Discursive Determinants of Attitudes towards Immigrants:

Political Parties and Mass Media as Contextual Sources of Threat Perceptions

Inauguraldissertation

zur

Erlangung des Doktorgrades

der

Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät

der

Universität zu Köln

2018

vorgelegt

von

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aus

Ludwigsburg

Discursive Determinants of Attitudes towards Immigrants:

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Tag der Promotion: 04.12.2018

Acknowledgments

I thank my supervisors Hans-Jürgen Andreß and Eldad Davidov for their professional and personal support and for the very helpful advice and encouragement I received throughout the three years I worked on this dissertation.

Secondly, I had the pleasure of writing together with great co-authors. Stephan Dochow, who is the perfect partner for discussing ideas on the most complex as well as the most basic level. Even more importantly, I treasure our great and longstanding friendship. Alexander Schmidt-Catran, who inspired me to chose an academic career and who is giving me useful advice and motivation since my master's studies. I am looking forward to continue working with you in Frankfurt.

Thirdly, I thank my colleagues. Conrad Ziller deserves special thanks for making everyday work both productive and fun, and so does Ravena Penning who always had a helping hand. The people at the Cologne Graduate School made this dissertation possible. Furthermore, Marijn van Klingeren, Merlin Schaeffer and Moshe Semyonov contributed useful recommendations to different parts of this thesis.

Special thanks to my friends who always remind me that publications and p-values are not the most important things in life.

Finally, most gratitude to my parents, Astrid and Andreas, for their unlimited support, trust, and openness.

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1 Going beyond demographics: How social contexts shape individual attitudes

1.1 Research question, setting & contribution

Immigration, asylum, and the free movement of persons have increasingly polarised Europe in recent years. The European border policy has been vividly discussed and many political debates within and across EU member states are characterised by a divide along this line. For example, the right-wing conservative present German Minister of the Interior Horst Seehofer went as far as calling immigration "the mother of all problems." (Deutsche Welle, 2018) The European immigration debate has especially heated up since 2015 when the number of first time asylum seekers who registered in EU member states more than doubled compared to the year before, with more than 1.2 million in total (Eurostat, 2016). More than a third of these people applied for asylum in Germany, making it the most popular destination in Europe and one of the key players regarding Europe's border policy (Connor, 2016). Even before 2015, Germany had been the second most popular country of destination for migrants (OECD, 2014), with immigration rates reaching a 20 year high in 2013 (Destatis, 2014).

Significant parts of European societies exhibit a fundamental opposition and hostility towards immigrants. Among the most prominent examples are the protests of the so-called Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) movement in Germany, which has attracted from a few dozens to several thousands of participants in various German cities. Large shares of these protests are characterized by latent to open racism and xenophobia (Vorländer et al., 2015). Similar protests also took place in other European countries, for example in the Netherlands, Poland, France, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Sweden, amongst others (Copley, 2016). Furthermore, since 2015 there has been a sharp increase in anti-immigrant violence such as personal injuries or arson attacks on refugee accommodations, especially in Germany (Jäckle and König, 2017, also see Koopmans and Olzak, 2004).

The political climate in Europe became increasingly tense after several incidents which influenced the public debates about immigration. This includes Islamist terror attacks which shocked the public during this period (cf. Jungkunz et al., 2018; Silva, 2018; Smiley et al., 2017). Since most of the recent immigrants and asylum seekers originate from predominantly Islamic countries in Africa and the Middle East (Connor, 2016), discussions about national identity and about religious fundamentalism, which is currently mostly associated with Islam, are also highly present (cf. Helbling and Traunmüller, 2018). Other prominent examples are the sexual assaults and robberies that happened at the festivities in various German cities on New Year's Eve (NYE) 2015/2016 (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017 or chapter 4). These assaults were connected with the recent inflow of refugees in public debates because the perpetrators were mainly reported to have been male Arabs or North Africans (Deutsche Welle, 2016). Even before the recent developments, immigration has repeatedly been a prevalent topic in Europe, for example during the two Eastern Enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 (cf. Boehnke et al., 2007 or section 2.5).

It is not surprising that these developments were very present in the public political debates in Europe in general and in Germany in particular.[1] Politicians as well as the media vividly, and often controversially, discussed the European and German immigration and asylum policy. The dynamics of such discourses can directly affect far-right violence (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004). Moreover, the question of how to deal with immigration and asylum has given rise to right-wing populist parties in many EU-member states. These parties often reject current politics and the political establishment altogether. They benefit from exclusionary sentiments in the public because they are mostly associated with anti-immigration positions (Arzheimer, 2008). The growing support for such anti-immigration and anti-European forces also poses a threat to the ideas and the cohesion of the European Union in general.

Because of the fundamental importance of immigration and migrant integration issues for the future of Europe, my aim in the present dissertation is to enhance our understanding of the way social contexts influence the emergence of negative attitudes towards immigration and immigrants in Europe and Germany. In contrast to many empirical-quantitative studies in this field, my focus is less on objective characteristics, such as actual immigration rates or economic wealth, than on political discourses, which in some cases might reflect actual circumstances but in others they might not. I argue that much prior research has practically neglected the role national discourses about immigration related issues play in the formation of public opinion. Models based mainly on objective country-level conditions are thus not always best suited to explain anti-immigration attitudes.[2] This reasoning is supported by the fact that many studies fail to find statistically or substantively significant correlations between

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[1]For a depiction of the trajectories of different aspects of the German immigration debate in recent years see Figures 2.2 and 4.1 in the present dissertation.

[2]Empirical evidence suggests, however, that things look different on more local and regional levels, which more directly shape one's opportunity structure, for example, for inter-ethnic contact (Sluiter et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2015).

objective country-level indicators and attitudes (e. g., Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007, also see Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 231). A crucial goal of the present dissertation is hence to examine whether different measures of national discourses help to explain attitudes. A subsequent question is to identify who is especially affected by certain discourses.

My main argument is that the *feelings of threat leading to exclusionary attitudes stem from national discourses about certain developments or salient events related to immigration.* Objective country-level migration rates, in contrast, are hardly perceivable to the individual and thus, their influence as a source of out-group threat perceptions has been overestimated in much of the existing literature. I will elaborate this point in the remainder of this chapter before turning to the single studies constituting the present dissertation. I will outline theoretical mechanisms and summarise the state of research on contextual explanations of attitudes related to immigration. To this end, I begin with the most prominent explanation in sociological studies concerning these attitudes: the group threat paradigm. Subsequently, I address theoretical and empirical shortcomings of the way a certain branch of research in this field applies this paradigm. Based on this critique, I develop a framework that, as I argue, is better suited to explain how social contexts form individual attitudes towards immigrants. In the "Concluding remarks" I synthesise and weave the findings of my studies into the broader picture. Moreover, I also derive implications for future research on the matter and point to potential advances which could build on my findings, as well as providing some practical guidelines for political communication.

But first I will discuss the key concepts underlying this dissertation.

1.2 Definitions of central concepts

Explananda (outcomes): Attitudes

The concept of attitudes or opinions[3] I use in this dissertation encompasses the evaluation of and views about certain immigrant groups or immigration in general. Examining attitudes is of political and social importance. First, this is due to the central role immigration plays in contemporary Europe, as I have outlined above. Second, negative attitudes are likely to lead to actual discriminatory behaviour (e. g., Carlsson and Eriksson, 2017) and, hence, ultimately to ethnic inequality and social tensions. The particular operationalisation is important, however, as it determines what is actually measured and which relationships researchers are investigating. For example, is it about the evaluation of national policies or certain ethnic groups or individuals (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010: 313)? While the outcome variable of chapter 2 is the broader evaluation of immigration in general, chapters 3 and 4 investigate more differentiated measures.

Accounting for the particularities of attitudes towards different immigrant groups takes up recent developments which, in contrast to previous research focussing on universal generalisations of out-group derogation (e. g., Zick et al., 2008), account for the fact that "prejudices cannot be understood *in abstracto*, but instead they need to be situated in social space" which includes "cultural-discursive contexts in which intergroup relations are embedded." (Meuleman et al., 2018: 5, also see Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017; Meeusen et al., 2017). However, there is evidence suggesting that even specific components of perceptions of threat related to distant groups carry over to attitudes towards immigrants whom individuals encounter in their local environment (Bouman et al., 2014).

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[3]I will use both terms interchangeably in this dissertation.

By combining broad and detailed measures of attitudes, my aim in the present dissertation is to establish findings which are, on the one hand, generalisable and, on the other, offer an in-depth understanding. I will discuss the particular measures for my outcome variables in the respective chapters in greater detail.

Explanantia (central explanatory factors): Discourses

By *discourses*, I mean the way public speakers, mass media, and national elites, such as politicians, provide and shape information exceeding personal experiences, using certain arguments and interpretations (cf. van Dijk, 1993: 8 ff., also see section 1.3 below). Such discourses are specific to a social space and time (cf. Meuleman et al., 2018), constituting a particular *information environment* (cf. Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 243 f.). Hence, they have a contextual character. *Discourse effects*, then, are the intended or unintended consequences of these arguments put forward by public actors and national elites for the individual members of the general public. In this respect, I follow Blalock (1984) who defines contextual effects in general as "macro processes that are presumed to have an impact on the individual actor over and above the effects of any individual-level variables that may be operating."[4] Finally, I will use the term *salience* for the prominence or importance of certain (parts of) discourses for the public and/or the individual (Wlezien, 2005).

Macro-level discourses are latent constructs with many possible operationalisations. In the present dissertation, I employ different measures of discourses in each study. Firstly, I investigate different shapers of discourses although they often respond to one another. Chapter 2 focuses on mass media, chapter 3 investigates political elites and chapter 4 refers to both. Secondly, I also employ different data sources. These

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[4]Blalock (1984) in his article particularly refers to what is now most commonly known as multi-level models. I employ this method in some, but not all, studies of the present dissertation.

range from a self-conducted quantitative content analysis in chapter 2 to the use of secondary, hand-coded data in chapter 3 to a qualitative discourse analysis in chapter 4. I come back to discussing the benefits and drawbacks of the different measures in section 5.3.

Connecting discourses and attitudes

The three empirical studies of the present dissertation investigate different aspects of discourses and have different scopes.

Chapter 2 analyses effects of salience of the immigration issue in the media over a time span of 15 years, chapter 3 the role of political elite discourses in 19 countries, and chapter 4 the effect of a selected prominent event which had significant influence on immigration discourses throughout Europe, namely the assaults of New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Germany (for a more detailed overview and summaries of these studies see section 1.4 below).

All three studies are based on the assumption that certain discourses shape threat perceptions which, in turn, lead to negative attitudes. I will elaborate this theoretical mechanism in the following.

1.3 Theoretical mechanism

The group threat paradigm

The lion's share of research about contextual effects on immigration related attitudes draws upon Herbert Blumer's paper from the late 1950s, in which he develops the idea that ethnic prejudice is largely influenced by the social positions of the different ethnic groups constituting a society (Blumer, 1958). According to Blumer, ethnic prejudice

is less the result of individual predispositions or traits but rather the outcome of the way in which members of an ethnic group view their own group, especially in relation to other ethnic groups. Opinions, sentiments, and ideologies are therefore not only the cause but the result of the perceptions of a society's positional arrangements (Esposito and Murphy, 1999). Negative attitudes and resentments among the members of the 'dominant' group in a society against the 'subordinate' ethnic out-group accordingly stem from the perceptions that the subordinate group may threaten the privileges of the dominant group. According to Blumer such threat perceptions are prerequisites for the emergence of ethnic prejudice (Blumer, 1958: 4).

The *group threat paradigm* translates Blumer's ideas into empirical-quantitative research settings. This translation was first prominently put forward by Blalock (1967)[5] who investigated race relations in the US. It was also picked up by Quillian (1995) and a plethora of studies which followed (see Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010 for an overview; for a critique of this development see Esposito and Murphy, 1999). According to this interpretation, threat perceptions are the result of understanding society as a zero-sum game, although not necessarily in a strictly economic sense. The argument is that improvement of conditions for the subordinate group, or generally eroding conditions, lead members of the dominant group to feel relatively worse off, be it in terms of material goods or of political influence. From such a perspective, immigrants threaten not only, for example, jobs but also a country's national identity, norms and values.

Social scientists interested in the contextual determinants of anti-immigration attitudes draw upon Blumer's argument of threat as a core driver of ethnic hostility and restrictive attitudes. Situations of threat are understood as the result of micro-level features, such as individual unemployment, as well as of structural, macro-level

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[5]An earlier version of a similar argument can already be found in Blalock (1957).

characteristics, such as economic deprivation of one's environment or the ethnic composition of one's residential area, or the combination of both.

With the increasing availability of demographical, economic, and survey data, researchers put this reasoning to the test (e. g., Blalock, 1967; Quillian, 1995; Semyonov et al., 2004; Hjerm, 2007; Schneider, 2008, see Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010).

Macro-level characteristics, individual perceptions & attitudes

There are studies finding empirical support for the hypotheses derived from the 'realistic' group threat paradigm discussed above, for example by reporting significant associations of the proportion of immigrants in a country and public opinion (e. g., Meuleman et al., 2009; Semyonov et al., 2006; Quillian, 1995). A cumulative body of evidence, however, calls this interpretation into question (e. g., Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2004). In fact, a meta-analysis conducted by Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes (2017) reveals that of almost 500 correlations between ethnic minority group size and attitudes provided in 55 studies, more than half were not statistically significant. Keeping in mind the general tendency to prioritise positive results, which is inherent in the publishing process of empirical research, this is a strikingly large proportion. Moreover, even the direction of significant correlations varies from study to study, casting further doubt on a clear causal effect.[6] Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) in their review article state that country-level real-world indicators, measured as objective numbers, often fail to be reliable predictors of attitudes towards immigration (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 231). The authors even conclude that

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[6]Admittedly, the authors partly explain the varying correlations among studies by the different operationalisations of the ethnic out-group(s) variables. But interestingly neither the modelling strategy nor the choice of the unit of analysis were significantly related to the effect sizes (Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes, 2017). Other researchers, however, argue that the level of measurement is important, which relates to the so-called modifiable areal unit problem (e. g., Weber, 2015). However, my argument mainly concerns the impact of immigration rates and characteristics on the *country level*, where exposure and personal everyday experiences are less likely.

the economic branch of the group threat paradigm which concerns competition on the national labour market between natives and immigrants "has repeatedly failed to find empirical support, making it something of a zombie theory." (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 241) This is in line with several studies which explicitly investigate the relationships between actual numbers, perceptions, and attitudes. For example, Sides and Citrin (2007) as well as Hjerm (2007) analyse data of the first wave of the European Social Survey and both find that neither national immigration rates, nor aggregate perceptions of out-group size (in the case of Hjerm, 2007), nor a country's economic condition are statistically significantly associated with anti-immigration attitudes. Semyonov et al. (2004) report similar findings by examining data of the German General Social Survey from 1996.

But the doubts regarding the impact of many objective country characteristics are not only empirical ones. Rather, the theoretical mechanism connecting these macro-level aspects and individual-level attitudes is on a shaky basis. *Individual perception* is the crucial link between social environments and attitudes. It is a well-established finding that individual perceptions of the ethnic composition in a country strongly correlate with attitudes, also in the studies discussed above (Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2004).[7] And Kuntz et al. (2017) report highly similar findings regarding the role of actual and perceived economic circumstances. However, the crucial question is whether inhabitants perceive their social environment in the way government statistics measure them. How, after all, should macro-level circumstances affect one's view if her or his picture about these numbers is considerably distorted?

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[7]Although one should be cautious about the causal direction: Are natives more xenophobic because they think there are too many immigrants around them or do they see immigrants everywhere because they do not like them? To my knowledge, this is empirically still an open question.

And indeed research has repeatedly shown that most people have highly biased perceptions of the ethnic composition in their country of residence, or to quote from a recent study on the nature of political misperceptions: "empirical research in public opinion yields a relatively simple answer to the question of how much people typically know about politics: not very much." (Flynn et al., 2017: 127) For example, US-Americans of all races largely overestimate the share of different ethnic minorities in their country according to Wong's (2007) analysis of the General Social Survey. This leads her to conclude that, for example, larger numbers of black people are not the cause of greater anti-black prejudice among whites, because whites are unlikely to actually perceive the group size of blacks (Wong, 2007, also see Alba et al., 2005). Herda (2010) demonstrates similar misperceptions for European countries, analysing the first wave of the European Social Survey (also see Herda, 2013). Moreover, the discrepancy between subjective perceptions and objective immigrant numbers tends to be stronger for immigrant numbers measured at larger spatial units such as countries (Wong, 2007), perhaps because people have more direct and indirect contact and encounters with people in their more local environment. In a similar vein, Blinder (2015) finds that the perception of the immigrant population in Britain strongly diverges from what is implied by census data with a severe overestimation of the relative share of permanent arrivals and asylum seekers while largely ignoring international students. This reverses the actual ratios (Blinder, 2015: 88). The fact that misperceptions about the composition of a country's immigrant population correlate not only with demographic variables and media exposure but also with fears about losing national identity suggests that such misperceptions are more than random ignorance (Herda, 2015).

In sum, people not only have biased perceptions about the size of ethnic out-groups in their country but also of who 'immigrants' actually are and where they are from. As

argued above, these misperceptions of national contexts have crucial implications for the use of census and government data as proxies for situations of perceived threat in cross-national comparative research. Moreover, relying on aggregated country-level demographics becomes even more problematic the larger and/or more segregated countries are.

In spite of the empirical and theoretical shortcomings, much of the research on immigration related attitudes has mostly ignored another potential macro-level source of threat perceptions: the national discourses on immigration related issues. In contrast to objective numbers, their impact on public opinion has been largely underestimated in this field.

Integrating discourses into the group threat paradigm

On the one hand, it is evident that exclusionist attitudes are unequally distributed across countries (e. g., Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007, see also chapter 3) and also fluctuate over time (e. g., Legewie, 2013; Semyonov et al., 2006, or chapters 2 and 4). It seems reasonable to assume that such attitudes stem from perceptions of threat. On the other hand, and as discussed above, many objective circumstances of a country, such as immigration shares, are mostly misperceived by the general public and often empirically fail to explain attitudes. This paradox raises the question of what, then, causes the threat perceptions leading to the different levels of anti-immigration sentiments in different social contexts.

The core argument underlying the present dissertation is that the *images of developments and events* which people harbour are crucial determinants of their attitudes. Early last century, Walter Lippmann wrote: "The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, and imagined. [...] [Man] has invented ways of seeing what no naked eye could

see, of hearing what no ear could hear, of weighing immense masses and infinitesimal ones, of counting and separating more items than he can individually remember. He is learning to see with his mind vast portions of the world that he could never see, touch, smell, hear, or remember. Gradually he makes for himself a trustworthy *picture inside his head* of the world beyond his reach." (Lippmann, 1921: 13, emphases added) Public opinion on political issues, in other words, is a response to mental images of developments and events. The impossibility of perfectly perceiving the actual environment leads to the creation of an imagined pseudo-environment reflecting particular aspects of the real world. Simplification is necessary to process the potentially infinitely complex information. While Lippmann's argument is a philosophical one, this phenomenon has also been empirically examined for decades by, for example, cognitive psychology (e. g., Tversky and Kahneman, 1974).

For the present investigation, the crucial point is that certain kinds of simplifying images are more likely to lead to resentments and ethnic prejudice. I will return to such group-specific attitudes after further elaboration of the outlined mechanism.

Among the main shapers of such an imagined pseudo-environment are mass media and public elites. They are the central sources for the kind of information which exceeds personal or everyday experiences. Moreover, they also define, interpret, frame, and contextualise real-world developments and events. Such interpretations are the basis of one's image about the world. Individuals create their views of the social and political world from these images, or in Lippmann's terms: "Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe. They have, therefore, to be pieced together out of what others have reported and what we can imagine." (Lippmann, 1921: 30)

Media and elites can thus shape attitudes towards immigrants by providing and forming the information underlying national discourses, which translate into the pic-

tures about an ethnic out-group that people have in their heads. This, in turn, affects how individuals evaluate the individuals belonging to this ethnic subgroup.

Furthermore, bringing public elites' rhetoric back into the group threat paradigm also means picking up an important aspect Herbert Blumer formulated in his original work on the social determinants of racial prejudice mentioned above. Blumer argues in his paper that the emergence of a "collective image of the abstract group" is a major prerequisite for ethnic prejudice (Blumer, 1958: 6). He further states that these collective images of an out-group are shaped by the elites and speakers of a society's dominant group in the public sphere. This aspect has largely been ignored by many studies which aim at testing the group threat paradigm empirically. However, it is crucial to Blumer's actual argumentation. For this reason, I want to bring this part of the original version of the group threat theory back into focus. I combine sociology and communication sciences by drawing upon the two classics and test their implications in a modern fashion. To this end, I bring together Lippmann's idea of the 'picture inside one's head' with Blumer's idea of public speakers definitions of the 'collective image of the abstract group'. To address the impact of public speakers, chapter 2 deals with mass media and chapter 3 with political elites as shapers of collective out-group images and, ultimately, of public opinion and xenophobic resentment.

But establishing that public speakers have the power to shape attitudes through discourses does not answer how such discourses come about and, so far, also misses why certain discourses are associated with more negative attitudes. In many cases the images of ethnic groups which underlie a discourse do not appear out of the blue. Rather, they are connected to certain real-world developments (also see Wimmer, 1997: 26 f.). A second important part of Blumer's argumentation helps to explain the emergence of such discourses. In his paper, he emphasises the importance of what he calls 'big events,' which are central for generating and defining a *threatening image*

of an ethnic out-group. Such events are seen as having major social importance. In many cases they are underlying subsequent discourses. Defining these events forms the collective image of the involved ethnic out-group. When the out-group is discussed as being threatening to the dominant group of a society, such events are particularly potent in shaping images (Blumer, 1958: 6). In this interpretation, the perceptions of certain ethnic groups as threatening do not (only) stem from their mere physical presence but from the pictures majority members associate with this group. The sexual assaults and robberies which took place in Germany on New Year's Eve 2015/16 are textbook examples of such events. Hence, I investigate the impact of these events in chapter 4 of the present dissertation.

The idea of discursive definitions of threatening images of ethnic groups also corresponds to recent findings in the social scientific literature according to which individuals' opinions are not only driven by a generalised kind of prejudice but that they are also target specific (Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Meeusen et al., 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017) and relate to particular temporal and spacial social contexts (Meuleman et al., 2018). To account for such particularities of attitudes, chapters 3 and 4 investigate attitudes towards different ethnic groups in particular contexts. Chapter 2, in contrast, takes a broader perspective and examines the universal effect of media reporting on immigration concerns across various discourses and public debates.[8]

As I have stated above, the present dissertation wants to bring together Lippmann's idea of people harbouring a picture of the real world inside their heads with Blumer's argument of definitions of threatening collective images of ethnic out-groups through

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[8]Many studies in this field contrast Blumer's group threat paradigm with Allport's contact paradigm (Allport, 1979: 261 ff.). They often test the competing hypotheses that the actual physical presence of immigrants in a given context either increases (Blumer) or weakens (Allport) ethnic prejudice. A similar argument about familiarisation can also be found regarding the presence of immigrants in the media, i. e. so-called parasocial contact (Schiappa et al., 2005). However, because the focus of the present dissertation is on discourses rather than repeated media exposure to certain ethnic characters on TV shows I will not pursue this approach any further throughout this work.

public speakers drawing upon significant events. These discourses related to certain developments and events are the sources of information the members of the ethnic majority group have to form their own picture of a certain ethnic group (Lippmann, 1921). And the more these discourses contribute to a threatening picture, the more likely is a negative and adverse attitude for those belonging to the ethnic majority (Blumer, 1958).

The underlying theoretical model consists of three main parts: I am interested in how important *events* are picked up by national elites who then shape macro-level *discourses* which, in turn, affect individual perceptions and thereby *attitudes*.[9] Epistemologically, this model is located in between the 'realistic threat' model I discussed above and philosophical 'discourse theories.' It is distinct from the former because it argues that threat perceptions often do not directly stem from actual circumstances in a country but from their mediation through public speakers and mass media. It is, however, also distinct from the latter because it still incorporates certain real-world events and developments. Much of discourse theory puts discourses in the centre of explanation as "quasi-magical powers" (Wimmer, 1997: 26) without being able to explain how discourses themselves come about or under which conditions they prevail (Wimmer, 1997). This is not my intention. While discourses certainly *can* be completely disconnected from social reality, I argue that their role in most cases is a mediating, yet potentially distorting, one.

