

# Corruption Exposure, Political Trust, and Immigrants\*

Cevat Giray Aksoy, Barry Eichengreen, Anastasia Litina, Cem Özgüzel and Chan Yu<sup>+</sup>

## Abstract

Using large-scale survey data covering 38 countries and exploiting origin-country variation across cohorts and surveys, we show that immigrants exposed to institutional corruption before migrating exhibit higher levels of political trust in their new country. Higher trust is observed for national political institutions only and does not carry over to other supra-national institutions and individuals. We report evidence that higher levels of political trust among immigrants persist, leading to greater electoral participation and political engagement in the long run. The impact of home-country corruption on political trust in the destination country is further amplified by large differences in income and democracy levels between the two countries. However, the effect is lessened by exposure to media providing independent information about institutional performance in the destination country. Finally, our extensive analyses indicate that self-selection into host countries based on trust is highly unlikely and the results also hold when focusing only on forced migrants who were unlikely to have been subject to selection.

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## 1. Introduction

Political trust, defined as trust that individuals place in political institutions, matters for societal processes and outcomes. As John Locke famously argued in *the Second Treatise of Civil Government*, mutual trust between citizens and the government is an essential condition for the establishment of an open society governed by the rule of law. When people lack trust in political institutions, they may view public policies as illegitimate and resort to irregular methods such as violent protests and demonstrations to achieve political change (Easton, 1965; Papaioannou, 2013). To take an example from the United States, if individuals lack trust in the authorities responsible for counting votes, they may disregard the election results and organize protests that could threaten the peaceful transition of power. Similarly, evidence shows that political trust matters for compliance with public policies, such as public health responses, regulations, and the tax system, (Levi and Stoker, 2000; Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020).

Societies with high levels of immigration place particular emphasis on the issue of institutional trust because immigrants frequently originate from countries with distinct political systems, institutional arrangements, and varying levels of corruption. Therefore, the level of trust that immigrants have in the institutions of their new host country can significantly impact their integration and engagement in civic and political life. Without trust in institutions, immigrants may feel marginalized and disconnected from the broader society, which can lead to social tensions and other negative consequences (see e.g., Easton and Dennis, 1967; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). If this characterization is accurate, it could be used by opponents of immigration to criticize its detrimental effect on the level of political trust in society.

Although these ideas have a long history, they have not been examined in a systematic manner. In this paper, we study whether immigrants who lived under poor institutions prior to migrating exhibit higher trust in the host country, and whether these effects are driven by large

differences in incomes and the extent of democracy between countries of origin and destination. Specifically, we test whether immigrants who were exposed to more corruption in their native country vest greater trust in the parliaments, political parties and politicians of their country of immigration.

We rely on two datasets for our main analysis. First, we use data from eight waves of the European Social Survey spanning the period 2004-2018, conducted in 38 European countries, to measure the political trust among immigrants. Second, we measure each immigrants' exposure to corruption in their home-country using Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) data.

Our empirical strategy is to exploit within-origin country, within-host country, between-age cohort variation. Put simply, we compare immigrants with similar observable characteristics, coming from the same origin country, residing in the same host country, but exposed to different levels of origin-country corruption before migration. We achieve this by controlling for origin country by year, host country by year, age cohort fixed effects, as well as age by subregion or age by country fixed effects in our more demanding specifications.

We find that immigrants' exposure to corruption in their native country is an important determinant of the trust they place in the parliaments, political parties and politicians of their country of immigration. Strikingly, however, exposure to more corruption in the native country affects trust in the political institutions of the host country *positively*, not negatively. Moreover, it is not exposure in general that matters, but rather an exposure in early adulthood, i.e., ages 18-25.<sup>2</sup> An individual with the highest exposure to corruption relative to an individual with no such exposure in that age range is, on average 6.14 percentage points more likely to trust the institutions

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<sup>2</sup> The early adulthood (i.e., impressionable years) hypothesis traces back to Newcomb (1943) and Newcomb, Koenig, Flacks and Warwick (1967). Acemoglu, Ajzenman, Aksoy, Fiszbein, and Molina (2022) and Aksoy, Eichengreen, Saka and (2021) show that the long-term attitudinal effects of exposure to democratic institutions and epidemics, respectively, are specific to the early adulthood.

of their destination country. Given a mean of 61 percent for this outcome, the effect is quantitatively meaningful.

While our empirical approach focuses on a promising source of variation in terms of origin country corruption exposure, it does not eliminate all endogeneity concerns. We address these concerns through five distinct and complementary approaches. First, our results are not driven by other past economic, social and political shocks that individuals may have experienced in their early adulthood. Second, they are robust to controlling for country-by-age, subnational-region-by-age-cohort or age-of-arrival fixed effects, migrant networks, and household income. Third, they hold across a variety of specification checks (using alternative indices for measuring corruption, excluding potential bad controls, conducting multiple hypothesis tests, ruling out influential observations, focusing only on a subsample of immigrants coming from countries with corruption levels that are lower than their host countries, and using alternative sampling weights). Fourth, we document that origin country's corruption experience before an immigrant is born has no impact on their political trust in the destination country. This finding mitigates concerns about our results being driven by broad social changes that affect political trust. Finally, we associate first-generation immigrants not with the institutional quality of their origin country but instead with the institutional quality of the host country. We do not find significant effects.

These results are also unlikely to be explained by selection for several reasons. Our empirical strategy compares only immigrants moving from the same origin to the same destination while also controlling for observable characteristics and age cohort fixed effects. Comparing only immigrants from the same home country nets out unobservable aspects of that country, while comparing those in the same host country absorbs the effect of the current host-country institutional quality. The results are also not driven by the fact that more trusting people tend to emigrate. If immigrants are more trusting by nature, then they should exhibit greater trust not only in their host-

country political institutions but also in other institutions and people. We show that this is not the case (in particular, we find no effects on other outcomes such as social trust and trust in supra-national organizations) and that the positive effects are limited to political institutions. Our balance tests show that individual-level past corruption exposure and the socio-demographic characteristics of immigrants are not correlated with host country characteristics (e.g., GDP, population, exports, physicians per capita, etc.). Finally, we show that the results also hold when focusing only on migrants originating from countries affected by natural disasters or wars who are forcibly displaced and thus unlikely to be subjected to selection.

