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Working Paper

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Working Paper, No. 126

Provided in Cooperation with:

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Dipartimento di Economia e Finanza (DISCE)

Suggested Citation: Pieroni, Luca; Rosselló Roig, Melcior; Salmasi, Luca; Turati, Gilberto (2023) : Legal status and voluntary abortions by immigrants, Working Paper, No. 126, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Dipartimento di Economia e Finanza (DISCE), Milano

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UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE
Dipartimento di Economia e Finanza

Working Paper Series

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Legal status and voluntary abortions by immigrants*

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January 2023

Abstract: We estimate the effect of granting legal status to immigrant women on voluntary abortions. We exploit the 2007 EU enlargement as an exogenous shock to legal status for Romanian and Bulgarian women, considering Italy as a destination country. Using a standard Difference-in-Differences model, we estimate a decline between 60% and 70% in voluntary pregnancy termination (VPT) rates for the new EU citizens from the two Eastern countries. We also introduce a novel framework to separate the total effect of the enlargement into a “citizenship” effect due to (legal or illegal) migrants already present in Italy and a “selection” effect due to new flows of immigrants. We show that the findings are robust to several alternative explanations. The drop in abortions points to legal status as a way to empower immigrant women.

Keywords: Immigration, Abortions, Legal status, EU Enlargement.

JEL Codes: F22, K37, I12, J13.

*We wish to thank Michelle Brock, Catia Nicodemo, Paolo Pinotti, and all seminar participants at the VI Workshop on immigration, health and wellbeing (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Rome) for insightful comments on a preliminary draft. We acknowledge funding from the Università Cattolica D3.2 Strategic Research Grant “Economic and Social Effects of Migration” (ESEM). The empirical analysis has been carried out at ISTAT’s Microdata Analysis Laboratory (ADELE) and complies with the relevant legislation on the protection of statistical confidentiality and protection of personal data. The results and opinions expressed are the authors’ sole responsibility and do not involve official statistical officers.

1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, the European Union (EU) has admitted thirteen new Member States in three successive waves (2004, 2007 and 2013). Many Eastern European countries (like Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria) joined the EU. According to article 79 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), admission to the EU allowed citizens of these countries to enjoy the rights that come with EU membership. Before the enlargement, citizens from Eastern European countries needed a formal visa (or a residence permit) to reside as legal migrants in EU countries, but effective access was difficult due to rigid labour market quotas. After the enlargement, EU membership allowed individuals from admitted countries to freely move and settle as legal migrants in any country of the Union. EU citizenship has been shown to be important in several dimensions, as it facilitates the possibility to take advantage of educational and labour market opportunities, as well as to invest in stronger relationships, start new families and make more conscious fertility decisions in the new country of residence, all of which can affect the propensity to commit crimes (e.g., Fasani (2016)).

In this paper, we focus specifically on the 2007 EU enlargement, when Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, and we focus on Italy as a destination country. The share of immigrants in Italy increased significantly, from 2.3 % in 2000 to around 8.9% in 2019. Immigrants from Romania constitute by far the largest foreign group in Italy, with a long history of migration starting in 1989, after the fall of the communist regime led by Mr Ceausescu, long before Romania joined the EU.

Our aim is to estimate the causal impact of obtaining the migrant legal status on migrant women's abortion decisions in Italy. Abortion, or voluntary pregnancy termination (VPT), is legal in Italy since law 194/1978 and it is supplied free of charge by the Italian National Health Service (the Italian tax-funded public insurance scheme, NHS from now on), like many other maternal care services. Official available statistics provided by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT, henceforth) show that migrant women undergoing a VPT rose from 8,967 in 1995 (about 7% of total VPTs) to 40,224 VPTs in 2007 (34% of total VPTs); since then, the number of VPTs stabilizes and decreases thereafter, reaching 25,503 VPTs in 2017 (30.3% of total VPTs).¹ Data from the Italian

¹Information on the citizenship of migrant women undergoing VPT in Italy are available since 1995. See: http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_2924_allegato.pdf.

Ministry of Health indicate that while the abortion rate is 5.8 per 1,000 women among Italian nationals, among foreign nationals it is around 12 per 1,000 women in 2019. The difference is systematically higher in the foreign population of all ages. Both the VPT rate in Italian and foreign women shows a decreasing trend in recent years.

As in Mastrobuoni & Pinotti (2015), our identification strategy exploits the 2007 EU enlargement as an exogenous shock to obtain the legal status for (i) Romanian and Bulgarian women already present in Italy legally, because they do not need to renew their residence permit, and, to a much greater extent, (ii) for those already present in Italy illegally, because they become legal migrants, as well as (iii) for those who decide to settle in Italy attracted by the new opportunities coming with the EU membership. To identify how the newly acquired rights that come with the legal migrant status affect the VPT decision of migrant women, we adopt a standard Difference-in-Differences (DD) strategy, defining Romanian and Bulgarian women as the treated group and women coming from countries that have not yet obtained EU citizenship rights (but have asked to join the EU) as the control group. Specifically, we consider immigrants from those countries negotiating in 2007 their future entry into the European Union, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. These candidate countries mostly belong to the same geographical area and share similar linguistic characteristics as Romania and Bulgaria. The only exceptions are Iceland and Turkey, which represents however less than 2% of all women from candidate countries using the legal VPT service.

Our empirical analysis is based on data on *all* legal VPTs in Italy relative to the period 2002-2010. The data were collected by ISTAT and include also a large set of information on women's socio-economic characteristics. Our main findings suggest that, after Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, Romanian and Bulgarian women reduced their demand for VPTs compared to women from candidate countries by 57-68% depending on the model specification. We also show that this reduction can be separated into two components, which are both caused by the enlargement: the first component is a "citizenship" effect due to the change in behaviour of those (legal or illegal) migrants already present in Italy (accounting for a share of the total effect ranging between 30% and 60%), while the second one is a "selection" effect due to the new migrants attracted by the opportunities opened by the EU membership (accounting for a share of the total

effect between 40% and 70%). Given the selection of different migrants, we also consider the semi-parametric DD estimator developed in Abadie (2005) to compute a set of weights improving the comparability between the treated and the control group. We show that the drop in VPT rates for EU2 migrants is not sensitive to alternative weighting procedures. The findings are robust to a number of alternative explanations for the observed variation in Romanian and Bulgarian women's VPT rates after 2007, such as the role of (i) gynaecologists against performing abortions for ethical motivations, (ii) illegal immigrants, and (iii) illegal abortions. We also show that our baseline results (i) are not sensitive to the choice of candidate countries included in the control group, (ii) are stable across the countries of origin that make up our treatment group, and (iii) are not sensitive to the inclusion of abortions performed after 90 days. Overall, our results suggest that improved living conditions for migrants allowed by EU membership resulted in more conscious decisions for Romanian and Bulgarian women in terms of their career, family, and fertility, hence reducing the need for VPT.

This paper provides three contributions to the literature. First, we add to the literature analyzing the effects of granting legal status to immigrants by considering a new outcome related to women's health, i.e., the decision to access VPT. The general message of this literature is that returns to citizenship are positive along several dimensions: labour market outcomes, consumption, crime, and women's opportunities. Many papers explore the effect of citizenship rights on labour market outcomes. For instance, Lozano & Sorensen (2011) find a positive effect on the long-term earnings of undocumented workers who receive legal immigrant status. Gathmann & Keller (2014) find that the returns to citizenship are higher for women than for men; in detail, acquiring citizenship increases the female assimilation rate (defined as wage returns per additional year lived in the host country) by 70%. There are also studies looking at the effects of citizenship rights on consumption. For example, Dustmann et al. (2017) analyse the effect of immigrants legal status on their consumption behaviour in Italy during the period from 2004 to 2007. They found that undocumented immigrants consume around 40% less than documented immigrants. Adamopoulou & Kaya (2020), using the same data, find a positive effect of obtaining EU citizenship on the consumption and working conditions of illegal migrants. Some papers consider the effect of citizenship rights on crime. For instance, Mastrobuoni & Pinotti (2015) use the change in citizenship status after the 2007 EU enlargement (like

we do in this paper) to assess its impact on crime. Findings suggest that obtaining the status of legal migrant produces a 50% decrease in recidivism, and it explains between 50% and 66% of the variations in crime figures between legal and illegal immigrants. Fasani (2018) analyses the effect of two amnesty programmes in Italy, showing that regions where a higher proportion of foreigners obtained legal status registered a greater decrease in crime rates of non-EU immigrants compared to other regions. Adda et al. (2020) present evidence on marriage decisions of natives and migrants focusing on the role of legal status and cultural distance, showing that access to legal status reduces by 60% the probability of immigrants intermarrying with natives, and it increases by 20% the hazard rate of separation for mixed couples formed before legal status acquisition. Our contribution to this literature is of an additional positive effect of obtaining citizenship rights for migrants, namely that improving career and family opportunities for women decrease the need to recur to VPT.

Second, we add to the economic literature on abortions by studying the causal impact of the extension of legal status on women's decisions to access VPT in Europe. Most of the literature focuses on the United States, as policy changes and differences between states offer an unparalleled opportunity to define control and treatment groups. The literature revolves around three main policy changes: (i) the repeal of the Comstock-era restrictions on the sale of contraceptive pills following *Griswold v. Connecticut* in 1965 (Bailey 2010, Ananat & Hungerman 2012); (ii) increased federal funding for local family planning during the mid-1960s and early 1970s (Kearney & Levine 2009) and (iii) parental consent in the case of female minors (Joyce et al. 2006, Colman et al. 2013). The results of these studies are mixed. The introduction of the pill points to a decrease in the proportion of pregnant women under the age of 22, hence a reduction in the need to access VPT. As for the introduction of parental consent, the literature finds fewer abortions in states where parental consent is mandatory and an increase in abortions in neighbouring states that do not subscribe to such laws. Autorino et al. (2020) is the only paper on VPT in Italy. The authors inspect whether conscientious objection (71% of gynaecologists in Italy refuse to participate in voluntary termination of pregnancy practices) has an impact on abortion rates. They find that, in regions where there is a large number of doctors who are unwilling to perform abortions, women need to move to other regions to obtain the treatment. We add to this literature by showing that empowering migrant women

and allowing them legal status is a powerful tool to reduce abortions.

Third, as a methodological contribution, we propose a novel strategy to disentangle the “selection” effect from the “citizenship” effect, both caused by the possibility to obtain the legal status offered to Romanian and Bulgarian women by the EU enlargement. We show that the total decrease in the VPT rate of Romanian and Bulgarian women is due not only to the acquisition of rights related to obtaining EU citizenship by women who were already living in Italy before 2007 (both legally with a residence permit, or illegally), but it is also due to the prospect of improved living conditions after enlargement which attracted Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to Italy.

The remainder of the paper is as follows: section 2 provides essential background information on migration policies and on VPT in Italy. Section 3 describes the data used in the analysis and section 4 the empirical strategy. Section 5 presents the results and the robustness checks. Concluding remarks are in section 6.

2 Institutional background

2.1 Migration policies in Italy and the role of EU enlargement

In the last two decades, the number of foreign-born individuals legally resident in Italy has increased significantly, from 1.4 million in 2000 to more than 5 million in 2020, out of a total population of about 60 million inhabitants. In terms of countries of origin, the largest groups are represented by citizens born in Romania (about 1.2 million, more than 22% of the total number of migrants), Albania, and Morocco (0.4 million each, about 8%). Residents from other European countries are 2.6 million and represent about half of the total number of foreign-born persons residing in the country; 1.5 million are nationals of other EU states. Available estimates provided by the Foundation for initiatives and studies on multi-ethnicity (ISMU) suggest that illegal migrants decreased from 34.3% of the total immigrant population in 2002 to 6% in 2013.

The number of legal migrants residing in Italy is influenced by the national migration policy. A clear distinction must be made between nationals of other EU Member States and nationals of non-EU countries. As for the former, Article 79 of the TFEU allows EU nationals to enter and settle in any other Member State with respect to the one in which they were born. According to D.Lgs. 30/2007, since 11 April 2007, EU migrants only

have to register with the Registry Office of the municipality in which they reside within three months of their arrival to become legal residents in Italy.

As for non-EU migrants, the D.Lgs. 286/1998 (the Italian Migration Law revised in 2002 by the Bossi-Fini Law) requires a visa (for a short period of up to three months) or a residence permit (for longer periods) to reside legally in the country. The reasons for granting a visa or permit are the same: work, study, or family reunification. In particular, focusing on work permits, the Italian legislation establishes rigid quotas (Article 21 of D.Lgs. 286/1998), specifically determining the total number of permits available by the type of contract and the province where the employer is located. The Migration Law specifies that Italian firms seeking non-EU workers must post job vacancies at Italian Consulates. Potential migrants to Italy can then apply for a residence permit only if an employer acts as a sponsor. If the application is approved and falls within the quota set by the government, non-EU citizens receive a residence permit from the consulate and can migrate to Italy. The permit is valid for the duration of the contract and, during this period, family reunification of children and spouses in Italy is accepted. However, once the contract has expired, the migrant must either find a job within six months or leave the country with the family.

However, finding an employer to sponsor a non-EU worker is difficult and unlikely. Many foreigners cross the border illegally or arrive as tourists (on a short-term visa) and then remain as illegal migrants afterwards. Like other EU countries, also Italy responded to the increase of unauthorised migrants by proposing massive regularisations on a quasi-regular basis. In particular, the 2002 and 2006 regularisations proved effective in drastically reducing the number of illegal immigrants in Italy, granting regularisation to 634,000 (i.e., 28.96% of the total immigrant population in Italy in 2002) and 170,000 individuals (i.e., 4.98% of the total immigrant population in Italy in 2006), respectively (Brick 2011). Alternatively, to avoid the illegal status, a migrant can apply to obtain Italian nationality. However, citizenship can be granted only after a long period of ten years of uninterrupted legal residence, or it is granted at birth according to the principle of *jus sanguinis* if at least one of the parents is Italian.²

²There are also very rare occasions that citizenship might be granted on the grounds of the *jus solis*, i.e., citizenship by being born in the country: parents are either stateless or unknown; parents are unable to transfer their citizenship to the newborn according to the law of the country of origin. The Italian law also allows for a modified version of the *jus solis* principle: a foreigner born in Italy who resided legally without interruption until the age of eighteen can become an Italian citizen by right if she/he

Given the large differences between EU and non-EU migrants in terms of the rules governing legal migration to Italy, episodes of EU enlargement represent clear cut-off points when it comes to changing the legal status of migrants from the new EU Member States. The first EU enlargement dates back to 2004 when eight Eastern European countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary) and two Mediterranean islands (Malta and Cyprus) acceded to the EU. A second episode dates back to 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU. The latest round of enlargement was in 2013, with Croatia joining the EU. In general, citizens of the new EU countries can move freely within the EU. However, previous members could impose limitations on certain workers for up to seven years after accession.

In this paper, we focus on Romania and Bulgaria. Since January 2007, Romanian and Bulgarian citizens can enter Italy with a valid identity card or passport. According to D.Lgs. 30/2007, immigrants from these two new Member States can reside in Italy if they: (i) have a regular job, (ii) have sufficient financial resources and health insurance, (iii) are enrolled in a school or in a vocational training programme offered by a public or private institution, (iv) are family members of an EU citizen who, according to the above conditions, regularly resides in Italy. The fulfilment of one of the above conditions, especially in terms of employment, was facilitated by the Italian government which, only three days before the 2007 enlargement, decided to grant full rights to new EU citizens and to fully liberalise the labour market. Italy was fully open to workers from the new EU member states in sectors such as agriculture, tourism and hospitality, domestic work, care work, construction, manufacturing of machinery and equipment, and seasonal work. For the remaining sectors, for which the government had not set a quota, the employer had to submit an application for authorisation. However, Italy relaxed the quota threshold to allow more migrants. Thus, in practice, Italy removed almost all entry barriers for workers from Romania and Bulgaria.

2.2 Access to VPT

The Italian NHS is a national insurance scheme, tax-funded, covering a very broad set of constitutionally defined services, including maternal and child care. VPT is regulated

declares her/his willingness to become Italian; this possibility expires within a year after reaching the age of eighteen.

under Law 194/1978 and is provided free of charge by the NHS, which was established the same year. Article 4 of Law 194/1978 states that during the first 90 days of pregnancy, a woman may undergo a voluntary abortion if pregnancy, childbirth, or maternity may compromise her physical or mental health, taking into account her health, her economic, social or family characteristics, the circumstances in which the conception took place or the likelihood that the child is affected by anomalies or malformations.³ After 90 days of pregnancy, VPT is only allowed for therapeutic purposes, i.e., when the woman's mental and physical health is at risk.

In Italy, legal abortion can only be performed in a hospital. Formally, in order to have an abortion, a gynaecologist must issue a certificate specifying the presumed date of conception. Once this certificate has been obtained, after seven days, the woman can undergo the surgical procedure in the hospital of her choice. The procedure is confidential and independent of the partner's consent. In addition, all women (national and migrant) are granted access to legal VPT, and access for migrants was independent of having a legal residence permit even before 2007. Foreign women can have an abortion free of charge according to the same rules valid for Italian women. However, despite having the right to access the NHS, illegal immigrant women may fear that accessing the services will mean that the hospital will report them to the police, threatening their chances of staying in Italy. In this case, they recur to illegal abortion. Estimates produced by the Italian Ministry of Health (2021) suggest that illegal abortions have declined over time, stabilising around 10,000 cases in the latest years, a number which includes Italian and foreign women.

After EU enlargement in 2007, thanks to the legal status, almost all migrants from Romania and Bulgaria meet at least one of the requirements to be able to freely join the Italian NHS.⁴

³Screening tests for abnormalities or malformations are offered free of charge by the Italian NHS; see Di Giacomo et al. (2022).

⁴These requirements imply the fulfilment of one of the following conditions: (i) having a regular job in Italy, (ii) being a family member of an Italian citizen or of a new EU citizen with a regular job in Italy, (iii) having a long-term residence permit (with at least five years of residence in Italy), (iv) being unemployed but registered in the placement lists or in a vocational training program, (v) having specific conditions. Conditions mentioned in point (v) are met when citizens are included in one of the following community forms: (i) E106, identifying workers sent by their employer to carry out a service in another EU Member State, students from another Member State participating in an exchange study program (e.g., Erasmus), (ii) E109 or E37, identifying individuals with valid residence in Italy and a with a family member from an EU Member State with a regular job in Italy, (iii) E120, E121 or E33, identifying individuals, with residence in Italy, receiving pension income from another EU Member State, and their family.

The possibility to legally access the NHS represents a clear improvement for Romanian and Bulgarian women with respect to those from candidate countries. This is only one of the advantages that come with the 2007 enlargement. For EU2 women, the migrant legal status implied an improvement in living conditions along several dimensions, including the possibility of legally accessing the labour market and the education system besides the NHS. The potential impact on VPT is uncertain. On the one hand, better education and employment opportunities translate into better economic conditions, which should imply a reduction in the use of VPT. On the other hand, the possibility to access legally the NHS reduces the need to use illegal services for fear to be reported to the police, which should imply an increase in legal abortions.