Not all studies constituting this dissertation address all three aspects of this model in the same fashion. Rather, each study has a somewhat different focus and its own methodology. In this way, I aim to provide new insights which are, in combination, both broad (generalisable) and deep (accounting for particularities).

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[9]Mind that this is not a strictly causal path which is universally applicable. Sometimes parts of elite discourses are the event itself (e. g., Donald Trump's Tweets) and sometimes manifestations of attitudes also shape national discourses (e. g., PEGIDA protests).

Multi-level agenda setting

While the phenomenon I am investigating, out-group attitudes as a part of inter-group relations, is a sociological one, drawing upon research of mass communication sciences can help to explain the effects of national discourses. I argued above that the social context informs a person's image of social and ethnic groups which, in turn, translates to her or his formation of particular attitudes. The model of multi-level agenda setting addresses the question how certain aspects in a discourse relate to general as well as specific attitudes, depending on their prominence, or *salience.* This model takes up Lippmann's reasoning that attitudes about complex political issues emerge from the images of the world people have in their heads. It deals with the transfer of salience from mass media to the audience, arguing that when mass media emphasise a certain issue this has an impact on the priority that the general public assigns to these issues (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001). Put more generally, elements which are prominent in national discourses are regarded as important by individual members of the public.

This transfer of salience, of what is seen as important or urgent, can happen at different levels of an issue. On the most general level, the media determines which issues dominate the public agenda. This corresponds to the classical idea of agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). A recent large-scale experimental study in the US, in which the media messages of 48 real news outlets were systematically manipulated over five years, confirms that increased news broadcasting indeed leads to more discussions on Twitter about topics such as immigration and refugees (King et al., 2017). Applied to the research question of this dissertation, this means that extensive reporting about immigration related topics the media increases the importance the public attaches to the issue. Chapter 2 of this dissertation is devoted to agenda-setting on this level.

But immigration is a multi-faceted issue. And according to McCombs and Ghanem (2001), the transfer of salience happens not only regarding the issues themselves but also regarding the different aspects that constitute each issue. So just like issues can be put in a hierarchy on the first level of agenda setting, the attributes *within* each issue can be organised on higher levels according to their relative salience (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001). In this way, public speakers and the media not only influence "what to think about," as stated by classical agenda setting-theory, but also "*how* to think about some subjects" (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001: 69).[10] Again applied to the present research question, the salience of the immigration issue itself can change, but also the salience of different aspects within it. For example, the increased number of Muslims, resulting debates about religious fundamentalism (see Helbling and Traunmüller, 2018; Koopmans, 2015; Diehl et al., 2009) and different Islamist terror attacks are likely to make Muslim immigration particularly important (cf. chapter 3). Similarly, the debates after the assaults of New Year's Eve 2015/16, which were centred on the influx of males from North-Africa or the Middle East, should especially affect the evaluation of these particular groups of immigrants (cf. chapter 4). By giving more importance to certain aspects (e. g., safety), public speakers have an impact not only on the general salience of immigration but also on the salience of certain attributes of immigrants. Such national discourses should thus primarily have an impact on attitudes towards these immigrant subgroups. Chapters 3 and 4 relate to more differentiated effects of discourses, which take place on higher levels of the agenda-setting model discussed above.

In brief, the present dissertation starts with the first level of agenda-setting by investigating effects of general salience in chapter 2. Chapter 3 examines attitudes

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[10]Note the similarities to the concepts of *priming* and *framing* (e. g., Iyengar and Kinder, 2010). McCombs and Ghanem (2001) admit that the idea of attribute agenda setting is explicitly meant to integrate the theory to the framing approach (page 69).

towards particular immigrant groups which were characterised by different levels of salience and threat perceptions. Finally, chapter 4 analyses how certain characteristics of immigrants influence their evaluation by native Germans after the sexual assaults of NYE 2015/16. Because some characteristics, such as gender and country of origin, were clearly outstanding in the particular setting they should be more important for the overall evaluation of immigrants. Hence, chapter 4 corresponds to salience on the level of attributes.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

In the following, I present extended summaries of each of the studies of this dissertation with the goal of explaining how each study contributes to the overall research question. Furthermore, I want to clarify how the different studies complement each other, which relates to different strengths and but also limitations associated with different methodology and data sources. Generally, the dissertation is structured in a way that starts with the most general perspective and then gradually zooms in and becomes increasingly more detailed. The final chapter is a short conclusion and discussion of the central findings.

Table 1.1 gives an overview of the key features of the three studies included in the present dissertation, which are subsequently explained in more detail.

Overview of studies

In chapter 2, called "Mass media and concerns about immigration in Germany in the 21st century: Individual-level evidence over 15 years", my colleague Stephan Dochow and I examine the *general* impact increased media reporting (media salience) has on *concerns about immigration.* Mass media are one of the key sources of information on

Table 1.1: Overview of studies

study	I	II	III
title	*Mass media and concerns about immigration in Germany in the 21st century: Individual-level evidence over 15 years*	*Propagating ethnic preferences? Political elite discourses and Europeans' openness towards different immigrant groups in the beginning of Europe's 'immigration crisis'*	*Refugees unwelcome? Changes in the public acceptance of immigrants and refugees in Germany in the course of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'*
investigating	attitudinal changes due to *mass media coverage*	attitudinal differences due to *political elite discourses*	attitudinal changes due to discourses around so-called "immigration crisis"
explananda (outcomes)	concerns about immigration	exclusionary attitudes towards different immigrant groups	acceptance of different kinds of immigrants
explanantia (main expl. variables)	media salience	party discourses	event (NYE 15/16) + migrant characteristics
scope	single country, long-term longitudinal perspective	multi-national, cross-sectional	single case, medium-term longitudinal perspective
data	GSOEP + quantitative content analysis (and others)	ESS + MARPOR (and others)	Self-conducted survey experiment
observations	190,049 person-years nested in 25,073 persons over 15 years	29,652 persons nested in 19 countries	18,032 immigrant ratings nested in two waves nested in 644 persons
strengths	generalizability over time, nuanced design	generalizability across countries, differentiated toning & outcomes	nuanced design, causal effects
limitations	broad measures of media and attitudes	correlational study	generalizability
status	published (ESR): doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcy019	revise & resubmit (International Migration Review)	published (ESR): doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcx071

political issues. When the media report on immigration, they transfer a certain picture of the world to people's heads (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001). As I have outlined above, the first level of the agenda setting model states that general salience of an issue such as immigration in the media increases the importance individuals assign to this issue. Moreover, the discussion of immigration makes the information related to this issue more accessible in people's minds. In the terminology of psychology and communication sciences, media salience *primes* the individual to the immigration issue (Iyengar and Kinder, 2010: 63 ff.).

The importance of mass media for attitudes toward ethnic minorities has already been discussed by Gordon W. Allport in his famous book *The Nature of Prejudice*, first published in 1954 (Allport, 1979: 200 ff.). However, due to the complexity of operationalising and systematically quantifying large amounts of real media data, empirical investigations outside artificial situations are still comparatively rare (but see Van Klingeren et al., 2015; Schlueter and Davidov, 2013; Hopkins, 2010). To the best of my knowledge, virtually all of the studies with such a scope employ a measure of the media environment which varies only between survey waves. This means that the measure has a constant value for all observations *within* each survey wave. However, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2, the amount of media reporting on immigration issues strongly fluctuates on a daily basis. To account for this, we employ a fine-grained and precise measure of media salience which captures the actual amount of salience for each respondent (see section "Research design and statistical models" in chapter 2).

We rely on individual-level panel data and employ fixed-effects models which automatically account for all time-constant potential confounders, such as socialisation, stable prejudice, social class, race, sex, culture, etc. Hence, we see our estimates as closer to causality compared with previous research on the matter.

Combining a self-conducted quantitative content analysis of German newspaper and news magazine articles with the German Socio-Economic Panel and other data sources, we build a very rich data set which includes 25,000 persons and 190,000 person-years.

My aim with this study is to provide a broad perspective which encompasses data from German print newspapers and individual attitudes over 15 years. Investigating many individuals for such a relatively long time span has the benefit of offering much information and statistical power. But perhaps even more important for my purpose is that the media reporting taking place over one and a half decades covers a heterogeneous set of discourses about various issues related to immigration. In the present case, this includes topics such as terrorist attacks, EU enlargements, and the recent inflow of refugees (cf. section 2.5). This large scope allows to investigate the impact of media on immigration concerns which is not primarily driven by a single kind of debate. The estimated effect thus resembles an effect of mass media which is generalisable over various different discourses and also, at least to a certain degree, over time. It is hence ideally suited to investigate the proposition derived from the agenda setting model on the first level, namely that mere salience of the issue in the media has an impact on attitudes.

The analyses exhibit a substantive and very robust positive effect of media salience on concerns about immigration. This effect can be understood as the universal impact of media salience, averaged over all different kinds of discourses. This demonstrates the general leverage of mass media. However, drastic negative framing may lead to even stronger effects.

The media salience effect is especially strong for individuals living in areas with a smaller proportion of ethnic minorities and for those with lower education, or conservative ideology. This stresses that the effect of mass media, while encompassing

different discourses, clearly depends on the individual proneness of direct or indirect recipients.

Chapter 3, which is called "Propagating ethnic preferences? Political elite discourses and Europeans' openness towards different immigrant groups in the beginning of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'", adds to the general issue salience the importance of tone of elite discourses. To this end, it takes a cross-national perspective and examines the relationship between political elite discourses and public opinion towards immigrants at the beginning of Europe's so-called Migration Crisis. It adds to chapter 2 by differentiating on both sides of the equation: firstly, I distinguish attitudes towards different *groups of immigrants*, such as Muslims or ethnically more or less distinct immigrants. Muslim immigration was especially prominent in the public debates during the period of analysis. This relates to xenophobic hostility towards people originating from countries characterised by Islam (Copley, 2016) as well as to more nuanced debates about the rejection of religious fundamentalism (cf. Helbling and Traunmüller, 2018). The main point for this study is that the salience of problematic aspects of Islam in many political discourses are likely to primarily shape attitudes towards Muslim immigrants compared to others (cf. Meuleman et al., 2018). Secondly, I also distinguish the *tone* of political elite discourses in this study. It is reasonable to assume that it is primarily the negative toning of discourses which causes negative attitudes (Careja, 2015; Bohman, 2011; Hjerm, 2007) because such discourses are more likely to contribute to a threatening image of, for example, Muslims. Whether, on the other hand, positive discourses have an liberalising impact by establishing positive images has empirically been an open question so far. My approach allows to examine whether positive and negative tones at the political elite level cause different attitudes towards more or less prominent immigrant groups.

To analyse these relationships, I combine data from the seventh wave of the European Social Survey (ESS7) with data taken from the Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR), which quantifies the manifestos on political parties based on a pre-selected set of topics and tone, and other sources (see section 3.6 for more details). The results reveal that objective national-level characteristics hardly correlate with any of the investigated attitudes. This also corresponds to a set of previous studies (e. g. Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2004). In contrast, negative discourses by political elites statistically significantly relate to more negative attitudes, but primarily affect attitudes towards Muslim and ethnically distinct immigrants. This is in line with the theoretical argument because both groups were rather prominent in the historical period being investigated. Thus, the emergence of discourses emphasising ethnic differences are likely to contribute to threatening pictures of certain ethnic out-groups (Blumer, 1958). This picture is influenced by the historical period of investigation (Meuleman et al., 2018). But the results also reveal that positive discourses by political elites are universally associated with less negative attitudes towards *all* of the investigated immigrant groups. An explanation for this finding is that discourses promoting tolerance and openness apply to various ethnic out-groups. Moreover, as in chapter 2, it is evident that discourse effects depend on individual receptiveness. As expected, the effect of political elite discourses is stronger for those who are more politically inclined. Moreover, the effect of individual ideology, interestingly, becomes more pronounced in contexts where elites are either more negative or more positive towards immigration related issues.

Whereas the study in chapter 2 aims at providing a more universal effect over a large and heterogeneous set of discourses by investigating their fluctuations over *temporal contexts*, the idea of the effects reported in chapter 3 is to test for generalisability over different discourses by analysing different *spatial contexts* and, thus, different political

and social cultures. Moreover, chapter 3 takes a more nuanced approach compared to chapter 2 by moving the focus from a general effect of salience on attitudes towards immigration in general to the more particularistic effects of discourses' tone on attitudes towards different groups of immigrants. However, it is cross-sectional for two reasons: firstly, specific effects refer to a particular setting (Meuleman et al., 2018) and, secondly, one of the crucial dependent variables (attitude towards Muslim immigrants) is included only in the seventh wave of the ESS and other items relate far less to specific out-groups.

Finally, "Refugees unwelcome? Changes in the public acceptance of immigrants and refugees in Germany in the course of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'", which is chapter 4 of the present dissertation, zooms in closest on the relationship between national discourses and attitudes. It tests the agenda setting model's propositions on the attribute level, that is that salience of certain aspects within the immigration issue affects attitudes towards those holding these attributes. It presents a case study on the changes in the public acceptance of different kinds of immigrants during the so-called Migration Crisis. As discussed above, several Islamist terror attacks and in particular the sexual assaults and robberies during the festivities of New Year's Eve 2015/16 made immigration in general highly salient, especially with regard to male and Muslim migrants and refugees from North Africa and the Middle East (Deutsche Welle, 2016). These are, thus, the attributes which were salient within the general immigration topic during this time.

To examine how these developments, and especially their discussion by public elites, influence public opinion about immigrants, my colleague Alexander W. Schmidt-Catran and I conducted a multi-factorial survey experiment on the same respondents over two waves, the first taking place at the beginning of the increasing migration inflow and the second after the assaults of New Year's Eve 2015/16, where men who

were reported as having Arab and African appearance conducted several assaults of robbery and sexual harassment in different cities in Germany. In brief, this means that the same individuals evaluated the same set of hypothetical immigrants, who systematically varied on certain attributes such as country of origin, reason for migration, and religious denomination (see section 4.5 of this dissertation for more details of the design). This unique within-variation based procedure allows us to estimate the differences in the effects of each immigrant attribute between the survey waves in a causal fashion.

The most striking finding of the study is that respondents were not only very positive toward refugees at the beginning of the so-called Migration Crisis, but that their acceptance actually *increased* during these developments. This points to strongly internalised humanitarian values, which may have been the result of philanthropic discourses surpassing threatening ones. On the other hand, the fact that the already lower acceptance of immigrants from Arab or African countries further decreased between both survey waves demonstrates potential limitations of such values when those entering Europe are not perceived as genuine refugees. Interestingly, the evaluation of Muslim immigrants did not change between the two waves. This might be because the assaults were no act of religious fundamentalism. Thus, people might actually retain differentiated views after dramatic events.

A deeper analysis reveals that male respondents primarily discriminated among immigrants according to their origin, while female respondents evaluated immigrants more on gender than men did. Hence, discourse effects, again, depend on the individual characteristics of recipients. In this case, it is likely to be caused by higher levels of perceived threat to one's personal safety for women, because sexual assaults are strongly dominated by male perpetrators (and, maybe, to collective safety or higher levels of prejudice for men?).

The design of the study in chapter 4 is ideally suited to linking the arguments constituting the discourses of certain events to the attitudes towards those immigrant groups which were at the core of these arguments. The study in chapter 4 thus provides the most nuanced approach in the present dissertation. This has the benefit of giving a detailed picture of the relationship of discourses on public opinion towards immigrants. An inevitable limitation of this procedure, however, is the question of whether and how the effects found in a case study are generalisable to other cases. Mind that the studies in chapter 2 and chapter 3 are meant to tackle exactly this question across time and space respectively.

To sum up, all three studies investigate the effects of different aspects of national discourses about immigration related issues on attitudes towards this topic. But they do so with very different scopes. On the spectrum from universal to particular relationships, the study in chapter 2 provides the most general effect and the study of chapter 4 yields the most specific one, chapter 3 being in the intermediate position. Hence, my goal is to fill the main gap of each study with material from the others.

Status of studies & contributions of co-authors

Study I: *Mass media and concerns about immigration in Germany in the 21st century: Individual-level evidence over 15 years* is co-authored with Stephan Dochow and published the *European Sociological Review* (online: https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcy019). It is in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric and scored higher than 96% of its peers.[11] The contributions to this study can be specified as follows (although both authors helped to develop all parts and contributed to the study equally): Christian S. Czymara: initial idea; argument and theoretical framework; literature review; Nexis data collection; discussion of results; revisions of all parts of the paper

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[11]https://oxfordjournals.altmetric.com/details/44470307#score, checked 27 July 2018.

Stephan Dochow: GSOEP data collection; final models; discussion of results; revisions of all parts of the paper

Study II: *Propagating ethnic preferences? Political elite discourses and Europeans' openness towards different immigrant groups in the beginning of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'* is single-authored and currently a revise and resubmit at the International Migration Review.

Study III: *Refugees unwelcome? Changes in the public acceptance of immigrants and refugees in Germany in the course of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'* is co-authored with Alexander W. Schmidt-Catran and published in the *European Sociological Review* (online: doi.org /10.1093/esr/jcx071. I presented previous versions at, amongst others, the seventh conference of the European Survey Research Association in Lisbon, Portugal, taking place in July 2017 where it received an honourable mention for the early career award and at the fourth Annual BAGSS Conference in September 2017 in Bamberg, Germany, where it won the best paper award. It has also received an exceptional amount of attention since the publication in October 2017 according to Altmetric: It is currently in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.[12] The contributions to this study can be distinguished as follows:

Christian S. Czymara: conceptualising the research design; developing the questionnaire and programming the online survey; argument and theoretical framework; literature review; collecting, preparing, and analysis of the data; generating Figure 4.1; revisions of all parts of the paper

Alexander W. Schmidt-Catran: conceptualising the research design; feedback and revising the questionnaire/survey; final models; revisions of all parts of the paper

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[12]https://oxfordjournals.altmetric.com/details/27636896#score, checked 16 March 2018.

2 Mass media and concerns about immigration in Germany in the 21st century: Individual-level evidence over 15 years

Abstract: Mass media has long been discussed as an essential determinant of the threat perceptions leading to anti-immigration attitudes. The field of empirical research on such media effects is still comparatively young, however, and lacks studies examining precise measures of the media environment an individual is likely to be actually exposed to. We employ a nuanced research design which analyses individual differences in the yearly levels of both media salience and attitudes in panel data of 26,000 persons, who were at least interviewed twice, and a time span over 15 years, from 2001 to 2015. We find a substantive and stable positive effect: comparing periods of vivid discussions with times where the issue was hardly discussed in the German

media results in an increase in the predicted probability of being very concerned by about 13 percentage points. Deeper investigations reveal that the media effect is most potent for individuals living in areas with lower share of ethnic minorities and for those with lower education or conservative ideology, stressing the importance of individual receptiveness. In sum, our findings strengthen the line of reasoning stressing the importance of discursive influences on public opinion and cast doubt on the argument that threat perceptions stem primarily from the size of ethnic out-groups.

2.1 Introduction

Immigration is a re-occurring, hotly debated topic in most European countries. The past 2 years are examples with lively debates on rising numbers of migrants and refugees, immigrant integration, and terror attacks, accompanied by various, large-scale anti-immigration protests. We investigate the fluctuations of media reporting on immigration and its impact on individual concerns about this issue on the example of Germany, investigating very extensive and rich data. We combine about 26,000 news articles from four major German newspapers and news magazines with panel data of 25,773 unique individuals in total and a time span of 15 years. Because we rely on yearly measures over a long time span, our period of investigation covers individual attitudinal reactions to various and diverse discursive triggers, enabling us to make more generalisable inferences about the relationship between media reporting and public opinion.

In search for contextual explanations of immigration attitudes, many sociological studies in the tradition of the group threat-paradigm (Quillian, 1995) explain attitudes towards ethnic minorities and immigration with objective demographics like the share of immigrants in a country, arguing that the presence of a sizeable ethnic minority

leads to competition for different resources which, in turn, leads to negative sentiments towards this out-group (for an overview, see Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). However, this reasoning has been challenged by scholars who found that threat perceptions are only loosely connected to objective immigration rates (Semyonov et al., 2004; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes, 2017). From this perspective, it is not surprising that objective demographics often fail to be reliable predictors of migration-related attitudes (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 231).

Therefore, it is important to empirically assess other contextual explanations for the fluctuation of threat perceptions, and ultimately of anti-immigration attitudes (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010: 318). A potent explanation is concerned with the coverage of immigration-related issues in mass media (e. g., Blumer, 1958; Allport, 1979: 200 ff.). In the lion's share of social science literature on the formation of attitudes towards immigrants, however, the importance of mass media is often simply assumed. But with the increasing availability of large-scale quantitative media and survey data, the role of mass media has increasingly come into focus of empirical research in recent years (e. g., Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009; Schlueter and Davidov, 2013; Van Klingeren et al., 2015).

We contribute to this growing field by employing a design which offers a very fine-grained view on the relationship between mass media and individual attitudes. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to investigate how the same ethnic majority individuals change their opinion when going through periods of differing levels of media attention on the immigration issue (media salience), fluctuating on a daily level. In contrast to previous research, our design also accounts for individual unobserved heterogeneity which might bias the relationship between media presence of immigration related news and concerns about immigration.

Subsequently, we also investigate under which conditions effects of frequent media reporting are particularly potent. We distinguish two sets of moderators: (i) contextual aspects, stressing the importance of the local opportunity structure for first-hand experiences (Voci and Hewstone, 2003) and (ii) personal characteristics, identifying who is more prone to media effects (cf. Ward and Masgoret, 2006).

Germany is a very interesting case to study because it has been among the most popular destination countries in Europe since the turn of the millennium[1] and, accordingly, has an increasingly diverse ethnic composition.[2] The media attention on immigration and integration, on the other hand, has fluctuated considerably (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009). This is related to certain events such as the reform of the German immigration policy in 2005 (Bauder, 2008), several Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe (Legewie, 2013), and the emergence of the anti-immigration PEGIDA protests in 2014. Moreover, Germany has been the most important country of destination for refugees in Europe in the course of the so-called immigration crisis (Connor, 2016). Violent acts performed by individuals reported as refugees (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017) as well as performed against refugees (Jäckle and König, 2017) both lead to significant levels of media attention and started extensive national debates. Mass media will hence continue to play an important role in the formation of public opinion on immigration in the in the foreseeable future.

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[1]According to the International migrant stock 2015 database of the UN as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Statistics, both retrieved 6 January 2018.
[2]https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/28347/umfrage/zuwanderung-nach-deutschland/ (retrieved 16 August 2017).

2.2 Mass media as a source of perceived threat: Theory and previous research

International migration, immigrant integration, and their social consequences are complex, multifaceted phenomena, hardly assessable by single individuals. This gives mass media considerable leeway in shaping individual opinion because they are one of the main sources providing information exceeding personal experiences (Blumer, 1958; McLaren et al., 2018). Moreover, the media can potentially transform the uncertainty surrounding immigration-related issues into threatening stereotypes (Esses et al., 2013).[3] Even without directly evoking negative stereotypes, increasing the visibility of immigration topics in public discourse heightens the attention given to such topics and makes information related to migration accessible in people's minds. Issue salience hence sets the terms by which the topic is evaluated, a process called priming in communication sciences (Iyengar and Kinder, 2010: 63 ff., also see Zaller, 1992). Similarly, the agenda-setting approach argues that issue salience transfers "from the mass media's pictures of the world to those in our heads" (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001: 67). In other words, what is prominent and important in the media becomes prominent in the audience. This can be reinforced further when different media outlets decide to copy what is newsworthy and what is not, also referred to as intermedia agenda-setting (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001). Both priming and agenda-setting should lead to an increased awareness of the immigration topic for natives, which can raise anti-migration sentiments or feelings of anxiety in the individual.

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[3]Mass media may affect the political public negatively through primarily focusing on negative news (Robinson, 1976). However, whether Western media indeed reported immigration-related news more often in a negative tone (ter Wal et al., 2005) or in a rather balanced one (Lawlor, 2015) is far from clear. Since our study covers a large time span, it is very likely to include very different debates, topics, and sentiments.

Moreover, effects of media reports are not limited to direct consumers. Rather, mass media shape the *information environment* and the public discourses at large. The information reported in certain outlets is not only picked up by other outlets but also disseminates within the public through indirect channels such as interpersonal communication (Schmitt-Beck, 2003, also see: Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009; Schlueter and Davidov, 2013; Van Klingeren et al., 2015).