Importantly, the implications of higher levels of political trust have concrete behavioural implications. More political trust in the host country leads to more political action: immigrants previously more exposed to corruption in their country of origin are more likely to be interested in politics, to have voted in the last election, and to work in a political party or political action group in the last 12 months. These findings highlight the practical and policy implications of our study: they emphasise the importance of fostering political trust as a means of promoting political participation and civic involvement, and hence of strengthening democratic processes.

Our findings also reveal a notable difference between natives and immigrants. Specifically, natives who were more exposed to corruption during their formative years exhibit lower levels of political trust. The impact on political trust is comparable for both natives and immigrants, underscoring the contrasting attitudes observed for these two groups.

In the final part of the paper, we investigate whether individuals assess outcomes in relation to a reference point established by a previous experience. Specifically, we examine whether immigrants hold a more positive view of political institutions in their host country if they compare favourably to those in their country of origin, where their attitudes and expectations regarding political institutions were formed.

Our findings suggest that when there are large differences in income and democratic practices between the countries of origin and destination, migrants tend to place more faith in political institutions of the latter. This higher political trust in the host country can be plausibly attributed to the improved living conditions that migrants experience. We also observe that migrants from less democratic countries exhibit greater levels of political trust. However, the impact of past exposure to corruption on political trust is less pronounced among immigrants who have greater exposure to media in their host country. By following the local media, immigrants expand their understanding of institutions in their host country, which reduces the positive effect of home-country corruption.

## **2. Related Literature and Our Contribution**

Our paper contributes to several literatures. First is the literature on the determinants of political trust, particularly the role of early life events.<sup>3</sup> Guiso, Herrera, Morelli, and Sonno (2020) analyze how negative economic shocks early in life negatively affect political trust. Acemoglu, Ajzenman, Aksoy, Fiszbein, and Molina (2021) show that more exposure to democracy leads to more trust in democratic institutions. Aksoy, Eichengreen, and Saka (forthcoming) find that epidemic exposure early in life has a persistent negative effect on trust in political institutions and leaders. Daniele, Aassve, and Le Moglie (forthcoming) find that young first-time voters exposed to the large-scale corruption scandal in the early 1990s in Italy have significantly lower institutional trust and were more likely to support populist parties at the 2018 national elections. Our results are similar in highlighting the importance of past experience and different in terms of the sign of the effect. Specifically, exposure to low-quality, corrupt institutions in an immigrant's country of origin

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<sup>3</sup> There is also an extensive literature on interpersonal trust (see, e.g., Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales, 2006).

positively impacts the trust that they vest in the political institutions of the country of immigration.<sup>4</sup>

Second, there is literature on the persistence of family and economic outcomes in the context of immigration generally – that is, how home-country norms, practices and institutions shape expectations and behaviours in the host country. This literature finds persistence in fertility outcomes (Fernández and Fogli, 2009), labour force participation (Alesina and Giuliano, 2010), and preferences for redistribution (Luttmer and Singhal, 2011) after individuals move from one country to another. Our results differ sharply from these earlier “persistence studies.” In contrast to these papers, we show that attitudes and behaviors regarding political trust differ systematically prior and subsequent to immigration. Low trust in the political institutions of the country of original results in unusually *high* trust in the political institutions of the country of immigration. Thus, our contribution is not only to document the persistence of the effect in the long term but to identify a novel mechanism through which individuals update as opposed to simply retaining their beliefs.

Third, there is literature on how institutions shape individual behaviour. For example, Shiller, Boycko, Korobov, Winter, and Schelling (1992) and Alesina and Fuchs-Schundeln (2007) explore the effect of exposure to the institutions of socialism on entrepreneurship, leadership, and attitudes towards redistribution and state intervention. Fisman and Miguel (2007) examine the impact of exposure to corrupt institutions on subsequent corruption norms.<sup>5</sup> We show that exposure to corrupt institutions similarly affects trust in political institutions, albeit in a different direction than would be expected on the basis of this literature. Our paper also presents causal cross-country evidence on this question by drawing on data from a larger number and a more varied sample of

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<sup>4</sup> Our paper is on the determinants of political trust, not on perceptions of corruption, but it is related to the perceptions-of-corruption literature insofar as a measure of corruption is our key independent variable (Olken, 2009; Gutmann, Padovano and Voigt, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Analysing variations in the number of unpaid parking tickets among foreign diplomats at the United Nations, they show that diplomats coming from countries with weaker institutions tend to break the rules more frequently and are less likely to pay fines.

countries, which allows greater confidence in the generality of the findings.

Fourth, we contribute to the literature on voter turnout. Existing research has demonstrated that citizens may be discouraged from participating in the electoral process as a result of their perceptions of corruption (Chong, De La O, Karlan, and Wantchekon, 2015; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015). Unlike these studies, we present new evidence that immigrants more exposed to corruption in their country of origin are more likely to be interested in politics and to have voted in the last election in the host country.

Finally, our paper contributes to the debate on economic case for immigration restrictions. Advocates of such restrictions argue that international migrants have the potential to transfer a significant portion of the factors responsible for low productivity in their countries of origin to wealthier destination countries (see, Clemens and Pritchett, 2019 for a detailed discussion). Notably, proponents such as Collier (2013) and Borjas (2015) argue that immigrants introduce low-quality norms prevalent in their countries of origin, thereby generating a negative externality that affects both formal and informal institutions within the destination countries. However, our findings present a contrasting perspective. They fail to support the notion that immigration undermines prevailing norms in destination countries, when it comes to political trust and participation. In this sense, our paper offers a nuanced view of the relationship between immigration and institutional dynamics.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. Data and Variables**

Data on trust in institutions come from Waves 2-9 (2004-2018) of the European Social Survey

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<sup>6</sup> See, Nowrasteh and Powell (2020) for comprehensive empirical assessment of the new economic case for immigration restrictions.



(ESS).<sup>7</sup> These surveys are fielded every two years in 38 European countries.<sup>8</sup> Interviews are conducted in local languages. Our main sample includes 31,797 migrants aged 15 years and older from 196 countries.

We consider three measures of trust in political institutions: “Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust: (i) parliament; (ii) politicians; (iii) political parties.”<sup>9</sup> We consider these measures individually and also combine them into a single index of political trust by taking the average of three outcomes.

To test whether the effects are specific to political trust, we also examine answers about other dimensions of trust, such as social trust, trust in non-national institutions (such as the United Nations), or non-political attitudes (such as views of homosexuality and fairness). This allows us to examine whether our results are specific to political institutions.