In practice, as discussed in Autorino et al. (2020), even after being granted full and free access to the NHS, access to VPT might be difficult because of the high presence of gynaecologists registered as conscientious objectors, who in Italy represent a very large share (71%) of all gynaecologists. A high presence of objectors in the hospitals active in the area of residence may increase the likelihood of resorting to illegal services and lead to a decrease in legal VPT services. However, this difficulty is shared also with natives and it is likely to impact illegal migrants more. In the following sections, we will provide evidence that the presence of anti-abortion gynaecologists cannot explain the observed larger decrease in abortion rates after the enlargement for Romanian and Bulgarian women with respect to women from candidate countries.

3 Data

We use data from the VPT survey conducted by ISTAT. This survey takes into account the universe of legal VPTs in Italy and provides information on the socio-demographic characteristics of women, such as age, marital status, education, employment status, type of work and economic activity, and the characteristics of VPTs, such as gestational age, complications, and urgency. The survey is carried out by ISTAT in agreement with the Italian regions, the Ministry of Health, and the Italian National Institute of Health (INIH). A specific form (D.12), signed by the physician who performed the VPT, must be filled in. The data collected in a given year correspond to the total number of VPTs performed between the 1st of January and the 31st of December of the same

year. The data must be sent to ISTAT by 30th April of the following year. The quality and completeness of the information are guaranteed by the fact that, according to D.Lgs. 322/1989 (art.7), they are compulsory and, when regions do not comply with them, administrative sanctions are applied. We merge information from the VPT survey with demographic information on the foreign population in Italy by gender, country of origin, province, and year also provided by ISTAT. We focus our sample on observations between 2002 and 2010 since before 2002 we do not have information on population by country of origin and from 2010 onward the census modified the official estimates of the immigrant population by province.⁵

Our final sample includes both women from Romania and Bulgaria (hereafter EU2, the treated group) and from candidate countries (the control group) who used the VPT service between 2002 and 2010. We end up with information on 124,079 women. Table A1 shows descriptive statistics for the main variables considered in the analysis. The table provides separate descriptive statistics for Italian and non-EU women for comparison with the two groups of women included in the sample. Non-EU women will also be used, in the robustness section of the paper, as an alternative to defining the control group. Considering the age of VPT users, 60% of EU2 women are under 29 years old, compared to 45% of Italian women, 53% of women from candidate countries, and 55% of non-EU women. Married and single women represent similar proportions in the sample, except for women from candidate countries, who are more likely to be single (73%) than married (24%). By level of education, regardless of country of origin, women with secondary education only and college-graduated women represent a proportion of the sample over 80% and below 7%, implying a lower level of education for women using the legal VPT service, with respect to native women for whom the proportion with secondary education and a college degree is 66% and 22%, respectively. Almost 70% of women from candidate countries are unemployed, while the same figure is around 50% for women from EU2, Italy, and outside the EU. Again, women using the VPT service are more likely to be unemployed than the average Italian woman, for whom the unemployment rate is around 30%. Looking at employment status, the highest proportion is dependent workers (mostly blue-collar workers), caregivers, and housekeepers. In particular, EU2 and non-EU women

⁵As discussed in Albani & Simone (2015) after the censuses of 1991, 2001 and 2011 the stock of foreign population, by gender and citizenship, is recalculated because for many municipalities there is either a misalignment between information on the resident population contained in the municipal registry and the census population or problems connected to under/over coverage of the census.

work mostly as caregivers and housekeepers (65% and 61%, respectively). Women from Italian and candidate countries work as caregivers and housekeepers (32% and 38%, respectively) and in the trade, hotel, and catering sectors (33% and 30%, respectively).

The outcome variable of interest is the VPT rate per 1,000 women, computed as the ratio of the number of VPT to the foreign-born female population multiplied by 1,000. In Figure 1, we show the time variation both of VPT rates and the resident female population for the EU2 and the candidate countries. Focusing on EU2 women (top panel), VPT rates went from 61 per 1,000 women in 2006 to almost 34 per 1,000 women in 2007, decreasing by 45% (left panel). The sudden drop in VPT rates of EU2 women is matched with a significant increase of almost 83% in the number of resident women, as a result of the EU enlargement (right panel).⁶ This was not the case for women from candidate countries. VPT rates remained almost stable at 15 per 1,000 women, and the number of women from candidate countries increased by only 6.9%.⁷ Patterns similar to those shown by candidate countries are observed for women from outside the EU, as shown in Figure A1.

Figure 2 shows the spatial variability of average VPT rates in Italian regions, for the periods 2002-2006 (before EU2 enlargement) and 2007-2010 (after EU2 enlargement). The upper and lower panels consider foreign women from EU2 and candidate countries, respectively. Before the enlargement, VPT rates are higher in the South and in Lazio for EU2 women, while they are higher in almost all regions facing the Adriatic Sea for women from candidate countries. After the enlargement, VPT rates decreased significantly in all Italian regions for EU2 women, but this was not the case for women from candidate countries. Again, if we look at Figure A2, we see a pattern closely mirroring that of women from candidate countries and also for women from outside the EU.

[Figures 1 – 2 around here]

⁶Women from EU2 countries legally resident in 2006 were 191,484 and became 350,858 in 2007.

⁷Women from candidate countries in 2006 were 254,134 and became 271,705 in 2007.

4 Empirical strategy

4.1 Main specification

Our aim is to estimate the causal effect of obtaining the legal status for migrant women on VPT rates, exploiting the 2007 enlargement as an exogenous shock to legal status for EU2 women. Following the literature (for instance, Mastrobuoni & Pinotti (2015), Adda et al. (2020)) we adopt a DD model where the post-enlargement behaviour of immigrants from EU2 countries (treatment group) is compared with that of immigrants from candidate member countries (control group). Choosing immigrants from candidate countries as a control group is particularly important to meet the assumptions of the DD model, according to which treated and controls should differ only for the effect of the treatment (i.e., the EU citizenship assignment) and not as a response to other observable or unobservable factors. Immigrants from candidate countries represent a natural control group, comparable to EU2 nationals in terms of economic conditions and political views towards Europe, as their countries of origin had already started negotiations with the EU before 2007, and in addition they almost all (except those from Iceland and Turkey⁸) belong to the same geographical area, sharing similar cultural and linguistic traits with those of the treatment group. We estimate the following general model:

$$\ln(VPT_rate)_{pct} = \alpha + \beta EU2_{pct} \times post_t + \delta_c + \lambda_t + \xi_p + \sum_{i=1}^K \gamma_i X_{pct} + \epsilon_{pct}. \quad (1)$$

Our outcome variable is the natural logarithm of the VPT rate per 1,000 women, computed as $(VPT_{pct}/Pop_f_{pct}) \times 1,000$, where VPT_{pct} and Pop_f_{pct} are the number of VPTs and the female population of nationals of country c in province p at time t , respectively. $EU2$ is a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if the immigrant is a national from either Romania or Bulgaria and 0 otherwise. $post_t$ is a dummy variable equal to 1 from 2007 onward and 0 otherwise. δ_c and λ_t are country of origin and year fixed effects. Equation 1 also includes province-specific fixed effects, ξ_p , to account for time-invariant differences in VPT rates across provinces. X_{pct} is a full set of covariates at the level of the country of origin c , province p , and year t for a number of observable individual

⁸However, women from Iceland and Turkey represent the 0.05% and 1.57% of the total number of women from candidate countries in our sample.

characteristics potentially correlated with immigration and VPT rates⁹. Our parameter of interest is β , capturing the causal effect of obtaining the legal status (thanks to the enlargement) on EU2 women’s VPT rates. Since our outcome variable is expressed in natural logarithm, we can interpret β as the growth rate of EU2 women’s VPT rate after the enlargement.

To validate the consistency of our estimates, we consider four different specifications of the general model in Equation 1: specification (1) including only country of residence and year-specific fixed effects; specification (2) adding province-specific fixed effects; specification (3) adding, to specification (2), province-specific linear time trends and a common quadratic component; finally, specification (4) adding, to specification (2), province-level covariates.

We estimate all the specifications from Equation 1 by OLS and weight observations by the share of women from country c living in province p at time t with respect to the foreign population, i.e., $w_s = Pop_{-f_{pct}}/Pop_{-f_{ct}}$. Thus, we avoid our estimates being biased by provinces with a small share of foreign resident women, which could be those with larger negative variations in VPT rates. We will discuss the impact of alternative weighting procedures in what follows.

The identification of the causal effect in DD models relies on the parallel trend assumption. As a first simple discussion on this assumption, we estimate the following event-study model:

$$\ln(VPT_rate)_{pct} = \gamma + \sum_{j=-q}^{-1} \eta_j D_{pct} + \sum_{j=0}^m \mu_j D_{pct} + \lambda_c + \psi_t + \xi_{pct} \quad (2)$$

Equation 2 includes q numbers of leads (η_j) and m numbers of lags (μ_j), that can be interpreted as prior- and post-enlargement effects, respectively. D_{pct} is a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if the VPT rate of country c at time t in province p is from the treatment group, 0 otherwise. In our specification, the first lead (one period prior to the reform, $j = -1$) is omitted. λ_c and ψ_t represent country of origin and year fixed effects. The leads coefficients being statistically insignificant provides suggestive evidence that immigrants from both treated and control groups behaved similarly before the enlarge-

⁹We use the average by country of origin c , province p and year t of age, marital status, education, employment, type of position, economic activity, gestational age, level of urgency, and presence of complications.

ment took place. Post-treatment coefficients (i.e., lags) serve us well to show whether the effect grows or fades as time passes, providing additional evidence relative to the size and duration of the estimates of β from Equation 1.

4.2 Separating the effect of citizenship from selection

The coefficient β in Equation 1 and the coefficients μ_j in Equation 2 represent the weighted sum of two effects: (i) the change in VPT rates due to legal and illegal female migrants from EU2 countries already living in Italy before 2007, both obtaining a permanent legal migrant status after the enlargement in 2007 (“citizenship” effect); and, (ii) the change in VPT rates due to a new wave of migrants women from EU2 countries deciding to migrate to Italy because of the enlargement (“selection” effect). Both effects might have decreased the VPT rates after the enlargement. In what follows we define a procedure to separate the total effect into the two components focusing on the event study.

Consider the coefficients $\hat{\mu}_j$ estimated from Equation 2. We can interpret these coefficients as the differential percentage change in VPT rates between treated and controls after the enlargement compared to the baseline reference year (2006), for different lags. Formally, we can rewrite $\hat{\mu}_j$ as follows:

$$\hat{\mu}_j = \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2}) - \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{cand}) \quad (3)$$

where $\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^g)$ represents the variation of the natural logarithm of the VPT rate for group $g = (EU2, cand)$ between period j and the first lead (ref , that corresponds to one year before the enlargement, 2006).

To separate the effect of citizenship from that of selection, we can rewrite the overall variation of the VPT rate for EU2 women between period j and the reference (ref) period as the weighted sum of the variation of the VPT rate for two groups of migrants: $EU2^{Cit}$, i.e., migrants that were already in Italy (or that would have arrived in Italy following the pre-enlargement trend, see below); and $EU2^{Sel}$, i.e., new EU2 immigrants that arrived in Italy because they were attracted by the improvement in opportunities induced by the enlargement. The total effect depends on the relative size of the two groups: the weighted sum is defined considering the weights $w_{1,j}$ and $1 - w_{1,j}$, which represent the

share of $EU2^{Cit}$ and $EU2^{Sel}$ on the overall EU2 population in a given period j :

$$\hat{\mu}_j = [w_{1,j} \times \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Cit}}) + (1 - w_{1,j}) \times \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})] - \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{cand}) \quad (4)$$

Equation 4 allows us to disentangle the causal effect of citizenship on the VPT rate of EU2 women from the total effect.¹⁰ For a given period j , consider the following:

$$\hat{\mu}_j^{cit} = w_{1,j} \times \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Cit}}) - \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{cand}) = \hat{\mu}_j - (1 - w_{1,j}) \times \Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}}) \quad (5)$$

According to the last part of Equation (5), to estimate $\hat{\mu}_j^{cit}$, we need estimates of (i) the share of new EU2 immigrants that arrived in Italy after the enlargement, i.e., the weight $(1 - w_{1,j})$; and, of (ii) the percentage difference between the VPT rate of EU2 women residing in Italy in the reference period (2006) and the VPT rate of EU2 women that arrived in Italy after the enlargement, i.e., $\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})$.

We consider two alternative scenarios for $(1 - w_{1,j})$. First, we assume that all EU2 women who entered Italy after the enlargement make up the selection effect. This first scenario provides an overestimate of $1 - \hat{w}_{1t} = 1 - EU2_{ref}^{cit}/EU2_t$. Second, we estimate the share of women from EU countries that would have entered Italy if the enlargement did not take place using pre-enlargement trends. This would provide a more conservative estimate of $1 - \hat{w}_{1t} = 1 - EU2_{ref}^{cit}/EU2_t$. To this end, we start by estimating the following model on the choice of location of EU2 women across Italian provinces in the pre-enlargement period using demographic information on the foreign population provided by ISTAT:

$$F_pop_pEU2t = \gamma_0 + \sum_{p=1}^{N_p-1} \gamma_p trend_t \times p + \gamma_{N_p} trend^2 + v_{pt} \quad (6)$$

F_pop_pEU2t is the female population of EU2 countries living in province p at time t , $trend_t \times p$ is a set of province specific linear time trends and $trend^2$ is a common quadratic component, v_{pt} is the residual term. We use the parameter estimates from

¹⁰Alternatively, we can estimate the selection effect considering that $\hat{\mu}_j^{sel} = \hat{\mu}_j - \hat{\mu}_j^{cit}$. Notice that $\hat{\mu}_j^{cit}$ represents a lower bound of the true ‘‘citizenship’’ effect, since $w_{1,j}$ are by construction equal or lower than 1.

Equation (6) to predict $\widehat{EU2}_{pt}^{cit}$, i.e., the EU2 female population in province p at time t as if the enlargement did not take place in 2007. We sum these values by province and obtain an estimate of the total number of EU2 women at time t that we would have observed without the enlargement; thus: $1 - \widehat{w}_{1t} = 1 - \widehat{EU2}_t^{cit} / EU2_t$.

We consider two alternative scenarios also for $\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})$, i.e., the difference between the VPT rate of EU2 women living in Italy in 2006 and the VPT rate of EU2 women that arrived in Italy because of the enlargement. First, we assume that new EU2 women arriving after 2007 have the same VPT rate as women in the respective countries of origin (Romania and Bulgaria). Using data from the United Nations database for the years 2003 and 2004, the VPT rate per 1,000 women in Romania and Bulgaria was 27.8 and 21.3, respectively. Considering that Romanian women account for 96% of VPT from EU2 women, we obtain a weighted VPT rate for EU2 women of 27.54 per 1,000. The VPT rate in Romania and Bulgaria amounts then to 45.1% of the VPT characterising Romanian and Bulgarian women already living in Italy in 2006. This first assumption represents an overestimate of the VPT rate, if new EU2 immigrants after 2007 attracted by the enlargement are positively selected. Hence, it provides a conservative estimate of $\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})$. Second, we assume that new EU2 women arriving after 2007 have a VPT rate equal to zero. This second assumption clearly represents an underestimate of the VPT rate for the new flows of migrants, that by definition cannot take values lower than 0. Hence, it provides an overestimate of $\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})$. The actual VPT rate characterizing $EU2^{Sel}$ will lie between these two estimates of the VPT rate. Thus, the set of assumptions on the share of $EU2^{Sel}$ and on the VPT rates characterizing this group of migrants allows us to obtain a plausible range of values for the causal effect of citizenship.

4.3 Accounting for differences in observable characteristics through propensity score weighting

An additional issue in the identification of the causal effect of obtaining the legal status on VPT rates rests on the differences in the composition of the treated and the control group. To account for the effect that an imbalance of characteristics between groups, amplified by the treatment, might have on the causal interpretation of our estimates, we follow Mastrobuoni & Pinotti (2015) and we consider the semi-parametric DD esti-

mator developed in Abadie (2005). Formally, we weight each observation by the inverse propensity score of the assignment conditional on the observed covariates. The weight ω is defined as:

$$\omega = EU2_{pct} \frac{pr(Eu2)}{pr(EU2|X_{pct})} + (1 - EU2_{pct}) \frac{1 - pr(EU2)}{1 - pr(EU2|X_{pct})}, \quad (7)$$

where $pr(EU2)$ is the unconditional probability of belonging to the EU2 group, and $pr(EU2|X_{pct})$ (the propensity score) is defined as the likelihood of belonging to the treatment group conditional on a set of observable characteristics. The weights ω improve the comparability between the treated and the control group, attaching more weights to observations that are more similar to the other group than the average observation in the sample.

We estimate the propensity score by means of logistic regression using the following set of observable covariates: age, marital status, education, employment status as well as VPT characteristics (the urgency, and the absence of complications). The dependent variable is a dummy equal to 1 for women from EU2 in province p at time t and observable covariates represented by the averages by country of origin c , province p , and time t ; the dummy is zero for women from candidate countries. Once obtained an estimate of $pr(EU2|X_{pct})$, we compute the weights ω according to Equation 7 to estimate our main model.

5 Results

5.1 Main estimates

Table 1 shows in the upper panel our main estimates for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates. Column (1) shows our baseline specification including only country of residence and year-specific fixed effects; column (2) adds province-specific fixed effects; column (3) adds, to specification 2, province-specific linear time trends and a common quadratic component; finally, column (4) adds, to specification 2, province-level covariates. Estimates are weighted by the share of women from country c living in province p at time t with respect to the foreign population. Estimated coefficients from Table 1 are consistently negative and highly statistically significant across specifications.

Also, the magnitude is fairly stable: the coefficients range from -0.5679 (column 1) to -0.6822 (column 4), implying that the 2007 EU enlargement decreased VPT rates between 57% and 68%. The magnitude of the effect increases after accounting for observable characteristics, even if the difference with respect to our baseline specification (column 1) is not significant since confidence intervals overlap. Unweighted estimates, presented in the lower panel in Table 1, are higher but very close to weighted ones: they range between -0.6468 (column 1) to -0.7471 (column 4), and largely confirm the drop in VPT caused by the enlargement.

[Table 1 around here]

Figure 3 reports the leads and lags coefficients estimated using Equation 2. All the leads are clearly not statistically different from zero, showing the absence of differential trends between treated and controls before the enlargement in terms of VPT rates. In addition, all the lags are negative and statistically significant, with an increasing magnitude of the point estimate of the effect over time. The general message is that, only after the enlargement, VPT rates for EU2 women experienced a large drop compared to women from candidate countries. In what follows, we discuss this finding in several directions.