Previous research on various West and Central European countries found mixed evidence regarding the relationship between mass media, actual demographic and economic conditions, and different aspects of (anti-)immigration attitudes. Schlueter and Davidov (2013) show that negative news about immigration correlated with more negative attitudes in Spain, and that this relationship was especially strong in contexts with low shares of migrants. In contrast, the comparison of The Netherlands and Denmark conducted by Van Klingeren et al. (2015) suggests that different toning of news seemed to have mattered only regarding positive news and only in The Netherlands. Once the effect of immigrant inflow is statistically controlled, however, mere issue salience was associated with more negative attitudes in The Netherlands, which have a relatively long history of immigration, while the same relationship was somewhat smaller in Denmark, where immigration became relevant not until the late 1990s (Van Klingeren et al., 2015). Similarly, media salience correlated with the vote intention for anti-immigrant parties in The Netherlands (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2007). On the other hand, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) find that salience itself was not connected to citizens' concerns in Germany, but that the framing of immigrant actors in news reports mattered. This is in line with the results of Schemer (2012), who finds an increasing effect of negative news portrayals of immigrants on stereotypic attitudes based on a two-wave panel study before and after a political campaign about immigration in Switzerland.

In sum, prior research suggests that the role of mass media remains rather ambivalent and context-dependent. However, comparing results is somewhat complicated due to differing methodology, which is not only related to particular benefits but also to different drawbacks: studies either measured subjective media consumption habits without taking into account the actual content of mass media (e. g., Vergeer et al., 2000), covered only short periods of time (Schemer, 2012), remained purely on the aggregate macro-level (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2007; 2009; McLaren et al., 2018), or in experimental contexts (e. g., van Klingeren et al., 2017). Some recent studies tackled these issues by combining data on media coverage with cross-sectional individual-level data from surveys pooled over several years (Hopkins, 2010; Schlueter and Davidov, 2013; Van Klingeren et al., 2015). This is an important step towards ensuring external validity of media effects outside artificial or short-term contexts. These studies, however, observed different individuals in different survey waves and modelled media characteristics as varying only between but not within waves. In contrast, we investigate the same individuals each year and employ a fine-grained, day-specific measure of media salience. We thus aim to advance the state of research on mass media effects on individual perceptions and attitudes by employing a more nuanced design than previous studies with similar scope (also see below).

Subsequently, we test the conditionality of the effect of media salience. It seems reasonable that the influence of media is more powerful under certain circumstances and that not everyone is equally affected by the media.

First, media information can fall on more fruitful ground if natives have less opportunity to collect information on immigrants based on own first-hand experience. This is the case for individuals living in areas where regular exposure or interpersonal contact (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006) with ethnic minorities is unlikely. In the case of Germany, districts have been shown to be potent contexts in which individuals

are likely to act regularly (e. g., Wagner et al., 2006). A high share of migrants in these contexts is likely to lead to inter-ethnic exposure during daily routines like work, shopping, and leisure time (Weber, 2015). Studies have shown that a high share of migrants in these contexts is associated with less exclusionary attitudes towards immigrants (Wagner et al., 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2010). We hence expect that the media salience effect is weaker for respondents living in districts where ethnic minorities are relatively prominent, since there are more opportunities for first-hand information (Schlueter and Davidov, 2013, also see Zucker, 1978).[4]

Second, the impact of media reports also depends on individual receptiveness and political sophistication (cf. Zaller, 1992). We test if the media salience effect differs across individual party preference and education. Both characteristics have repeatedly shown to be strong predictors of immigration attitudes (for party preference in the German case, see, e. g., Blinder et al., 2013; for education see, e. g., Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). Party affiliation is directly connected to liberal and conservative ideology on which grounds information is processed. Voters are more open for information that is in line with their existing beliefs because they aim to uphold their long-term values (Bechtel et al., 2015).

Education correlates with political knowledge which, in turn, determines how open individuals are towards political information (Zaller, 1992; Schemer, 2012). This is because those who are less informed are likely to have less stable attitudes, are less likely to have been exposed to similar political messages before, and have less informational resources to counter arguments (Bechtel et al., 2015: 687). These individuals should hence be more prone to effects of media reporting.

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[4]Based on US data, Hopkins (2010) argues that media salience is more potent under strong changes of the ethnic environment. However, given that the ethnic composition of districts in Germany is rather stable during our period of investigation, this mechanism should be less important in our case.

2.3 Hypotheses

We expect that higher levels of media attention on immigration issues (media salience) increase the accessibility of related information in people's minds and consequently raises individual concerns about these issues (Zaller, 1992; Iyengar and Kinder, 2010).

Hypothesis 1 High visibility of immigration issues in the media triggers individual concerns. (Salience-Hypothesis)

We furthermore expect that individuals in ethnically more diverse contexts perceive news about immigration as less threatening due to regular exposure to ethnic out-groups (Schlueter and Davidov, 2013).

Hypothesis 2 The negative effect of media salience as postulated in Hypothesis 1 is stronger (weaker) for individuals who live in districts with a lower (higher) shares of foreigners. (Information Substitution-Hypothesis)

We furthermore hypothesise that the effect of media salience depends on personal characteristics. First, preferences of certain parties signal a more liberal or a more conservative ideological disposition, affecting the receptiveness to certain political information. Because of their political predisposition, natives who prefer more liberal parties should be less receptive to negative discursive triggers than those who prefer more conservative parties. In the German parliament, the Green and, arguably, the Left Party are more liberal, the Social Democrats are centre-liberal, and the Free Democrats as well as the Christian Democrats are centre-conservative.

Hypothesis 3 The negative effect of media salience postulated in Hypothesis 1 is weaker (stronger) for natives who identify with more liberal (conservative) parties. (Party-Hypothesis)

Finally, we hypothesise that natives with higher education are less vulnerable to media effects. This is because we assume that natives with higher education not only exhibit a more differentiated world view in general (cf. Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007) but that they are also more likely to take the ambivalence and complexity of most political information into account. Assuming that education is a proxy for political knowledge, it furthermore determines motivation and ability to evaluate political information against previously stored information (Zaller, 1992; Schemer, 2012; Bechtel et al., 2015).

Hypothesis 4 The negative effect of media salience postulated in hypothesis 1 is weaker (stronger) for natives with higher (lower) education. (Education- Hypothesis)

2.4 Data

We use the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), an annual, household-based long-term panel study (Wagner et al., 2007) for yearly information on individual characteristics from 2001 to 2015. To focus on the ethnic majority, we drop respondents with migration background.

Outcome: concerns about immigration

Respondents are asked to rate how much they are concerned about certain topics in each year, including immigration to Germany on a three-point scale. We use a dichotomised version for our main analyses (0: 'not concerned' or 'somewhat concerned', 1: 'very concerned'; for similar procedure see, e. g., Lancee and Pardos-Prado, 2013; Lancee and Schaeffer, 2015) and the ordinal variable for robustness checks. This item is likely to capture a combination of two things: a negative evaluation of immigration

and individual salience of immigration issue. According to Wlezien (2005), concern measures capture the importance of issues as well as whether these issues are perceived as problematic (also see Lancee and Pardos-Prado, 2013: 116; Pardos-Prado et al., 2014: 855; Lancee and Schaeffer, 2015: 9). Hence, our dependent variable measures whether respondents express an opinion that is both negative and salient. Since our main explanatory variable is capturing macro-level issue salience, the relationship between our treatment and our outcome can theoretically be decomposed into the associations between, first, salience in the media and salience for (direct or indirect) consumers and, second, into the effect of media salience on negative opinions. While the latter, in our view, is especially interesting, the GSOEP unfortunately does not offer the possibility to disentangle both concepts empirically. However, the outcome is related to well-established predictors of negative attitudes towards immigration (see Table 2.4 in the Supplementary appendix). Independent of the conceptual shortcoming, we understand threat perceptions to be the theoretical mechanism relating media salience and individual concerns, analogous to Lancee and Pardos-Prado (2013).

Treatment: media salience of immigration-related issues

We combine the GSOEP with data from a quantitative content analysis of German newspapers and news magazines to measure the presence of issues related to immigration at a given day. To this end, we use digital full texts of the two weekly news magazines with the highest circulation in Germany: *Der Spiegel* and *Stern*, as well as one of the most highly circulated daily, non-tabloid national newspapers: the conservative *Die Welt* and the left *taz.die tageszeitung*. In combination, these outlets reach a large audience and have a balanced ideological position, likely to capture the broader national information environment. The full texts were provided by Nexis.[5]

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[5]https://www.nexis.com/

We scanned the content of all newspaper articles in our period of investigation with a search string based on a keyword list of immigration-related terms based on re-occurring content from random newspaper articles and previous literature (e. g., Schlueter and Davidov, 2013; Van Klingeren et al., 2015). This search string identifies articles which simultaneously include (i) at least one of several terms directly referring to immigration, (ii) the term 'Germany' or synonyms, and (iii) at least one of several terms more broadly connected to immigration.[6] We manually checked the validity of the sample by investigating the content of randomly chosen articles. We deleted duplicates, letters from readers, table of contents, and short news.

For our final media salience measure, we ran an exploratory factor analysis with four count variables indicating the number of articles in each of the four outlets in the past 21 days[7] with the single days as units of analysis and extracted the factor values. These values measure media salience on specific days, higher values implying higher media salience. The factor has an eigenvalue of 1.98. The factor loadings and

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[6]The search string reads as follows (! are wildcards):