Our variable of interest is corruption exposure in the respondent’s home country between the ages 18 to 25. To investigate the role of early adulthood exposure compared to exposure in other age ranges, we also calculate corruption exposure in ages 0-9, 10-17, 26-33, and 34+. We measure corruption using Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) data which covers 202 countries from 1900 to 2018.<sup>10</sup>

V-DEM provides an executive and public sector corruption index, a judicial corruption index, and a legislative corruption index.<sup>11</sup> Executive and public sector corruption measure how routinely

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<sup>7</sup> We drop the first round of the survey because it does not include information of country of origin of migrants.

<sup>8</sup> The sample is an unbalanced panel because not all countries were surveyed in every round.

<sup>9</sup> The actual question queried also about trust in the legal system. Since the legal system is not a political institution per se, we do not consider it here.

<sup>10</sup> The V-DEM dataset includes information from the years 1789 to 2020. Because our earliest cohorts were born in 1900, we use 1900 as the starting point in our main sample. For more detail see <https://www.v-dem.net/en/news/political-corruption-persistent-global-phenomenon/>

<sup>11</sup> Each index is based on factual and evaluative indicators. The former use data from current and historical sources, while the latter are based on ratings from some 3,000 experts specialized by country and dimension. Full details on the

public-sector employees grant favors in exchange for bribes, kickbacks or other material inducements and how often they steal, embezzle or misappropriate public funds or other state resources for personal or family use. Legislative corruption indicates how often members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain by receiving bribes, obtaining government contracts for firms that legislators own, doing favours for firms in order to obtain the opportunity of employment after leaving the legislature, or stealing money from the state or campaign donations. Judicial corruption captures how often individuals or businesses make undocumented payments or bribes in order to obtain favourable judicial decisions.<sup>12</sup> In our baseline analysis, we use a political corruption index that takes the average of executive corruption, judicial corruption, legislative corruption, and public-sector corruption. The index values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more corruption.

Appendix Figure 1 displays the time series of the corruption index used in the main analysis for 196 countries. The figure highlights the variation for India, Iran, Italy, and Russia for illustrative purposes. These suggest that exposure to corruption varies by country but also across cohorts within countries.

We use country of birth to identify first-generation immigrants.<sup>13</sup> We also construct a sample of natives born in the country of residence, whose fathers and mothers were also born in the country of residence.<sup>14</sup>

To control for other aspects of past economic and political shocks in respondents' early

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methodology are at <https://www.v-dem.net/en/data/reference-material-v11/>

<sup>12</sup> While our variable of primary interest is the aggregate index of institutional corruption, we also examine the results of each component in a later section.

<sup>13</sup> First-generation immigrants are defined as the individuals who themselves migrated to the host country (i.e., born outside the host country), whereas second-generation immigrants are individuals who were not foreign-born but whose father and/or mother were immigrants.

<sup>14</sup> We also use a definition of natives as individuals born in the country of residence whose fathers and mothers were not also born in that country. Our results are not sensitive to these different definitions.

adulthood, we use variables from Penn World Tables and Cross-National Time-Series (CNTS). Penn World Tables provide country-level GDP per capita since 1950. CNTS provides data on exchange rates as well as other political events (such as, assassinations, strikes, purges, riots, revolutions, anti-government demonstrations and so on).

Appendix Tables 1A and 1B present the summary statistics for corruption-exposure variables, outcome and control variables used in this study.

#### **4. Empirical strategy**

##### ***Construction of the treatment variable and the importance of early adulthood***

Our treatment variable captures the level of exposure to corruption that individuals experienced during their early adulthood, between the ages of 18 to 25, in their country of origin. The relevance of this life stage in shaping enduring attitudes and values is highlighted in a seminal study on women who attended Bennington College between 1935 and 1939 (Newcomb 1943, Newcomb, Koenig, Flacks, and Warwick 1967). The study showed that beliefs and values formed during this period tend to persist over long periods. This led to the development of the hypothesis by Dawson and Prewitt (1969), in which subsequent research, such as that by Krosnick and Alwin (1989), identified the formative years as spanning the ages of 18 to 25.

In terms of applications, using survey data from the United States, Cotofan, Cassar, Dur, and Meier (2020) show that job preferences vary in systematic ways with macroeconomic conditions experienced in early adulthood. Recessions create cohorts of workers who give higher priority to income, whereas booms make cohorts care more about job meaning, for the rest of their life. Aksoy, Eichengreen, and Saka (2021) show that exposure to previous epidemics affected young people's trust in science and scientists. Acemoglu, Ajzenman, Aksoy, Fiszbein, and Molina (2020) find that exposure to democratic institutions during young adulthood leads to persistently

higher levels of collective action.

To measure corruption exposure during early adulthood, our treatment variable is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{CorruptionExposure}_{io}^{18-25} &= \sum_{age=18}^{age=25} \text{CorruptionIndex}_{ot} \times I(\text{DepartureAge} \geq 25) \\ &+ \sum_{age=18}^{age=\text{DepartureAge}} \text{CorruptionIndex}_{ot} \times I(\text{DepartureAge} < 25) \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where  $\text{CorruptionExposure}_{io}^{18-25}$  corresponds to the V-DEM Corruption Index (i.e., average of executive corruption, judicial corruption, legislative corruption, and public-sector corruption) in the country of origin  $o$  when the individual  $i$  is between ages 18 and 25. If an individual left the country of origin before age 25 ( $\text{DepartureAge} < 25$ ), then the measure only includes corruption exposure between age 18 and the age of immigration ( $\text{DepartureAge}$ ).<sup>15</sup> Individuals migrating before age 18 have zero exposure to home-country corruption during their early adulthood by construction.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Main specification***

We estimate the following specification:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{ihot} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{CorruptionExposure}_{io}^{18-25} + \beta_2 X_i + \alpha_{cohort} + \alpha_h + \alpha_o + \alpha_t + \\ &\alpha_h \times \alpha_t + \alpha_o \times \alpha_t + \alpha_h \times \alpha_{immigration\ year} + \varepsilon_{ihot} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The outcome variable,  $Y$ , is the index of the level of trust of individual  $i$  in the political institutions of his/her host country  $h$ , where that individual is from home country  $o$ , and participates in the survey in year  $t$ .  $\beta_1$  captures the effect of early adulthood exposure to corruption in the

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<sup>15</sup> Similarly, if an individual continued to reside in their country of origin beyond age 25. In that case, the baseline measure does not account for the corruption exposure in additional years.