[Figure 3 around here]

5.2 Separating citizenship effect from selection effect

A first observation is that the drop in VPT rates estimated using our baseline specification is really the composition of two effects: a “citizenship” effect and a “selection” effect. The first is due to women already residing in Italy (or that would have come to Italy even without the enlargement), which changed their behaviour because of the enlargement. The second picks up the change in VPT due to new flows of women from EU2 caused by the enlargement. We first provide evidence about the new flows of migrants and then estimate the relative magnitude of these two effects.

5.2.1 Change in the characteristics of EU2 migrant women by date of arrival in Italy

We start by looking at how the EU enlargement is associated with a change in the observable characteristics of EU2 migrant women. To offer descriptive evidence on this issue, we use data from the Italian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the years between 2009 and 2016 and exploit retrospective information on the year of the arrival of migrants. Formally, we estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{ict}^l = \delta + \sum_{j=-q}^{-1} \gamma_j D_{pct} + \sum_{j=0}^m \Theta_j D_{pct} + \theta_c + \psi_a + \mu_t + \xi_p + v_{ict} \quad (8)$$

Equation 8 includes q numbers of leads (γ_j) and m numbers of lags (Θ_j), that can be interpreted as prior- and post-enlargement effects, respectively. D_{pct} is a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if the socio-economic characteristics describing women i from country c at time t — Y_{ict}^l , with $l = 1, \dots, L$ — is from the treatment group, 0 otherwise. We focus on the age structure (at arrival), education (at and after arrival), marital status (at and after arrival), employment (current and first job), and family type. In our specification, the first lead (one period prior to the reform, $j = -1$) is omitted. θ_c and ψ_a are country of origin and year of arrival fixed effects. Lastly, ξ_p and μ_t represent province and year fixed effects.

Figures 4-11 show estimates of coefficients associated to lags and leads. There are several interesting insights emerging from this exercise. First, almost all the leads coefficient are statistically insignificant, suggesting the absence of any differences in trends before the 2007 enlargement between the characteristics of EU2 women and of women from candidate countries.

Second, we find evidence of “selection” with respect to some characteristics, especially concerning age and marital status at arrival. Figure 4 shows a decrease in the age of women at arrival for EU2 immigrants, but only for the years 2007 and 2008. Figure 5 shows the level of education at arrival. There seems to be an increasing trend for women with only primary education and a decreasing trend for those with secondary education, but these effects are barely significant at the usual conventional level. We do not find effects for college-graduated women. After arrival, Figure 6 shows an increase

in women from EU2 countries with only primary education, but no significant effects for the other levels of education. On the contrary, Figure 7 shows a clear change in the characteristics of women with respect to marital status. After the enlargement, fewer married women and more single/divorced women from EU2 countries arrived in Italy compared to those from candidate countries. In addition, Figure 8 shows that there is a clear decrease in the probability of being married after arrival, and the same result is confirmed when looking at intermarriages between EU2 natives and Italians. This evidence clearly mirrors results in Adda et al. (2020), which show that - after the 2007 EU enlargement - the likelihood of EU2 female migrants marrying natives decreased by almost 60% and increased by 20% the likelihood of breaking up in mixed couples formed before the legal status acquisition.¹¹ Connected to marital status, in Figure 9 we can observe a clear increase in the probability of households composed of single members for EU2 immigrants arriving after 2009 and a clear decrease in the probability of households composed of married couples with no children. Finally, Figures 10 and 11 show the results related to the employment status of EU2 immigrants arriving after the EU enlargement. Almost all the lags are statistically insignificant, albeit some mild evidence of a positive effect on labour income and on hours worked in the case of a first job. Overall, these results suggest that women from EU2 countries migrating to Italy soon after the enlargement are somewhat younger compared to those from candidate countries. These younger women are more likely to be independent, or to have a family with children (but less likely to marry an Italian). There are no clear signs of a different selection of women in terms of education and in terms of employment status.

[Figure 4 – 11 around here]

5.2.2 Disentangling the citizenship effect

Given the change in migrant women’s characteristics caused by the enlargement, we now apply the procedure described in Section 4.2 to separate the “citizenship” effect from the “selection” effect. Table 2 provides estimates of the “citizenship” effect, defined as the decrease in VPT rates driven by EU2 women already residing in Italy (either legally or

¹¹The impact on intermarriages is supported also by literature focusing on the USA. For instance, Amuedo-Dorantes et al. (2020) show that mixed marriages between immigrants and natives are an important mechanism to preserve legal status against intensified immigration controls.

illegally) acquiring the permanent status of legal migrants after the 2007 enlargement. The “citizenship” effect is estimated using Equation 5 for the four lags 2007-2010.

[Table 2 around here]

Column (1) of Table 2 reports the original coefficients of the event study presented in Equation 2 ($\hat{\mu}_j$), which represents the total effect on VPT rates caused by the enlargement. Columns (2) and (3) show the estimates of the causal effect of citizenship under alternative hypotheses with respect to new flows of migrants. In particular, results in column (2) consider all new EU2 migrant women arriving after 2007 in Italy because of the benefits provided by enlargement, with $1 - \hat{w}_{1t} = 1 - \widehat{EU2}_{ref}^{cit}/EU2_t$. These estimates assign a higher weight to the selection effect in Equation 6 and, consequently, provide conservative values for the causal effect of citizenship.

Alternatively, column (3) presents estimates of the causal effect of citizenship by estimating the share of new EU2 immigrants arriving after 2007 by the benefits provided by enlargement using the regression analysis proposed in Equation 6. We estimate $1 - w_{1,t}$ using the predictions obtained from the regression analysis proposed in Equation 6. Figure 12 represents the predicted values using diamonds (with dashed lines showing the confidence interval of the estimates) compared to the observed total number of female migrants from EU2 countries arriving in Italy in the period 2007-2010 (represented by dots). The values predicted by the model follow the pre-enlargement trend very closely and are significantly lower than the actual total number of immigrant women from EU2 countries arriving in Italy each year after the enlargement.

[Figure 12 around here]

Both in columns (2) and (3), we show the range of plausible values for the causal effect of EU citizenship attainment on EU2 women’s VPT rates obtained assuming that: (i) new EU2 immigrant women after 2007 have the same VPT rate as women from the respective countries of origin, and (ii) new EU2 immigrants arriving after enlargement have a VPT rate equal to 0. To provide estimates under the first assumption we use data from the UN database and estimate a rate of VPT per 1,000 EU2 women of 27.54. Using this value we estimate a percentage difference between the VPT rate of EU2 women

residing in Italy in 2006 and the VPT rate of EU2 women that arrived in Italy because of the enlargement ($\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})$) equal to -55%. In order to provide estimates under the second assumption, we assume that the percentage difference between the VPT rate of EU2 women residing in Italy in 2006 and the VPT rate of EU2 women that arrived in Italy because of the enlargement ($\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,j}^{EU2^{Sel}})$) is -100%.

According to results presented in Table 2, columns (2) and (3), the causal effect of citizenship ranges: between -22 and -45% in 2007; between -4 and -33% in 2008; between -27 and -60% in 2009; and between -26 and -59% in 2010. Table 2, column (4) provides an easy way to interpret these estimates, showing the share of the total effect represented by the citizenship effect: the range is between 30% and 60% of the total effect, but for 2008 when the large flows of new migrants make the selection effect to weigh more.

5.3 Propensity score weighting

A second observation is that the drop in VPT rates estimated using our baseline specification may be driven simply by the differences between the group of treated and controls, and these differences are correlated with access to VPT. We first show descriptive evidence of the differences between the two groups and then compare our baseline estimates with those obtained using propensity score weights.

5.3.1 VPT user characteristics before and after the enlargement

We start by comparing the characteristics of EU2 and candidate countries women using a logistic regression model: the dependent variable is a dummy identifying EU2 women; the independent variables are observable characteristics X (age, marital status, education, employment status, employment sector, and clinical conditions) of women using VPT.

Table 3, column (1), reports the coefficients of this model and reveals the presence of significant differences in observable characteristics between EU2 and candidate country nationals using VPT services in Italian provinces. On average, immigrants from the treated countries are younger and less likely to be single, have a higher education, are less likely to be unemployed, have better jobs, and less complicated VPT.

[Table 3 around here]

Given results in the previous section 5.2, these differences might be driven by the selection effect. Hence, we now study how observable characteristics of EU2 women using VPT service change after the enlargement, estimating the following equation:

$$X_{ict} = \sigma + \theta EU2_{ict} \times post_t + \iota_c + \phi_t + \sigma_p + \varepsilon_{ict} \quad (9)$$

where θ captures the differential variation for the same set of observable characteristics X (age, marital status, education, employment status, employment sector, and clinical conditions) of EU2 women compared to those from candidate countries. We also control for country of origin (ι_c), time (ϕ_t) and province (σ_p) fixed effects.

Estimated θ in Figure 13 provides visual evidence of a change in the composition of VPT users after the enlargement along many dimensions. First, we observe non-linear changes in terms of age: we record an increase in the proportion of EU2 women aged 20-24 and 40-44, coupled with a decrease in the proportion of EU2 women aged 25-39. Second, considering marital status, EU2 married women making use of VPT services decreased by 4 percentage points, and, conversely, single and separated/divorced women increased by a similar amount. Third, in terms of education, we observe a significant increase in the proportion of EU2 women with low educational attainment using the VPT service, by approximately 3 percentage points, while we observe a decrease in the proportion with secondary education, by approximately the same amount. Fourth, there are no relevant differences in terms of employment status, but we do observe an increase in the number of EU2 women using VPT employed in the sectors of agriculture, industry, and wholesale trade. Finally, there are no significant differences in terms of complications or urgency of the VPT.

[Figure 13 around here]

5.3.2 Comparing different weighting strategies

A concern of the DD strategy is that, if treated and control groups differ in terms of observable characteristics, such differences may affect trends in VPT over time. To discuss this issue, we follow Mastrobuoni & Pinotti (2015) and compute a system of weights defined by the inverse propensity score of the assignment conditional on observable characteristics of migrants, as discussed in section 4.3.

Figure 14 shows the propensity score distributions for our treatment and control groups. Unsurprisingly, the two distributions appear to be very different from each other. The propensity score distribution in the control group is very close to zero, which means that there are provinces where EU2 and candidate country nationals have very different observable characteristics. We now use the weights ω (see Equation 7) as alternative weights in the baseline model (see Equation 1). Clearly, by weighting using ω , we reduce the influence of observations far from the centre of the distribution and increase the importance of those at the centre. The impact of weighting is clear from Table 3, column (2): after weighting by ω , we do not find any more significant difference in terms of observable characteristics between the treatment and the control group.

[Figure 14 around here]

Table 4 shows a comparison between the estimates of β in Equation (1), specification (4), including province-level covariates, with different weighting strategies. Column (1) shows the “unweighted” effect of the enlargement, while columns from (2) to (4) report β estimates with three different weights: column (2) shows estimates weighted by the propensity score (ω); column (3) shows the estimates (already reported in Table 1, column (4)) when using as weights the share of immigrants from country c in province p at time t with respect to the population of immigrants in province p at time t (w_s); lastly, column (4) shows estimates weighted by a combination of the previously specified weights, after implementing appropriate standardization between 0 and 1 ($w_c = w_s^{std} \times w_p^{std}$).¹² The four β estimates reported in Table 4 are all quite similar and statistically significant: the “unweighted” effect is the largest in magnitude (-0.7471); the most conservative estimate is obtained when using propensity scores weights (-0.6790). The overall conclusion is that weighting, either by immigrant population or by propensity score, does not affect our baseline results.¹³

[Table 4 around here]

¹²We standardized weights as follows: $w_i^{std} = \frac{w_i - \min(w_i)}{\max(w_i) - \min(w_i)}$ with $i = s, ps$. This procedure was implemented to assign equal importance to previous weighting strategies when calculating the combined weight.

¹³We showed here a comparison considering our preferred specification (4) of Equation (1), but the same conclusion applies when using other specifications. These results are not reported in the paper but are available from authors upon request.

5.4 Robustness to alternative explanations

Our findings show that after obtaining legal migrant status thanks to the EU enlargement, EU2 women significantly reduced the use of VPT compared to women from candidate countries. This finding does not depend on differences across the two groups of women; it is explained by a change in the behaviour of women already residing in Italy (either legally or illegally), and by new flows of women with different characteristics. We now consider alternative explanations for the observed variation in abortion rates among EU2 women after 2007. In particular, we consider the role of (i) conscientious objector gynaecologists, (ii) illegal immigrants, and (iii) illegal abortions. In the following, we show suggestive evidence that none of these alternative stories can explain the estimated variation in VPT rates.

5.4.1 Conscientious objection

In Italy, the share of gynaecologists refusing to perform abortions due to conscientious objection increased from around 60% in 2003 to 70% in 2008, remaining stable at this level until now. The increase in the presence of anti-abortion gynaecologists has been paralleled by an increase in miscarriages, suggesting that more women were likely undergoing illegal VPT.

The presence of anti-abortion gynaecologists could represent a threat to our identification strategy, as the estimated reduction in terms of EU2 women's VPT rate could be explained by either (i) a strong increase of objectors after the enlargement, or (ii) EU2 migrants arriving after 2007 and settling in regions with high percentages of anti-abortion gynaecologists. There is no evidence to support both scenarios.

First, Figure 15 shows the absence of any significant discontinuity after the EU2 enlargement in 2007 in both the share of anti-abortion gynaecologists out of the total of Italian gynaecologists (panel A) and the number of anti-abortion gynaecologists per 100,000 people (panel B). The share of objectors is fairly stable at around 70% of the total number of specialists, while the number per 100,000 people if anything, decreased after 2007.

Second, Figure 16 represents the relationship between the percentage increase in EU2 women from the pre- to the post-enlargement period (considering averages calculated for the periods 2002-2006 and 2007-2010 at the regional level), and either (panel A) the

proportion of objectors at the regional level, or (panel B) the number of objectors per 100,000 people. The size of the circles representing each Italian region is proportional to the share of EU2 women in the pre-enlargement period, allowing us to check whether the results are affected by regions with a low proportion of EU2 nationals. Figure 16 shows that there is no evidence of an association between the allocation of EU2 women after the enlargement and the presence of anti-abortion gynaecologists. Some of the Southern regions experiencing a large percentage increase in EU2 migrants (like Campania, Calabria, Puglia, and Sicily) are characterized by the same number of anti-abortion gynaecologists characterizing some regions in the Centre-North (like Veneto and Lazio), which are also those with many EU2 women residing before the enlargement.

As an additional check, we also consider that, if the proportion of anti-abortion gynaecologists is driving our results, we should observe that the estimated decrease in VPT for EU2 women is larger in regions with a lower proportion of objectors. We can test this hypothesis by estimating the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(VPT_rate)_{pct} = & \lambda + \theta EU2_{pct} \times post_t + \theta_r EU2_{pct} \times post_t \times region_r + \\ & + \gamma_c + \sigma_t + \iota_p + \sum_{i=1}^K \psi_i X_{pct} + v_{pct} \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

Besides capturing the overall effect of EU enlargement on EU2 women's VPT rates (θ), Equation (10) allows us to estimate also the heterogeneous effects for each region, by interacting $EU2_{pct}$ with $post_t$ and $region_r$ (θ_r). The θ_r coefficients represent the additional effect of the EU enlargement in 2007 on EU2 women's VPT rates in each region. We plot these coefficients in Figure 17 against both the share of objectors (panel A) and the number of objectors per 100,000 people (panel B). If our hypothesis was correct, we should expect a negative correlation between these two variables, i.e., lower effects in terms of VPT reductions in regions where the presence of anti-abortion gynaecologists is lower. We do not find any evidence in support of this story.

[Figures 15 – 17 around here]

5.4.2 Illegal immigration and illegal abortions

Another concern relates to the presence of illegal immigrants before 2007 and the practice of illegal abortions outside hospitals. Since these illegal immigrants from EU2 are included in official population statistics only from 2007 onward, thanks to the legal migrant status allowed by the EU enlargement, the VPT rate for EU2 women is overestimated before the enlargement. To determine the magnitude of this bias, we consider available estimates of the number of illegal migrants. For instance, Fasani (2008) suggests that the share of illegal immigrants in Italy is between 7 and 13%; a similar estimate, around 10%, is provided by Fondazione ISMU. Given these numbers, we assume that the share of illegal immigrants amounts to 10% for all the years before the enlargement and adjust the denominator of the VPT rate accordingly. Figure 18 “corrects” the upper left panel of the previous Figure 1. It plots the “corrected” version of the average VPT rate before the enlargement, obtained by increasing the foreign population by 10% (dashed line), with the “unadjusted” version (solid line). We still observe a significant jump after enlargement. Specifically, even considering a 10% share of illegal immigrants in 2006, we would observe a reduction in the VPT rate of 37%, which represents 85.43% of the unadjusted change. Thus, illegal female migrants in the official population figures after 2007 can explain, at most, about 15% of the unadjusted change in the VPT rate.

[Figure 18 around here]

However, there are at least two reasons to believe that the bias due to illegal migration is likely to be even lower than this estimate. First, it is likely that the proportion of illegal immigrants in 2006 was less than 10%, since the law *Decreto Flussi 2006* allowed the recruitment, and thus the legal entry into Italy, of 170,000 foreigners.¹⁴ Second, the number of legal abortions after 2007 could also be affected by illegal migrants turning legal because of the enlargement. Before 2007, EU2 women could decide to undergo an illegal abortion for fear of being reported to the police. But after the enlargement, this reason will no longer be relevant. Hence, observed legal VPT also includes a share of previous illegal abortions, potentially resulting in an increase of VPT after 2007.¹⁵

¹⁴The *Decreto Flussi*, literally Flows Decree, is a yearly law passed by the Italian government since 2001 on the basis of the Law n. 40/1998 (so-called, Law Turco-Napolitano). It establishes the number of workers from non-EU countries admitted to Italy every year.

¹⁵Notice that the increase in legal VPT due to illegal migrants turning to legal runs counter to finding

Still, one can even think that the observed decrease in VPT rates after 2007 is driven by an increase in illegal abortion by new EU2 immigrant women. Since we can rule out a preference for illegal abortion after the enlargement, we remain with illegal abortion to be chosen because hospitals are unable to respond to additional demand by new EU immigrants due to capacity constraints. To show that this is not the case, we compute how many additional VPTs would result in each year due to the increase in EU2 immigrant women after the 2007 enlargement. We obtain back-of-the-envelope estimates by multiplying the rate of VPT per 1,000 EU2 immigrant women by the annual change in EU2 immigrant women after enlargement. For example, EU2 immigrant women increased by 159,374 from 2007 to 2008. As a consequence, we can expect an additional demand for 4,368 legal abortions (i.e., $27.54 \times 159,374 / 1,000$, where 27.54 is the VPT rate per 1,000 women in the country of origin obtained from the United Nations database for the years 2003 and 2004). Following the same procedure, we calculate the expected increase in demand for legal abortions for the years 2008 to 2010, corresponding to 2,657, 1,609, and 1,489 additional VPT, respectively. To understand whether these additional VPTs can be absorbed by the legal service supplied by hospitals, consider that the total number of VPTs decreased by 18,435 units from 2002 to 2010. This means that all else equal, in 2010 the legal VPT service can perform about 18,000 additional abortions, a number much higher than the potential additional demand from new EU2 women. For this estimate to be credible, we must also verify that objectors did not increase significantly in the same years. However, looking at the previous Figure 15, the presence of objectors remained stable. In view of these results, we can reasonably exclude the possibility that the legal VPT service was unable to absorb the increase in demand potentially associated with the enlargement.