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  (!wander!  OR !migration!  OR !migrant!  OR !flücht!  OR !flucht!
OR !ausländer!  OR !asyl!)  AND (deutschland OR bundesrepublik
OR brd) AND (!integration!  OR !abschieb!  OR abgeschob!  OR
!einbürgerung!  OR aufenthaltsgenehm!  OR ausländerkriminalität
OR (!kriminalität!  w/5 (!wander!  OR !migrant!  OR !flücht!
OR !ausländer!))  OR (!kriminell!  w/5 (!wander!  OR !migrant!
OR !flücht!  OR !ausländer!))  OR !fachkr!  OR (!qualifi!  w/3
(!wander!  OR !migrant!  OR !flücht!  OR !ausländer!))  OR (arbeit!
w/3 (!wander!  OR !migration!  OR !flücht!  OR !ausländer!))
OR (!erwerbs!  w/3 (!wander!  OR !migrant!  OR !flücht!  OR
!ausländer!))  OR (!beruf!  w/3 (!wander!  OR !migrant!  OR !flücht!
OR !ausländer!))  OR ((!terror!  OR !anschlag!)  w/5 !islam!)
OR zwangshochzeit OR zwangsheirat OR !parallelgesellschaft!  OR
!kopftuch!  OR ehrenmord OR hassprediger OR !burka!  OR (!islam!  OR
!muslim!  w/5 (!wander!  OR !migrant!  OR !flücht!  OR !ausländer!))
OR mohammedkarikatur OR (mohammed w/3 karikatur!))
```

[7]While the time span of 21 days is somewhat arbitrary, it ensures that the topic was salient for long enough to be a discussed topic but short enough to be remembered at the time the interview took place. Generally, the results hold for different specifications of the chosen time span (see Robustness checks).

uniqueness values (in brackets) of the media outlets are Die Welt: 0.78 (0.39), taz. die tageszeitung: 0.73 (0.46), Der Spiegel: 0.68 (0.54), Stern: 0.61 (0.62).

Our period of investigation covers a heterogeneous set of debates. This means that our approach aims at showing the universal effect of salience rather than a particularistic effect of certain topics or tones. On the one hand, we do not want to conceal that this partly relates to the complexities associated with building a detailed, topic-related measure of media over a long time. But on the other hand, we are convinced that investigating a universal effect of mere presence of issues is highly interesting itself because it tells something about the power of media independent of certain idiosyncratic debates. Finding a general effect of media salience on individual concerns is actually more striking than finding an effect of negative news only. At worst, we underestimate the maximum effect of mass media on public opinion.

Contextual variables

In the models interacting media salience and the local ethnic composition (Hypothesis 2), we also include several local context variables on the district level (*Kreise*, NUTS 3 level) provided by the German Federal Institute for Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Research.[8]

Most importantly, we include the share of individuals without German citizenship in a respondent's district to test whether the effect of media salience varies with ethnic exposure. With 402 different districts, this is a fine-grained yet efficacious measure of ethnic exposure (Wagner et al., 2006; Weber, 2015).

To control for economic conditions, we also add local unemployment rate, number of training positions, number of students, average household income, and population

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[8]Source: http://inkar.de/. Values for 2015 were forwarded from 2014. We also run models with a time-stable share of foreigners to rule out that artificial fluctuations affect our results (e. g., through changes in measurement in certain districts).

density to the models (all measured on the district level). We also include monthly immigration inflow to account for possible demographic developments that could confound the relationship under study.[9]

Individual-level variables

We include individual time-varying controls to adjust for confounding influences which are correlated with immigration concerns and possibly also influenced by macro-level developments. For example, individual economic worries partly capture periods of economic deprivation taking place at a certain time in Germany. These variables encompass general interest in politics, age, employment status, satisfaction with own household income, concerns about the own economic situation, and concerns about the general economic situation in Germany. Table 2.2 in the Appendix contains descriptive statistics and the coding for all variables included in our models.

Research design and statistical models

To capture individual exposure to media salience as precise as possible, we merge the public media salience measure with the GSOEP data based on the day each interview took place. Figure 2.1 illustrates our design based on two hypothetical respondents being interviewed in 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2012. The black dots represent the interview date and the two areas illustrate that we aggregate the numbers of articles from the four newspaper outlets 21 days before the interview for respondent 1 and respondent 2, respectively, in each year.

This operationalisation increases the likelihood that an individual has been exposed to the assigned level of media salience at the day of the interview, either directly

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[9]Data on monthly migration inflows from 2006 to 2015 stems from the German Statistical Office through email contact. We imputed monthly inflows from before 2006 by dividing the available yearly inflow by 12 for each year.

through individual news consumption or indirectly though information diffusion via other types of communication. As discussed above, prior research with similar scope modelled media variables as stable characteristics within surveys waves (e. g., Hopkins, 2010; Schlueter and Davidov, 2013; Van Klingeren et al., 2015). Assuming the same media environment for everyone within one wave can be critical, however, when media salience strongly fluctuates periodically in short-term intervals. Figure 2.2 indicates that this is indeed the case in our data. It is hence reasonable to employ a measure of media salience which varies between individuals who were interviewed at different days within the same survey wave (see Figure 2.1).
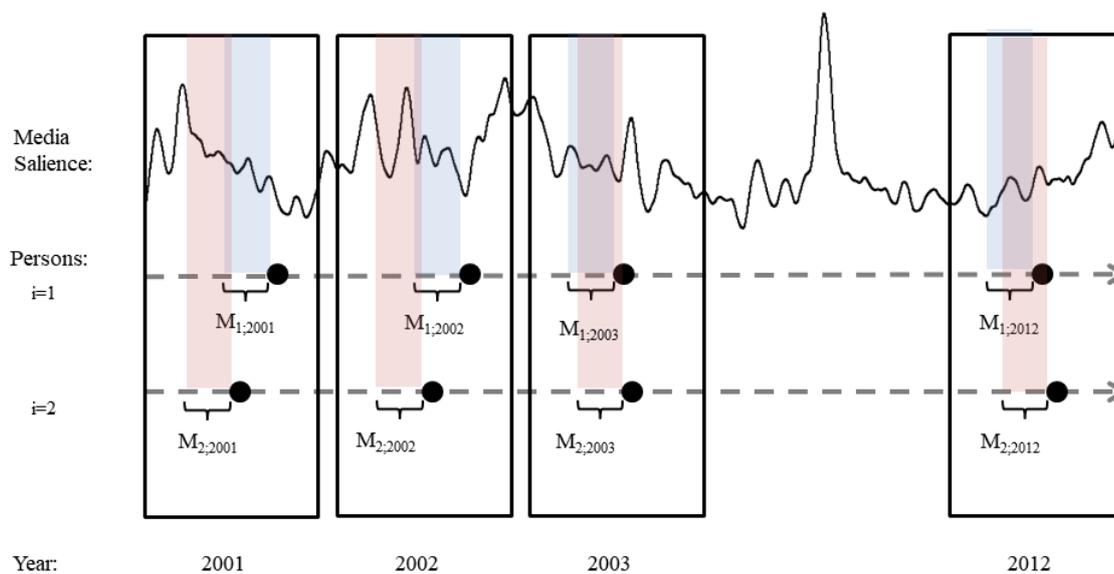
Figure 2.1: Stylized research design

The measure of media salience is most likely exogenous of respondent-specific characteristics in our models for two reasons. First, it is highly unlikely that the national level of media salience is influenced by individual-level characteristics that are also related to concerns about immigration. This is because the day of the interview, and thus the level of media salience a respondent is assigned to, is out of a respondent's control. Even if respondents with certain characteristics time their interviews differently than others, it is very unlikely that these characteristics affect individual concerns about immigration. Neither is it plausible that these respondents set the dates for their interviews dependent on the amount of articles on immigration in the media.[10] Second, we statistically account for all constant person-specific confounding influences by analysing within variation only, such as stable prejudice, social class, race, sex, and culture.[11] To this end, we estimate panel fixed-effects (FE) linear probability models (LPMs) which eliminate time-constant unobserved heterogeneity (Andreß et al., 2013).[12]

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[10]If there is geographical variation in the timing of the interviews (for example between the regional sampling points that underlie the stratified GSOEP sampling procedure), it is highly unlikely that this geographical variation is related to the debate on immigration as captured by our media salience measure.

[11]However, there may still be confounding factors on the aggregate level, that is, unmeasured period effects. See 'Is the effect of media salience causal? Considerations on reverse causality and unmeasured confounding' for a variety of strategies how we dealt with these issues.

[12]We use Stata 13.1's `xtreg` command for our RE and FE LPMs and `xtlogit` command the RE logistic regression models. The use of robust standard errors did not change our results in any substantive way. The analyses including district level variables were conducted with *SOEPremote*, a remote access possibility offered by the DIW Berlin. All do-files are available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/W8UZ9

2.5 Results

Immigration issues in Germany: time trends & key events

The overall time trend in immigration-related news is shown in Figure 2.2 . The figure illustrates the weekly total numbers of all articles and periods of 21 days after certain immigration related key events (coloured dots).[13]

In the beginning of the millennium, various Islamist terror attacks happened, which were unprecedented in terms of fatalities and impact for Western countries. This includes 9/11 (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009), the Madrid bombings on 11 March 2004 (Legewie, 2013), and the murder of Theo van Gogh on 2 November 2004 (Finseraas et al., 2011). Consequently, immigration and Islam were much debated during this time, although with quite some fluctuation, as Figure 2.2 indicates.

Moreover, politicians and the German public vividly discussed the new migration law (Zuwanderungsgesetz, cf. Pardos-Prado et al., 2014: 858), which became effective in January 2005. According to Bauder (2008), considerations about the 'economic utility' of immigration were a rather stable topic in the German immigration discourse during the period from 2001 to 2005.

In September 2005 until the beginning of 2006, media attention increased due to the Mohammed caricatures published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten and the subsequent protests in many Islamic countries.

Further debates revolved around the two Eastern Enlargements of the European Union (EU), the first taking place in May 2004 (e. g., Boehnke et al., 2007) and the second in January 2007. Both EU expansions were debated in the press, dealing with

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[13]For certain events, the coloured dots are not very likely to mark the actual time of the main public debate. For example, the Eastern Expansion of the EU was discussed before it legally became effective and the main debate on the Mohammed cartoons took place several months after their original publication. Moreover, we do not use these weekly totals in our statistical analysis but a measure on a daily basis.

the potential consequences regarding immigration-related crime, and economic costs and benefits.
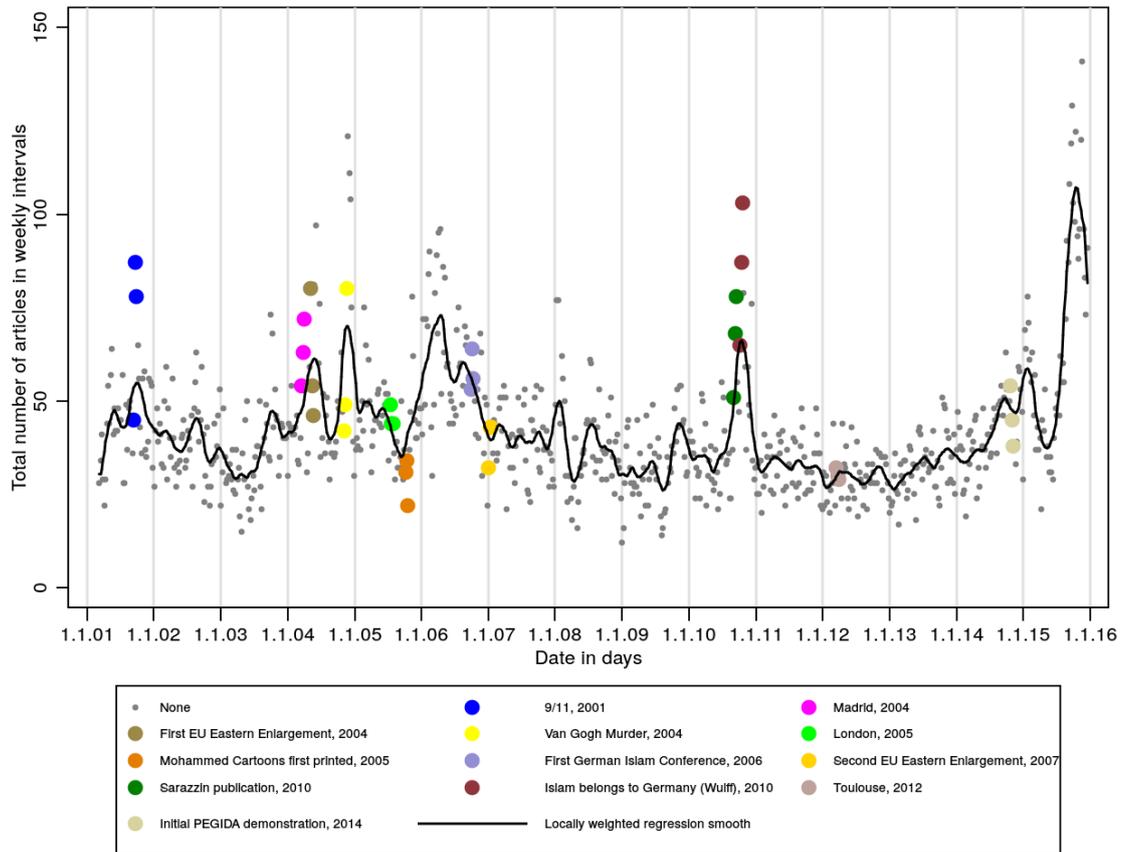
Figure 2.2: Total number of articles related to immigration per week, and immigration related key events

Note: Coloured dots indicate a period of 21 days after each event.

A third outstanding peak is around 2006. Note that two Islamist terrorist attacks do not seem to have led to major public debates on immigration, London in 2005 and the series of attacks in France in 2012.

Apart from economic and terror-related news, culturalistic discussions were repeatedly part of the immigration discourse in recent years. One trigger of these discussions was the former Federal President Christian Wulff's statement that 'The Islam belongs to Germany' in 3 October 2010. Almost simultaneously, Thilo Sarrazin's bestseller book 'Deutschland schafft sich ab' ('Germany is abolishing itself') was released in 30 August 2010, in which highly controversial theses about the impact of immigration on German society are put forward. Both events make sense of the steep increase in 2010. Finally, the peak in 2014 coincides with the first PEGIDA demonstrations in Dresden which were primarily targeted against immigration from Muslim countries.

From late summer 2015 on, Europe faced a strong increase in immigration and asylum rates with more than twice as many first-time asylum applications in the EU compared to the year before, including a disproportionate high share of individuals from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Connor, 2016). From all European countries, Germany received more than a third of these asylum applications, making it by far the most popular destination for these refugees (ibid.).

These turbulent times were accompanied by several acts of violence and terrorism. One of the most prominent events was the sexual assaults in various German cities on New Year's Eve 2015/2016, where victims described the perpetrators as men of Arab or North African appearance, leading to a direct connection to the strong increase in asylum rates (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017).

Other events include fatal Islamist terror attacks on the staff of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and on a Jewish supermarket (January 2015), the attacks on a cultural centre and a Synagogue in Copenhagen (February 2015), the series of attacks in Paris with 130 fatalities (November 2015), and the cancellation of a football match in Germany due to a terror warning (November 2015). At the same time, violence against refugees and refugee shelters erupted (Jäckle and König, 2017). It is hence

hardly surprising that Figure 2 shows it strongest increase during the time between 2015 and 2016.

Hence, the information environment our media measure is meant to capture fluctuates strongly, encompassing a heterogeneous set of different discourses and aspects of the immigration issue.

Looking at the association between our media salience factor and individual immigration concerns, we clearly see a similar trend, shown in Figure 2.3: the trajectories of concerns about immigration (upper panel) and of our media salience factor (lower panel) apparently show similar patterns. This means that respondents were more likely to show higher concerns about immigration when they were interviewed on days with high media salience.[14] This lends initial support to the Issue Salience-Hypothesis, although some debates (in terms of peaks in the time series) seem to be more influential than others. In the following, we put this relationship more rigorously to the test.

The upper panel of Figure 2.3 also shows the number of interviews per day. It clearly decreases over the year, with very few interviews taking place during the end of each year and in January. Hence, debates happening during these times are unfortunately hardly covered in our analysis. The light grey dots in the lower panel of Figure 2.3 represent the raw media salience including days when no interviews took place to capture actual trends in media salience.

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[14]Note that there are seasonal fluctuations with highest concerns in winter. This is in line with research on the seasonality of depression and other negative moods (Harmatz et al., 2000) and could further reflect the yearly summer slump. We control for seasonal effects in our regression models.
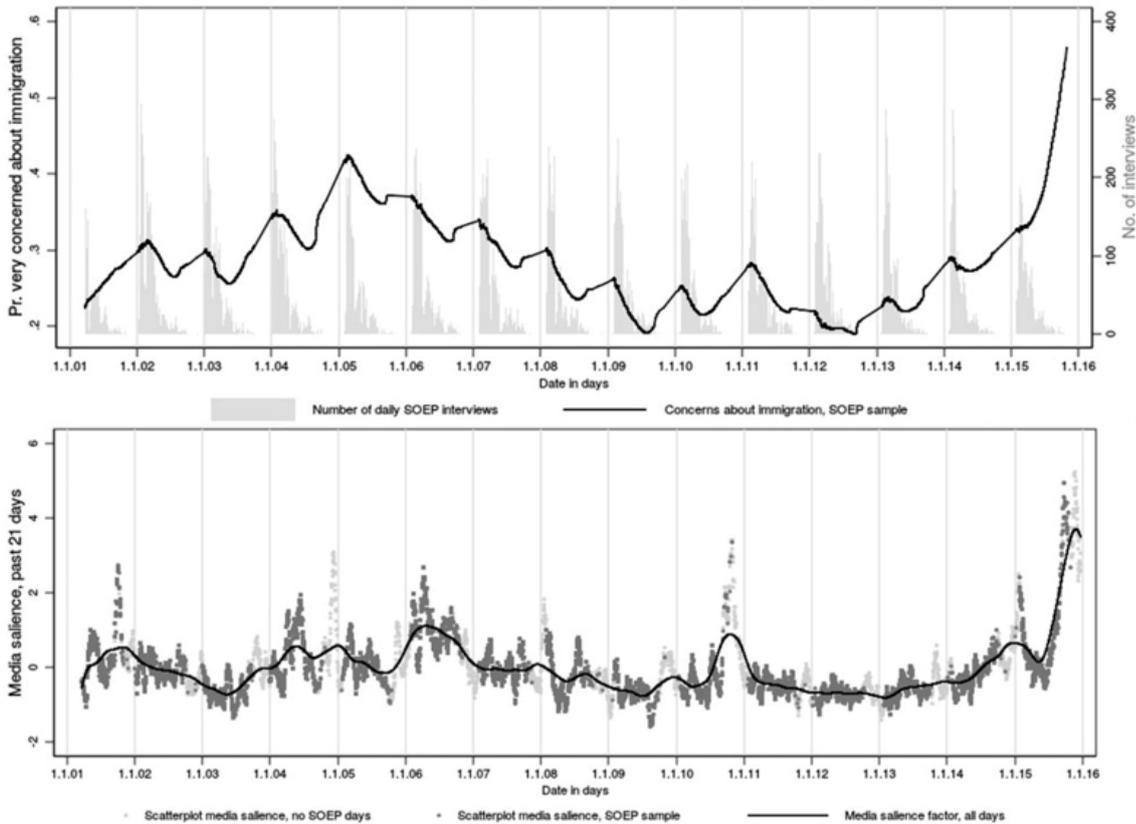
Figure 2.3: Locally weighted regression trends of concerns about immigration (upper panel) and media salience (lower panel), and distribution of GSOEP interviews over time

Note: Trend in lower panel shows the full trend going through all data points, those on which GSOEP interviews took place (and make up the sample of analysis) and those where no GSOEP interview took place.

Media salience effects on concerns about immigration

The association between media salience and worries about immigration in the FE models is substantial. The coefficient of media salience is 0.05 (Table 2.1), implying that a one unit increase of our media salience factor predicts an increase in the probability of being very concerned by 5 percentage points.

Respondents interviewed during periods when media salience was at its 95 per cent quantile value (1.65) have a 12.76 percentage points higher average predicted probability of being very concerned about immigration than those who were interviewed during times where immigration was not a salient issue (5 per cent quantile: -0.92).

In comparison, preferring the conservative Christian Democrats increases this probability by about 3 percentage points (relative to no party preference) and being very concerned about one's own economic situation increases it by about 6 percentage points (relative to not concerned). In addition, monthly immigration rates also have a statistically significant positive association with public concerns.

To give a better interpretability of the results from our first model in Table 2.1, we predict changes in concerns about immigration for changes in media salience related to a selection of important events discussed above. For example, our media salience factor increases by 2.57 units between 9/11 and 21 days after 9/11. This predicts an increase in concerns about immigration of 12.81 percentage points according to our model. Similarly, the Madrid terror attacks lead to an increase of 1.90 units in media salience predicting an increase of 9.44 percentage points in concerns. The publication of Sarazzins book 'Deutschland schafft sich ab', a major event influencing German wide debates on immigration, went along with an increase of media salience of 2.60 units which predicts an increase in concerns of 12.91 percentage points.

Table 2.1: Panel Fixed-Effects Linear Probability Models of effect of media salience on concerns about immigration, and effect heterogeneity by education and party

	Main model	Education interaction	Party preference interaction
Media salience,	0.050***	0.053***	0.052***
past 21 days	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Party preference (ref.: no preference)			
CDU/CSU (Christian	0.027***	0.027***	0.028***
Democrats)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
SPD (Social	-0.007+	-0.007+	-0.007+
Democrats)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Die Grünen	-0.012+	-0.012+	-0.019**
(The Greens)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Die Linke	-0.005	-0.006	-0.007
(The Left)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
FDP (Free	0.019*	0.020*	0.019*
Democrats)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Others	0.015	0.015	0.014
and mixed	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Radical right	0.144***	0.143***	0.143***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Interest in politics (ref.: very strong)			
Strong	-0.020***	-0.020***	-0.020***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Not so strong	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Not at all	-0.025***	-0.025***	-0.025***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Income satisfaction (ref.: low)			
1	-0.012+	-0.012+	-0.012+
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
2	-0.015*	-0.015*	-0.015*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
3	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.021***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
high	-0.020**	-0.020**	-0.021**
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Concerns about German economy (ref.: not concerned)			
Somewhat concerned	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***

Table 2.1 (continued)

	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Very concerned	0.120***	0.119***	0.120***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Concerns about own economic situation (ref.: not concerned)			
Somewhat concerned	0.019***	0.019***	0.019***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Very concerned	0.062***	0.062***	0.062***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Age categories (ref.: <25)			0.000
25-34	-0.001	-0.002	-0.001
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
35-49	-0.009	-0.011	-0.010
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
50-64	-0.014	-0.015	-0.014
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
>65	-0.014	-0.015	-0.015
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Employment status (ref.: not working)			
In training/apprentice	-0.010	-0.009	-0.010
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Registered unemployed	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Pensioner	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Working	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Month of interview (ref.: January)			
Feb.	0.016***	0.016***	0.016***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Mar.	0.017***	0.017***	0.017***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Apr.	0.019***	0.018***	0.019***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
May	0.022***	0.022***	0.023***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Jun.	0.015**	0.015*	0.015**
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Jul.	0.002	0.002	0.003
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Aug.	0.022**	0.022**	0.022**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)

<div align="center">Table 2.1 (continued)</div>

Sep./Oct./Nov.	-0.005	-0.004	-0.004
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Monthly	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
in-migration/1,000	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
(imputed before 2006)			
Education × media salience (ref.: Elementary)			
Secondary I		0.005	
		(0.003)	
Secondary II (FHR)		-0.008	
		(0.006)	
Secondary II (Abitur)		-0.020***	
		(0.004)	
Other degree/no degree		0.000	
		(0.009)	
In school		-0.023**	
		(0.007)	
Party preference × media salience (ref.: Elementary)			
CDU/CSU (Christian			0.008*
Democrats)			(0.003)
SPD (Social			-0.006+
Democrats)			(0.004)
Die Grünen			-0.036***
(The Greens)			(0.006)
Die Linke			-0.012+
(The Left)			(0.007)
FDP (Free			-0.004
Democrats)			(0.010)
Others			-0.005
and mixed			(0.014)
Radical			-0.025+
right			(0.015)
Constant	0.191***	0.191***	0.191***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Number of person-years	190,049	190,049	190,049
Number of persons	25,073	25,073	25,073
Min. no. person-years per person	2	2	2
Max. no. person-years per person	15	15	15

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001 (two-sided tests).

Mind that the substantial association between media salience and worries may partly reflect feedback mechanisms and unmeasured periodic shocks. Mass media may partly respond to changes in attitudes, although scholars have argued that, on average, journalist rarely directly take public opinion into account when evaluating what qualifies as 'news' (Patterson, 2008). We present various additional analyses in an attempt to rule out these alternative explanations in Table 2.5 in the Supplementary appendix. These analyses include measures of aggregate worries, general time trends, or restricting the analysis to certain years. In all cases, the effect remains statistically significant, with a minimum effect size of 0.01.

Who is prone to media-induced concerns?

To investigate the conditionality of the media salience effect, we interact the variable with the share of foreigners on the district level, controlling for all context characteristics discussed above (see Table 2.3 in the Appendix). The emerging pattern depicted in Figure 2.4 clearly supports our reasoning: the marginal effect of media salience (y-axis) gets substantially smaller as the percentage of foreigners in one's district increases. This means the concern increasing effect of media salience is most substantial for inhabitants of areas with a relatively small to medium share of foreigners. Since the ethnic composition of one's district is a rather stable characteristic in our data, the interaction effect is likely primarily due to the within-variation of the media salience variable.

Our results support Information Substitution-Hypothesis, proposing that obtaining information about immigrants from contextual sources prevents fears caused by increasing media attention. One should note, however, that the effect of media salience is still statistically larger than 0 also for individuals living in districts with many foreigners. Hence, it seems that even for those who are used to immigrants in their day
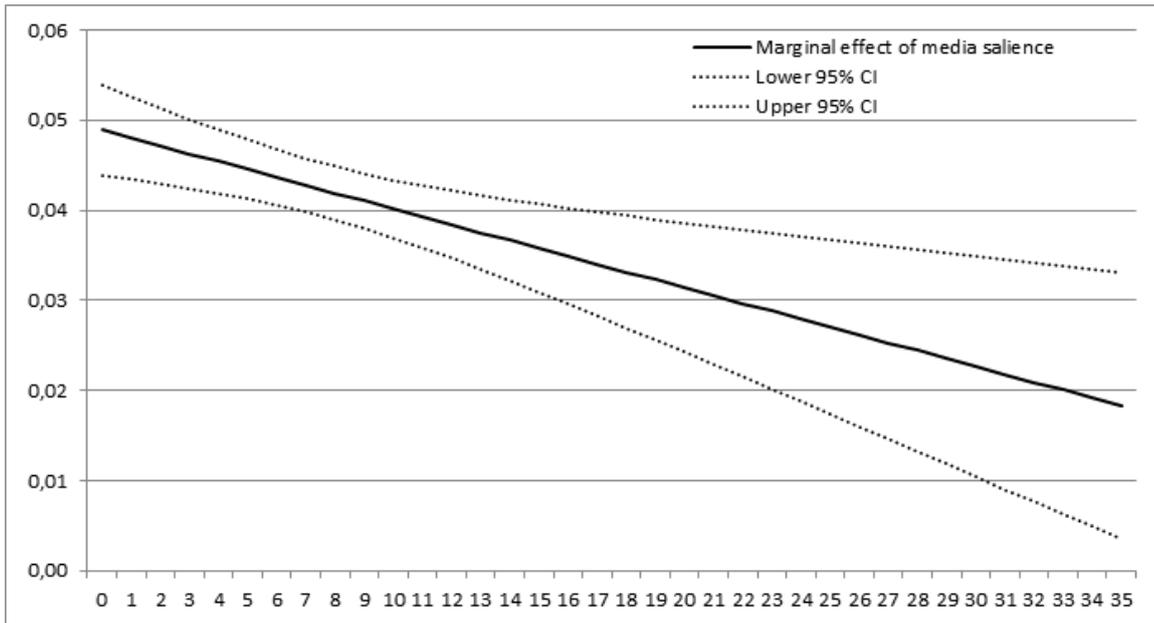
Figure 2.4: Marginal effect of media salience on concerns about immigration conditional on the local share of foreigners, with 95% confidence interval (based on models in Table 2.3 in the Appendix)

to day life, this first-hand information does, on average, not completely substitute the information coming from mass media.

We also hypothesised that the effect of media salience differs with individual characteristics because media information is less important for those holding a more liberal world view or having more political knowledge. The former should apply mainly to natives with a preference for the Green or the Left Party, and the latter to those with higher education.

And indeed, the effect of media salience is substantially lower for natives who favour more liberal parties, as Figure 2.5 indicates (also see Model 2 of Table 2.1). Relative to individuals without party preference, the differences for those adhering to the Social Democrats or the Left party are moderate, but preferring the Green Party is clearly associated with a smaller effect of media salience. In contrast, the media effect is strongest for those preferring the Christian Democrats. This is in line with

our Party-Hypothesis and with previous findings indicating that voters converge to the position of their preferred party when exposed to media information, independent of the toning of this information (Bechtel et al., 2015).[15]
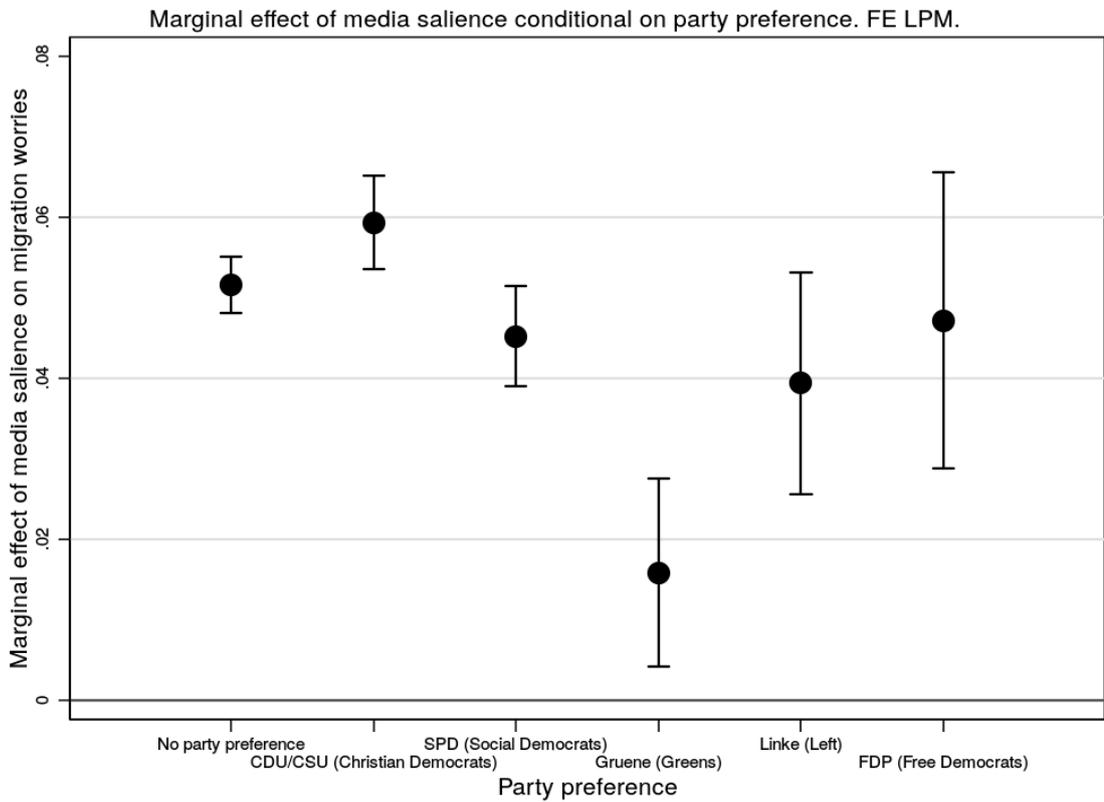
Figure 2.5: Marginal effects of media salience on concerns about immigration conditional on party preference, with 95% confidence intervals (based on model 2 in Table 2.1)

Finally, the effect of media salience on individual concerns primarily holds for respondents with low or medium education, but it is close to 0 for those with higher education, as can be seen in Figure 2.6 (or Model 3 in Table 2.1). This supports our Education-Hypothesis.