<sup>16</sup> While this measure is our baseline measure of corruption, we also consider alternative measures by changing the age bracket or using the per year corruption exposure instead of the cumulative one. The results are also robust to excluding all individuals who migrated before the age of 18, who therefore have zero exposure.

country of origin on immigrants' trust in host country political institutions. As noted, we explore four measures of political trust: trust in parliament, in politicians, and in political parties, as well as a simple average of these three variables. We estimate ordinary least squares models for ease of interpretation.

The vector  $X_i$  includes the following demographic and labour market controls: age, gender (male), dummy variables for marital status (single, married), educational attainment (tertiary education, secondary education), religion dummies (Christian, Muslim, and other religions), employment status (employed, unemployed), a dummy variable for living in an urban area, and presence of children in the household (any child under 15).

Cohort fixed effects  $\alpha_{cohort}$  account for factors that might affect trust specific to each cohort, which may be important for trust. For example, individuals born in the late 1930s and early 1940s may vest less trust in political institutions because they experienced widespread protests against political systems in the late 1960s (during their early adulthood). We, therefore, include dummies for birth years so as to compare the individuals only within the same birth cohort.

We also include fixed effects for the host country ( $\alpha_h$ ), origin country ( $\alpha_o$ ), and survey year ( $\alpha_t$ ). Host- and origin-country dummies control for time-invariant effects on outcome variables due to factors that vary cross-nationally. Survey-year dummies capture the impact of survey-year-specific global factors affecting all countries.

We further control for host-country-by-year ( $\alpha_h \times \alpha_t$ ) and origin-country-by-year fixed effects ( $\alpha_o \times \alpha_t$ ) capturing possible omitted host-country and origin-country factors that change with time (such as GDP per capita, population, political regime, etc.). These eliminate heterogeneity in our outcome variables attributable to origin country-specific or host country-specific time-varying factors. As a result, the treatment only compares individuals within the same host country and survey year and same origin country and survey year, ensuring that these individuals face the same

political institutions and leaders.

We also include an interaction between host country and year of immigration,  $\alpha_h \times \alpha_{immigration\ year}$ , which allows us to control for cohort effects for immigrants to a particular country (where cohorts are defined by year of immigration).

Standard errors computed with two-way clustering at the origin-host-country pair level are robust to heteroscedasticity. Although sample weights are not used in the baseline specification, we consider robustness with respect to population size weight and design weight, as provided by ESS.<sup>17</sup>

While using a demanding set of fixed effects helps in obtaining an unbiased estimate of the role of past exposure to corruption on political trust, it also reduces variation crucial for estimation. Appendix Figure 2 plots the distribution of residuals after accounting for each set of fixed effects. Each line corresponds to the set of fixed effects used in each model presented in our main estimation table (Table 1). While the sequential increase in the number of fixed effects slightly reduces the dispersion of residuals, the substantial amount of variation remains even in the most saturated model.

## 5. Main Results

Table 1 shows that exposure to home-country corruption during early adulthood (ages 18-25) increases immigrants' political trust in the host country. Panel A uses the political trust index that averages all outcomes, while the subsequent panels consider, successively, trust in parliament, political parties, and politicians. Column (1) includes host country fixed effects, origin country fixed effects, and survey year fixed effects. Column (2) adds cohort fixed effects and demographic and labour market controls. Column (3) includes host-country-by-survey-year fixed effects,

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<sup>17</sup> Our results are insensitive to this inclusion of weights.

controlling for potential omitted variables that vary across host countries and years and comparing immigrants living in the same host country in the same survey year. Column (4) adds host-country-by-immigration-year fixed effects. In column (5), we include origin-country-by-survey-year fixed effects, controlling for potential omitted variables that vary across home countries and years. This nets out home country economic and political conditions that change over time. In column (6), we additionally control for GDP per capita in the country of origin during the immigrant's early adulthood.<sup>18</sup> In all remaining analyses, we include the complete set of controls in column (5), while using the version controlling for GDP as a robustness check.

The coefficients on early adulthood home-country corruption exposure are uniformly positive and significant. To facilitate interpretation, in the online appendix, we also report an analog of Table 1 where we recode the treatment variable as 0 when recorded as 5 or less and as 1 when recorded as greater than 5 (the untransformed treatment variable runs on a scale from 0 to 10). According to column (5) of Online Appendix Table 2, an individual with the highest exposure to corruption (7.67) relative to individuals with no exposure is on average 6.14 percentage points ( $0.008 \times 7.67$ ) more likely to trust institutions in their destination country. Given that the mean level of this outcome variable is 61 percent, this effect is sizable.

It is worth reemphasizing how very different our results are from earlier studies finding persistence in, *inter alia*, fertility, marriage and labor-force behavior of immigrants.<sup>19</sup> That literature finds that individuals display the same attitudes and behaviors before and after immigration, even when the attitudes and behaviors of natives in the country of destination are quite different. In contrast, we show for trust in political institutions that individuals display very

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<sup>18</sup> Because GDP data from Penn World Tables is not available until 1950, including this variable reduces the sample size.

<sup>19</sup> Recall our review and discussion of this literature in Section 2 above.

different attitudes before and after immigration, consistent with a “reference point” as opposed to a pure “persistence” interpretation.

### *Persistence*

How durable is this effect? We study persistence in Table 2, where we consider (i) an interaction between exposure to corruption in early adulthood and length of stay in the host country, and (ii) also test the quadratic relationship between length of stay and political trust of immigrants on the grounds that political trust may decline with the length of stay in the destination country, as immigrants gain more exposure to destination country institutions. All of these interaction terms are statistically insignificant and very small in magnitude, suggesting that the effect persists over time.

### *Are effects specific to the early adulthood exposure?*

One may be concerned that our focus on early adulthood is arbitrary and restrictive. We, therefore, re-estimate our specification for alternative age windows (0-9, 10-17, 26-33, and 34+). Table 3 shows that the impact on political trust is statistically insignificant when individuals are exposed to corruption before age 18 or after age 25. The positive effect of home-country exposure is only evident when such exposure is during the individual’s early adulthood.