5.4.3 Other robustness checks

In this section we discuss three additional robustness checks to show that our baseline results: (i) are not sensitive to the choice of the control group; (ii) are stable across all countries that make up our treatment group; and (iii) are not sensitive to the inclusion of VPT performed after 90 days.

First, Table 5 shows estimates of Equation (1) considering as control group women

an effect of the enlargement, which makes our results if anything, more convincing.

from countries outside the EU (not included in the list of candidate countries). To facilitate comparison, columns (1) to (4) show coefficients from the same four model specifications reported in Table 1. The four estimates are consistently negative and statistically significant, clustering around -0.77/-0.78. They are always higher than estimates obtained using women from candidate countries as the control group, which supports our choice of the original control group based on candidate countries as a group of women more similar to those from Bulgaria and Romania. We also estimate Equation (1) as an event study, still considering women from countries outside the EU as the control group. Figure A3 plots the leads and lags coefficients, clearly showing the absence of any differential trend in VPT rates between the group of treated and control women before the enlargement, and a significant drop soon after 2007.

[Table 5 around here]

We also run a placebo test by replacing EU2 women with immigrants from non-EU countries as the treatment group. We perform this exercise by randomly drawing 1,000 samples of women from outside the EU (excluding women from candidate countries), and re-estimating Equation (1) as if each of these placebo samples was the “true” treatment group. Figure 19 shows that the distribution of estimated placebo effects is centred around zero, suggesting that (i) the change in VPT rates experienced by EU2 women (i.e., the true treated group), represented by the dashed vertical line, is significantly larger than the variation obtained using an alternative randomised treatment group, further reassuring about the validity of our results, and (ii) the change in VPT rates experienced by the control group made up by candidate countries after the EU enlargement is close to zero.

[Figure 19 around here]

Second, Table 6 shows estimates of the original four specifications of Equation (1) considering as the treatment group either the group of only Bulgarian women or the group of only Romanian women. All the estimated coefficients are negative and statistically significant, very similar to those reported in Table 1, albeit those for Bulgarian are higher than those for Romanian women.

Finally, Table 7 reports the estimated effect of the enlargement when we exclude VPT

performed after 90 days of pregnancy. According to Italian legislation, after 90 days of pregnancy, VPT is only allowed when the woman’s mental and physical health is severely at risk and represents a medical decision more than a decision by the woman. Estimated coefficients of Equation (1) on this restricted sample are almost equal to the original estimates presented in Table 1. This result is unsurprising as, according to data from the Italian Ministry of Health, only 6.5% of all VPTs are performed after three months of pregnancy.

[Tables 6 and 7 around here]

5.5 The effect on birth rates

Since we documented a significant reduction in VPT rates for EU2 women after the enlargement, it is interesting to understand whether this was matched also with a change in fertility rates. A priori, the estimated decrease in VPT rates could be matched by either a decrease or an increase in birth rates. On the one hand, the decrease in intermarriages and the increase in the number of single women can result in a reduction in fertility rates matching the sharp decrease in VPT rates. On the other hand, the improvement in living conditions and the increase in households with children can imply an increase in fertility rates matching the decrease in abortions.

We use data on births by country of origin and year at the regional level available from ISTAT from 2004 to 2010.¹⁶ We estimate the following event study:

$$\ln(\text{Birth_rate})_{pct} = \lambda + \sum_{j=-q}^{-1} \delta_j D_{pct} + \sum_{j=0}^m \nu_k D_{pct} + \xi_c + \omega_t + v_{pct} \quad (11)$$

Equation 11 includes q numbers of leads (γ_j) and m numbers of lags (Θ_j), that can be interpreted as prior- and post-enlargement effects, respectively. D_{pct} is a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if the ratio between the number of births from women from country c in the region r at time t and the female population from country c in the region r at time t ($\ln(\text{Birth_rate})_{pct}$) is from the treatment group, 0 otherwise. δ_j and ν_k are parameters associated to leads and lags, respectively. In this specification, the first lead (one period prior to the reform, $j = 1$), is omitted. ξ_c and ω_t represent country of origin and year

¹⁶Unfortunately, data for the year 2003 are unavailable.

fixed effects.

Figure 20 shows results from this analysis. Birth rates for EU2 women decline after 2007, but the estimated effects are not significant at the usual conventional level. Hence, the decrease in VPT rates of EU2 women is mirrored by a decrease in fertility rates for the same group. However, it must be noticed that the latter is not significant according to our estimates. This result is in line with findings by the literature exploring women empowerment and fertility (Upadhyay et al. 2014).

[Figure 20 around here]

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we exploit the 2007 EU enlargement to Bulgaria and Romania to estimate the effect of granting legal status to migrants on VPT rates. Using a standard Difference-in-Differences approach, we find a negative and strongly significant reduction in abortions, by 57-68% depending on the model specification, for EU2 women compared to those from candidate countries (our control group). We show that this reduction is the weighted sum of two components: (i) the causal effect of obtaining EU citizenship, and consequently gaining the permanent status of legal migrant for both legal and illegal EU2 women residing in Italy before 2007, and (ii) a selection effect determined by new EU2 immigrants who arrived in Italy after 2007 lured by the potential improvements in economic conditions. We calculate that the “citizenship” effect accounts for a share of the total effect ranging between 30% and 60%, while the “selection” effect is responsible for a share of the total effect between 40% and 70%. Finally, we also test our baseline results in several directions: we show that results are robust to the role of gynaecologists registered as conscientious objectors, illegal migrants, and illegal abortions; in addition, we find that results are not affected by the choice of candidate countries included in the control group, are stable across the countries of origin that make up our treatment group, and are not sensitive to the inclusion of abortions performed after 90 days. As a last step, we also present some evidence of a decline, albeit not statistically significant, in birth rates for EU2 women after 2007.

Overall, our results suggest that the permanent legal status allowed by joining the EU

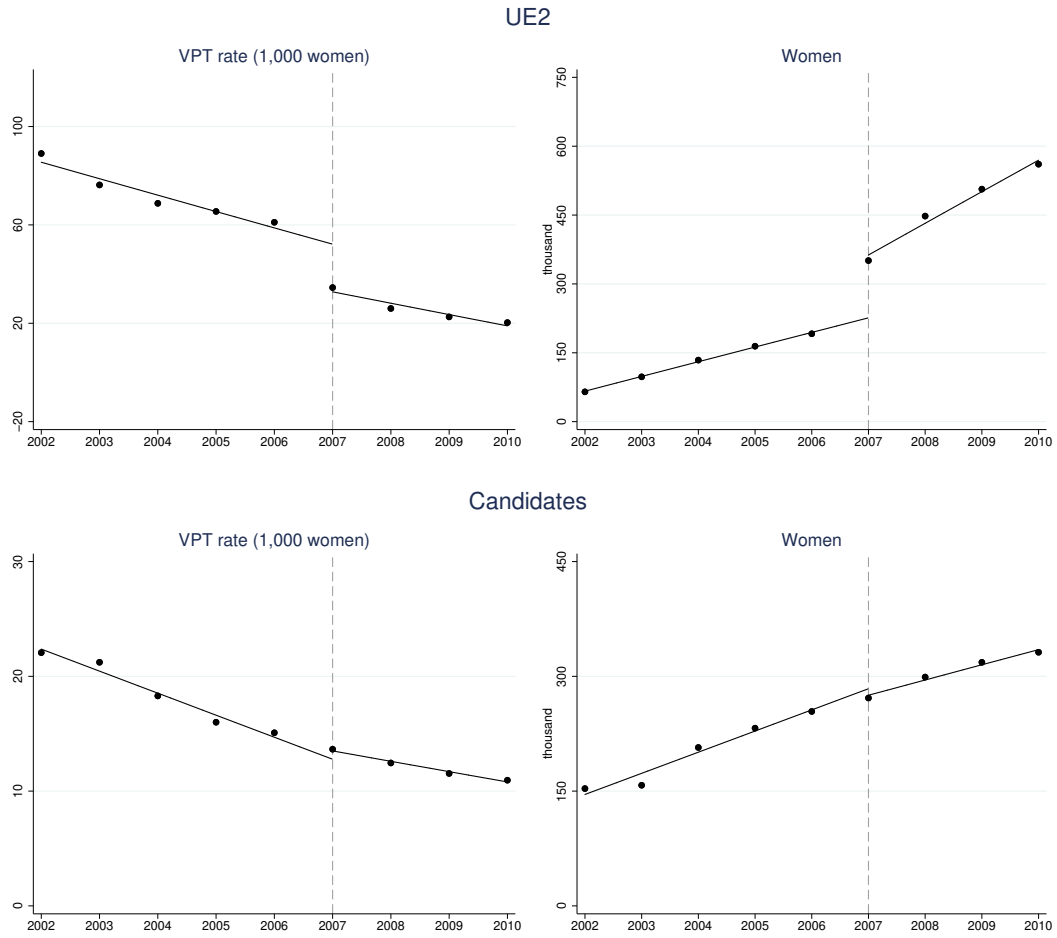
for Bulgarian and Romanian women can be interpreted as an empowerment mechanism for women. In terms of family decisions, after the enlargement, EU2 women are more likely to be single and less likely to get married, especially with an Italian native. They can take more conscious decisions in terms of their career, and fertility, hence reducing the need for VPT. The policy implications of this work point in the direction of improving access conditions to legal status for migrant women to better safeguard their health and their dignity. Differently from men, illegal status is likely to carry several additional negative consequences for women, including abuse and violence (Ayres et al. 2013). For instance, the inability to access the legal labour market can bring illegal migrants to fall prey to prostitute traffickers, increasing risks to their health, as well as risks of unintended pregnancies, resulting in the need for abortions. As most of the illegal markets are in the hands of criminal organizations, improving the living conditions of migrant women is also a way to reduce the room for such organizations.

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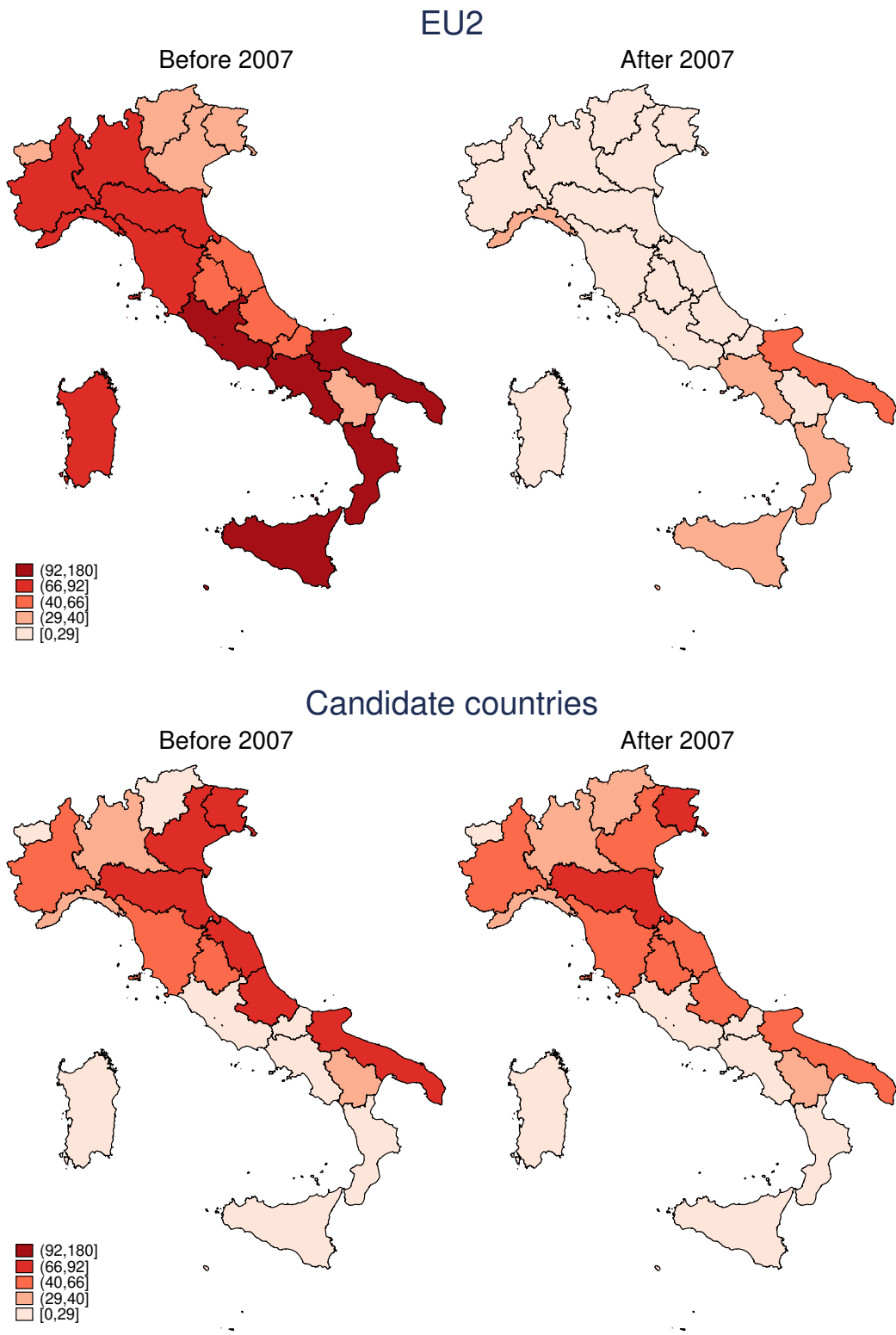
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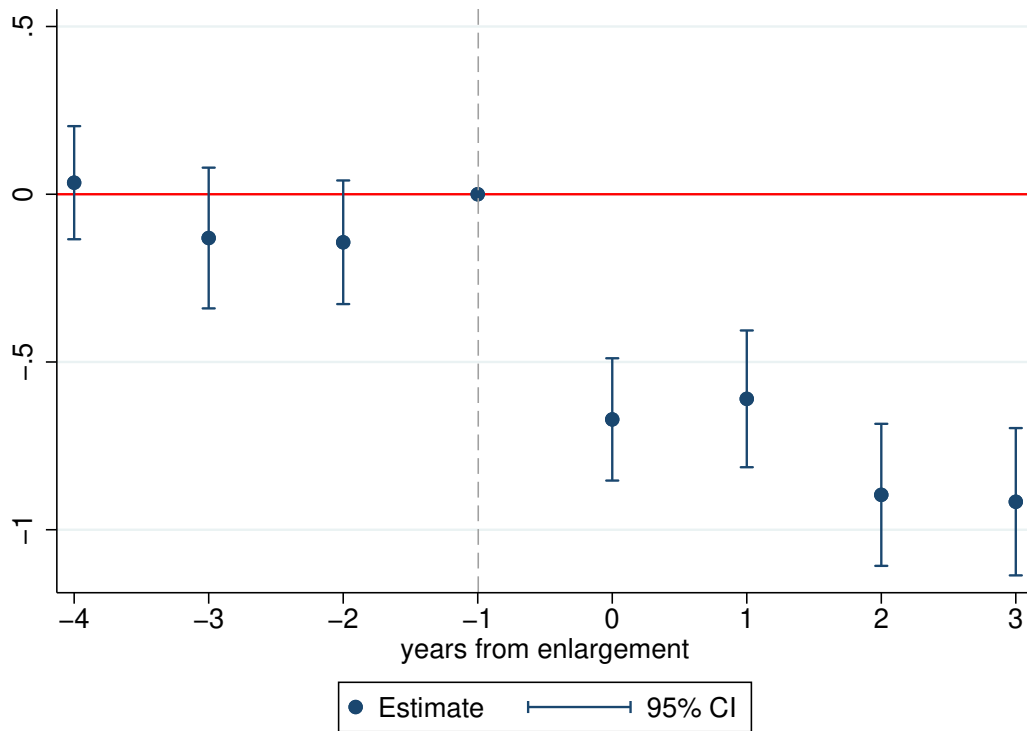
Notes: This Figure shows the time variation of VPT rates and resident female population in the period 2002-2010. The upper and lower panels consider women with foreign nationality from EU2 and candidate countries, respectively. The dashed vertical line corresponds to the year of the EU enlargement, i.e. 2007. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. Candidate countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

Figure 1: Trends in VPT rates and resident female immigrant population during the period 2002-2010 - immigrant women from EU2 and candidate countries.



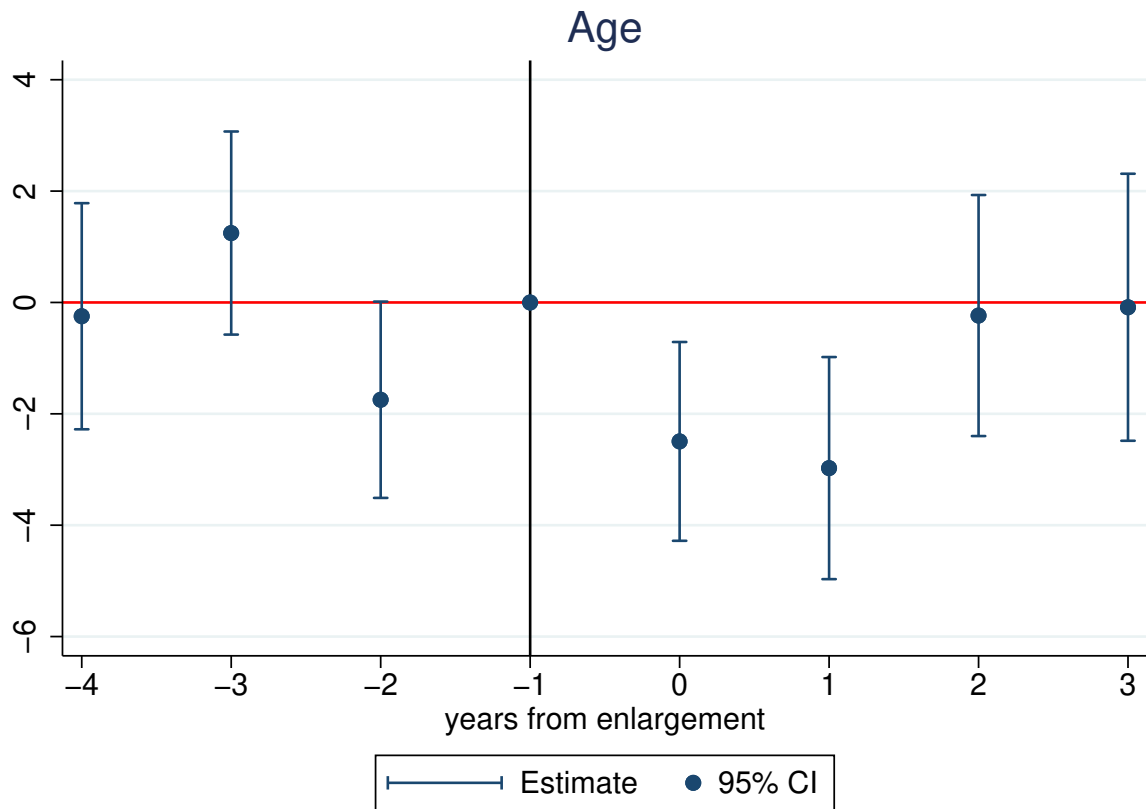
Notes: This Figure shows the territorial dispersion of average VPT rates in Italian regions for the periods 2002-2006 and 2007-2010. The upper and lower panels consider women with foreign nationality from EU2 and candidate countries, respectively. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. Candidate countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

Figure 2: Regional variability in VPT rates before and after the 2007 EU enlargement - immigrant women from EU2 and candidate countries.