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[15]We refrain from making inferences about the interaction between radical right party preference and media salience because the number of observations is too small. The category is hence not included in Figure 2.5 (but it is included in the underlying model).
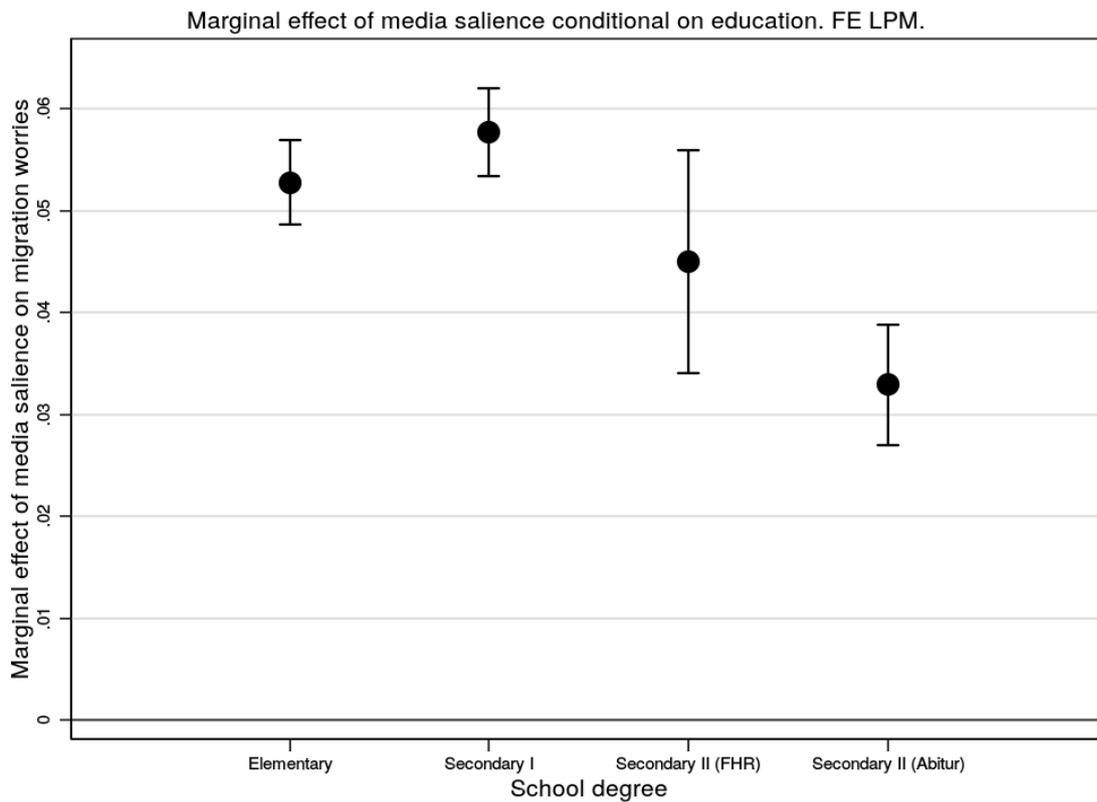
Figure 2.6: Marginal effects of media salience on concerns about immigration condi-
tional on education, with 95% confidence intervals (based on model 3 in
Table 2.1)

Robustness checks

We intensively tested the robustness of our findings. First, we restricted the analysis
to years with similar distributions of media salience to check whether results are
driven by excessively high media salience in single years. Second, we restricted the
sample to oral interviews to ensure that the date of the interview is not biased due
to wrong dates for postal questionnaires. Third, we checked whether our results are
affected by the construction of our media salience measure, generating other versions
based on 7, 14, or 28 days before each interview instead of 21. Fourth, we checked
whether replacing the factor with a weighted count variable changes the results (for

'past 21 days'-treatment: dailies divided by 18, weeklies by 3). Fifth, we ran panel random effects- (RE) and FE-ordered logistic regression models to see whether the regression link function affects results (for results of RE logistic regression model see Figure 2.7). Sixth, we included the moderate left Frankfurter Rundschau to the media salience variable.[16] Finally, we allowed for effect heterogeneity of media salience between years and calculated the average effect over all years. In all cases, the results are similar to the ones of our main analyses.
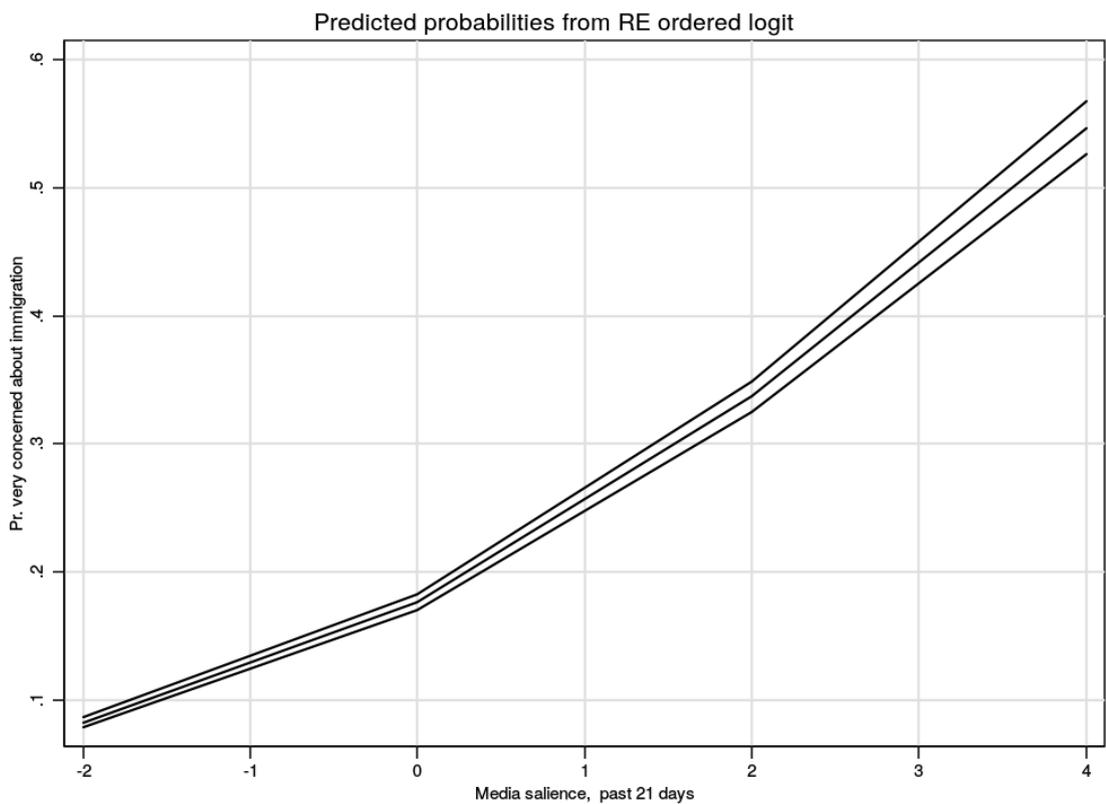
Figure 2.7: Predicted probabilities from a Random-Effects ordered logistic regression. Variables set at means

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[16]We did not include this outlet in our final analysis because data from the Frankfurter Rundschau is only available from 2003 onwards and because its distribution is limited.

2.6 Summary and discussion

Investigating a period of 15 years, we find that public concerns about immigration in Germany vary systematically with the amount of media attention on this issue. The probability of being very concerned about immigration is about 13 percentage points higher when immigration was vividly discussed before an interview compared to times when the issue played a minor role in the press. Moreover, we have shown that media attention varies considerably on a short-term basis. Hence, we suggest that it is very well suited to explain fluctuation in public opinion, adding theoretical and statistical explanatory power beyond general immigration rates.

Deeper analyses reveal that individuals who live in districts with a higher share of ethnic minorities are much less likely to be concerned in times of high media salience. These findings are contrary to the realistic group threat-paradigm according to which feelings of ethnic competition should increase in contexts with high or increasing shares of out-group members, particularly when this out-group is made salient (see Hopkins, 2010). These different findings might be due to the comparatively stable regional share of foreigners within districts in our data, pointing to the importance of familiarisation with ethnic minorities.

Furthermore, the negative impact of media salience diminishes for natives with higher education and those who prefer the Green Party. Hence, it seems that prior knowledge and more stable attitudes as well as a liberal ideology can be effective barriers for such media effects (cf. Bechtel et al., 2015).

We stated that we are interested in analysing a universal effect of general issue salience over a long time span covering various debates. While we stressed our motivation behind this above, it is of course also associated with shortcomings, reflecting a general dilemma between the identification of generalisable, universal effects and an

in-depth understanding and identification of effects of particular discourses.

First, we did not differentiate the toning of our news measure. It is reasonable to assume that negative news have a stronger negative effect than neutral or positive ones. However, recent research on media effects suggest that reports in high-quality print media are actually too balanced to classify as primarily negative or positive (Lawlor, 2015). Hopkins (2010) even argues that one "cannot draw conclusions about whether the tone of coverage matters above and beyond the fact that there is coverage at all" (Hopkins, 2010: 58). Moreover, the fact that we find a statistically significant and robust effect using an undifferentiated measure actually strengthens the general importance of mass media as a determinant of individual concerns about immigration. Put differently, finding an effect of negative news on negative attitudes may also be seen as more trivial.

Second, we also neither differentiate topics nor aspects of our attitudinal outcome. Again, this is also due to data restrictions. But specifying which types of debates (e. g., McLaren et al., 2018) affect which kinds of attitudes (e. g., Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017) would certainly be a promising endeavour for future research.

Moreover, individuals differ in their media consumption habits. Although we understand our media measure as a proxy of both direct individual exposure and the indirect information environments, frequent consumption most probably increases the media effect. Unfortunately, there is no measure of individual media consumption available in the GSOEP.

Finally, we investigated the impact of print media outlets only. First, this misses the dominating medium for political news: TV. Second, with the growing supply of (free) online news, sales of print media are decreasing steadily. Social media are of increasing importance as platforms for political debates. How these developments affect public opinion and the political culture is hardly known yet, although there

are pioneering studies (e. g., Bakshy et al., 2015). The increasing availability and comprehensiveness of media data provides many promising opportunities for more nuanced research regarding the impact of such media in the future.

We see our study as a step towards a more fine-grained, yet generalisable understanding of mass media effects on public opinion. We aimed at developing a nuanced design that extends previous research by drawing on within individual variation and fluctuations in the media on a daily basis. Yet, our observational 'real-world' approach complicates the identification of the causal media effect (see 'Is the effect of media salience causal? Considerations on reverse causality and unmeasured confounding' in the Supplementary appendix). To obtain a picture of the impact of media, our results are, thus, ideally complemented by (quasi-)experiments (e. g., Legewie, 2013; van Klingeren et al., 2017).

While we believe that the general effect of media salience is highly interesting, we certainly do not deny the additional insights a more differentiated media measure could bring. As manual coding with such a large number of articles is impossible, the rapidly growing field of text as data in the information sciences should be of great help here, offering methods like topic modelling or sentiment analysis (similar to, for example, Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017). Such quantitative investigations of the media discourses on immigration over such a long time span, however, would already be a study on its own. Still, adding such information to our approach could lead to further insights and, thus, deepen the understanding of the relationship between mass media and public opinion formation.

2.7 Appendix

Table 2.2: Descriptive statistics of sample of analysis

Continuous variables	Mean	Number of person years
Monthly in-migration/1,000	66.05	190,049
Categorical variables	per cent	
Concerned about immigration		
Not/somewhat concerned	70.79%	134,527
Very concerned	29.21%	55,522
Party preference		
No party preference	54.38%	103,351
CDU/CSU (Christian Democrats)	18.27%	34,730
SPD (Social Democrats)	16.05%	30,509
Die Grünen (The Greens)	4.80%	9,117
Die Linke (The Left)	3.09%	5,876
FDP (Free Democrats)	1.77%	3,355
Others and mixed	0.92%	1,755
Radical right	0.71%	1,356
Interest in politics		
Very strong	7.64%	14,518
Strong	31.15%	59,209
Not so strong	48.52%	92,208
Not at all	12.69%	24,114
Household income satisfaction		
low	3.25%	6,171
	9.41%	17,893
	21.74%	41,309
	32.01%	60,831
high	33.59%	63,845
Concerns general economic development		
Not concerned	10.96%	20,832
Somewhat concerned	54.31%	103,218
Very concerned	34.73%	65,999
Concerns own economic situation		
Not concerned	27.70%	52,641
Somewhat concerned	51.73%	98,304
Very concerned	20.58%	39,104
Age		
<25	7.61%	14,463

<div align="center"><i>Table 2.2 (continued)</i></div>

25-34	12.83%	24,382
35-49	29.55%	56,152
50-64	25.33%	48,147
>65	24.68%	46,905
Employment status		
Not working	5.84%	11,103
In training/apprentice	5.70%	10,825
Registered unemployed	5.43%	10,315
Pensioner	27.99%	53,196
Working	55.04%	104,610
Month of interview		
Jan.	7.27%	13,821
Feb.	33.10%	62,908
Mar.	27.64%	52,531
Apr.	14.54%	27,639
May	7.39%	14,048
Jun.	4.38%	8,325
Jul.	3.06%	5,809
Aug.	1.73%	3,279
Sep./Oct./Nov.	0.89%	1,689
State of Residence		
Schleswig-Holstein	3.06%	5,825
Hamburg	1.49%	2,833
Lower Saxony	9.18%	17,447
Bremen	0.59%	1,119
North-Rhine-Westfalia	19.18%	36,445
Hessen	5.85%	11,126
Rheinland-Pfalz	4.61%	8,753
Baden-Wuerttemberg	9.77%	18,573
Bavaria	13.44%	25,541
Saarland	1.17%	2,221
Berlin	3.85%	7,315
Brandenburg	5.31%	10,086
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	2.82%	5,355
Saxony	8.97%	17,040
Saxony-Anhalt	5.21%	9,906
Thuringia	5.51%	10,464
Survey year		
2001	3.64%	6,921
2002	7.72%	14,673
2003	7.72%	14,669

Table 2.2 (continued)

2004	7.54%	14,327
2005	7.21%	13,696
2006	7.61%	14,471
2007	7.42%	14,106
2008	7.04%	13,384
2009	6.58%	12,514
2010	6.02%	11,444
2011	6.30%	11,977
2012	6.67%	12,678
2013	6.56%	12,466
2014	6.22%	11,812
2015	5.74%	10,911
N	190,049	

Table 2.3: Moderating effects of district level share of foreigners

Variable	FE-LPM	FE-LPM with time stable contextual covariates	FE-LPM with categorical share foreigners
Share foreigners	0.011***		
Media salience, past 21 days	0.049***	0.058***	0.049***
Share foreigners × media salience	-0.001**		
Share foreigners 2001 × media salience		-0.001***	
Share foreigners (categorical) (ref.: 02% − 02%)			
over 02% − 06%			0.015
over 06% − 10%			0.027*
over 10% − 15%			0.033*
over 15% − 35%			0.035*
Share foreigners (cat.) × media salience (ref.: 00% − 02%)			
over 02% − 06%			-0.005
over 06% − 10%			-0.001
over 10% − 15%			-0.012**
over 15% − 35%			-0.020***
Contextual controls			
Unemployment rate	0.005***		0.005***
Vocational training positions	-0.002***		-0.002***
Number of students	-0.000		-0.000
Av. household income	0.000***		0.000**
Population density	0.000		0.000
Constant	0.127*	0.191***	0.183***
Number of person-years	166,399	166,399	166,399
Number of persons	22,487	22,487	22,487
Min. no. person-years per person	2	2	2
Max. no. person-years per person	15	15	15

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001 (two-sided tests).
Results from FE LPMs. All models control for the full set of individuals level covariates (not shown), plus additional district level controls (unemployment rate, training positions, number of students, average household income, population density). Sample is restricted to those who had no changes in district over time to rule out individual selection into contexts. Complete table available upon request.

2.8 Supplementary appendix

What does our outcome measure?

In line with usual findings from the literature on attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, our measure is highly associated with education, party preference, and political ideology as Table 2.4 shows. This favours the argument that GSOEP respondents interpret this item similar to other items on attitudes towards immigration and relate the question to negative consequences of immigration.

Is the effect of media salience causal? Considerations on reverse causality and unmeasured confounding

Our design assumes no effects of aggregate concerns in the population on media salience and that the effects of external events are mediated through mass media. If we do not allow for these assumptions, however, causal inference is complicated by two interrelated issues: feedback between aggregate concerns and media salience and unmeasured period effects.

Feedback mechanisms are present if the media increases aggregate public concerns, which, in turn, fuels interest in migration related topics, which then prompts journalists to write even more about the topic. Aggregate concerns sometimes even may precede media reports. If aggregate concerns also affect individual concerns, e. g. through social networks, they may confound our relationship of interest. In other words, it is hard to separate the effects of media salience and the aggregate mood in the population on individual concerns if these factors themselves correlate. To adjust for potential feedback mechanisms, we include a variable measuring the lagged mean concerns of respondents, covering the period of 42 to 22 days before each inter-

Table 2.4: Mean values of various correlates of migration attitudes for original three valued ordinal item and the dichotomous operationalization

Correlates of migration attitudes	Mean migration concerns ordinal	Mean migration concerns dichotomous
School degree		
Elementary	2.188	0.360
Secondary I	2.090	0.317
Secondary II (FHR)	1.856	0.204
Secondary II (Abitur)	1.683	0.142
Other degree/no degree	2.089	0.342
In school	1.788	0.199
Total	2.031	0.292
Party preference		
No party preference	2.077	0.310
CDU/CSU (Christian Democrats)	2.126	0.329
SPD (Social Democrats)	1.943	0.24
Die Grünen (The Greens)	1.456	0.07
Die Linke (The Left)	1.928	0.267
FDP (Free Democrats)	1.916	0.259
Others and mixed	1.952	0.288
Radical right	2.786	0.824
Total	2.031	0.292
Political left-right self-placement		
0 (very left)	1.949	0.288
1	1.843	0.232
2	1.803	0.205
3	1.821	0.202
4	1.887	0.224
5	2.120	0.334
6	2.117	0.332
7	2.263	0.433
8	2.424	0.523
9	2.573	0.637
10 (very right)	2.572	0.650
Total	2.058	0.313

view in Model 1 in Table 2.5. The coefficient of the LPM is clearly reduced but still substantial at 0.02.

As an additional analysis, we restrict the sample to years with no large fluctuations in media salience. The assumption behind this analysis is that feedback mechanisms between public opinion and media reports are mainly present in those debates which result in peaks in salience. In those years where there were no peaks in media salience we assume that there were no major reinforcing mechanisms of public opinion on media salience, or at least they were quite small. In addition, this restriction ensures that we compare years which are more similar in terms of media salience. The results are shown in Table 2.6. We find that such restrictions do not change our overall conclusions.

The second causal issue is that external events are assumed to have no direct additional influence on individual concerns given media salience and conditional on the variables in our model. We think this assumption is reasonable because most of the topics discussed among the public do not fall out of thin air due to some event which is not visible in media reports. Rather the issues are present in people's minds because the media reported about them in the first place.

These period events might, however, confound the relationship if their effects on individual concerns are not primarily channelled through media reports but for example through private communication or social networks. To account for periodic idiosyncrasies of certain years, we completely net out all variance between years by including year fixed-effects (Model 2) or include a restricted cubic spline specification of the date variable (Model 3). In both models, the effect of media salience remains statistically significant, but the effect size is substantively reduced when year fixed effects are included in Model 2. Year dummies are commonly employed to adjust for unmeasured macro-level trends. By definition, netting out all variance between years

adjusts for everything that could possibly confound the relationship between media salience and individual concerns that is related to each year. However, an alternative interpretation of such modelling is that the year dummies capture similarities between individuals within each year which are caused by media salience in this year. In that case, the inclusion of year fixed-effects leads to over-control bias, which results in an underestimation of the 'true' effect of media salience because variation that is actually caused by media salience is partialled out.

Generally, identifying the correct model for the media effect over a range of temporal contexts depends on the assumptions about the theoretical emergence of the media effect: is it the effect of merely the media itself or does it also include the public discussion surrounding it? What exactly one assumes to be part of such a media effect influences the strength of the association between media salience and individual concerns. While we opted for the most general (and arguably easiest to interpret) media effect for our main analyses, we offer some additional, more conservative, specifications in the models presented here. In the end, we believe that what matters is that even under strict conditions, the media salience effect remains statistically and substantively significant.

Table 2.5: Possible adjustment strategies for feedback mechanisms and unmeasured confounding through period effects

	Aggregate concerns	Year dummies	Date splines
Media salience,	0.02***	0.01***	0.02***
past 21 days	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Party preference (ref.: no preference)			
CDU/CSU (Christian	0.03***	0.03***	0.03***
Democrats)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
SPD (Social	-0.01+	-0.01	-0.01
Democrats)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Die Grünen	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
(The Greens)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Die Linke	0.00	-0.00	-0.00
(The Left)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
FDP (Free	0.02*	0.03**	0.02*
Democrats)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Others	0.02	0.02+	0.02+
and mixed	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Radical	0.15***	0.14***	0.14***

Table 2.5 (continued)

right	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Interest in politics (ref.: very strong)			
Strong	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Not so strong	-0.03***	-0.03***	-0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Not at all	-0.03***	-0.03***	-0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Income satisfaction (ref.: low)			
1	-0.00	-0.01+	-0.01+
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
2	-0.01	-0.01*	-0.01*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
3	-0.01*	-0.02**	-0.02**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
high	-0.01*	-0.02**	-0.02**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Concerns about German economy (ref.: not concerned)			
Somewhat	0.03***	0.04***	0.04***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Very	0.11***	0.12***	0.11***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Concerns about own economic situation (ref.: not concerned)			
Somewhat	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Very	0.06***	0.06***	0.06***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age categories (ref.: <25)			
25-34	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
35-49	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
50-64	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
>65	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Employment status (ref.: not working)			
In training /	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
apprentice	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Registered	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
unemployed	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)

Table 2.5 (continued)

Pensioner	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Working	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Month of interview (ref.: January)			
Feb.	0.02*	-0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Mar.	0.02**	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Apr.	0.03***	0.01+	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
May	0.05***	0.01**	0.01+
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Jun.	0.05***	0.01	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Jul.	0.04***	-0.00	-0.01+
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Aug.	0.06***	0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Sep./Oct./Nov.	0.05***	0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Monthly	0.00***	0.00**	0.00***
in-migration/1,000	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
(imputed before 2006)			
Aggregate	0.57***		
concerns	(0.02)		
Survey year (ref.: 2001)			
2002		0.04***	
		(0.01)	
2003		0.00	
		(0.01)	
2004		0.06***	
		(0.01)	
2005		0.13***	
		(0.01)	
2006		0.08***	
		(0.01)	
2007		0.08***	
		(0.01)	
2008		0.04***	
		(0.01)	

	Table 2.5 (continued)		
2009		-0.01+	
		(0.01)	
2010		-0.01	
		(0.01)	
2011		0.03***	
		(0.01)	
2012		-0.02**	
		(0.01)	
2013		0.01	
		(0.01)	
2014		0.06***	
		(0.01)	
2015		0.09***	
		(0.01)	
dateSPL_1			-0.00***
			(0.00)
dateSPL_2			0.00***
			(0.00)
dateSPL_3			-0.01***
			(0.00)
dateSPL_4			0.02***
			(0.00)
dateSPL_5			-0.01***
			(0.00)
dateSPL_6			-0.00*
			(0.00)
dateSPL_7			-0.00
			(0.00)
Constant	0.00	0.18***	0.99***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.21)
Number of person-years	149945	190049	190049
Number of persons	24747	25073	25073

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
Aggregate concerns in model 1 of this table are calculated as mean concerns in period 42 days to 21 days before interview with at least 15 observations (hence the reduced sample size).
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-sided tests).

Table 2.6: Restricting the analysis to subsets of years does not change the results

	Without refugee crisis year 2015	(Excluding years with most salient debates (2004, 06, 10, 15)	Excluding years with most and relatively salient debates (04 to 06, 10, 14, 15)	Low salience years only (2003, 11, 12, 13)	Restrict to years with 6 quantiles of media salience
Media salience,	0.05***	0.06***	0.04***	0.05***	0.04***
past 21 days	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Party preference (ref.: no preference)					
CDU/CSU (Christian	0.03***	0.03***	0.02***	0.02+	0.03***
Democrats)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
SPD (Social	-0.01+	-0.01+	-0.01	-0.00	-0.02**
Democrats)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Die Grünen	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02
(The Greens)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Die Linke	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.03*
(The Left)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
FDP (Free	0.02+	0.02*	0.02	-0.02	0.01
Democrats)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Others	0.02	0.02	0.02+	0.01	0.02
and mixed	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Radical	0.14***	0.13***	0.15***	0.14***	0.16***
right	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Interest in politics (ref.: very strong)					
Strong	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.03***	-0.03**	-0.01+
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Not so strong	-0.02***	-0.03***	-0.04***	-0.03**	-0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Not at all	-0.02***	-0.03***	-0.04***	-0.05***	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Income satisfaction (ref.: low)					
1	-0.01*	-0.02*	-0.01+	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
2	-0.02**	-0.02*	-0.01+	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
3	-0.02***	-0.02**	-0.02*	-0.04*	-0.02+
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
high	-0.02***	-0.02**	-0.02*	-0.03*	-0.02+

Table 2.6 (continued)

	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Concerns about German economy (ref.: not concerned)					
Somewhat	0.04***	0.04***	0.03***	0.04***	0.04***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Very	0.12***	0.12***	0.10***	0.11***	0.14***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Concerns about own economic situation (ref.: not concerned)					
Somewhat	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***	0.01*	0.02***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Very	0.06***	0.06***	0.06***	0.06***	0.07***
concerned	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age categories (ref.: <25)					
25-34	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
35-49	-0.01	0.00	-0.02+	-0.02	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
50-64	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
>65	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Employment status (ref.: not working)					
In training /	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02
apprentice	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Registered	-0.01	-0.01	-0.00	-0.02	-0.01
unemployed	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Pensioner	-0.01+	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Working	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Month of interview (ref.: January)					