### *Mechanisms*

Our results can be interpreted in terms Kahneman and Tversky’s (1979) reference-point hypothesis, which suggests that when current institutions compare favorably with institutions on whose basis attitudes and expectations were formed, the former are viewed more positively in an absolute sense. But two additional factors may also matter for how individuals evaluate current outcomes relative



to the reference point formed on the basis of earlier life exposure: differences in GDP per capita, and differences in levels of democracy between host and home countries. Suppose differences in living standards and political conditions direct attention toward differences in the quality of institutions in the two countries. In that case, this will amplify the impact on evaluations of the quality of institutions in the host country of reference-point conditions in the country of origin.

We therefore examine whether first-generation immigrants have more political trust when there are large differences in living conditions between their countries of origin and destination at the time of the immigration. We calculate the difference in GDP per capita and V-DEM democracy scores between the two countries at the time of immigration for each respondent in our sample, constructing an indicator that equals 1 if the observation is in the above median of the score (reflecting larger differences in terms of economic and political conditions) across all respondents.<sup>20</sup>

Table 4 confirms that the effect of home-country exposure to corruption is amplified when there are large differences between the home and host country in terms of GDP per capita (Panel A) and democracy (Panel B). An interpretation is that better living and political conditions in the destination country compared to the home country lead to more positive evaluations of the political performance of the host country relative to the international-reference-point benchmark.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Media Exposure as a Mediating Factor***

Finally, we consider whether media consumption in the destination country mitigates or reinforces the reference-point effect. We again use our fully saturated specification (Column 5 of Table 1) but now interact our treatment variable with measures of media consumption. The ESS

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<sup>20</sup> We include this variable categorically rather than in continuous form in order to limit the likelihood of a response to corruption experience.

<sup>21</sup> In contrast, the presence of media (measured as the sum of radio and television sets, newspaper circulation, book production per capita) in the country of origin prior to immigration has no detectable impact on political trust (Panel C).

reports four media channels: newspaper, TV, radio, and the internet. We group the three traditional forms of media (newspaper, TV and radio) together while keeping modern electronic media (internet) separate.

Table 5 shows that media consumption in the host country reduces the impact of early corruption exposure on trust in host-country political institutions. In addition, media consumption is associated with greater access to information about the host country, allowing information about the actual quality of host-country institutions, as opposed to memories of home-country institutions formed during early adulthood, to dominate assessments, weakening the international reference-point effect. A comparison of the coefficients indicates that traditional channels and the internet have similar effects.

## **6. Robustness**

In this section we establish the robustness of the results and consider potential threats to the identification.

### ***More demanding fixed effects***

Additional analyses, reported in the Online Appendix 3, further establish the robustness of our findings. Our results are again similar when we focus on more fine-grained variation by including age  $\times$  country fixed effects (Column 1), age  $\times$  year  $\times$  subnational region (Column 2) or both (Column 3). The results are also robust to the inclusion of age-of-arrival fixed effects (Column 4). Essentially, these specifications eliminate the source of variation that arises from comparing a particular age group to other age groups within the same destination country (or detailed subregion) or the same age group from other origin countries. Instead, it concentrates on the changes in host political trust and exposure to home country corruption over time within a specific age group.

### *Can a certain type of corruption be driving the results?*

In the baseline, corruption exposure is calculated as the average of four different types of corruption (i.e., executive corruption, judicial corruption, legislative corruption, and public sector corruption). Online Appendix Table 4 investigates how the sub-components matter for trust in political institutions. While all four indicators matter for political trust, home-country exposure to executive corruption and public sector corruption has the strongest effect on immigrants' political trust in the destination.

### *Are we picking up the effects of other shocks?*

Our estimates could be capturing early-adulthood exposure to other factors in the home country correlated with its level of corruption, such as democracy, freedom, or electoral fraud. We therefore add early-adulthood exposure to five other aspects of institutional quality, namely, electoral democracy, participatory democracy, additive polyarchy, freedom of expression, and clean election; see Online Appendix Table 5.<sup>22</sup>

To ensure that other economic and political shocks in the country of origin during the individual's early adulthood are not driving the results, we calculate measures of early-adulthood year exposure to several economic and political shocks (GDP growth, inflation, assassinations, purges, riots, general strikes, terrorist attacks, and so on) in Online Appendix Table 6.

None of these additional controls impacts the coefficients for early adulthood corruption exposure. Point estimates and statistical significance remain stable, indicating that our results are robust to controlling in these ways for additional economic, social, and political exposures that

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix for related variable definitions.

individuals may have experienced in their early adult years.

### ***Ruling out pre-trends***

We test whether different immigrant age groups within the same host country are on differential trends in terms of their political views, even absent differences in exposure to corruption. We ask whether pre-birth “exposure” (that is, corruption in a country ten years before the respondent was born) affects political trust. In Online Appendix Table 7, the coefficients on pre-birth exposure are small and insignificant. This confirms that we are not capturing differential trends in the political views of different immigrant age groups across host countries.

### ***Robustness to alternative corruption measures***

In our baseline specification, we measure exposure to corruption cumulatively between ages 18 and 25. In Online Appendix Table 8, we use an alternative exposure measure obtained by dividing the cumulative corruption exposure by the length of stay in the home country. By doing so, this alternative measure captures the intensity of corruption exposure over a year. The results are similar, confirming that the estimated effect is not sensitive to how we measure corruption exposure.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Measuring corruption by using alternative indices***

In our baseline, we use V-DEM for the corruption measure as it provides the largest coverage in terms of country and time. One might be concerned that the results might be driven by how the

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<sup>23</sup> Another potential concern related to V-DEM measure is the challenge of measuring corruption especially further back in time. To alleviate any concerns, we run a test where we exclude immigrants who have emigrated prior to 1960. Even when we focus on immigrants who have arrived since that year, the results remain unchanged. The results are available on request.

corruption is measured in this specific index. To ensure that this is not the case, we confirm that the corruption index measured using V-DEM, is highly correlated with measures using measures obtained using World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) (Pearson Correlation of 0.81) and International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) (Pearson Correlation of 0.72).

In addition, we reproduced the baseline results when constructing the corruption exposure during early adulthood using the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). WGI scores various dimensions of governance for over 200 countries for the period 1996 and 2021. We construct our corruption measure by using “control of corruption”, which is a composite index that includes several indicators measuring the level of public power exercised for private gain and the “capture” of the state by elites and private interests.<sup>24</sup> Results in Online Appendix Table 9 show that our results remain robust when using this alternative corruption measure.