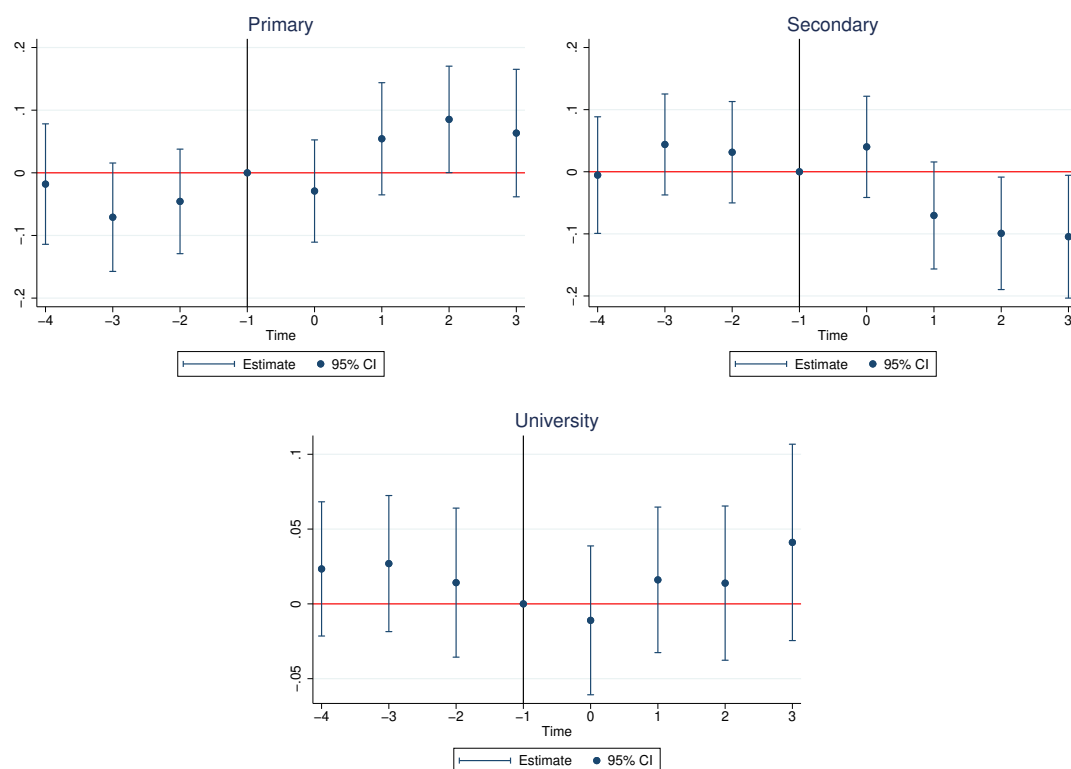
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Estimates are weighted by the share of foreign women in the population. Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 3: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates.



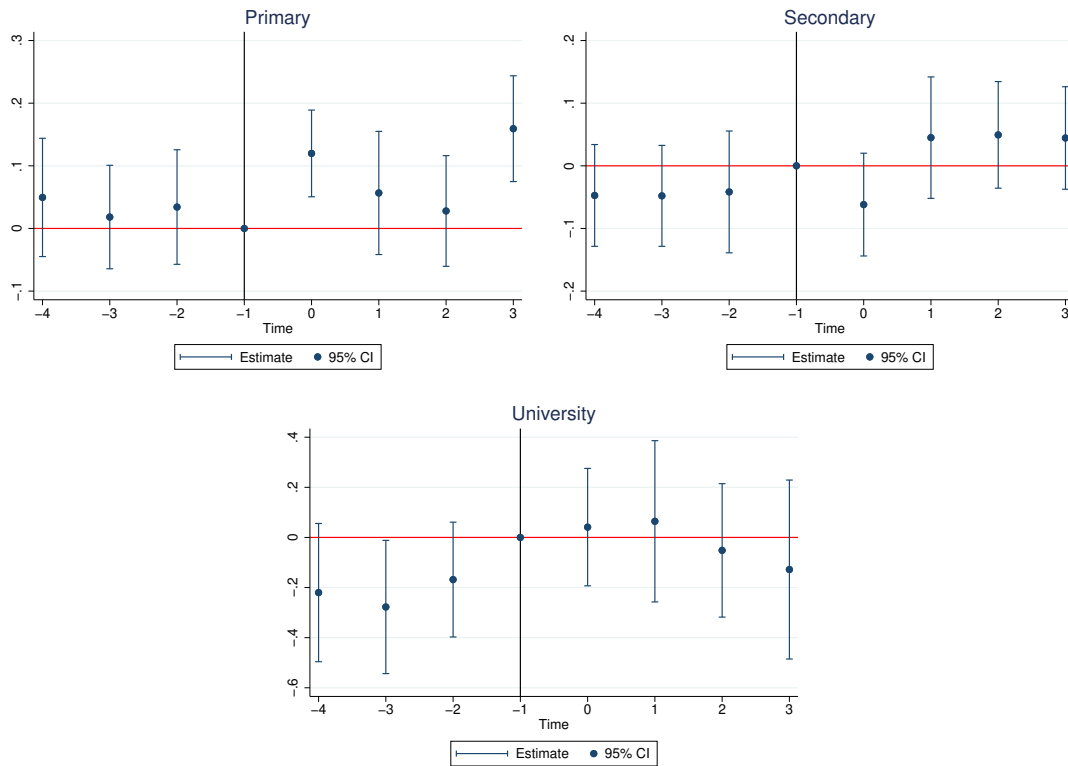
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' age at arrival. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 4: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' age at arrival.



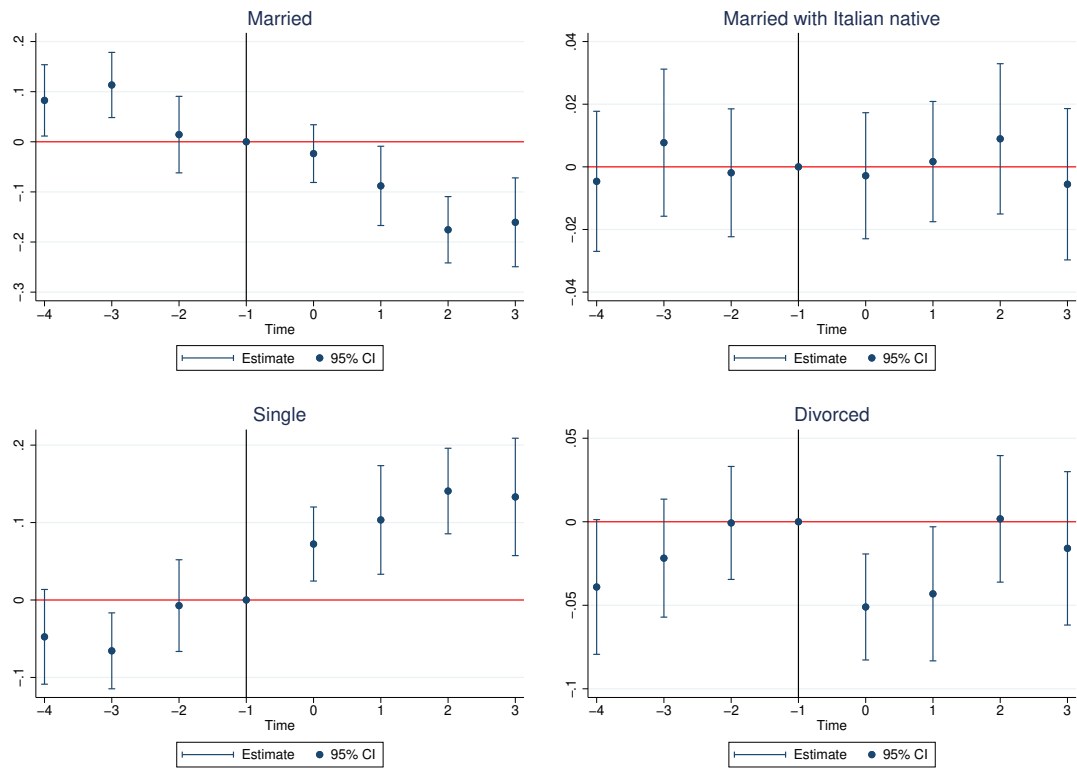
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' education at arrival. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 5: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' education at arrival



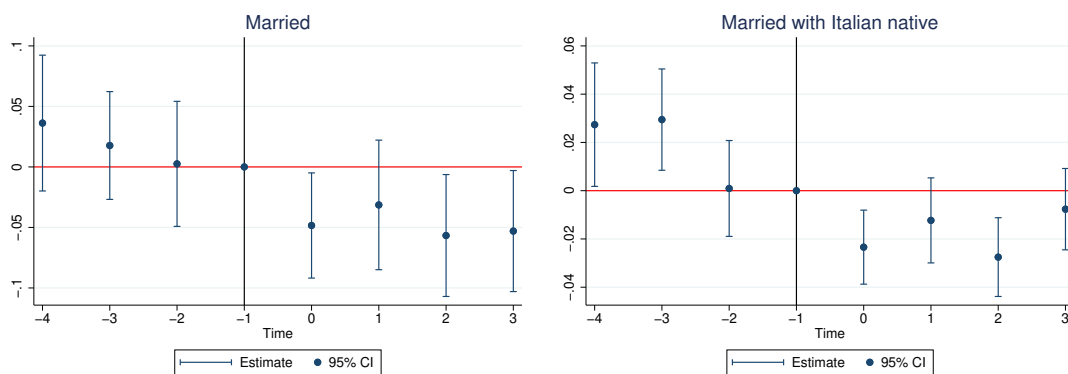
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' education after arrival. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 6: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' education after arrival



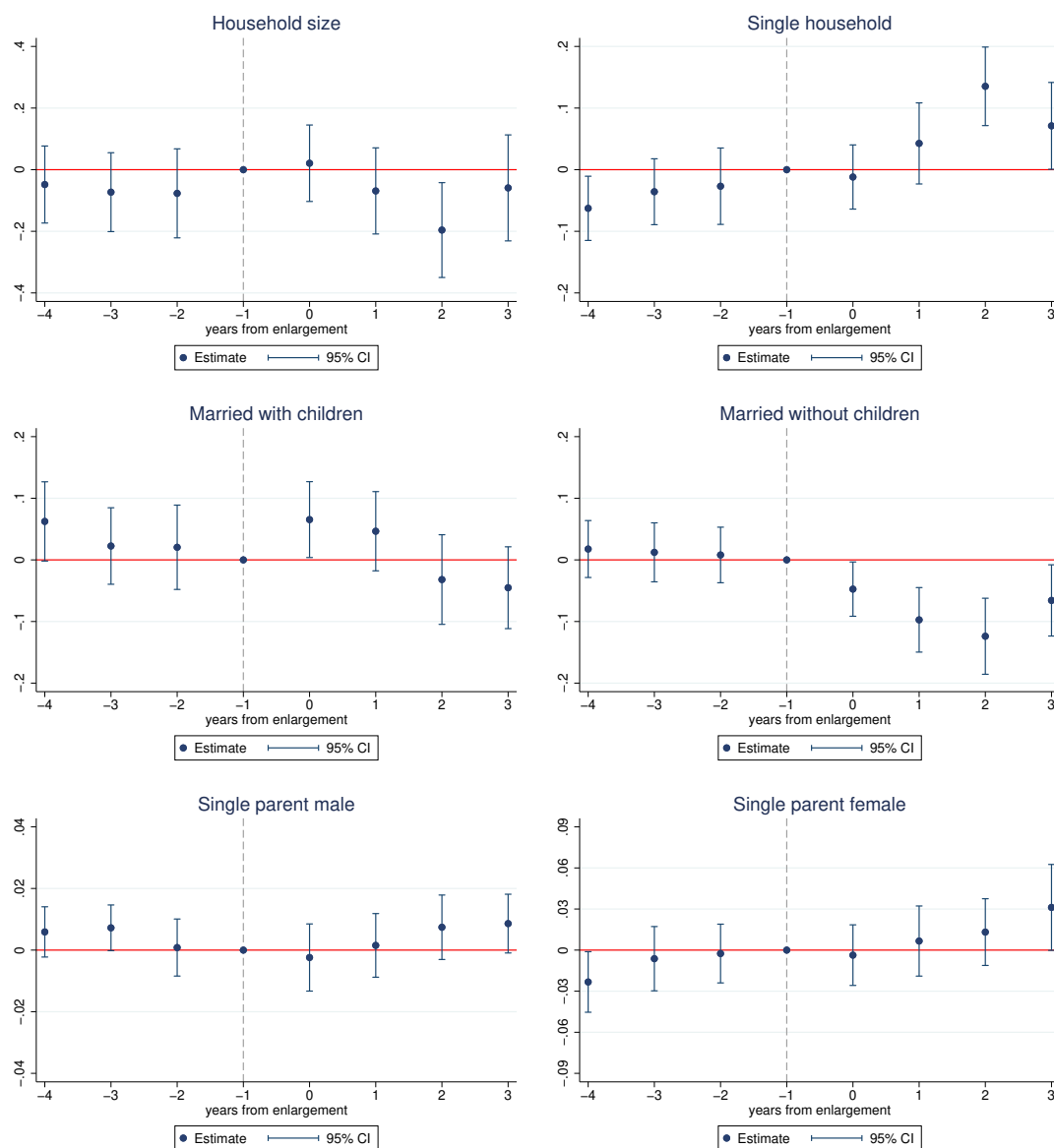
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' marital status at arrival. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 7: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' marital status at arrival



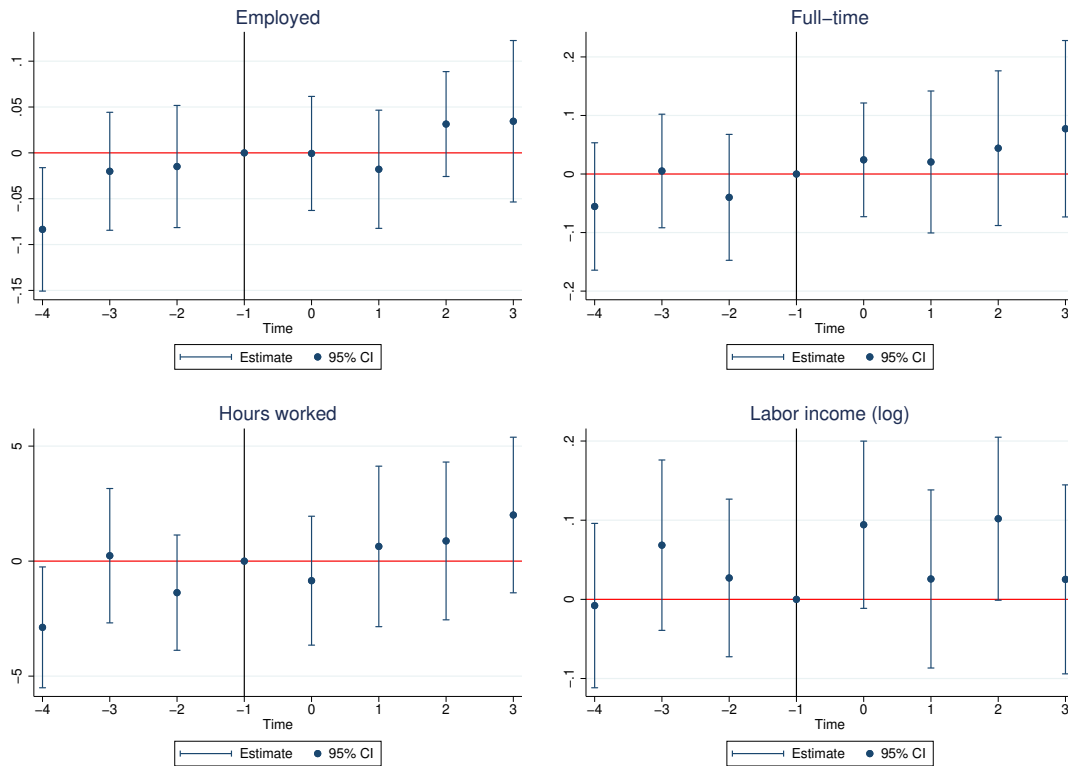
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' marital status after arrival. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 8: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' marital status after arrival



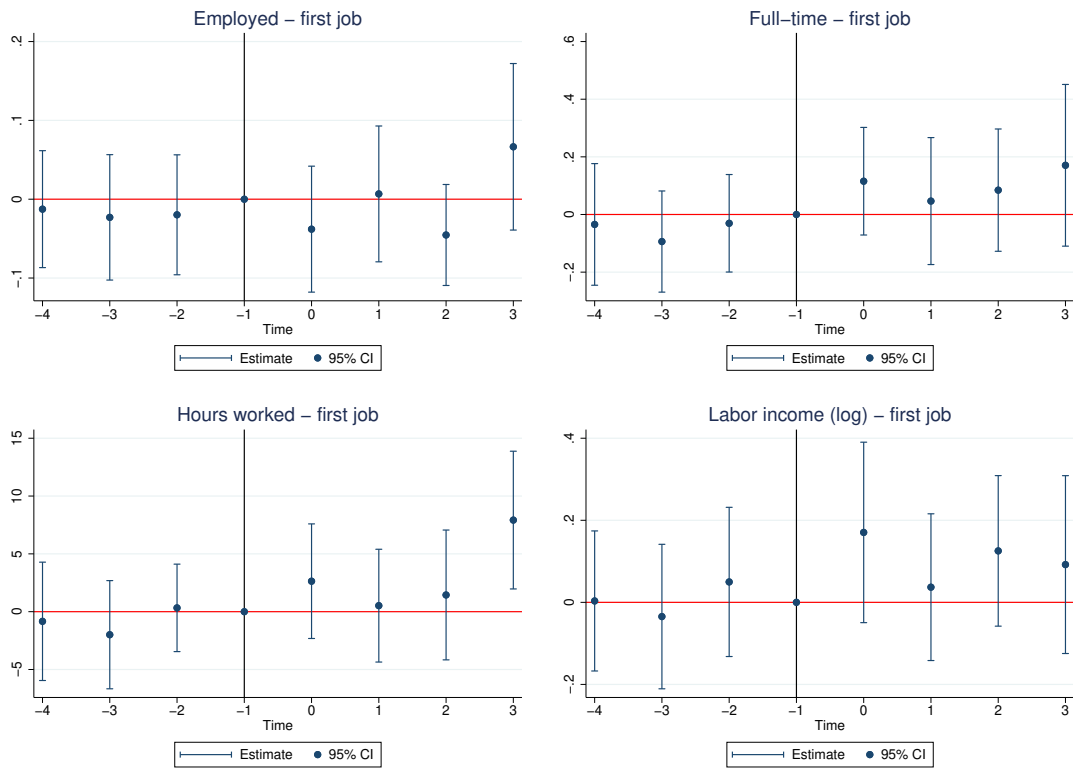
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants family type. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 9: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants family type