Feb.	0.01***	0.03***	-0.00	0.02+	0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Mar.	0.02***	0.03***	0.01	0.03***	0.01*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Apr.	0.02***	0.03***	0.01	0.04***	0.02**
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
May	0.02**	0.03***	0.01	0.05***	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Jun.	0.01	0.02**	-0.00	0.03*	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Jul.	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	0.04**	-0.01

Table 2.6 (continued)

	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Aug.	0.02*	0.03**	0.01	0.05**	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Sep./Oct./Nov.	-0.01	-0.00	-0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Monthly	0.00***	0.00***	-0.00***	-0.00+	0.00***
in-migration/1,000	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
(imputed before					
2006)					
Constant	0.20***	0.19***	0.29***	0.29***	0.19***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Number of person-years	179138	138896	113388	51790	100363
Number of persons	25073	25060	24650	22537	24110

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two-sided tests).

Table 2.7: Regression models of concerns about immigration

	FE linear probability model	FE ordered logit	RE ordered logit
Media salience,	0.050***	0.428***	0.432***
past 21 days	(0.002)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Party preference (ref.: no preference)			
CDU/CSU (Christian	0.027***	0.236***	0.294***
Democrats)	(0.005)	(0.029)	(0.025)
SPD (Social	-0.007	0.006	-0.136***
Democrats)	(0.004)	(0.028)	(0.025)
Die Grünen	-0.012*	-0.205***	-0.919***
(The Greens)	(0.006)	(0.054)	(0.048)
Die Linke	-0.005	-0.013	-0.211***
(The Left)	(0.009)	(0.057)	(0.056)
FDP (Free	0.019*	0.145*	0.043
Democrats)	(0.009)	(0.066)	(0.063)
Others	0.015	0.072	-0.052
and mixed	(0.010)	(0.072)	(0.069)
Radical	0.144***	1.075***	1.861***

Table 2.7 (continued)

right	(0.015)	(0.128)	(0.128)
Interest in politics (ref.: very strong)			
Strong	-0.020***	-0.099**	-0.018
	(0.005)	(0.034)	(0.031)
Not so strong	-0.026***	-0.110**	0.120***
	(0.006)	(0.038)	(0.034)
Not at all	-0.025***	-0.152***	0.153***
	(0.007)	(0.045)	(0.041)
Income satisfaction (ref.: low)			
1	-0.012+	-0.050	-0.096*
	(0.007)	(0.043)	(0.044)
2	-0.015*	-0.049	-0.099*
	(0.007)	(0.044)	(0.044)
3	-0.021**	-0.091*	-0.184***
	(0.007)	(0.045)	(0.046)
high	-0.020**	-0.077+	-0.215***
	(0.008)	(0.046)	(0.047)
Concerns about German economy (ref.: not concerned)			
Somewhat	0.037***	0.612***	0.819***
concerned	(0.003)	(0.026)	(0.027)
Very	0.120***	1.091***	1.437***
concerned	(0.004)	(0.029)	(0.032)
Concerns about own economic situation (ref.: not concerned)			
Somewhat	0.019***	0.270***	0.368***
concerned	(0.003)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Very	0.062***	0.508***	0.700***
concerned	(0.004)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Age categories (ref.: <25)			
25-34	-0.001	-0.155**	-0.063
	(0.008)	(0.052)	(0.045)
35-49	-0.009	-0.323***	0.040
	(0.010)	(0.067)	(0.047)
50-64	-0.014	-0.425***	0.179***
	(0.011)	(0.076)	(0.049)
>65	-0.014	-0.487***	0.250***
	(0.013)	(0.086)	(0.057)
Employment status (ref.: not working)			
In training /	-0.010	-0.027	-0.252***
apprentice	(0.008)	(0.057)	(0.051)
Registered	-0.009	-0.022	0.007
unemployed	(0.007)	(0.048)	(0.044)

Table 2.7 (continued)

Pensioner	-0.009	-0.027	0.139**
	(0.008)	(0.052)	(0.043)
Working	0.001	0.046	-0.021
	(0.006)	(0.039)	(0.033)
Month of interview (ref.: January)			
Feb.	0.016***	0.063*	0.012
	(0.005)	(0.026)	(0.028)
Mar.	0.017***	0.083**	-0.006
	(0.005)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Apr.	0.019***	0.090**	-0.008
	(0.005)	(0.030)	(0.031)
May	0.022***	0.100**	-0.001
	(0.006)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Jun.	0.015*	0.006	-0.091*
	(0.007)	(0.040)	(0.041)
Jul.	0.002	-0.049	-0.152**
	(0.007)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Aug.	0.022*	0.144*	0.010
	(0.009)	(0.057)	(0.056)
Sep./Oct./Nov.	-0.005	-0.035	-0.224**
	(0.011)	(0.080)	(0.073)
Monthly in-migration/1,000 (imputed before 2006)	0.001***	0.007***	0.006***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	0.191***		
	(0.015)		
cut1			
Constant			-0.123
			(0.090)
cut2			
Constant			3.251***
			(0.090)
σ_u^2			
Constant			3.872***
			(0.067)
Number of person-years	190049	209509	190049
Number of persons	25073		

Table 2.7 (continued)

Min. number of person-years per person	2	2
Max. number of person-years per person	15	15

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001 (two-sided tests).
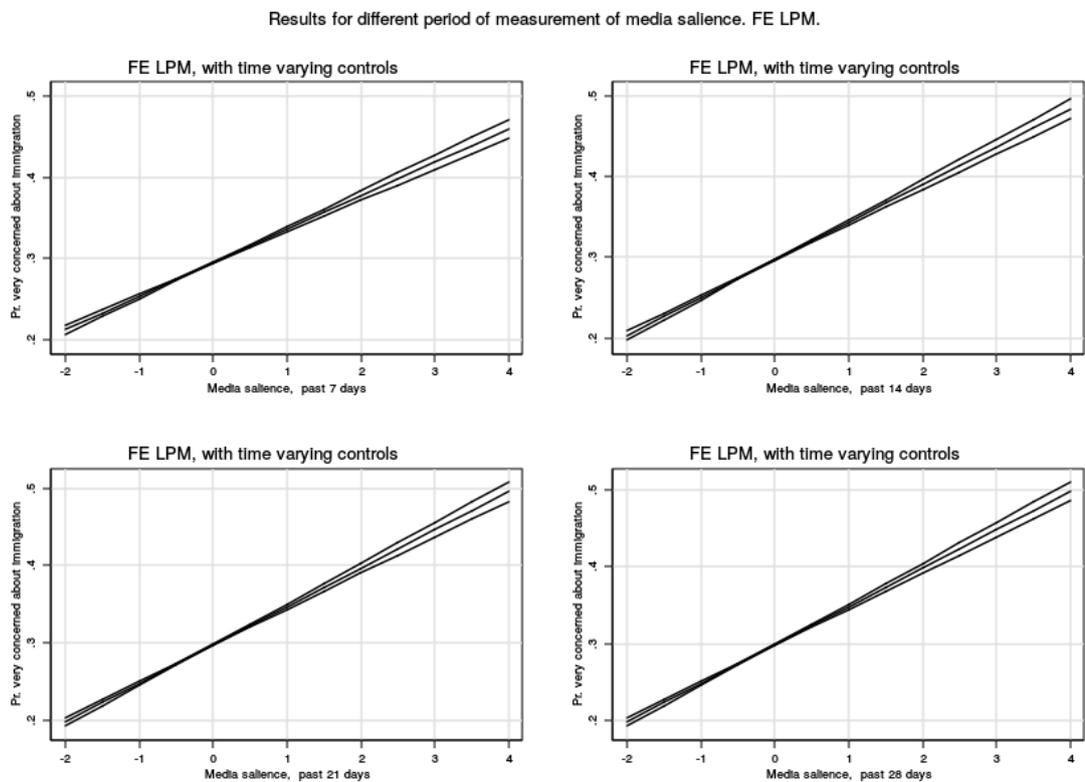
Figure 2.8: Results for different periods of measuring media salience before date of interview

Note: We assessed whether changing the number of days before the individual interviews took place changes our results. The results showed to be very similar for periods of 7 days, 14 days, 21 days and 28 days before the interview.
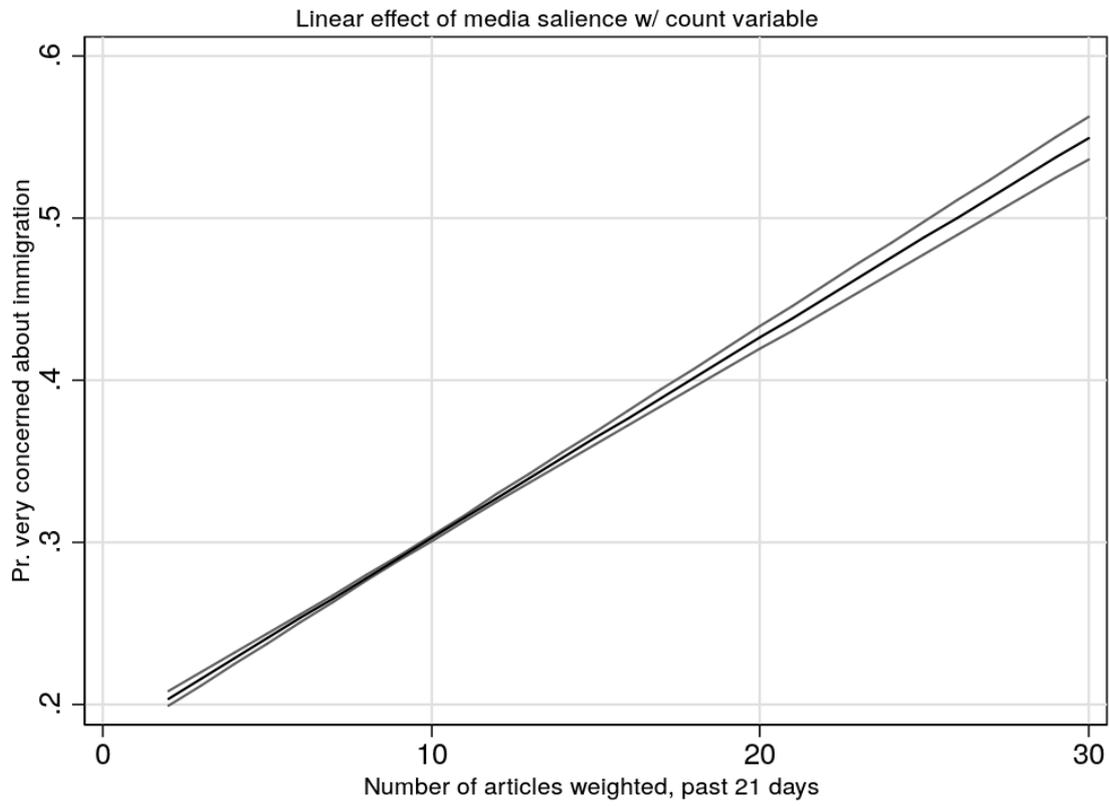
Figure 2.9: Using counts of articles as treatment variable (weighted by days of weekly publication frequency)

3 Propagating ethnic preferences? Political elite discourses and Europeans' openness towards different immigrant groups in the beginning of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'

Abstract: Immigration policies and migrant integration were among the most vividly discussed issues in the parliaments of many EU-countries in recent years. Drawing upon recent developments in social science research emphasising the importance of certain intergroup contexts in particular social spaces, this paper investigates how the toning of political elite discourses are connected to individual attitudes towards Muslim immigrants and other migrant subgroups during this time, arguing that (i) discursive aspects of national politics matter beyond 'objective' circumstances and (ii) such relationships can primarily be found regarding those ethnic groups which were in the centre of debates. Combining the ESS with party manifesto data and other

sources, the findings suggest that, in contrast to most demographic and economic aspects, negative elite discourses are primarily associated with negative attitudes towards Muslim but not towards ethnically similar migrants. Positive discourses, on the other hand, universally correlate with less negative attitudes towards various immigrant groups. Deeper analyses reveal that these relationships vary with certain political characteristics of respondents. Most importantly, differences related to residents' ideology become more pronounced in contexts where political elites are more negative as well as in contexts where they are more positive about immigration related issues. This points to potential boomerang effects for programs of liberal politicians.

3.1 Introduction

In recent years, immigration, asylum and the free movement of persons have increasingly become politicised topics in Western societies (Sides and Citrin, 2007) and the impact of voters' political orientation on immigration attitudes has intensified (Semyonov et al., 2006). As a consequence, debates about immigration seem to polarise the European public and significant anti-immigration discourses and active protests emerged. Recent manifestations of anti-immigration sentiments can be found in the presidential elections in Austria in 2016 and France in 2017 as well as in the Dutch general election in 2017. In all three cases, campaigns were to a large degree centred around national and European immigration and integration policies, and there has been a considerably strong right-wing populist candidate, devoting a large share of her or his campaign to anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism, and national identity arguments. And in all three cases, combined efforts of other participating candidates were necessary to prevent the right-wing populist candidates from winning, increasingly dividing the respective electorate (cf. Harteveld et al., 2017).

These recent examples suggest a strong correlation between public opinion and the discourses articulated by political elites. And indeed, previous studies have found that a more hostile political climate – shaped by political elites – is associated with more negative general attitudes towards immigration and immigrants (e. g., Bohman, 2011; Hjerm, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2008), with the public opinion on national identities (Helbling et al., 2016) and moderates the relationship of immigration attitudes and support for the welfare state (Schmidt and Spies, 2014). However, other studies report no direct correlation between political elite discourses and immigration related attitudes (Bohman and Hjerm, 2016; Careja, 2015). A possible explanation of discrepant findings is that different immigrant groups are associated with different characteristics and different levels (or kinds) of threat (Meuleman et al., 2018; Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017; Meeusen et al., 2017). Perceptions of ethnic groups are crucial for attitude formation (Blumer, 1958) and these perceptions are highly context dependent. Thus, the association between political elite discourses and attitudes should be strongest regarding attitudes towards those groups that are debated as being most threatening in a particular social space (Meuleman et al., 2018). In the setting investigated in this study, this should be the case for attitudes towards Muslim immigrants. This is because Muslim immigration and integration were very visible in many public debates due to an increase in the inflow of individuals from countries characterised by a predominantly Muslim culture and several Islamist terror attacks throughout Europe (see below).

If discourses mainly relate to certain immigrant groups and less to others, intermingling attitudes towards different immigrant groups, as done by previous research, leads to an underestimation of the actual relationship between political elite discourses and public opinion. Moreover, the toning of political debates is crucial for the establishment of boundaries between ethnic groups, an aspect previous quantitative research

has neglected as well. How this relates to different groups, then, also is an open question. I aim at filling these gaps, as I elaborate further below.

Subsequently to investigating the relationship of political elite discourses and attitudes, I test whether this relationship differs with respect to certain political attributes of respondents. It is reasonable to hypothesise variation in this association because individuals are likely to differ in their receptiveness to the arguments of political elites.

3.2 Political elite discourses, ethnic boundaries & out-group-specific threat perceptions

The most prominent approach to explain how social and economic circumstances are related to (negative) immigration attitudes is the group threat-paradigm, according to which exclusionary attitudes stem from the real or perceived threats ethnic out-groups pose to the majority group (Blumer, 1958).

In much of prior cross-national research situations of threat have primarily been operationalised as large out-group sizes or poor economic conditions (for an overview see Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). However, other research has repeatedly shown that natives, on average, have highly biased perceptions of their country's ethnic composition (Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes, 2017; Semyonov et al., 2004) as well as of the composition of the immigrant population (Blinder, 2015). Accordingly, objective circumstances often fail to be reliable predictors of attitudes (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 231). On the other hand, individual (mis-)perceptions of a country's share of immigrants (Hjerm, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2004; Sides and Citrin, 2007) or of national economic conditions (Kuntz et al., 2017) seem to be core drivers of hostility towards immigrants. At least, all of the studies cited above show that the connection between individual perceptions and attitudes is much more evident compared to the

impact of factual numbers.[1] This implies that public debates about immigration are often based on highly subjective arguments.

A central source of subjective arguments are political elites. In his classical paper, Blumer argues that "The collective image of the abstract group grows up not by generalising from experiences gained in close, first-hand contacts but through the transcending characterisations that are made of the group as an entity. Thus, one must seek the central stream of definition in those areas where the *dominant group as such is characterising the subordinate group as such.* This occurs in the 'public arena' wherein the *spokesmen appear as representatives and agents of the dominant group.*" (Blumer, 1958: 6, emphasises added) In line with Blumer's reasoning, much of recent research shows that individuals differentiate between out-groups and that different groups are associated with different attitudes (Meuleman et al., 2018; Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017; Meeusen et al., 2017). When reading Blumer's argument, debates of politicians on the political stage are one of the most obvious examples that come to mind.

Political elites shape national discourses by providing and interpreting information related to certain ethnic groups and articulating certain frames and arguments on the basis of which ethnic groups are evaluated. Discourses, in this understanding, are the sum of interpretations and articulations of political elites participating in certain debates. As such, they are an important part of a country's political climate and have a clearly contextual character. Members of the public may then either be directly exposed to discourses, for example by political news consumption, or indirectly, for example by interpersonal communication or social media (Schmitt-Beck, 2003).[2]

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[1]Xenophobia can of course also distort the lenses through which one perceives her or his ethnic environment.

[2]This corresponds to the idea of an *information environment* a country's residents are exposed to (cf. Czymara and Dochow, 2018; Van Klingeren et al., 2015; Schlueter and Davidov, 2013).

Modelling discourses as a contextual characteristic implies that, first, discourses are more than effects of direct exposure to a certain articulation and, second, they relate to the general public beyond the supporters of particular parties. On the other hand, it is also plausible that, because most parties want to attract a maximum of voters, national political elite discourses at large may follow trends of public opinion in general or that both aspects mutually influence each other. In any case, the connection between both aspects should matter beyond objective economic or demographic circumstances.

There are two main points that follow from this reasoning which I am to address in this paper. First, discourses often relate to specific targets and, thus, individuals should also distinguish between target groups when considering the information underlying such debates (Meuleman et al., 2018; Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017). Put differently, political elite discourses cultivate views on specific ethnic groups of a society. This should lead to stronger correlations between discourses and public opinion for attitudes towards those ethnic groups who are in the focus of the public debates. As I will further elaborate below, in the context I am investigating in this study, this should primarily relate to Muslim immigrants.

Second, the toning of political discourses seems crucial for the direction of associations. Ethnic boundaries are an important prerequisite for negative attitudes. Political elite discourses can either reinforce such boundaries by addressing differences between ethnic groups or mitigate them by emphasising similarities (Bohman, 2011). Hence, negative attitudes should be more prevailing in an environment consisting of many narratives problematising immigration whereas such attitudes should be significantly scarcer in countries characterised by a positive, open immigration discourse (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017).

In a more exploratory manner, I also test for the interplay of both points. This is, do inclusionary political elite discourses relate to different groups of immigrants in the same way as exclusionary political elite discourses?

3.3 Evidence of previous research & contribution

Some existing studies lend support to the argument that the political-ideological climate correlates with general restrictive attitudes. For example, cross-national studies have shown that anti-immigrant sentiments are more present in places with relatively strong extreme right parties (Semyonov et al., 2006; 2008, but see Bohman and Hjerm, 2016). However, as Careja (2015) correctly argues, this approach neglects the importance of those parties that actually make up the lion's share of national parliaments in shaping national immigration discourses.

To address this shortcoming, other studies have drawn upon party manifesto data to capture the overall political climate of countries in a standardised way (see the data section below for a more detailed discussion). Hjerm (2007) finds that, in contrast to any of the macro-level measures of demographic or economic circumstances, a nationalistic political climate correlates with xenophobic attitudes in Europe. Taking up this reasoning, Bohman's (2011) results suggest that it is especially the negative rhetoric of centre right- and left-wing parties that are associated with anti-immigrant attitudes, but neither those from the extreme right nor from the centre. Moreover, the correlations seem to be particularly strong between attitudes of politically left individuals and parties belonging to either the left or the centre (Bohman, 2011). On the other hand, the study of Careja (2015) does not find a direct association of political elite discourses and attitudes but points to a moderating relationship. That is, Individuals exhibiting an immigrant friendly disposition were even more positive

about inter-ethnic marriage in countries with present anti-immigration discourses, but not regarding the expulsion of unemployed immigrants. Hence, while there is some support for the connection between the discursive political climate and public opinion on immigration, this correlation is empirically not always as evident as theoretical reasoning may suggest. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that since both discourses and attitudes are difficult to capture numerically, broader measures might not be ideal to describe actual associations.

The present study adds to the existing literature by testing these relationships in a very interesting setting, namely Europe in the emergence of the so-called Immigration crisis (see below). Moreover, it aims at exceeding prevailing knowledge by employing a more nuanced design, which differentiates toning of discourses and attitudes towards different ethnic groups as well as the interplay of both aspects. This takes into account recent developments in social science research that emphasises the importance of certain intergroup contexts in particular social spaces (Meuleman et al., 2018; Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017; Meeusen et al., 2017).

3.4 The moderating role of individual openness to political messages

Modelling political elite discourses as a contextual characteristic does not mean that associations should be equally strong for everyone living in a certain context. Rather, people differ in their receptiveness of such political information because not everyone is equally aware of the arguments constituting a country's political discourses or willing to incorporate these messages into one's own world view.

First, the relationship between national discourses and individual attitudes should be particularly strong for those *interested in politics.* Existing evidence indicates that those interested in politics are generally more positive towards immigration (Bohman, 2011; Rustenbach, 2010). More importantly for this study, the more a person is politically interested, the more likely she or he is to encounter the arguments political elites put forward in national discourses, for example through the consumption of political news. Hence, the positive effect of political interest should depend on the political elite discourses in a country. Because politically interested individuals are more likely to be aware of political discourses, they should be less (more) negative about immigrants in countries characterised by a more inclusionary (exclusionary) discursive political climate.

Second, *existing beliefs and values* of an individual should moderate the association between political elite rhetoric and attitudes towards immigrants. Depending on one's ideology, Careja (2015) argues that 'if the message is congruent with individuals' existing orientations and opinions, then it is assimilated and used to reinforce them, while a challenging message is rejected or disregarded' (Careja, 2015: 5). Since the political right (left) is associated with less (more) liberal attitudes regarding immigration (de Vries et al., 2013), this means that those adhering to the political right (left) are likely to feel vindicated in contexts where political elites refer to immigration and diversity more negatively (positively) and, hence, the polarisation between both should be more pronounced in contexts where the immigration issue is more politicised (where political elites refer to immigration related issues either more positive or more negative).

3.5 Hypotheses

Statements released by political parties shape the political climate by either reinforcing or mitigating ethnic boundaries (Bohman, 2011). Thus, exclusionary political elite discourse should be associated with more negative attitudes on the individual level whereas inclusionary discourses should correlate with less negative attitudes.

Hypothesis 1 Exclusionary (inclusionary) political elite discourses are associated with more (less) negative attitudes towards immigrants. (Discourses-Hypothesis)

Second, previous research has pointed out that different groups of immigrants are associated with different stereotypes and, ultimately, with different threat perceptions (Meuleman et al., 2018; Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017; Meeusen et al., 2017). To more adequately capture the strength of the association between political elite discourses and attitudes, it is hence important to differentiate attitudes towards different kinds of immigrants. Because the integration of Muslim immigrants was very prominent in the debates during the period of analysis (see below), the relationships hypothesised above should be particularly related to attitudes towards Muslim immigrants.

Hypothesis 2 Political elite discourses are more strongly connected to attitudes towards Muslim immigrants. (Group-Specific Discourses-Hypothesis)

Furthermore, the relationship between discourses and attitudes should vary with certain characteristics of respondents. First, it depends on individual political interest (Bohman, 2011; Rustenbach, 2010). When politicians use many negative (positive) arguments, politically interested citizens should also be more (less) negative towards immigrants.

Hypothesis 3a Those who are politically interested are less (more) open to immigrants relative to those not interested in politics in countries where political elites are more exclusionary (inclusionary). (Political Interest-Hypothesis)

Finally, discourses should mainly resonate with those recipients for whom are congruent with their ideology (Careja, 2015). If there is a symmetry, this should lead to the polarisation between those on the political left and on the right for countries in which political elites address the immigration issue independent of toning.

Hypothesis 3b The difference in attitudes between those adhering to the political right and those on the political left is larger the more political elites in a country are either negative or positive about immigration. (Ideological Polarisation-Hypothesis)

3.6 Data and setting: the European Social Survey & the European immigration discourse

Data on attitudes towards immigrants on the individual level come from the 7th wave of the European Social Survey (ESS7). The fieldwork period of the ESS7 ranged from August 2014 to December 2015, about 75% of all ESS7 interviews were conducted by the end of March 2015.[3]

Although the ESS7 interviews in most cases precede the so-called 'immigration crisis,' immigration and integration were present topics in many countries. This particularly refers to Muslim immigration due to, first, an increase of the European Muslim population (Pew Research Center, 2017), and perhaps more importantly, the different Islamist terror attacks in Europe: the attack on the staff of the satirical newspaper

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[3]http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/deviations_7.html

Charlie Hebdo and the related attack on a Jewish supermarket in January 2015, the attacks on a cultural centre and a Synagogue in Copenhagen in February 2015, and the series of attacks in the inner city of Paris with 130 fatalities in November 2015, as well as the cancellation of a football match between Germany and the Netherlands in Hanover due to terror threat also in November. These events made the political Islam very prominent in European debates and, thus, the relationship between political elite discourses and attitudes towards Muslims should be particularly strong.