### ***Do migrant networks shape perceptions?***

Migrant networks may influence immigrants’ attitudes toward host-country institutions. It could be that immigrants place more trust in political institutions in a country with a large immigrant population better able, by sheer numbers, to influence the operation of those institutions. We therefore construct a measure of the immigrant network using the Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) to non-OECD destination countries (DIOC-E or DIOC extended).<sup>25</sup> We interact the migrant stock with year fixed effects to construct time-specific trends in the growth of the immigrant population originating in the same country as the respondent. Not only does Online

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<sup>24</sup> The World Bank collects perception indicators with information for assessing quality of control of corruption in different countries. Then the WGI corruption measure is obtained by weighting the average of individual indicators of corruption based on Unobserved Component Model (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2011). See more at <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Documents>

<sup>25</sup> See more detail in <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm>. Because the OECD database is only available every five years, we measure immigrant networks using the total number of immigrants in 2005, the year closest to the start of our sample.

Appendix Table 10 rule out the possibility that such networks drive our results, but the coefficient of interest becomes even stronger.

### ***Controlling for income***

Our baseline specification does not control for household income, since this may be affected by individuals' past experience in their home countries. But Online Appendix Table 11 shows that results do not change when we add household income as a robustness check.

### ***Robustness to using sampling weights***

Online Appendix Table 12 reports weighted regressions. To account for the fact that countries in the ESS have different population sizes, we weight our regressions by host-country population. We also correct for the under- and over-representation of ESS respondents by using the sampling weight provided by the ESS. Results are qualitatively similar as those from unweighted regressions.

### ***Multiple hypothesis tests***

We conducted multiple hypothesis testing using the randomization inference technique suggested by Young (2019). This helps to establish the robustness of our results both for individual treatment coefficients in separate estimations and also for the null that our treatment does not have any effect across any of the outcome variables. Online Appendix Table 13 shows that our findings remain robust both for the individual coefficients and the joint tests of treatment significance.

### ***Ruling out influential observations***

To check whether our results are driven by influential observations, we exclude migrants whose corruption exposure is in the top 5 percentiles of the distribution. Panel A of Online Appendix Table

14 shows that results remain robust. The results also remain robust to the exclusion of immigrants from countries with less than 150 immigrants or more than 1000 immigrants (Panels B and C, Online Appendix Table 14).

One might be concerned that the migrants coming from Russia and other former Soviet Republics countries associate differences in the economic models with political institutions and therefore have a biased view. To alleviate this concern, the Panel D of the Online Appendix Table 14 excludes immigrants from these countries. Results remain unchanged.

Results are also robust to the exclusion of migrants coming from specific continents, cohorts of migrants by decade of arrival, exclusion of those coming from former colonies or countries with socialist legal origin, those with high ethnic diversity, and those with low polity or high inequality. Results remain virtually unchanged and are available if requested.

### ***Focusing on migrants from less corrupt countries?***

Much of the sample consists of immigrants coming from countries with higher levels of corruption relative to their host countries. One might be concerned that the effect captured in the analysis is due not to past corruption but to a third factor related to moving from to a less corrupt country. To dispel this concern, we carry out a robustness test focusing only on a subsample of immigrants coming from countries with corruption levels that are lower than their host countries. While the sample size falls dramatically, the results presented in Online Appendix Table 15 remain virtually unchanged.

## **7. Additional analysis**

In this section, we provide additional results related to the real-life implications of political trust, test whether past exposure to corruption has uneven effects on individuals with different education

backgrounds, and how if at all it affects the political trust of natives.

### ***More political action***

Online Appendix Table 16 reports evidence on actual political behaviour. More political trust in the host country leads to more political action: immigrants more exposed to corruption in their early adulthood in their country of origin are more likely to be interested in politics, to have voted in the last election, and to have worked in a political party or political action group in the last 12 months.

### ***Do the effects vary with education?***

The analysis here focuses on the impact of past exposure to corruption on the political trust on average of all migrants. However, some migrants might be more sensitive if they are more perceptive or informed.

Online Appendix Table 17 shows that more educated individuals are more influenced by early adulthood exposure. It could be that more educated individuals are more involved in and conscious of politics at this age. They may be more active as citizens, translating into a stronger effect of early adulthood exposure to political institutions.

### ***Are natives exposed to corruption also more trusting?***

The evidence presented so far shows that past exposure to corruption tends to increase the trust that migrants vest in the host-country institutions. To benchmark our immigrant analysis, we replicate the same analysis for the sample of natives, again derived from the European Social Survey.<sup>26</sup> To

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<sup>26</sup> We construct a sample of natives born in the country of residence, whose fathers and mothers were also born in the country of residence.



make the two approaches comparable, we introduce the same set of controls.<sup>27</sup>

Online Appendix Table 18 confirms a difference between the two groups. As suggested by Column 1, which includes natives, higher exposure (of a native individual) to corruption during the formative years is associated with lower political trust. The results are strong and significant for each of our four proxies of political trust. When further restricting the sample, i.e., when excluding even the second-generation immigrants, we obtain similar results, slightly stronger in magnitude (see Column 2).<sup>28</sup> The magnitudes of the coefficients are similar to those for the immigrant sample. As in the former case, the effect is also sizable for natives, thus further highlighting the difference in attitudes of the two groups.

#### ***Are the effects non-linear?***

Online Appendix Table 19 tests the presence of non-linear effects by introducing the squared term of early adulthood corruption exposure, which allows for the effect of corruption exposure on political trust to increase up to a certain point and then decrease beyond that point. We find a weakly significant and quantitatively small effect for the quadratic term.

#### ***8. Ruling out self-selection***

In this sub-section we examine whether our results can be explained by the self-selection of migrants into destinations.

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<sup>27</sup> The only difference between the two sets of controls lies in the host country fixed effects, which is present only in the immigrant sample.

<sup>28</sup> We do so under the assumption that inertia in cultural attitudes may extend even to the second generation of immigrants in a country.

### *Are migrants more trusting?*

Immigrants are self-selected by ability, education, risk-tolerance, and social attitudes (Chiswick, 1978; Zimmermann, 1995; Heitmueller, 2005; Aksoy and Poutvaara, 2021). What is relevant here, however, is not selection in general but selection on trust. Suppose, for example, that more trusting individuals have a tendency to select into immigration. Immigrants' higher political trust in host-country institutions then might reflect their trusting nature, as opposed to more exposure to corruption in their home country.