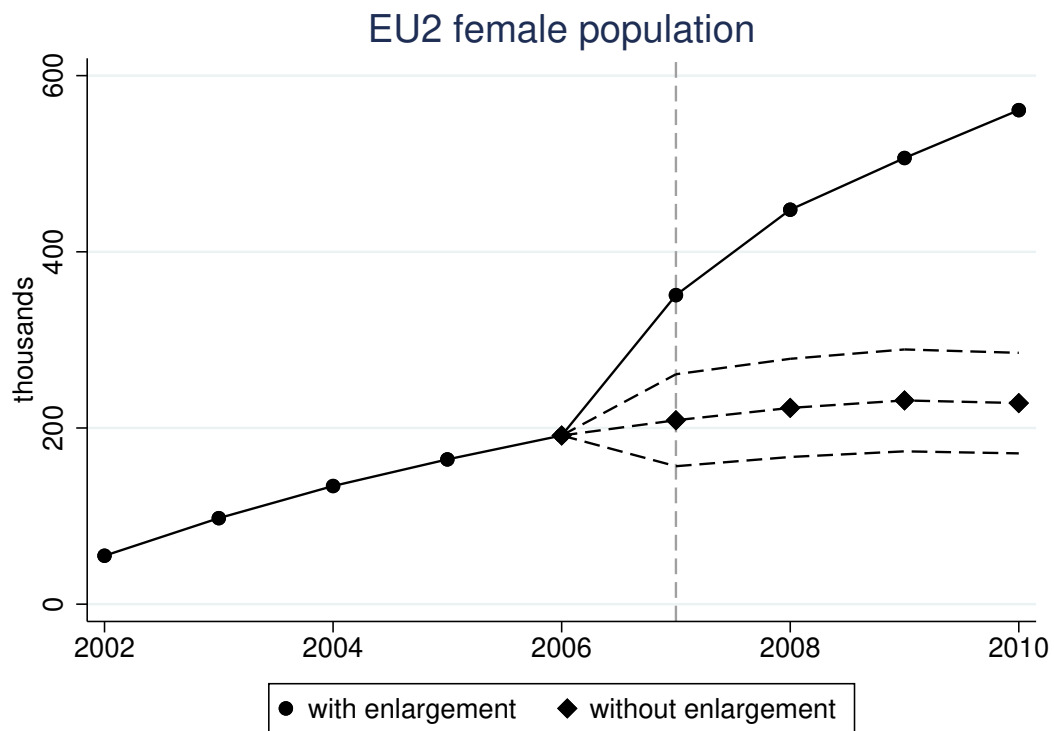
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' current employment status. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 10: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' current employment status



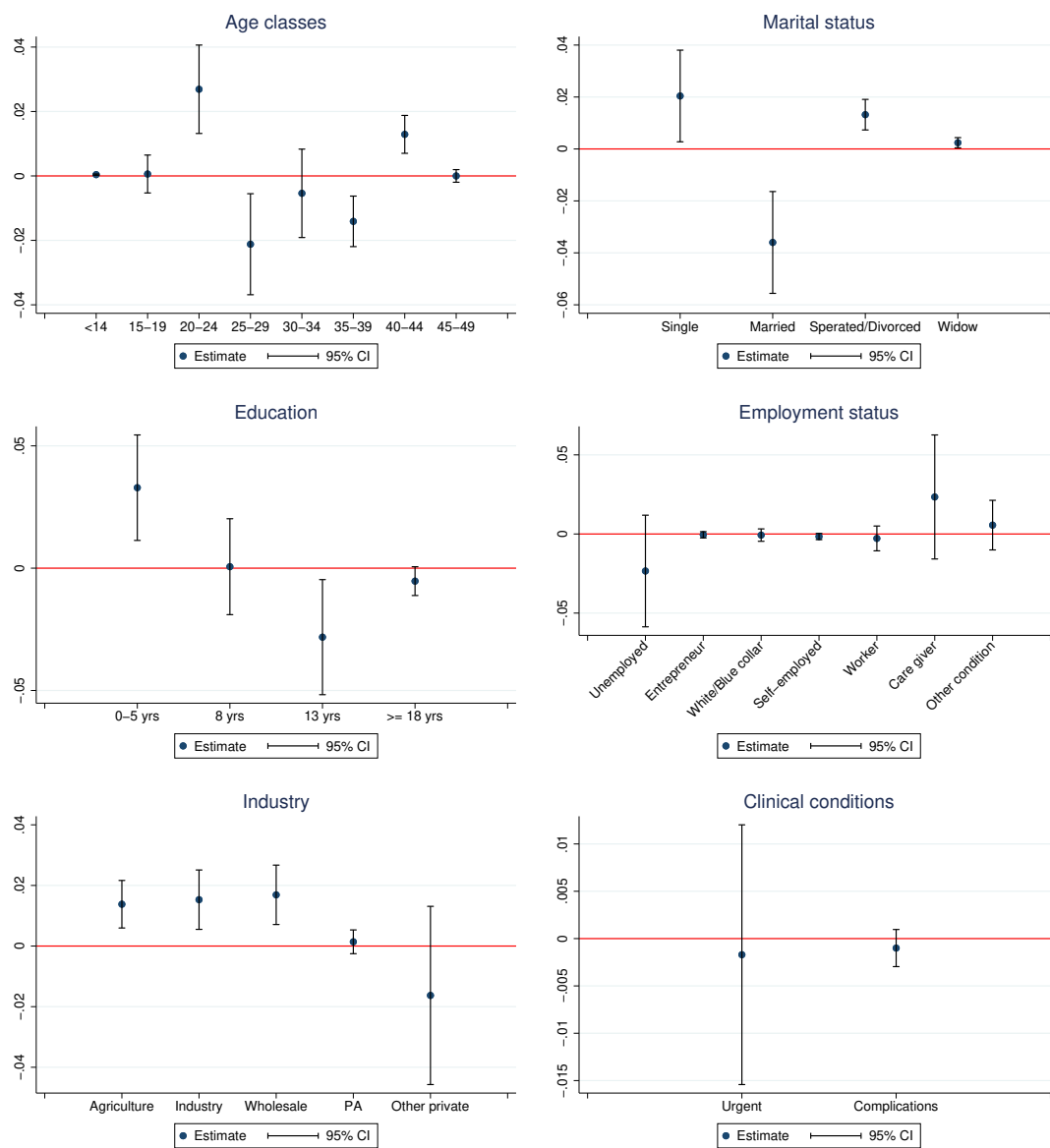
Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' first employment. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure 11: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 immigrants' first employment.



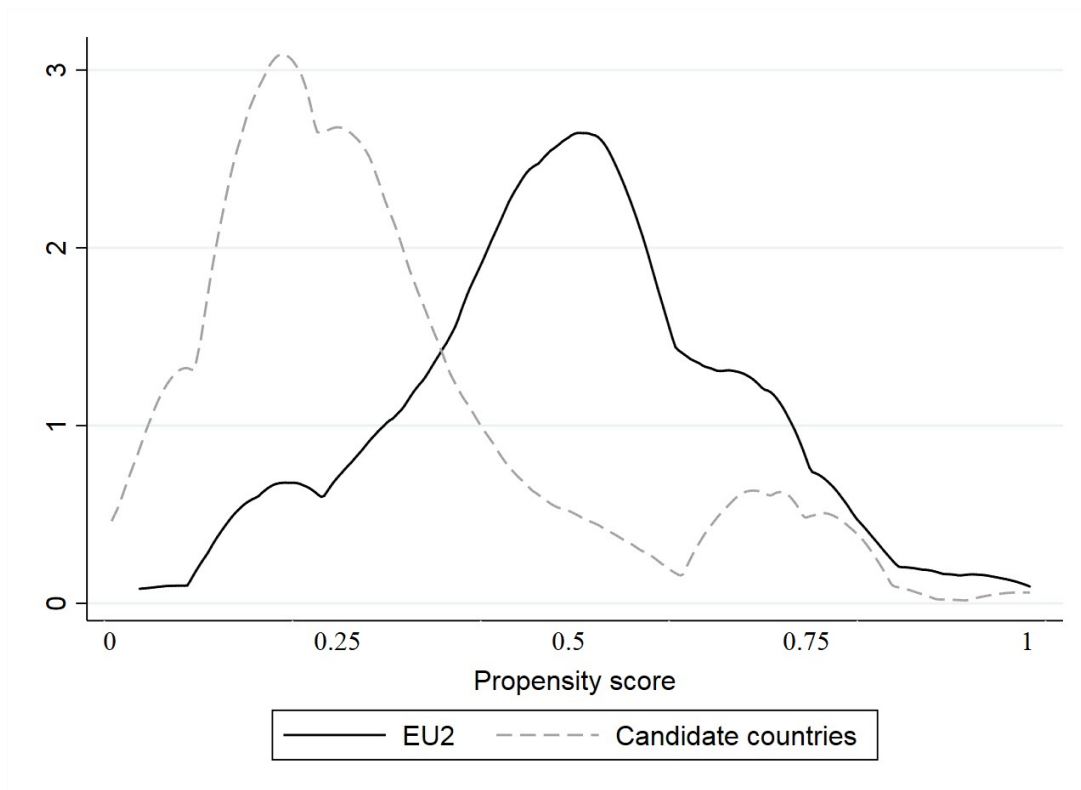
Notes: This Figure shows the total number of female immigrants from EU2 countries who arrived in Italy in the period 2002-2010 (circles) and the predicted values obtained from the regression analysis proposed in Equation 6 (diamonds) for the years 2007-2010. Dashed lines represent 95% C.I.

Figure 12: EU2 female population in Italy: real flows and estimated trend.



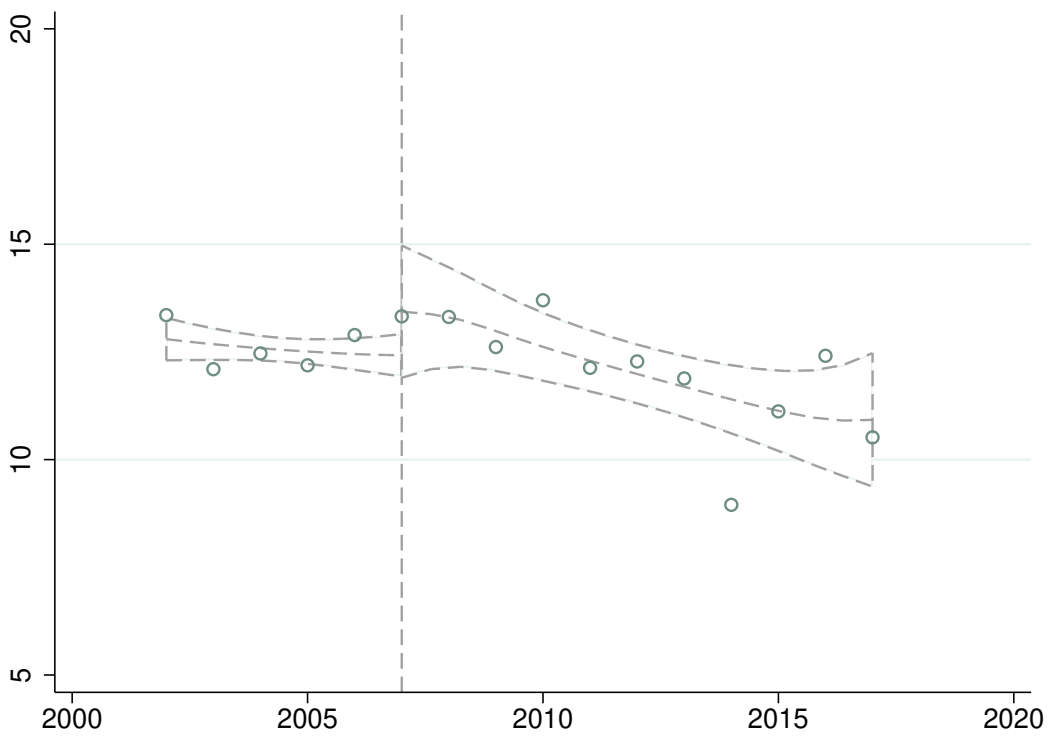
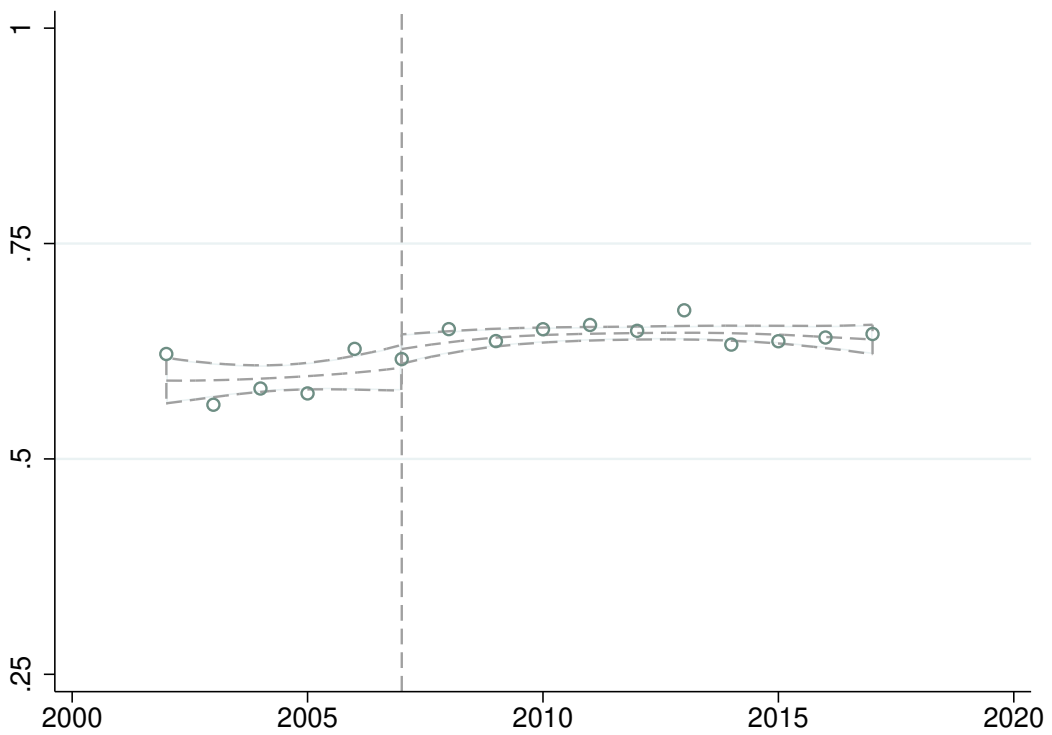
Notes: This Figure shows how EU2 women's observable characteristics - marital status, age, level of education, previous pregnancies, and employment status - vary after the 2007 EU enlargement, with respect to observable characteristics of women from candidate countries. Coefficients are estimated from Equation 3, which controls for country of origin, time, and province-specific fixed effects. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Standard errors clustered at the province level. Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Figure 13: Variation in observable characteristics of EU2 women using VPT service after the 2007 EU enlargement.



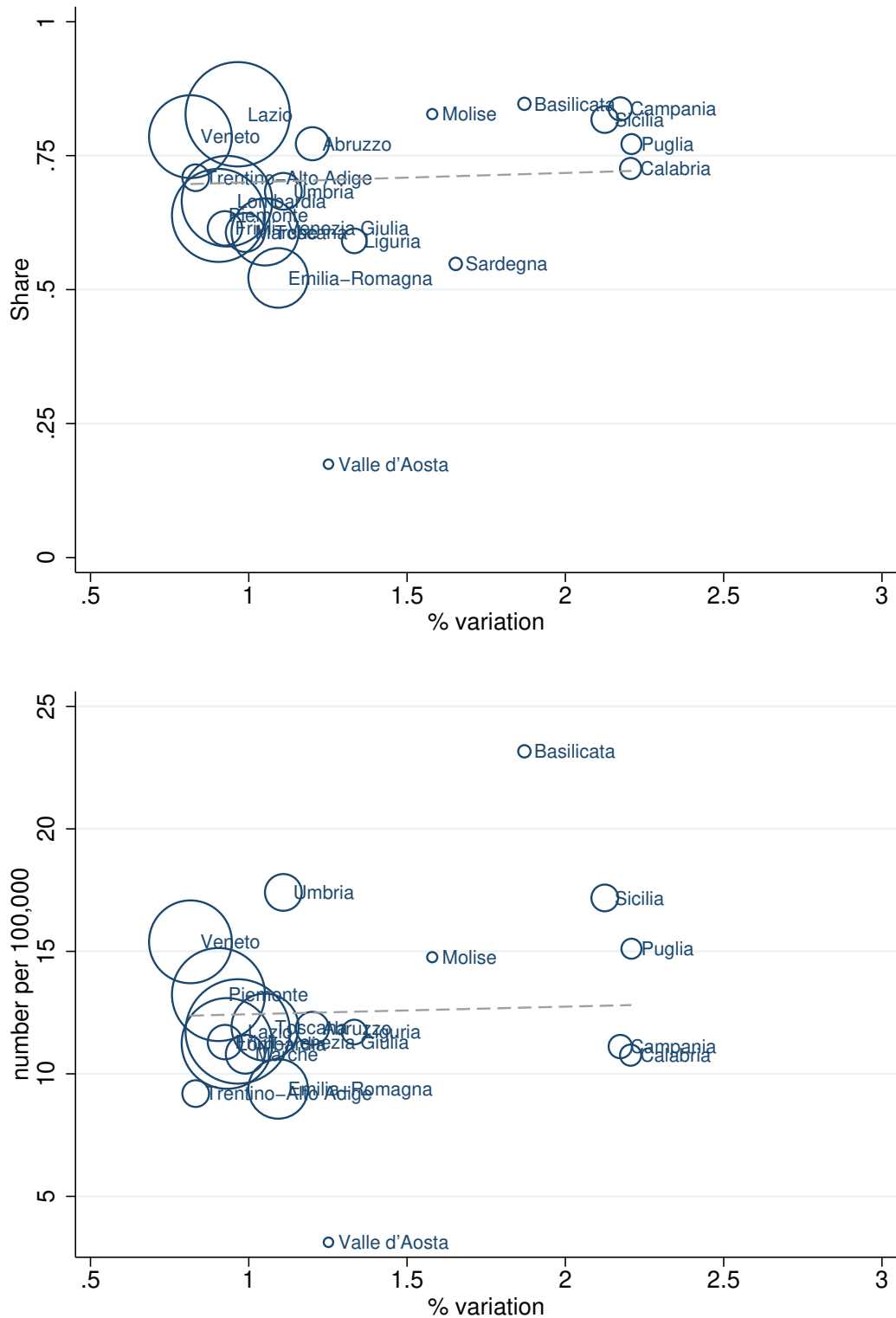
Notes: This Figure shows the propensity score distributions for treated and control groups. Propensity scores are obtained from a logistic regression where the dependent variable takes value 1 for women from EU2 and 0 for women from candidate countries in province p at time t and observable covariates are represented by the averages by country of origin c , province p and time t for the following observable characteristics: age, marital status, education, employment status, and position, VPT characteristics.

