads to important compositional changes in the cohorts of foreign born who remain at destination. These changes are crucial for understanding both the economic assimilation of immigrants in the host societies and the impact of return migration for the source countries. Lubotsky (2007) shows that not accounting for selective return migration leads to overestimating the rate of economic assimilation during the first decade spent in the host country. There is to date no conclusive evidence about what determines the selection into return migration.

After the 2008 economic crisis, several major destination countries saw a surge in support for nationalist and populist parties. This led mainstream politicians to adopt harsh anti-immigration positions. In this context, negative attitudes towards migration can greatly influence choices over return migration. However, no empirical research dealt until now with the effects of native attitudes on out-migration decisions.

The novelty of our study lies in uncovering a significant relationship between changes in public attitudes and migrants' settlement intentions. We exploit the variation in media consumption among Romanian migrants in Italy and use data after a unique shock in the attitudes of Italians towards Romanian migrants. Our results indicate that Romanian migrants who have been affected by the shock in native attitudes are less likely to plan to settle in Italy. We find a reduction in settlement intentions on average by more than 10 percent which can be attributed to the change in natives' attitudes. The impact is not random. Less skilled migrants are more affected by the shock in attitudes than medium and highly skilled migrants.

Our findings complement the results of Friebel et al. (2013) who show that migration intentions from a developing country are affected by xenophobic sentiments in the destination country. The same holds true for the work of Gorinas and Pytliková (2013) who analyse the link between native attitudes and migration flows in a cross-country setting. They conclude that natives' hostility, measured by the extent of potential labor market discrimination, reduces migration inflows. Several other studies confirm the importance of migration intentions and their role in predicting actual migration (e.g. Burda et al. 1998, Gordon and Molho 1995).

The implications for the destination country are straightforward. Negative attitudes affect migrants who have the lowest skills and therefore lowest earnings in a particular cohort. They will have no incentives to invest in country specific skills or language. If they do return, any predictions on the economic assimilation of immigrants will have to be adjusted downwards to account for the negative selection into return migration. If they stay in Italy, persistent return intentions will hamper their socio-economic integration. The implications for the

sending countries are manifold. The recent tide in anti-immigrant feelings may induce more return migrants from the lower end of the skill distribution in any immigrant cohort. This reduces the expected benefits from temporary migration. Changes in intended durations of stay may also affect both the magnitude and the use of remittances sent from abroad (Piracha and Randazzo 2011). This in turn might reduce the potential growth inducing effects of remittances in sending countries, often developing or transition economies.

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