We know of no evidence that more trusting individuals select into immigration. In addition, our identification strategy compares not immigrants and natives but, rather, the corruption exposure of different immigrants. If the selection bias resulting from immigrants' trusting nature relates to their identity as immigrants, then our estimates of differences in political trust within the immigrant group will not be biased by selection.

Alternatively, immigrants could display unusually high levels of trust in host-country institutions not because of their status as immigrants but because of other unobserved factors. This makes it important to explore whether immigrants are selected on other dimensions of trust and social attitudes. In Online Appendix Table 20 we check the effect of early adulthood corruption exposure on eight other dimensions of trust and non-political attitudinal outcomes. The outcomes are Trust in the United Nations (Panel A), Social trust (Panel B), People are fair (Panel C), People try to be helpful (Panel D), Important to understand different people (Panel E), Important to help people and care for others well-being (Panel F), Important to be loyal to friends and devote to people close (Panel G), and Important to try new and different things in life (Panel H).

Column 1 presents results for our main sample, while column 2 focuses on European immigrants only. We find no relationships between past corruption exposure and any of these variables, suggesting that self-selection into host countries on the basis of trust is unlikely. This is

consistent with our hypothesis that any gain of trust by individuals with earlier corruption exposure is specific to host country political institutions and not a reflection of general of trust in host society.

### ***Balance tests***

A possible concern is that immigrants coming from countries with several institutional and economic problems select into host countries which they think have good and trustworthy institutions.

As a first test to address this concern, we implement a balance test examining whether immigrant status is uncorrelated with observable institutional characteristics (different population sizes, military expenses, GDP, etc.). Online Appendix Table 21 confirms that our treatment is not correlated with several host country characteristics and, hence, that it is plausibly exogenous.

We also contend with the selection into the migration of a particular group of cohorts. For example, migrants might have a lower social-economic status that determines their subsequent political trust in host country institutions. We there provide a cohort-level analysis examining whether cohorts exposed to different levels of corruption during early adulthood differ substantially in terms of age, gender, education, ethnicity, household income and employment rate from other cohorts. Online Appendix Table 22 examines whether immigrants' pre-migration socio-demographic characteristics are related to host country characteristics. None of the main socio-demographic characteristics (that is, age, gender, marital status, education and religion) is correlated with host country's GDP, government revenue, defence expenditure, school enrolment per capita, or physicians per capita. This supports the view that the migrants' main observable characteristics are orthogonal to destination-country characteristics.

### *Migrants from countries affected by war or natural disasters*

As people fleeing wars or natural disasters are less likely to be selected based on their observable or unobservable characteristics, focusing on such individuals should mitigate selection concerns. We therefore restrict our sample to immigrants coming from countries that experienced a war (Panel A of Online Appendix Table 23) or natural disaster (Panel B) in the year they migrated. Both panels confirm our benchmark results despite the large reduction in the sample.

## **10. Conclusion**

Lower institutional quality in an immigrant's country of origin is associated with a *more* favourable evaluation of host-country institutions. This pattern can be explained by the tendency of an immigrant to evaluate the quality of current host-country institutions relative to the quality of the home-country institutions to which they were exposed in the past. But what matters is exposure to corruption during early adulthood (ages 18-25), not exposure overall. This last finding is consistent with work in sociology, psychology, cognitive science, and economics on the importance of early adulthood.

Some political commentators and leaders worry about whether immigrants have adequate regard for their host-country institutions, values, and cultures. Some scholars advocate immigration restrictions on these grounds of avoiding degradation of host-country norms, values and institutions by immigrants bringing very different values. In response, some governments restricted immigration, while others have adopted practices intended to impart better understanding and greater respect for host-country institutions.<sup>29</sup> These initiatives reflect the belief that immigrants from countries with poor institutional quality will import scepticism about the quality of host-

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<sup>29</sup> Examples include the Dutch citizenship test and citizenship education in UK schools designed to impart a sense of "Britishness" (Miller and Ali, 2014).

country institutions. In fact, when it comes to political attitudes and behaviors, such immigrants hold host-country institutions in higher, not lower, regard. In this respect, they may be easier, not harder, than the average citizen to integrate into host-country politics and society.

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**Table 1: Impact of Corruption Exposure (18-25) on Political Trust**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<b>Panel A   Outcome: Political Trust Index</b>						
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.098*** (0.010)	0.057*** (0.012)	0.058*** (0.012)	0.060*** (0.013)	0.058*** (0.014)	0.064*** (0.015)
Mean of the outcome	4.049	4.049	4.049	4.049	4.049	4.049
Observations	25471	23917	23917	23464	23301	19620
<b>Panel B   Outcome: Trust in Parliament</b>						
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.099*** (0.011)	0.048*** (0.013)	0.050*** (0.013)	0.053*** (0.014)	0.054*** (0.015)	0.059*** (0.016)
Mean of the outcome	4.695	4.695	4.695	4.695	4.695	4.695
Observations	26376	24758	24758	24303	24144	20287
<b>Panel C   Outcome: Trust in Parties</b>						
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.086*** (0.011)	0.056*** (0.014)	0.055*** (0.014)	0.058*** (0.014)	0.054*** (0.015)	0.061*** (0.017)
Mean of the outcome	3.738	3.738	3.738	3.738	3.738	3.738
Observations	24793	24793	24333	24633	24170	24793
<b>Panel D   Outcome: Trust in Politicians</b>						
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.107*** (0.011)	0.061*** (0.014)	0.061*** (0.014)	0.064*** (0.015)	0.061*** (0.015)	0.066*** (0.017)
Mean of the outcome	3.754	3.754	3.754	3.754	3.754	3.754
Observations	26787	25144	25144	24686	24521	20690
Host Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Origin Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demographic and labor market cont.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Host Country × Year	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Host Country × Immigration Year	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Origin Country × Year	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
GDP Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Number of Origin Countries	196	196	196	196	196	196
Number of Host Countries	38	38	38	38	38	38

Notes: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . This table estimates of the baseline model specified in equation (2). Ordinary least squares models are estimated for ease of interpretation. Each panel displays the result for a different political trust variable. The political trust index is defined as the average trust in parliament, parties, and politicians. Corruption Exposure<sub>18-25</sub> corresponds to the cumulative V-DEM Corruption Index in country of origin  $o$  when individual  $i$  is between ages 18 and 25. Demographic and labor market controls include: age, a male dummy, dummy variables for marital status (single, married), educational attainment (tertiary education, secondary education). Standard errors are in parentheses and clustered at the origin-host country pair level. Data Sources: European Social Survey and V-DEM.