Figure 14: Propensity scores distributions for EU2 and candidate countries.



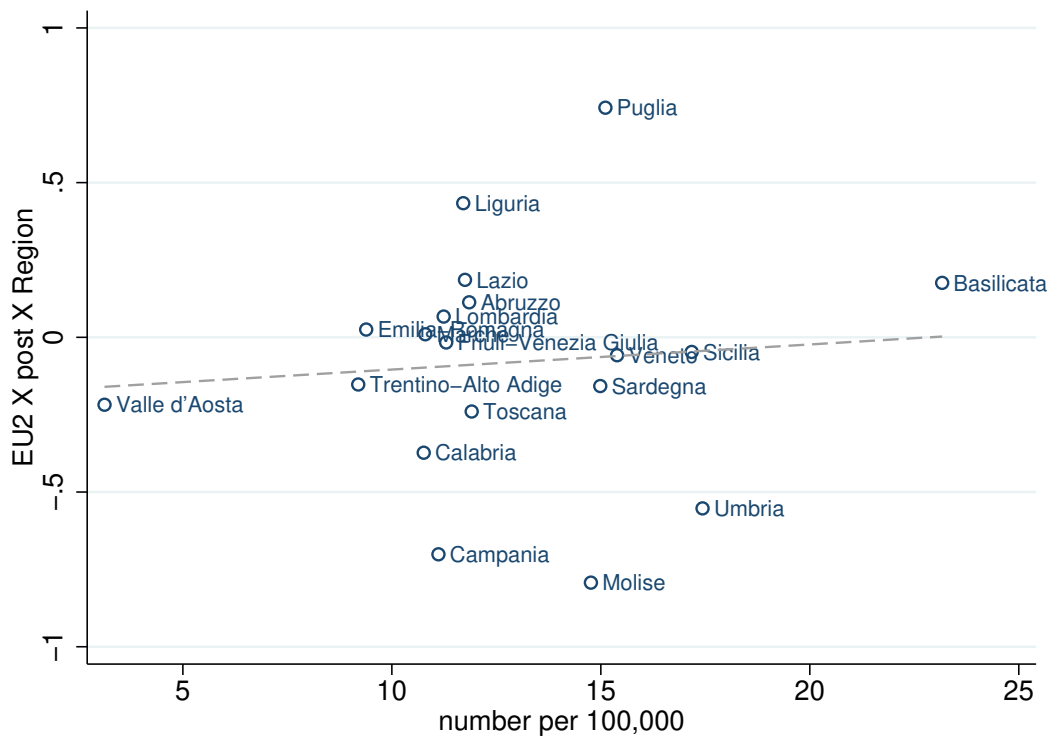
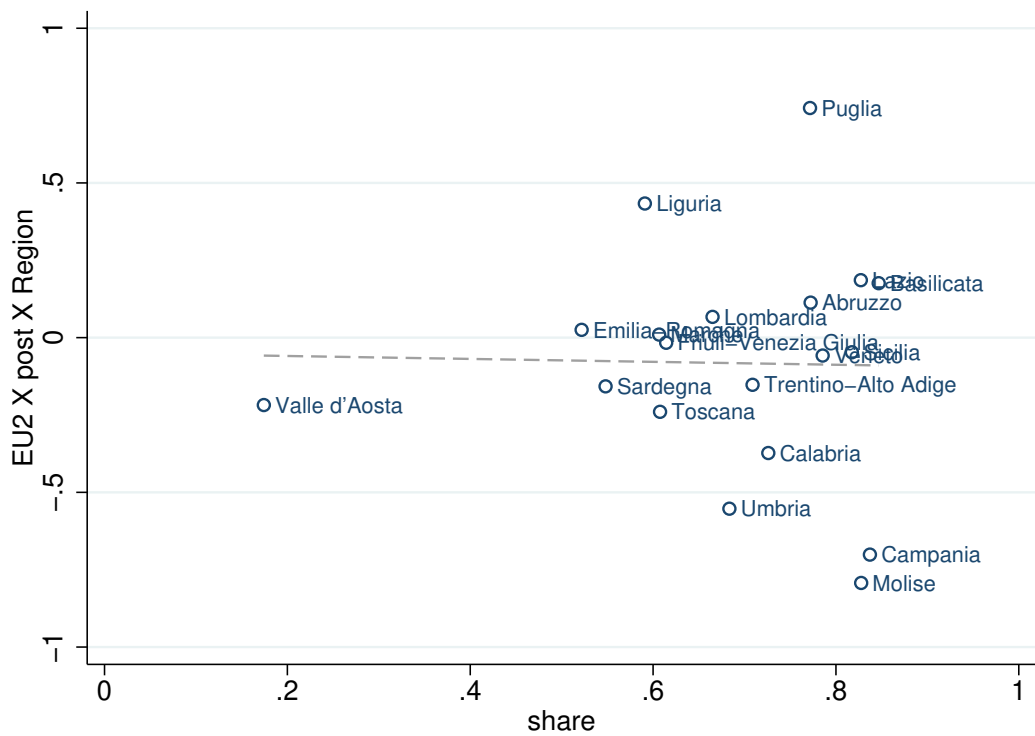
Notes: This Figure shows the time trend for the share (panel A) and the number per 100,000 people (panel B) of gynaecologists against practising abortions in the period 2002-2018.

Figure 15: Gynaecologists against practising abortions in the period 2002-2018.



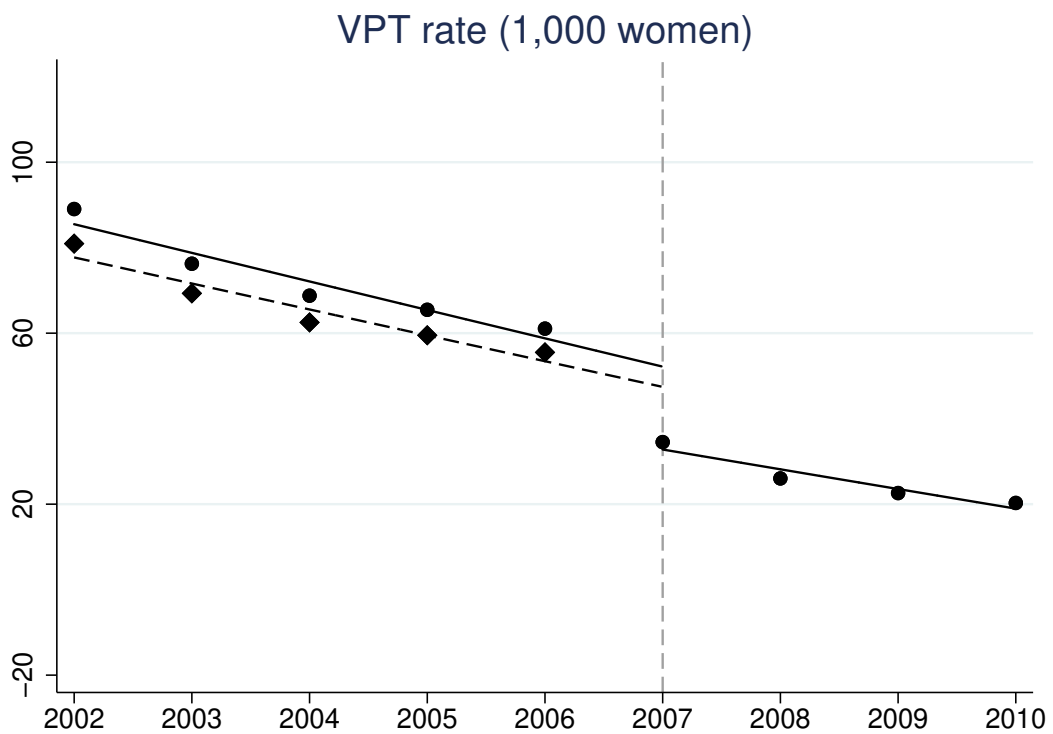
Notes: This Figure shows a scatter plot with on the x-axis the post-enlargement increase in EU2 women across Italian regions, calculated considering the average percentage increase between pre- and post-enlargement periods (i.e., 2002-2006 and 2007-2010, respectively) and on the y-axis the share (panel A) and the number per 100,000 people (panel B) of gynaecologists against practising abortions in Italian regions, calculated as averages during the post-enlargement period (i.e., 2007-2010). The dot size in the chart is proportional to the share of EU2 women in each region in the pre-enlargement period (i.e., 2002-2006).

Figure 16: Association between the post-enlargement increase in EU2 women and the presence of gynaecologists against practising abortions in Italian regions.



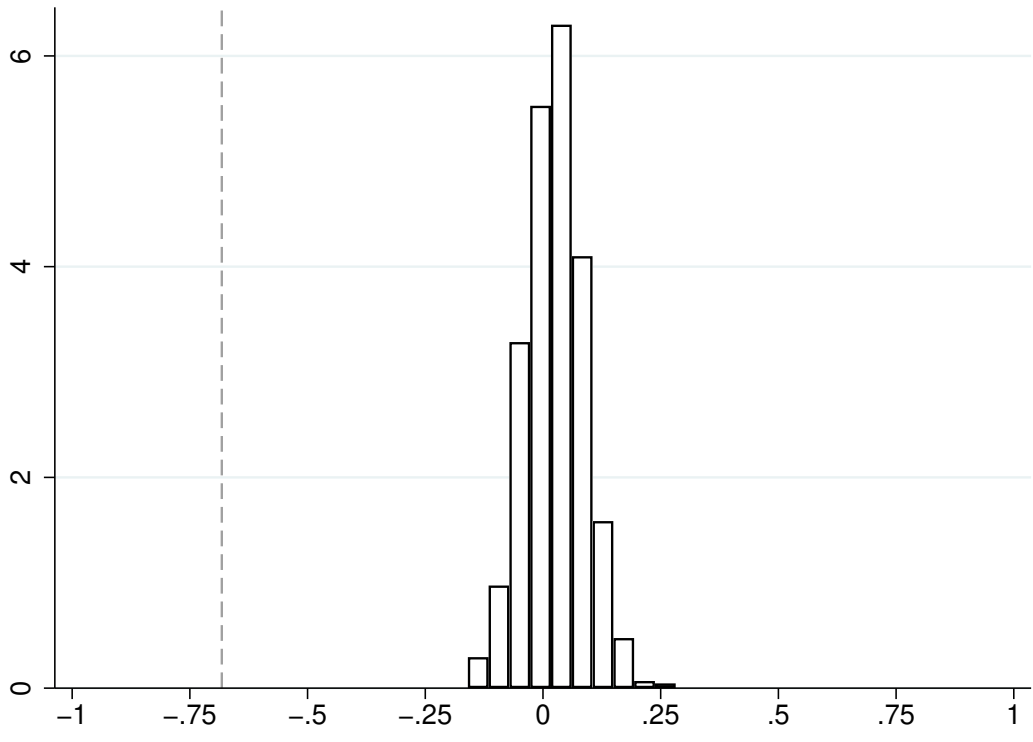
Notes: This Figure shows a scatter plot with on the x-axis the share (panel A) and the number per 100,000 people (panel B) of gynaecologists against practising abortions in Italian regions and, on the y-axis, the heterogeneous effect for each Italian region of the EU enlargement in 2007 on EU2 women's VPT rates.

Figure 17: Association between regional post-enlargement variation in VPT rates of EU2 migrants and presence of gynaecologists against practising abortions in Italian regions.



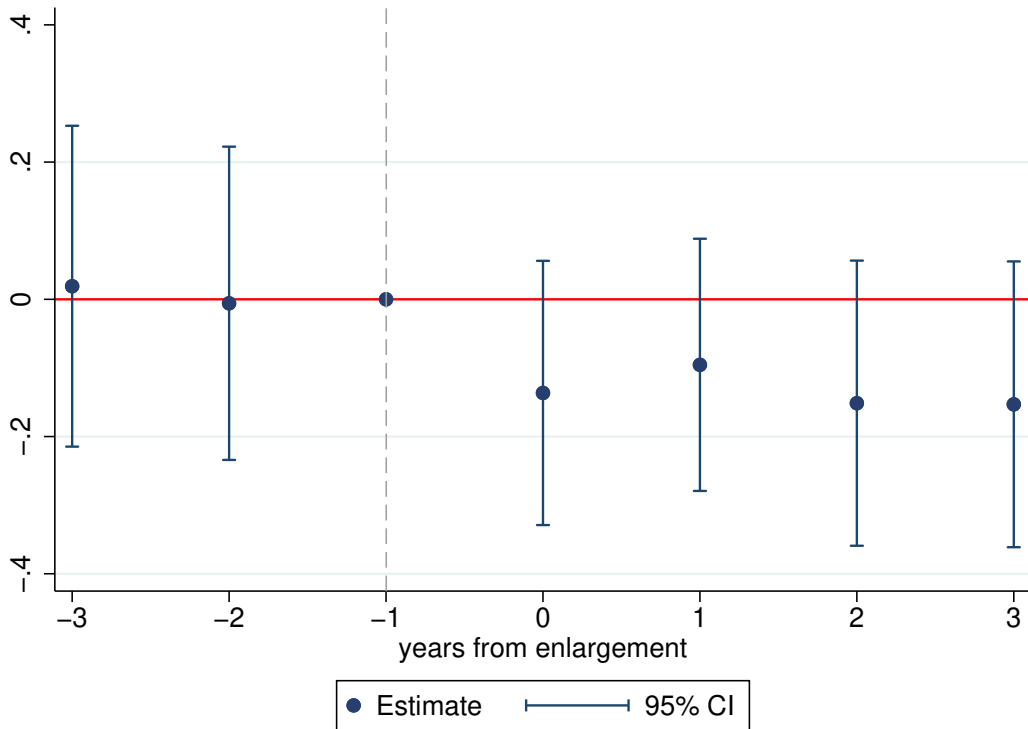
Notes: This Figure shows the time variation of VPT rates for women from EU2 countries. The dashed line before 2007 represents the estimated time variation for VPT rates including illegal immigrants in population estimates. The solid line before 2007 is the unadjusted VPT rate for EU2 women. The dashed vertical line corresponds to the year of the EU enlargement, i.e. 2007. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria.

Figure 18: Trends in VPT rates and resident female immigrant population during the period 2002-2010 - accounting for irregular immigrants before 2007.



Notes: This Figure shows the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement when our original treatment group, composed of EU2 women, is substituted by randomly drawing 1,000 samples of women from outside the EU (excluding candidate countries). The dashed line represents the effect of the enlargement when EU2 women are used as the treatment group obtained from Equation 1 using specification (4). Estimates are weighted by the share of immigrant women in province p at time t with respect to the total number of immigrant women in Italy during the year t .

Figure 19: Placebo test using women from outside EU as treated.



Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women birth rates. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Estimates are weighted by the share of foreign women in the population. Standard errors clustered at the region and country of origin level.

Figure 20: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women birth rates.

Table 1: Effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU women VPT rates.

VPT rate				
Weighted by the share of immigrant women				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
EU2 \times post	-0.5679*** (0.075)	-0.6397*** (0.064)	-0.5870*** (0.063)	-0.6822*** (0.068)
Constant	0.6711*** (0.070)	0.9988*** (0.114)	-0.1381 (0.132)	0.7321 (1.193)
Observations	3,739	3,739	3,739	3,651
R-squared	0.5641	0.6902	0.7101	0.7108
Unweighted				
EU2 \times post	-0.6468*** (0.053)	-0.6615*** (0.050)	-0.6745*** (0.050)	-0.7471*** (0.059)
Constant	0.5611*** (0.052)	0.6677*** (0.080)	-0.3353*** (0.068)	0.0573 (0.791)
Province FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE \times linear trend	No	No	Yes	No
Post \times covariates	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	3,739	3,739	3,739	3,651
R-squared	0.2792	0.4963	0.5171	0.5115

*Notes: This Table shows estimates for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates. Column (1) shows our baseline specification, including only country of residence and year-specific fixed effects, column (2) adds province-specific fixed effects, column (3) adds, to specification 2, province-specific linear time trends and a common quadratic component, whereas column (4) adds, to specification 2, province-level covariates. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. The control group is composed of women from candidate countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Standard errors clustered at the province level. Estimates in the upper panel are weighted by the share of immigrant women in province p at time t with respect to the total number of immigrant women in Italy during the year t . Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.*

Table 2: Lower bound of the causal effect of EU citizenship on EU2 women VPT rates.

k (year)	$\hat{\mu}_j$	Citizenship effect with selection estimated by:		Citizenship effect % of the total effect
		all new EU2	pre-enlargement trend	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1 (2007)	-0.67	[-0.22 ; -0.42]	[-0.27 ; -0.45]	32.83% - 62.68%
2 (2008)	-0.61	[-0.04 ; -0.30]	[-0.11 ; -0.33]	6.55% - 49.18%
3 (2009)	-0.89	[-0.27 ; -0.55]	[-0.35 ; -0.60]	30.33% - 61.79%
4 (2010)	-0.92	[-0.26 ; -0.55]	[-0.32 ; -0.59]	28.26% - 59.78%

Notes: This Table shows estimates for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates. Column (1) shows the original coefficients from the case event study presented in Equation 2 ($\hat{\mu}_k$). Column (2) shows estimates of the causal effect of citizenship when considering that all new EU2 immigrants arrived after 2007 came in Italy for the benefits provided by the enlargement, with $1 - \hat{w}_{1t} = 1 - EU2_{ref}^{cit} / EU2_t$. These estimates assign a higher weight to the selection effect in Equation 6 and consequently provide conservative values for the lower bound of the causal effect of citizenship. Column (3) presents estimates of the lower bound of the causal effect of citizenship estimating the share of new EU2 immigrants who arrived after 2007 for the benefits provided by the enlargement using the regression analysis proposed in Equation 6, $1 - \hat{w}_{1t} = 1 - \widehat{EU2}_t^{cit} / EU2_t$. Column(4) shows estimates of the ratio between the lower and upper bounds of the lower bound of the causal effect of citizenship on the VPT of EU2 women and the overall effect. Each column shows the range of plausible values for the lower bound of the causal effect of obtaining EU citizenship on VPT rates of EU2 women obtained assuming that: (i) new EU2 immigrant women after 2007 have the same VPT rate as women in the respective countries of origin. Using data from the United Nations database for the years 2003 and 2004 we know that the VPT rate per 1,000 women in Romania and Bulgaria is equal to 27.8 and 21.3, respectively. Considering that Romanian women account for 96% of VPTs from EU2 women, we obtain a weighted VPT rate per 1,000 EU2 women of 27.54 ($0.96 \times 27.8 + 0.04 \times 21.3$). Using this value we estimate a percentage difference between the VPT rate of EU2 women residing in Italy in 2006 and the VPT rate of EU2 women that arrived in Italy because of the enlargement ($\Delta \ln(VPT_{ref,k}^{EU2^{Sel}})$) equal to -55%; and (ii) the same variation is equal to -100%, which is equivalent to assuming that new EU2 immigrants arrived after the enlargement have a VPT rate equal to 0.