For my analysis, I draw upon data from 19 countries, that is, from all countries that participated in the ESS7 except for Lithuania for which there is not sufficient information on control variables available and Israel for which Jewish identity and the immigration of diaspora Jews (see below) is constitutive.

Outcomes: attitudes towards immigrants

I have argued that correlations between political elite discourses and attitudes towards immigrants are likely to differ across out-groups, being especially strong for attitudes towards Muslim immigrants. Fortunately, the ESS7 is well suited for this question because it provides various items measuring attitudes towards immigrants. In total, I investigate four items measuring opposition towards allowing immigrants into one's country.

The item concerning Muslim immigrants is introduced by the sentence "please tell me to what extent you think [country] should allow . . . " followed by " . . . Muslims from other countries to come and live in [country]?" As a comparison group I use the similar item referring to Jews. Because Jewish immigration and integration were less prominent in public debates in Europe during the period of analysis, the associations with political elite discourses should be weaker.

To further corroborate my argument, I also analyse the following two items: "To what extent do you think [country] should allow *people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country]'s people* to come and live here?" and "How about *people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people?*," respectively (emphasises added).[4]

While there may be an overlap in the concept of 'people from a different race or ethnic group' and Muslims, the first is more abstract and also not as directly connected to stereotypes or threatening events as the second. Hence, my argument centres around the item concerning Muslim immigrants. Ethnically similar immigrants, in contrast, should clearly not be the focus of any exclusionary political elite discourses since such discourses by definition refer to immigration from distant cultures. The association between political elite discourses and attitudes should thus be weaker in this case.

Respondents were asked to rate all four items on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 ('Allow many to come and live here') to 4 ('Allow none').[5]

Explanatory variables: political party discourses

Measures of the national political elite discourses on immigration related issues come from the Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR) project (version 2017b).[6] These data are based on quantitative content analyses of party manifestos and capture the proportion of the electoral manifestos which is devoted to certain pre-defined topics (Klingemann et al., 2006), theoretically ranging from 0 percent

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[4] Recent research on the measurement equivalence of these items suggests that they are comparable across countries, allowing to draw valid conclusions (Davidov et al., 2018), with the exception of France, Ireland and Slovenia. Excluding these countries from the analysis has little impact on the estimated effects of this study.

[5] This set also includes an item on 'Gypsies.' However, I did not include this item into the analysis because debates about Sinti und Roma, arguably, are highly unequally distributed across Europe.

[6] https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/

(issue not mentioned in a manifesto) to 100 percent (no other issues mentioned in a manifesto). Since these measures of national political elite discourses are systematically conducted across different countries, they are ideally suited for cross-national comparisons.

Unfortunately, there is no explicit immigration item in the MARPOR data. I hence employ two items dealing with the topics national way of life and multiculturalism as proxies (see Bohman, 2011; Careja, 2015). For each of these two topics there is a positive and a negative formulation. I operationalise a country's political elite discourse with the following procedure: First, I take the four items from the MAR-POR data for each party in a national election (multiculturalism: positive (per601) & negative (per602), national way of life: positive (per607) & negative (per608)) and weight these values with the respective party's vote share in the corresponding election. This accounts for the fact that an argument is likely to be more visible in the national discourse if it's coming from a successful party. In a next step, I generate the country-specific means for each of these four weighted party discourse measures. Finally, I combine these country mean values for all countries by summing them up in the following way:[7]

- Exclusionary discourses = multiculturalism (negative) + national way of life (positive)

- Inclusionary discourses = multiculturalism (positive) + national way of life (negative)

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[7] The correlation between inclusionary and exclusionary party discourse is surprisingly moderate (r=0.36). Hence, it seems not to be the case that some parties become more exclusionary or inclusionary primarily as a reaction to opposing statements of rival parties.

To capture the political elite discourses most directly preceding the measurement of attitudes, I take the values from the elections closest or preceding the ESS7 fieldwork period.

Moderators & controls

Since I am interested in investigating how the association between elite discourse and migration attitudes vary with individual receptiveness, I include two individual-level moderators related to politics: political interest, measured on a 4-point scale (1: 'Very interested' to 4: 'Not at all interested') and self-placement on the left right-scale (0: 'Left', 10: 'Right').

Following previous literature, I account for various confounding factors to avoid spurious relationships. On the country level, I include control variables for the share of the Muslim population (2010 estimates taken from Pew Research Center, 2011, cross-validated with the data from the Association of Religion Data Archives), the share of foreigners (2013) and the national unemployment rate (2014, both taken from the OECD).

To account for confounding composition effects, I control for religious denomination, income satisfaction, education, employment status, age, and gender on the individual level. Contrary to common practice, I follow the recommendation of Sarrasin et al. (2015) and keep individuals with immigration background ("When studying a highly salient societal phenomenon such as immigration, it is crucial to try to include all members of society and to avoid a priori unjustified exclusion" Sarrasin et al., 2015: 273). However, I, of course, also control for immigration background and belonging to an ethnic minority to account for potential differences between natives and immigrants. Moreover, excluding immigrants does not change the results.

Statistical model

Because of the hierarchical data structure, I employ hierarchical linear models (HLMs) to test the hypotheses with individuals being nested in countries.[8] This means that I assume a quasi-metric character of the outcome variables, which is a rather strong assumption for 4-point scale measures. However, the results are very stable regarding different link functions (results available upon request). Because the conclusions do not depend on the link function, I opt for linear models for two reasons: First, they, in contrast to logistic models, allow the comparison of coefficients across different models (cf. Breen et al., 2018), which is crucial for this study. Second, linear models yield far more intuitively interpretable effect sizes.

All continuous explanatory variables are linearly transformed to range from 0 to 1 for easier interpretation. In this way, the estimated coefficients represent the difference between the observed minimum of each variable and the observed maximum. Hence, these effects can be understood as maximum effect sizes, comparing each empirical minimum and maximum. To allow the comparison of the standardised coefficients, all analyses are based on the same sample, using only those respondents who answered all four outcome variables. This is necessary because standardisation is based on sample specific statistics (i. e., empirical minima and maxima). In total, the subsequent analyses are all based on the same 29,652 individuals from 19 countries. I run separate models for each of the four outcomes and both explanatory variables to avoid multicollinearity and to preserve degrees of freedom on the second level. Table 3.1 presents descriptive statistics of all the variables included in the analysis.

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[8]I use the `mixed` command in Stata 13.1 to estimate the models. Final do-files for replication will be made available on my Open Science Foundations profile (https://osf.io/b3ugm/) after publication.

Table 3.1: Descriptives

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Outcomes					
Anti-Muslim	29,652	2.58	0.96	0	4
Anti-Jew	29,652	2.19	0.88	0	4
Anti-different race	29,652	2.37	0.86	0	4
Anti-same race	29,652	2.10	0.81	0	4
Country level variables					
Exclusionary discourse	29,652	0.38	0.28	0	1
Inclusionary discourse	29,652	0.34	0.28	0	1
Share foreigners	29,652	0.39	0.20	0	1
Share Muslims	29,652	0.45	0.33	0	1
Unemployment rate	29,652	0.23	0.20	0	1
Individual level variables					
Left right-scale	29,652	0.50	0.22	0	1
Political interest (ref.: very)					
Quite	29,652	0.41	0.49	0	1
Hardly	29,652	0.32	0.47	0	1
Not at all	29,652	0.14	0.34	0	1
Religious denomination (ref.: none)					
Christian	29,652	0.49	0.50	0	1
Jew	29,652	0.00	0.03	0	1
Muslim	29,652	0.02	0.13	0	1
Other	29,652	0.01	0.08	0	1
Female	29,652	0.51	0.50	0	1
Age	29,652	0.39	0.20	0	1
Migration background	29,652	0.18	0.38	0	1
Immigrant friends (ref.: several)					
A few	29,652	0.37	0.48	0	1
None	29,652	0.50	0.50	0	1
Looking for job	29,652	0.06	0.24	0	1
Education (ref.: high (tertiary))					
Medium (avanced vocational)	29,652	0.14	0.35	0	1
Medium (upper secondary)	29,652	0.36	0.48	0	1
Low (lower Secondary or Less)	29,652	0.26	0.43	0	1
Income satisfaction (ref.: living comfortably)					
Coping	29,652	0.46	0.50	0	1
Difficult	29,652	0.14	0.35	0	1
Very difficult	29,652	0.04	0.19	0	1

3.7 Results

Political elite discourses on immigration and integration related issues generally vary over the different European countries, as Figure 3.1 shows. First, political elites of the Scandinavian countries seem to be very positive and not very negative on such topics while the opposite seems to be true for Hungary. Second, there are also differences in the overall prominence of these issues in national political debates. For example, in Portugal and Spain, these topics seem not to be discussed much in either a positive or a negative manner. In contrast, immigration and integration seem to be much more politicised on the level of political elites in Denmark and Austria, since both positive and negative statements are highly visible in these countries.
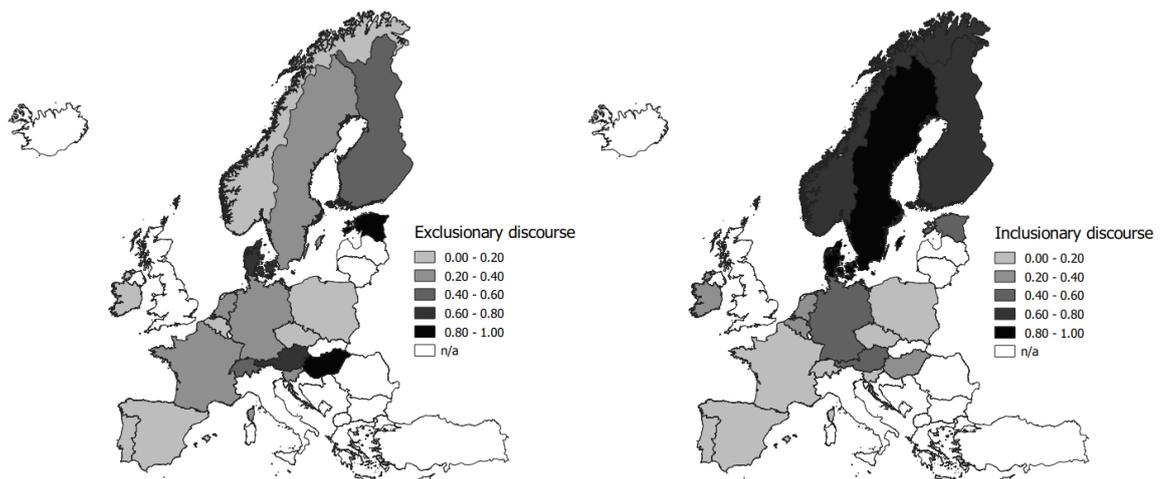
Figure 3.1: Distributions of exclusionary & inclusionary political elite discourses in European countries

How this relates to differences in public opinion on different immigrant groups can be seen in Figure 3.2, which presents the bivariate relationships between attitudes towards Muslim and Jewish immigrants (country means), respectively, and the two macro-level discourse variables.

Although there is dispersion in all cases, the grey regression lines indicate a positive relationship between exclusionary discourse and attitudes towards both out-groups, although the correlation is only moderate for attitudes toward Muslim immigrants (r=0.24) and very weak for attitudes towards Jewish immigrants ($r = 0.07$). In Hungary and Estonia, politicians seem, on average, to be very nationalistic and negative about multiculturalism which is accompanied by very negative attitudes towards Muslim immigrants. However, according to this measure, politicians in the Czech Republic seem to be less negative while the public opinion on Muslims is very exclusionary. In Denmark and Austria, on the other hand, it seems that politicians are rather negative but the general public is not.
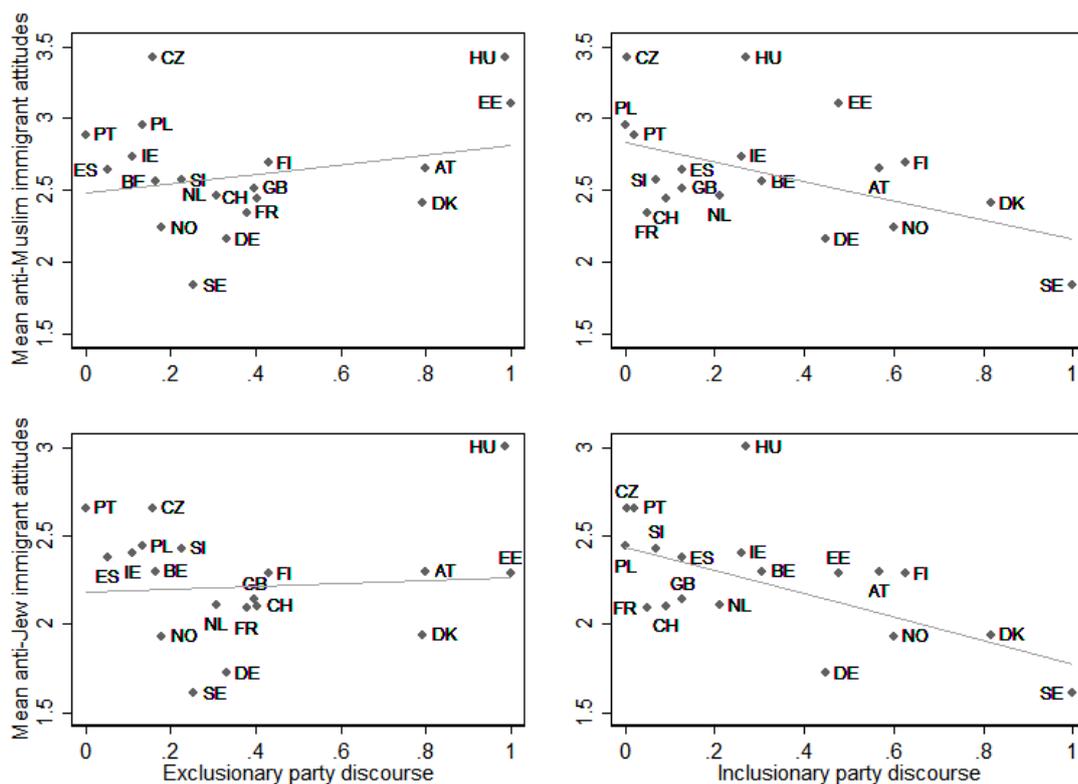
Figure 3.2: Bivariate relationships between macro-discourses and average level of anti-Muslim and Anti-Jewish immigrant attitudes, respectively

Inclusionary discourse is clearly associated with less negative attitudes towards both Muslim and Jewish immigrants (Muslim: r=-0.48, Jewish: r=-0.57). Political elites in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Portugal hardly release positive statements and in these countries the public is also very negative, whereas the opposite is true for Sweden, Denmark or Norway. In fact, there seems to be no clear outlier in the case of inclusionary political elite discourses and attitudes in either case.

A first preliminary conclusion is thus that exclusionary discourses, if anything, primarily relate to salient minorities (Muslims), whereas an inclusionary political environment seems to correlate with less negative attitudes towards various kinds of ethnic out-groups.

To test whether these relationships hold once composition effects and potential macro-level confounders are controlled, I now turn to the multiple multilevel regression models.

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 contain the results of four analyses each, one for each of the dependent attitude outcomes. The models in Table 3.2 investigate the effects of exclusionary party discourses, those in Table 3.3 the effects of inclusionary party discourses. The effects of the control variables are in line with those found in previous research (cf. Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010).

Table 3.2: Effects on exclusionary attitudes towards . . .

	Muslim immigrants	Jewish immigrants	Immigrants of different race	Immigrants of same race
	(EX.Muslim)	(EX.Jew)	(EX.diff. race)	(EX.same race)
Individual level				
LR-scale	0.553***	0.325***	0.513***	0.352***
Political interest (ref.: none)				
very interested	-0.360***	-0.415***	-0.340***	-0.351***
quite interested	-0.275***	-0.297***	-0.281***	-0.267***
hardly interested	-0.140***	-0.150***	-0.158***	-0.143***

Table 3.2 (continued)

Religious denomination (ref.: none)				
Christ	0.042***	-0.007	0.041***	-0.005
Jew	0.186	-0.419***	0.290*	0.100
Muslim	-0.324***	0.109**	-0.076*	0.042
Other	0.013	-0.043	-0.083	-0.033
Female	-0.011	-0.031***	-0.040***	-0.031***
Age	0.666***	0.210***	0.457***	0.260***
Migration background	-0.016	-0.063***	-0.040***	-0.064***
Migrant friends (ref.: many)				
few	0.164***	0.117***	0.143***	0.102***
None	0.378***	0.277***	0.324***	0.235***
Looking for work	-0.022	-0.009	-0.004	-0.011
Education (ref.: high)				
medium high	0.202***	0.140***	0.151***	0.118***
medium low	0.319***	0.274***	0.261***	0.225***
low	0.374***	0.334***	0.306***	0.278***
Income satisfaction (ref.: comfortably)				
Coping	0.120***	0.121***	0.087***	0.107***
Difficult	0.205***	0.212***	0.183***	0.198***
Very difficult	0.386***	0.378***	0.286***	0.320***
Country level				
Exclusionary discourse	0.322*	0.195	0.338*	-0.009
Share foreigners	-0.066	0.049	-0.063	-0.074
Share Muslims	-0.594***	-0.371**	-0.246	-0.134
Unemployment rate	-0.013	0.254	0.007	0.062
Constant	1.831***	1.742***	1.671***	1.720***
Variance components				
Constant	0.034***	0.029***	0.035***	0.026***
Residuals	0.646***	0.606***	0.556***	0.530***
Statistics				
N (countries)	19	19	19	19
n (respondents)	29,652	29,652	29,652	29,652
Log-likelihood	-35,642.23	-34,690.07	-33,416	-32,730.68

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (one-sided tests). All continuous variables are standardized to range from 0 to 1

Table 3.3: Effects on exclusionary attitudes towards ...

	Muslim immigrants	Jewish immigrants	Immigrants of different race	Immigrants of same race
	(IN.Muslim)	(IN.Jew)	(IN.diff. race)	(IN.same race)
Individual level				
(highly similar to effects reported in Table 3.2)				
Country level				
Inclusionary discourse	-0.391**	-0.363**	-0.357*	-0.341**
Share foreigners	-0.155	-0.013	-0.153	-0.094
Share Muslims	-0.570***	-0.344**	-0.226	-0.100
Unemployment rate	-0.353*	-0.001	-0.329	-0.065
Constant	2.185***	2.006***	2.021***	1.850***
Variance components				
Constant	0,030***	0.022***	0.034***	0 .018***
Residuals	0.646***	0.606***	0.556***	0,530***
Statistics				
N (countries)	19	19	19	19
n (respondents)	29,652	29,652	29,652	29,652
Log-likelihood	-35,641.16	-34,687.56	-33,415.70	-32,727.02

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (one-sided tests). All continuous variables are standardized to range from 0 to 1

I first discuss associations for theoretically relevant individual-level variables. Notably, political characteristics play an important role for one's attitudes. Across all models, individual left-right placement and political interest have strong and statistically significant effects ($p < 0.001$). Not surprisingly, respondents who adhere to the political right are more negative towards all four ethnic out-groups. This effect is the second largest of all individual level variables, exceeded only by the age effect. Comparing the most left respondents with the politically most right individuals results in an increase of 0.55 points on the 4-point scale measuring anti-Muslim attitudes

and a 0.51 point increase on the same scale measuring anti-ethnically distinct immigrant attitudes. This implies a difference of almost 60 percent of a standard deviation regarding both attitudes towards Muslims ($SD = 0.97$) and attitudes towards ethnically distinct immigrants ($SD = 0.87$). This relationship is substantively weaker, however, regarding attitudes towards Jewish immigrants (beta=0.33) and those who are ethnically more similar (beta=0.35), with differences between politically most left and most right respondents resulting in a standard deviation difference for Jewish immigrants ($SD = 0.9$) of a 37 percent of and a 43 percent standard deviation difference for ethnically similar immigrants ($SD = 0.83$), respectively.

Second, in line with prior research, the more a respondent is politically interested the less negative she or he is towards any of the investigated out-groups, net of, among other things, education and ideology. Moreover, the differences in attitudes between the different levels of political interest, interestingly, vary little across the four immigrant groups. Regarding all four ethnic out-groups, those very interested in politics score 0.34 to 0.42 points less negative on the 4 point scales compared to those not interested in politics at all, with those who are quite or hardly interested in politics being in between these two categories.

Turning to the country-level variables, it appears that the discourse variables and share of Muslims are the only macro-level predictors which systematically reach statistical significance, although the latter only correlates with attitudes towards Muslims and towards Jews. Figure 3.3 depicts the main effects of the discourse variables on all four attitudinal outcomes, net of the control variables. It is evident that both the content of messages and the object of evaluation are important: controlling for composition effects and macro-level variables, exclusionary discourses are associated with more negative attitudes towards Muslims as well as ethnically distinct immigrants, and to a smaller degree also with negative attitudes towards Jewish immigrants but
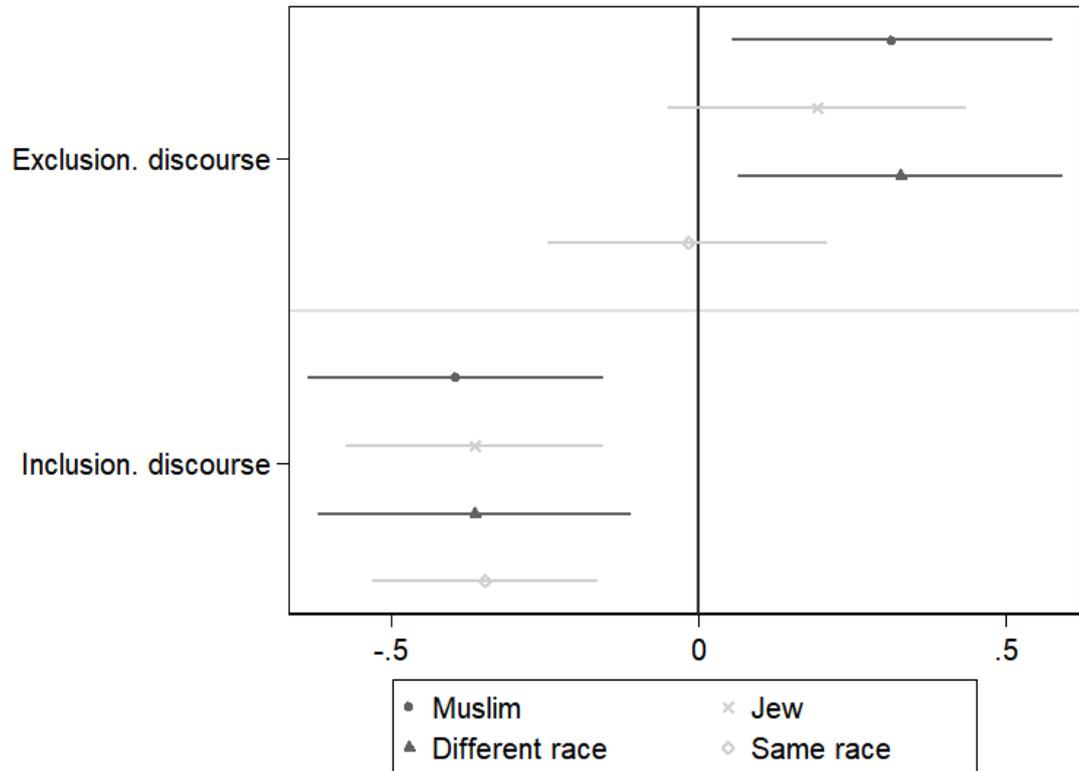
Figure 3.3: Coefficients plot of main effects of political elite discourse variables on four attitudinal outcomes, net of controls

Note: Based on coefficients in Tables 3.2 and 3.3. 95 percent confidence intervals, one sided tests.

the latter effect is not statistically different from zero on the 5 percent level of significance. Moving from the observed minimum of exclusionary discourse to the maximum is associated with an increase of negative attitudes towards Muslims of 0.32 points on the 4-point scale and of attitudes towards ethnically distinct immigrants of 0.34 points. For attitudes towards Muslims this amounts to two thirds of a standard deviations for this towards ethnically distinct immigrants to 38 percent. Compared with other coefficients, these are substantively strong effect resembling roughly the effects of lower education or having no immigrants as friends. However, exclusionary discourses

have virtually zero effect on attitudes towards ethnically similar immigrants. Accordingly, Likelihood-Ratio-Tests reveal that adding the exclusionary discourse variable increases the model fit for the models Ex.Muslim ($p = 0.054$) and Ex.different race ($p = 0.047$) on the 10 percent level of significance but fail to increase the fit of the model Ex.Jew ($p = 0.198$) and clearly of the model Ex.same race ($p = 0.947$). Exclusionary elite discourses, thus, seem to be rather target specific and, in this setting, related especially to Muslim and ethnically distinct immigrants.

Inclusionary political elite discourse, on the other hand, has a statistically significant negative effect on attitudes towards all four immigrant groups. Adding the inclusionary discourse variable to the models increases the model fit in all four cases as the respective Likelihood-Ratio-Tests show ($p < 0.05$ in all four cases). Interestingly, with coefficients ranging between -0.39 and -0.34, the effect of inclusionary discourse is roughly the same size for all four outcomes and also similar to the effects of exclusionary discourse on attitudes towards Muslim or ethnically distinct immigrants. Hence, in contrast to exclusionary discourses, inclusionary discourses seem to universally promote more openness, relating to all different kinds of (potential) immigrants. Referring to the hypotheses specified above, the empirical results lend support to the Group-Specific Discourses-Hypothesis and to the Discourses-Hypothesis.

Because the latest available party manifesto data is not from the election directly preceding the ESS but from the election before the last one in the cases of Belgium and Norway, I re-estimated the models excluding these countries. Note that this reduces the number of observation on the second level to only 17 cases. Excluding these two countries hardly changes the estimated effects. Moreover, the relationships between the discourse variables and the outcomes reported above by and large do not depend on different model specifications regarding the inclusion or exclusion of the macro-level variables.

The subsequent research aim of this study is to investigate whether the associations reported above are stronger for certain parts of the population. To this end, I add two interactions to the model EX.muslim (Table 3.4). For the sake of clarity, I will focus on the relationship between exclusionary and inclusionary party discourses and anti-Muslim attitudes because these attitudes are of theoretical interest and the main effects of both discourse predictors were statistically significant.

Figure 3.4 depicts the marginal effect of political interest on anti-Muslim attitudes for different levels of exclusionary (left panel) and inclusionary (right panel) political elite discourse. The left panel shows that in countries where there are few exclusionary macro-discourses, i. e. where exclusionary discourse is low, respondents with higher levels of political interest exhibit about 0.41 points less negative attitudes towards Muslims compared to those with no political interest (reference group). This is in line with the theoretical expectations, as those who are politically very interested are more likely to perceive that political elites devote little of their campaigns to exclusionary arguments. Hence, these individuals are less likely to think about immigrant groups in a negative way compared to those who are not interested in politics and who thus less likely perceive that political elites are not very exclusionary. Moving to the right on the x-axis, the different levels of political interest converge, with a 0.1 unit decrease in the difference between those very interested in politics and those not interested at all in countries with high levels of exclusionary discourse. This means a 25 percent drop in the difference between the politically very interested and those not interested at all when comparing the empirical minimum with the maximum of exclusionary elite discourse. In these contexts, politically interested individuals are more likely to receive the negative statements of politicians. Politically interested residents are thus somewhat more likely to 'agree' with those not interested in politics in their exclusionist attitude.

Table 3.4: Interaction effects on exclusionary attitudes towards Muslim immigrants

	Exclusionary	Inclusionary	Exclusionary	Inclusionary
Individual level				
LR-scale	0.552***	0.553***	0.497***	0.472***
Political interest (ref.: none)				
very interested	-0.409***	-0.329***	-0.360***	-0.357***
quite interested	-0.314***	-0.233***	-0.276***	-0.274***
hardly interested	-0.159**	-0.110***	-0.140***	-0.139***
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country level				
Discourse	0.245	-0.265*	0.243	-0.517***
Control variables	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discourse × political interest (ref.: none)				
very interested	0.245*	-0.126*		
quite interested	0.112*	-0.156**		
hardly interested	0.061	-0.124*		
Discourse × LR scale		0.151*	0.244***	
Constant	1.858***	2.156***	1.861***	2.226***
Variance components				
Constant	0.034***	0.030***	0.034***	0.030***
Residuals	0.646***	0 .646***	0.646***	0.646***
Statistics				
N (countries)	19	19	19	19
n (respondents)	29,652	29,652	29,652	29,652