**Table 2: Persistence Over Time**

Outcome →	(1) Political Trust Index	(2) Trust in Parliament	(2) Trust in Parties	(4) Trust in Politicians
Panel A				
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub> × Length of stay	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.066*** (0.020)	0.065*** (0.021)	0.064*** (0.021)	0.067*** (0.022)
Observations	23301	24144	24170	24521
Panel B				
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub> × Length of stay-squared	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub> × Length of stay	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.079*** (0.025)	0.083*** (0.026)	0.081*** (0.026)	0.074*** (0.027)
Length of stay-squared	0.001*** (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)
Observations	23301	24144	24170	24521

Notes: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . This table reports estimates of the baseline model specified in equation (2) with additional interaction terms: length of stay in host country and its squared term (in Panels A and B). Ordinary least squares models are estimated for ease of interpretation. Each column displays the result of a different political trust variable. Each panel displays the result of a different regression. The political trust index is defined as the average of trust in parliament, parties, and politicians. Corruption Exposure<sub>18-25</sub> corresponds to the cumulative V-DEM Corruption Index in country of origin  $o$  when individual  $i$  is between ages 18 and 25. The specification includes the full set of controls as Column 5 of Table 1. See notes to Table 1. Standard errors are in parentheses and clustered at the origin-host country pair level. Data Sources: European Social Survey and V-DEM.

**Table 3: Impact of Corruption Exposure on Political Trust in Alternative Treatment Years**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Outcome →	Political Trust Index	Trust in Parliament	Trust in Parties	Trust in Politicians
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.055** (0.021)	0.062*** (0.024)	0.043* (0.023)	0.045** (0.023)
Corruption Exposure <sub>0-9</sub>	0.011 (0.020)	0.015 (0.024)	0.006 (0.021)	-0.012 (0.022)
Corruption Exposure <sub>10-17</sub>	-0.018 (0.020)	-0.026 (0.024)	-0.013 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)
Corruption Exposure <sub>26-33</sub>	0.017 (0.014)	0.007 (0.015)	0.022 (0.016)	0.022 (0.015)
Corruption Exposure <sub>34+</sub>	0.014 (0.014)	0.016 (0.015)	0.020 (0.014)	0.012 (0.015)
Observations	21180	21948	21994	22307

Notes: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . This table reports estimates of the baseline model specified in equation (2). Ordinary least squares models are estimated for ease of interpretation. Each panel displays the result of a different political trust variable. The political trust index is defined as the average of trust in parliament, parties, and politicians. Corruption Exposure<sub>18-25</sub> corresponds to the cumulative V-DEM Corruption Index in country of origin  $o$  when individual  $i$  is between ages, 0 and 9, 10 and 17, 18 and 25, 26-33 and 34+. The specification includes the full set of controls as Column 5 of Table 1. See notes to Table 1. Standard errors are in parentheses and clustered at the origin-host country pair level. Data Sources: European Social Survey and V-DEM.

**Table 4: Mechanisms**

Outcome →	(1) Political Trust Index	(2) Trust in Parliament	(3) Trust in Parties	(4) Trust in Politicians
Panel A   Differences in GDP per capita				
High $\Delta$ GDP $\times$ Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.041* (0.022)	0.045* (0.024)	0.049* (0.026)	0.042* (0.026)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.054*** (0.016)	0.052*** (0.017)	0.045*** (0.017)	0.065*** (0.018)
Observations	21974	22774	22788	23116
Panel B   Differences in Democracy				
High $\Delta$ Democracy $\times$ Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.052*** (0.017)	0.058*** (0.019)	0.042** (0.019)	0.049** (0.021)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.052*** (0.013)	0.056*** (0.014)	0.049*** (0.014)	0.054*** (0.014)
Observations	21974	22774	22788	23116

Notes: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Ordinary least squares models are estimated for ease of interpretation. Each panel displays the result for a different interaction variable. Differences in GDP per capita (democracy) reflects the differences between host and origin country. GDP per capita data is from the Penn World. Democracy measure is from the V-DEM dataset. Media data are from CNTS and includes data on radio and television sets, newspaper circulation, book production – all measured in per capita. For each variable, we calculate the average in the individual's early adulthood. We then construct an indicator that takes the value of 1 if the observation is in the above median of early adulthood scores across all respondents. We include this variable categorically rather than in continuous form to limit the likelihood of a response to corruption experience. The specification includes the full set of controls as Column 5 of Table 1. See notes to Table 1. Standard errors are in parentheses and clustered at the origin-host country pair level. Data Sources: European Social Survey and V-DEM.

**Table 5: the Role of Media Consumption**

Outcome →	(1) Political Trust Index	(2) Trust in Parliament	(3) Trust in Parties	(4) Trust in Politicians
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub> × Traditional Media	-0.095*** (0.033)	-0.080* (0.042)	-0.077** (0.036)	-0.120*** (0.036)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub> × Internet	-0.096*** (0.036)	-0.108** (0.044)	-0.091** (0.037)	-0.094** (0.038)
Traditional Media	0.279*** (0.083)	0.189** (0.096)	0.275*** (0.087)	0.315*** (0.093)
Internet	0.178 (0.117)	0.186 (0.142)	0.178 (0.113)	0.153 (0.122)
Corruption Exposure <sub>18-25</sub>	0.223*** (0.045)	0.199*** (0.052)	0.212*** (0.047)	0.245*** (0.052)
Observations	5388	5539	5550	5618

Notes: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . This table reports estimates of the baseline model specified in equation (2) with additional interaction terms of media and corruption exposure measure. Traditional media on political/current affairs per week takes the average of newspaper, TV, and radio use on political/current affairs. Internet use is an indicator variable telling whether individuals use internet every month or not. Ordinary least squares models are estimated for ease of interpretation. The political trust index is defined as the average of trust in parliament, parties and politicians. Corruption Exposure<sub>18-25</sub> corresponds to the cumulative V-DEM Corruption Index in country of origin  $o$  when individual  $i$  is between ages 18 and 25. The specification includes the full set of controls as Column 5 of Table 1. See notes in Table 1. Standard errors are in parentheses and clustered at the origin-host country pair level. Data Sources: European Social Survey and V-DEM.