Table 3: Balancing test for covariates.

	Unweighted	Weighted by propensity score
	(1)	(2)
Age	-0.6818*** (0.1707)	-0.2441 (0.4287)
Not married	-0.2301*** (0.0118)	0.0755 (0.0557)
Low educated	-0.1097*** (0.0092)	0.0424 (0.0432)
Unemployed	-0.1323*** (0.0108)	0.0101 (0.0259)
Manager	0.0076*** (0.0034)	0.0021 (0.0034)
Blue collar	0.0577*** (0.0085)	0.0194 (0.0148)
Self-employed	0.0000 (0.001)	0.0003 (0.001)
Urgent	0.0031 (0.0055)	-0.01645 (0.01549)
No complications	0.0024*** (0.0011)	0.0004 (0.0011)
Observations	3,739	3,739

*Notes: This Table shows estimated coefficients from a logistic regression where the dependent variable takes value 1 for women from EU2 and 0 for women from candidate countries in province p at time t and observable covariates are represented by the averages by country of origin c , province p and time t for the following observable characteristics: age, marital status, education, employment status, and position, VPT characteristics. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. The control group is composed of women from candidate countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Standard errors clustered at the province level. Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$*

Table 4: Effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates - a comparison using different weighting strategy.

	Unweighted	Weighted by		
		propensity score	% of foreign population	propensity score and % of foreign population
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
EU2 × post	-0.7471*** (0.059)	-0.6790*** (0.063)	-0.6822*** (0.068)	-0.7002*** (0.067)
Constant	0.0573 (0.791)	-0.1381 (0.132)	0.7321 (1.193)	0.0500 (0.091)
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE × linear trend	No	No	No	No
Post × covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,739	3,739	3,650	3,651
R-squared	0.5171	0.7101	0.8359	0.5646

Notes: This Table shows a comparison among estimates obtained from Equation 1 using specification (4) - i.e. including province-level covariates - with different weighting strategies. Column (1) shows unweighted estimates, reported as the baseline. Column (2) shows estimates weighted by the propensity score (w_{ps}). Column (3) shows estimates weighted by the share of female immigrants from country c in province p at time t with respect to the population of female immigrants in province p at time t (w_s). Lastly, column 4 shows estimates weighted by a combination of the previously specified weights, after implementing appropriate standardization between 0 and 1. Standardization performed as follows: $w_i^{std} = \frac{w_i - \min(w_i)}{\max(w_i) - \min(w_i)}$ with $i = s, ps$. This procedure was implemented to assign equal importance to previous weighting strategies when calculating the combined weight., ($w_c = w_s^{std} \times w_p^{std}$). Standard errors clustered at the province level. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. The control group is composed of women from candidate countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 5: Effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates - control group of women from outside the EU

	VPT rate			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
EU2 \times post	-0.7738*** (0.086)	-0.7763*** (0.079)	-0.7773*** (0.071)	-0.7811*** (0.079)
Constant	1.3488*** (0.061)	1.6633*** (0.208)	1.3717*** (0.236)	1.4964*** (0.455)
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE \times linear trend	No	No	No	No
Post \times covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	20,600	20,600	20,600	19,787
R-squared	0.6354	0.7221	0.7294	0.7262

*Notes: This Table shows estimates for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates. Column (1) shows our baseline specification, including only country of residence and year-specific fixed effects, column (2) adds province-specific fixed effects, column (3) adds, to specification 2, province-specific linear time trends and a common quadratic component, whereas column (4) adds, to specification 2, province-level covariates. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. The control group is composed of women from countries outside the EU different from candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Estimates are weighted by the share of immigrant women in province p at time t with respect to the total number of immigrant women in Italy during the year t . Standard errors clustered at the province level. Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$*

Table 6: Effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 VPT rates - heterogeneous effects by country of origin.

VPT rate				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Only Bulgaria				
Bulgaria \times post	-0.5810*** (0.082)	-0.6814*** (0.085)	-0.6191*** (0.084)	-0.7393*** (0.094)
Constant	0.6697*** (0.073)	1.1164*** (0.152)	1.4003*** (0.217)	0.3136 (1.464)
Only Romania				
Romania \times post	-0.5547*** (0.079)	-0.5852*** (0.060)	-0.5564*** (0.055)	-0.6512*** (0.066)
Constant	0.6530*** (0.069)	0.9640*** (0.118)	-0.1717 (0.136)	0.7619 (1.443)
Province FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE \times linear trend	No	No	Yes	No
Post \times covariates	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	2,904	2,904	2,904	2,825
R-squared	0.5337	0.6603	0.6822	0.6830

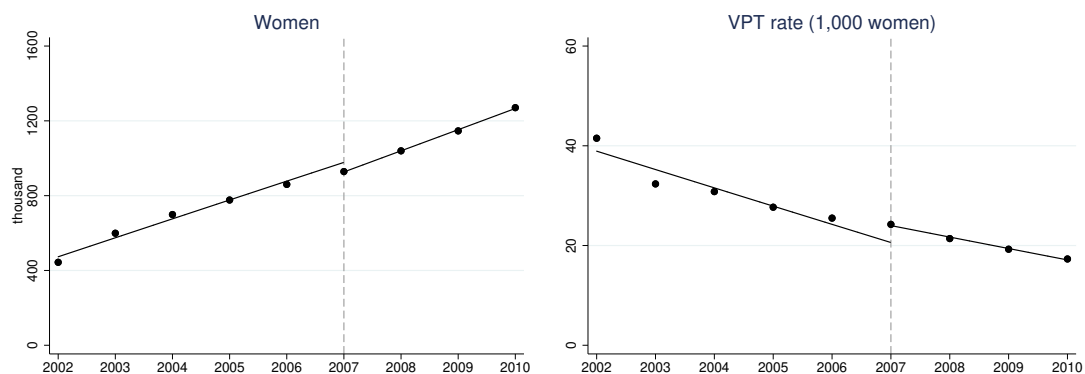
*Notes: This Table shows estimates for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on Bulgarian (panel A) and Romanian (panel B) women's VPT rates. Column (1) shows our baseline specification, including only country of residence and year-specific fixed effects, column (2) adds province-specific fixed effects, column (3) adds, to specification 2, province-specific linear time trends and a common quadratic component, whereas column (4) adds, to specification 2, province-level covariates. The control group is composed of women from candidate countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Standard errors clustered at the province level. Estimates are weighted by the share of immigrant women in province p at time t with respect to the total number of immigrant women in Italy during the year t . Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$*

Table 7: Effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates - excluding voluntary pregnancy terminations after 90 days.

	VPT rate			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
EU2 \times post	-0.5637*** (0.075)	-0.6376*** (0.064)	-0.5791*** (0.064)	-0.6796*** (0.068)
Constant	0.6601*** (0.069)	0.9878*** (0.115)	-0.1388 (0.130)	0.5441 (1.195)
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE \times linear trend	No	No	No	No
Post \times covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,729	3,729	3,729	3,641
R-squared	0.5638	0.6911	0.7109	0.7113

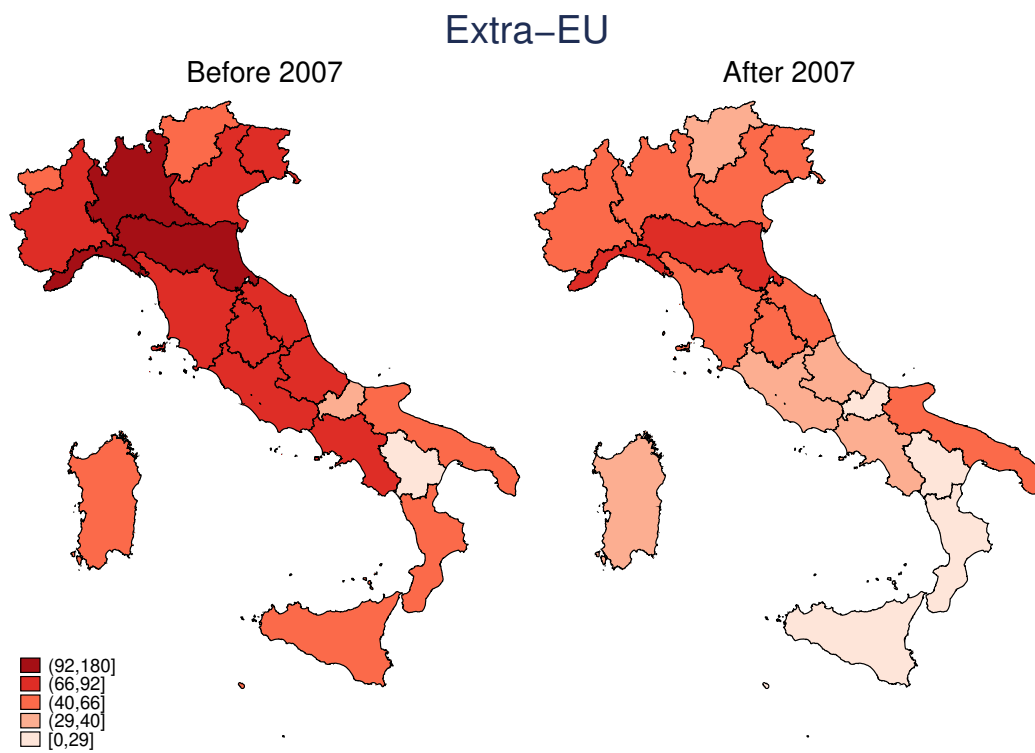
*Notes: This Table shows estimates for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates excluding VPTs after 90 days. Column (1) shows our baseline specification, including only country of residence and year-specific fixed effects, column (2) adds province-specific fixed effects, column (3) adds, to specification 2, province-specific linear time trends and a common quadratic component, whereas column (4) adds, to specification 2, province-level covariates. EU2 includes Romania and Bulgaria. The control group is composed of women from candidate countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Standard errors clustered at the province level. Estimates are weighted by the share of immigrant women in province p at time t with respect to the total number of immigrant women in Italy during the year t . Significant levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.*

Appendix



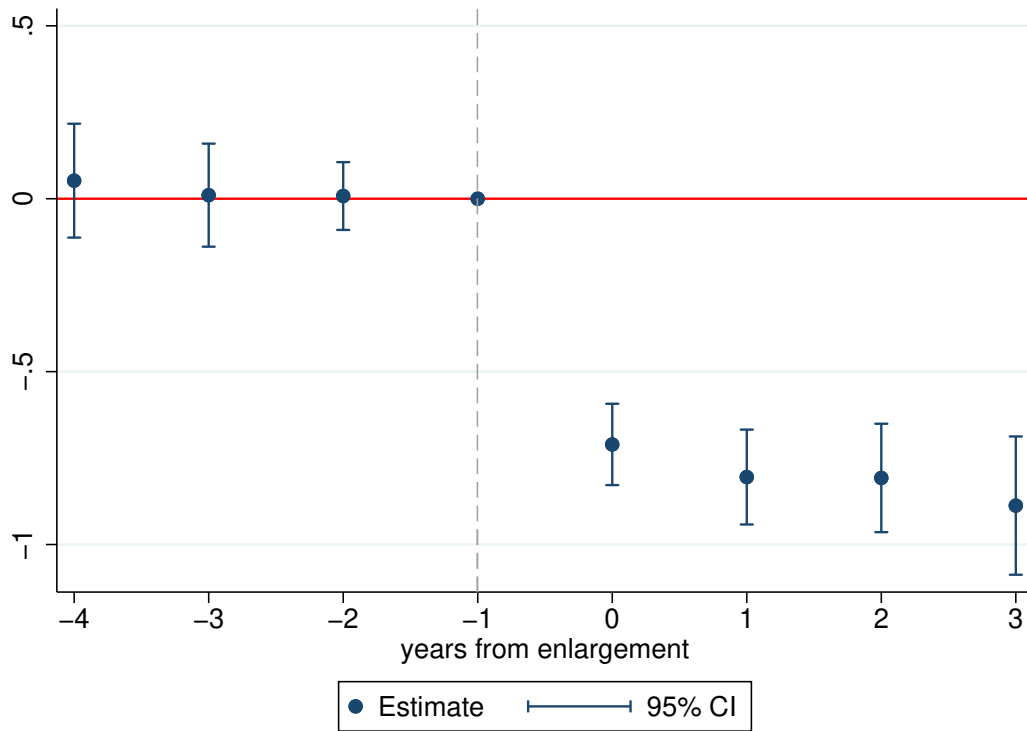
Notes: This Figure shows the time variation of VPT rates and resident female population in the period 2002-2010 for immigrant women from outside the EU excluding candidate countries. The dashed vertical line corresponds to the year of the EU enlargement, i.e. 2007. Candidate countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

Figure A1: Trends in VPT rates and resident female immigrant population during the period 2002-2010 - immigrant women from outside the EU.



Notes: This Figure shows the territorial dispersion of average VPT rates in Italian regions for the periods 2002-2006 and 2007-2010 for women from outside the EU excluding candidate countries. Candidate countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

Figure A2: Regional variability in VPT rates before and after the 2007 EU enlargement - immigrant women from outside the EU.



Notes: This Figure shows the coefficients estimated from Equation 2, corresponding to the first 3 lags and 4 leads of the event study for the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates. The year of the enlargement corresponds to 0. The year before the enlargement is used as the reference category, and, for this reason, no confidence intervals are displayed. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The horizontal line is set at 0 to test graphically whether the estimated coefficients are equal to 0. The treatment group is composed of women from EU2 countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the control group is composed of women from outside the EU excluding candidate countries (i.e., Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey). Estimates are weighted by the share of foreign women in the population. Standard errors clustered at the province level.

Figure A3: Event study of the effect of the 2007 EU enlargement on EU2 women VPT rates - control group of immigrant women from outside the EU.

Table A1: Descriptive statistics.

Variable	EU2			Italian			Candidate countries			Extra EU		
	Obs (1)	Mean (2)	Std. Dev. (3)	Obs (4)	Mean (5)	Std. Dev. (6)	Obs (7)	Mean (8)	Std. Dev. (9)	Obs (10)	Mean (11)	Std. Dev. (12)
Age classes												
< 14	91337	0	0.03	781695	0	0.05	32742	0	0.03	191246	0	0.03
15-19	91337	0.08	0.27	781695	0.09	0.29	32742	0.04	0.2	191246	0.05	0.22
20-24	91337	0.26	0.44	781695	0.17	0.38	32742	0.21	0.4	191246	0.2	0.4
25-29	91337	0.26	0.44	781695	0.19	0.39	32742	0.28	0.45	191246	0.28	0.45
30-34	91337	0.22	0.41	781695	0.22	0.41	32742	0.26	0.44	191246	0.25	0.43
35-39	91337	0.14	0.35	781695	0.21	0.41	32742	0.16	0.37	191246	0.16	0.36
40-44	91337	0.04	0.2	781695	0.1	0.3	32742	0.05	0.21	191246	0.05	0.22
45 +	91337	0	0.04	781695	0.01	0.1	32742	0	0.05	191246	0	0.06
Marital status												
Married	90681	0.45	0.5	778116	0.48	0.5	32466	0.24	0.43	189356	0.46	0.5
Single	90681	0.48	0.5	778116	0.44	0.5	32466	0.73	0.45	189356	0.48	0.5
Other	90681	0.07	0.25	778116	0.07	0.26	32466	0.03	0.18	189356	0.06	0.24
Education												
Primary education	88347	0.1	0.3	759168	0.04	0.2	31343	0.16	0.37	182377	0.14	0.35
Secondary education	88347	0.87	0.34	759168	0.88	0.32	31343	0.8	0.4	182377	0.8	0.4
Degree	88347	0.03	0.18	759168	0.07	0.26	31343	0.04	0.2	182377	0.06	0.24
Employment status												
Employed	90404	0.3	0.46	772900	0.42	0.49	32435	0.24	0.43	189021	0.31	0.46
Unemployed	90404	0.57	0.49	772900	0.54	0.5	32435	0.7	0.46	189021	0.54	0.5
Other condition	90404	0.13	0.33	772900	0.04	0.18	32435	0.05	0.22	189021	0.15	0.36
Type of position												
Entrepreneur/White collar	27345	0.09	0.29	326516	0.17	0.38	7874	0.08	0.26	58763	0.12	0.33
Self-employed	27345	0.01	0.1	326516	0.03	0.18	7874	0.01	0.08	58763	0.01	0.1
Worker/Caregiver/House keeper	27345	0.9	0.31	326516	0.79	0.41	7874	0.92	0.27	58763	0.87	0.34
Economic activity												
Agriculture	34339	0.04	0.19	302182	0.03	0.18	7989	0.03	0.18	72788	0.01	0.11
Industry	34339	0.11	0.31	302182	0.16	0.37	7989	0.25	0.43	72788	0.15	0.36
Wholesale	34339	0.18	0.39	302182	0.33	0.47	7989	0.3	0.46	72788	0.2	0.4
Public administration	34339	0.02	0.15	302182	0.15	0.36	7989	0.03	0.17	72788	0.03	0.17
Other private services	34339	0.65	0.48	302182	0.32	0.47	7989	0.38	0.49	72788	0.61	0.49
Gestational age												
< 90 days	91277	0.99	0.1	781582	0.97	0.17	32680	0.98	0.13	191074	0.99	0.11
≥ 90 days	91277	0.01	0.1	781582	0.03	0.17	32680	0.02	0.13	191074	0.01	0.11
Urgency												
No	89675	0.9	0.3	768400	0.9	0.3	32320	0.9	0.29	188651	0.91	0.29
Yes	89675	0.1	0.3	768400	0.1	0.3	32320	0.1	0.29	188651	0.09	0.29
Complications												
No	89577	1	0.05	768424	1	0.07	32060	1	0.06	186872	1	0.07
Yes	89577	0	0.05	768424	0	0.07	32060	0	0.06	186872	0	0.07

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