Log-likelihood	-35,639.01	-35,637.90	-35640.30	-35635.61

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001 (one-sided tests). All continuous variables are standardized to range from 0 to 1
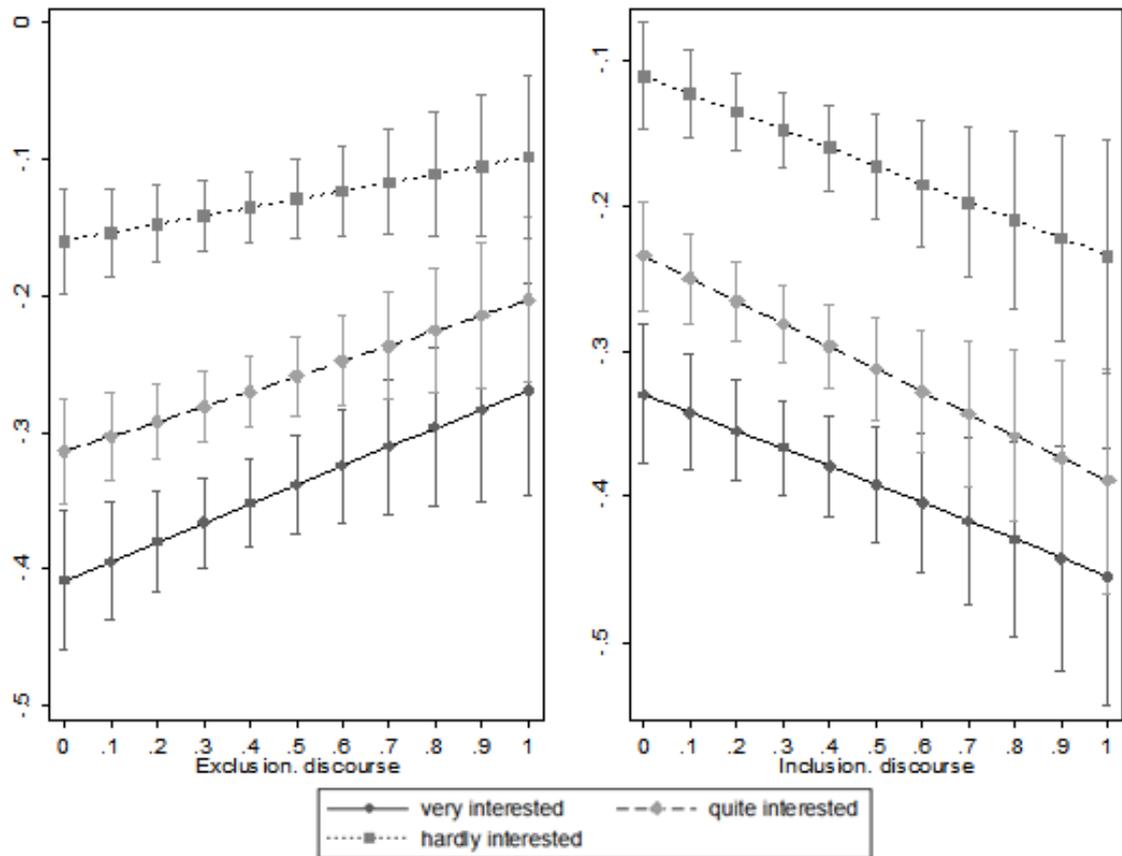
Figure 3.4: Marginal effect of political interest on anti-Muslim immigrant attitudes, conditional on discourse

Note: Reference: not interested at all, based on the model of Table 3.4 (columns 2 and 3). 95 percent confidence intervals, one sided tests.

In line with theoretical considerations, roughly the same – but in opposite direction – applies to the effect of political interested conditional on inclusionary discourse, as the right panel of Figure 3.4 shows. Here, comparing the empirical minimum value of inclusionary discourse with the empirical maximum implies an increase in the marginal effect between those very interested in politics compared to those not interested at all of about 30 percent. Both findings are in line with the Political Interest-Hypothesis.

Turning to the interaction of the LR-scale and political discourses in Figure 3.5, a similar picture emerges for exclusionary discourse (left panel): being politically more right has a lower positive impact on having anti-Muslim attitudes if political elites are less exclusionary than when politicians are more exclusionary.
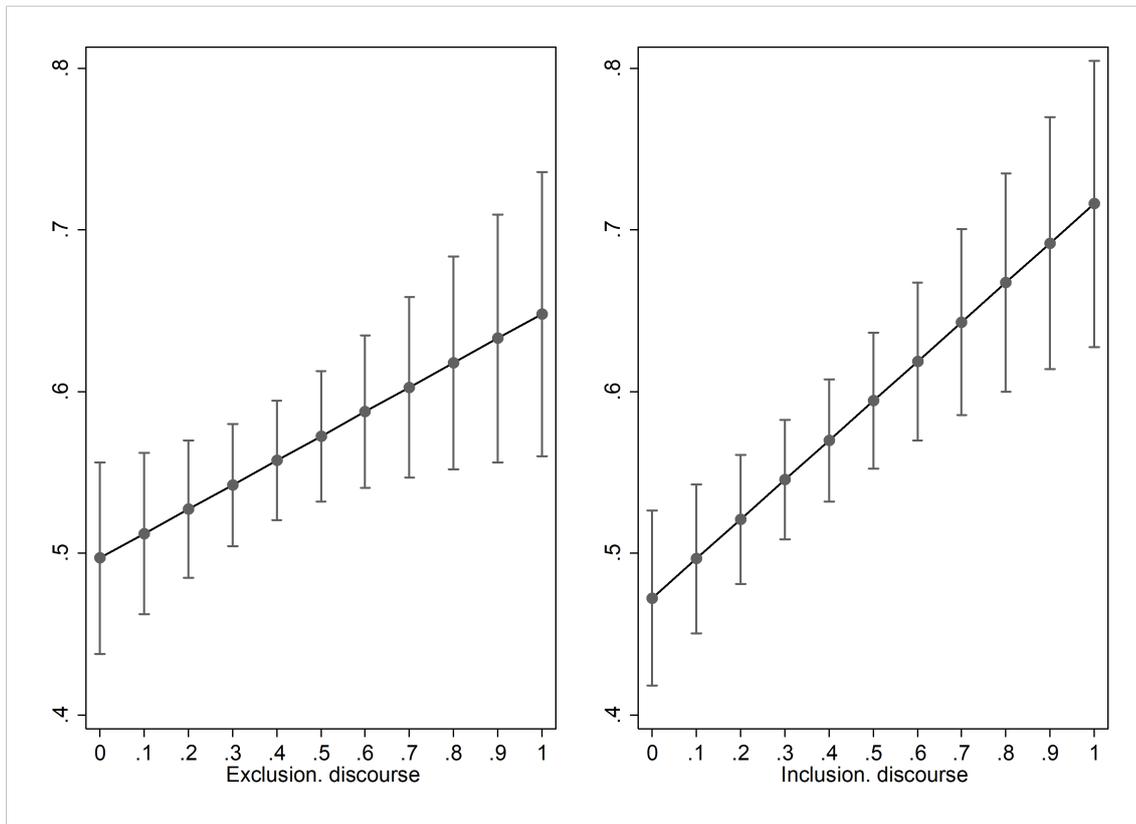
Figure 3.5: Marginal effect of ideology on anti-Muslim immigrant attitudes, conditional on discourse

Note: Higher values imply stronger adherence to the political right ideology, based on the model of Table 3.4 (columns 4 and 5). 95 percent confidence intervals, one sided tests.

The main effect of left right-scale in the fourth column of Table 3.4 indicates that those who are maximum right are 0.5 points more exclusionary towards Muslim immigrants on the 4-point scale compared to those who are maximum left ($p < 0.001$) if

exclusionary discourse is at its empirical minimum. Moving from the empirical minimum to the empirical maximum of exclusionary discourse, this difference between the most right and the most left further increases by 0.15 units ($p < 0.05$).

The right panel of Figure 5 (or the fifth column of Table 4) shows that the same also applies for inclusionary discourse. Here, the difference between the empirical minimum and the maximum value of inclusionary discourse increases the effect of left right-scale of 0.47 ($p < 0.001$) by more than a half (0.24 units, $p < 0.001$). Comparing the left and the right panel of Figure 3.5 reveals that, interestingly, the additional increase of the effect of ideology on exclusionary attitudes towards Muslim immigrants is even greater for inclusionary discourse compared to exclusionary discourse. I will return to this finding in the discussion. Both findings support the Ideological Polarisation-Hypothesis.

3.8 Summary and discussion

Discourses and the rhetoric of political elites resonate with public opinion on ethnic groups. I examined the relationship of the toning of political elite discourses and attitudes towards different immigrant subgroups. Based on Blumer's (1958) group threat-paradigm and recent developments in research on attitudes towards immigrants (Meuleman et al., 2018; Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Meeusen and Jacobs, 2017), I have argued that political elites play a crucial role in shaping the 'public picture' of certain ethnic out-groups. This picture then translates to natives' perceptions of these groups and, ultimately, affects the individual openness towards them. In this way, perceiving out-groups as threatening is affected by the arguments making up the discourses of political elites at a particular point in time.

Because Muslim immigrants have received much attention in public discourses due to several major Islamist terror attacks and other related events taking place during the period of investigation, attitudes towards Muslim immigrants were in the centre of the present analysis. In line with the theoretical expectations, the findings suggest that political elite discourses clearly correlate with individual attitudes. In discursively more exclusionary contexts the public is, on average, more negative towards Muslim and ethnically distant immigrants but not towards ethnically similar ones.

Moreover, the public is less negative when elites are more inclusionary. Interestingly, the empirical evidence suggests that the letter refers to all immigrant groups universally. The associations between attitudes and exclusionary and inclusionary discourses, respectively, are about the same size which contradicts the idea that negative information has a stronger impact than positive information (Soroka, 2006).

I identified two important moderators of this relationship. The effect of political elite discourses especially relates to, first, people who are politically interested. An explanation is that these individuals are more likely to come across the arguments of politicians when consuming political news or engaging in political discussions. Being more aware of these arguments, the politically interested are more negative in countries where elites are more exclusionary and less negative in countries where elites are more inclusionary.

Second, the political elite rhetoric seems to lead to a polarisation of the electorate. The empirical evidence indicates that this holds independently of the toning of the elite discourses. If they use more immigration hostile arguments, individuals adhering to the political right can draw upon the nationalist political party statements which justify and consolidate their existing opinion. The same applies to those adhering to the political left in countries characterised by a more immigration friendly climate on the level of political elites. Interestingly, this relationship is even stronger for

inclusionary discourses compared to exclusionary discourses. A possible solution to this puzzle is related to experimental evidence showing that anti-prejudice messages can increase out-group derogation (Legault et al., 2011). An explanation can be found in psychology's reactance theory according to which, individuals 'rebel' against a perceived marginalisation of their views when exposed to opposing messages (Miron and Brehm, 2006). Many debates about so-called political correctness indicate that those on the political right fear a loss of freedom of expression. Hence, they may perceive their freedom undermined when confronted with a multi-cultural friendly political environment, resulting in a "boomerang attitude change." (Miron and Brehm, 2006: 14) It might be that adherents of the political left are less affected by such boomerang effects. While I can only speculate on this explanation in the current study, it is certainly interesting for further research.

But, of course, this study has its limitations. A core interest was to investigate a setting in which a certain ethnic group is prominent because in such a setting the theoretical argument about group-specific relationships is most plausible (cf. Meuleman et al., 2018). I have argued that, for this study, this is the case for Muslim immigration because different important events related to political Islam took place in Europe during the period of investigation. While I am not aware of any cross-national direct measure of the salience of Muslim immigration in political discourses, assuming this salience seems reasonable. This has the drawback, however, that the investigation is limited to a cross-sectional design because immigration and integration of Muslims were, arguably, less prominent issues during the fieldwork periods of previous waves of the ESS, which complicates the (theoretical) definition of the intergroup context. This is crucial, however, for hypothesising about nuanced forms of (perceived) threat which relate to specific ethnic groups (cf. Meuleman et al., 2018). Even more importantly, previous waves of the ESS (and the next one) do not include

the item on attitudes towards Muslim immigrants or a similar concrete group. But with cross-sectional observational data the identification of causality is complicated.

Theoretically, it is also plausible that political parties aim at maximising their popularity and thus partly pick up the public opinion towards certain out-groups in their argumentation. A relationship of mutual response seems most likely, where both aspects are also affected by certain potentially threatening external events (e. g., Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Legewie, 2013). I hence avoided language that is strongly related to causality.

Apart from these limitations, however, I tried to counter spurious correlations by controlling several potential confounders on the micro- and the macro-level and testing various model specifications. The statistical associations are largely independent of the included controls. This being said, I believe that the present study generates important insights into the relationships between political elite discourses and attitudes towards immigrants.

Another important point is the question whether the manifesto data is a valid measure of political elite discourses at all – and whether one can assume that these are the discourses the people perceive. As other authors have argued before, the statements of party manifestos proxy the positions of politicians belonging to the party and politicians and their arguments often have high visibility in public debates (Helbling et al., 2016: 752). Research on the cross-validation of the party manifesto data and data derived from expert surveys also conclude that both approaches measure party positions similarly (Marks et al., 2007; Netjes and Binnema, 2007), further lending support to the validity of the MARPOR data. I follow previous studies arguing that the national identity and multiculturalism categories I employ for this study capture the overall stance of a party regarding immigration issues (Schmidt and Spies, 2014).

These findings have severe implications for political debates on immigrant integra-

tion. From the perspective of liberal politicians, it is good news that an immigration friendly climate in national parliaments relates to more universal openness on the individual level. This can facilitate the integration of diverse immigrant subgroups. On the other hand, the opposite is also true regarding more immigration hostile countries and particularly attitudes towards Muslim and ethnically distant immigrants. Moreover, evidence suggests that such an immigration friendly political environment on the level of political elites leads to an increased polarisation among the electorate between those adhering to the political left and those adhering to the political right. So politically right voters – who are likely to be more critical towards immigrants in the first place (de Vries et al., 2013) – may become even more negative if political elites are stressing the positive aspects of immigration and multiculturalism. This implies that stressing the benefits of immigration can also have a counterproductive impact for liberal politicians.

4 Refugees unwelcome? Changes in the public acceptance of immigrants and refugees in Germany in the course of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'

With Alexander W. Schmidt-Catran (University of Frankfurt)

Abstract: Based on an innovative design, combining a multi-factorial survey experiment with a longitudinal perspective, we examine changes in the public acceptance of immigrants in Germany from the beginning of the so-called 'migration crisis' to after the sexual assaults of New Year's Eve (NYE) 2015/2016. In contrast to previous studies investigating similar research questions, our approach allows to differentiate changes along various immigrant characteristics. Derived from discussions making up

the German immigration discourse during this time, we expect reduced acceptance especially of those immigrants who were explicitly connected to the salient events, like Muslims and the offenders of NYE. Most strikingly, we find that refugees were generally highly accepted and even more so in the second wave, whereas the acceptance of immigrants from Arab or African countries further decreased. Moreover, female respondents' initial preference for male immigrants disappeared. Contrary to our expectations, we find no changes in the acceptance of Muslims. We conclude that (i) public opinion research is well advised to match the particular political and social context under investigation to a fitting outcome variable to adequately capture the dynamics of anti-immigrant sentiment and that (ii) the vividly discussed upper limits for refugees seem to be contrary to public demands according to our data.

4.1 Introduction

In 2015, Europe experienced a strong increase in immigration and asylum rates, which included a disproportionate high share of young male refugees, many originating from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Connor, 2016). For these immigrants and refugees, Germany was the most popular destination (ibid.). During this time, several violent acts took place which were directly or indirectly connected to Islam or immigration from Africa and the Middle East, including the Islamist attack on the staff of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, the related attack on a Jewish supermarket (January), the fatal attacks on a cultural centre and a Synagogue in Copenhagen in February, a series of attacks in the inner city of Paris with 130 fatalities, as well as the cancelation of a football match between Germany and the Netherlands in Hannover due to terror threat in November. This series of fatal events was followed by dozens of incidents of sexual assault and robbery at the festivities in several German cities on New Year's

Eve (NYE) 2015/2016, where the perpetrators were described to the police as men of 'Arab or North African appearance' (Deutsche Welle, 2016). Many German media reports linked the sexual violence and robbery with the sexual harassment in crowds known from the protests at Cairo's Tahrir Square at the time of the Egyptian revolution (Lutz, 2016). After the event was uncovered, the story went viral and brought into question the heretofore rather liberal German refugee policy (Spiegel Online, 2016).

Such (potentially) threatening events are often linked to the erosion of public acceptance of immigrants by politicians and the media. While this effect is theoretically plausible, the reasoning is often based on anecdotal evidence. Direct scientific investigations of the effects of external events are rather rare. Furthermore, most of the studies which dealt with this question assumed a universal effect shaping attitudes towards all immigrants equally (Hopkins, 2010; Finseraas and Listhaug, 2013; Legewie, 2013). It is reasonable, however, to call this assumption into question (cf. de Rooij et al., 2015). This is because natives generally tend to evaluate different groups of immigrants in different ways (Iyengar et al., 2013; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2015; Bansak et al., 2016). Such differentiation may be even more important for the evaluation of immigrants after an external shock because such events are typically directly linked to stereotypes of specific ethnic groups, as in the case of the events on NYE 2015/2016. We argue that prior research underestimated the effect of such events because it mixed up attitudes towards various immigrant subgroups, even though most of them were not associated with the respective event. Accordingly, the effect of, for example, Islamist terror attacks on general attitudes to immigration found in previous research were modest compared with common expectations and, moreover, statistically significant in only some of the countries investigated (Finseraas et al., 2011; Legewie, 2013) or even in none (Finseraas and Listhaug, 2013). An explana-

tion of this surprising finding is that natives understand immigration not primarily as 'Muslim immigration' and not because the events themselves are negligible. Our study allows differentiating the change in attitudes towards immigrants along various dimensions of immigrant characteristics.

We thus contribute to the literature by providing a more accurate effect of important events and thereby also a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of public opinion towards immigrants in times of social tensions. This has important political implications because, tragically, such events are not unlikely to happen in Europe again in the future. Since public support of immigrants is a crucial prerequisite to successful integration, politicians should react adequately to such events. For example, bans or 'upper limits' for refugees, as repeatedly demanded by many public speakers across Europe during our period of analysis, seem to contradict many natives' preferences according to our data.

We base our analysis on an innovative design which combines a multi-factorial survey experiment with a longitudinal perspective: respondents rated a set of hypothetical immigrant profiles in the beginning of the so-called 'migrant crisis' and again shortly after NYE 2015/2016. We find not only that immigrants were generally rated more negatively in the second wave but also that this negative effect was almost twice as large for migrants originating from the Middle East or Africa compared with those from a European neighbour of Germany. Both areas were at the centre of the German refugee debate in general and of the discussions regarding the assaults on NYE in particular. In contrast, we find that persecuted migrants ('refugees') were accepted even more in the second wave, while changes in attitudes towards Muslim immigrants were not significant. Moreover, we show that female respondents' acceptance of male immigrants diminished over time.

4.2 The impact of external events on migration-related attitudes: theory and evidence

The determinants of migration-related attitudes have been intensively studied by social scientists who have examined the effects of individual attributes as well as contextual characteristics (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). Much of the recent literature indicates that sociotropic and identity-related concerns are more important than self-interest (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014). The lion's share of these studies refer to Blumer's essay on group positions and collective threat perceptions, in which he argues that the dominant group of a society develops ethnic prejudices as a response to concerns about losing privileges to subordinate racial groups. Blumer particularly argues that 'big events' play a crucial role in developing a concept of the racial out-group and are thus fundamental for the emergence of ethnic prejudice. He states: "It is the events seemingly loaded with great collective significance that are the focal points of the public discussion. The definition of these events is chiefly responsible for the development of a racial image and of the sense of group position. When this public discussion takes the form of a denunciation of the subordinate racial group, signifying that it is unfit and a threat, the discussion becomes particularly potent in shaping the sense of social position" (Blumer, 1958: 6). From this sense of group position emerge fears that immigrants "alter the prevailing way of life or the foundation of national identity" (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010: 318). However, previous research has paid only little attention to the effects of such events. There are only a few studies investigating 'big events', often based on natural experiments. These studies exploit the fact that, in some cases, certain tragic events coincide with the field work period of

large-scale survey programmes. For example, Legewie (2013) analyses the data from the European Social Survey (ESS) 2002 and Eurobarometer 2004 and draws upon the exogenous variation caused by the Islamist terror attacks in Bali on 12 October 2002 as well as the Madrid train bombings in March 2004. He finds significant effects in two of nine countries for which the fieldwork period coincided with the terror attack in Bali. Analysis of the Madrid bombings reveal an especially strong effect for Spain itself, suggesting that events closer to home have a larger effect (Legewie, 2013). In a similar vein, Finseraas and Listhaug (2013), relying on the data of the fourth wave of the ESS, find that the Islamist terror attacks in Mumbai 2008 significantly increased fear of terrorism. According to their analysis, however, this fear does neither translate into support for illiberal interrogation techniques nor to more restrictive policy preferences. Moreover, Finseraas et al. (2011) analyse the second wave of the ESS and find that the brutal assassination of the Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh by a radical Islamist in 2004 led to more restrictive policy preferences, although the effect is comparatively small and not significant for all countries, strikingly also not for the Netherlands. Similarly, Smiley et al. (2017) find that the immigration preferences of the residents of Copenhagen area did not differ between those who were surveyed before and those surveyed after the shootings in Copenhagen 2015. However, Hopkins (2010) reports that US Americans in counties which experienced a high inflow of migrants were in fact more negative about immigrants after the 9/11 attacks (Hopkins, 2010: 51 f.).

In sum, the effects of significant events were surprisingly modest in most studies. An explanation for this is that large survey programmes may not be able to sufficiently capture the central aspects of the public debates after such events. Most survey programmes typically ask rather general questions about immigration which are not tailored to specific events, since they are hardly predictable.

Capturing these central aspects seems important, though, because, in Blumer's terms, public speakers define events and develop racial images by highlighting certain related aspects of ethnic out-group members, for example the aspects of origin or gender after NYE (see below). By calling attention to these aspects (and ignoring others), public speakers and the media shape which information is most easily accessible in natives' minds which, in turn, affects the criteria used for evaluating immigrants after these events (Iyengar and Kinder, 2010: 63 ff.).

For example, the ethnic riots in London in 2011 had an effect on prejudice towards Blacks and East European minorities, but not towards Muslims (de Rooij et al., 2015). The authors of this study conclude that "events that are linked *more explicitly to minority groups*" may "increase [. . .] prejudice by heightening perceived threats" (de Rooij et al., 2015: 381, emphasis added). This implies that the effect of destabilising events is likely to decrease natives' acceptance of certain minority groups more than others. We take up this reasoning and put it to the test by making use of intra-individual variation not only between two time points but also regarding the acceptance of different immigrant subgroups.

4.3 Germany's immigration and refugee discourse before and after NYE 2015/16

In 2015, more than 1.3 million asylum seekers first registered in European Union member states, a number more than twice as large as in the year before. More than a third of these refugees applied for asylum in Germany, making it the most popular destination in Europe (Connor, 2016). Thus, Germany by then was one of the key political players in the so-called European 'migrant crisis'. Accordingly, immigration and the admission of refugees had been prominently discussed in Germany during our

time of analysis. Figure 4.1 graphs this quantitatively, depicting the number of daily articles about immigration in three prestigious German online media (Spiegel Online, Welt Online, and Zeit Online), with several million unique visitors per month each.[1] It appears that media debates about immigration were relatively low in general during the first survey wave in April 2015.[2] As the number of immigrants and refugees steadily increased in late summer 2015, shown by the circles, immigration stories about Africa and the Middle East and about Islam came more into focus.

This strong increase in asylum applications was accompanied by fundamental, and partly violent, protests against the German immigration and asylum policy. The most prominent example is the so-called Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (Occident) (PEGIDA) movement. Starting as a weekly protest march in Dresden already in autumn 2014, different branches of PEGIDA formed in various cities in Germany, attracting from a few dozens to several thousands of participants every week. A significant proportion of the German civil society, however, was also characterised by a high degree of openness and willingness to help the newcomers (Knobbe et al., 2015). The German public was therefore strongly divided over the country's immigration policy in general and the question of how to deal with different kinds of (potential) immigrants in particular. As Figure 4.1 indicates, the salience of the immigration issue somewhat abated by the end of 2015. This changed abruptly in the days after NYE 2015/2016 when the circumstances of the assaults were gradually uncovered by the media. Now the attention on immigration from Arabic or (North)African as well as Islam strongly increased. The political right often explicitly framed refugees as being directly dangerous to the native population and harmful to Western values in the aftermath of these events (Meisner and Wischmeyer, 2016;

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[1]Cf. https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/165258/umfrage/reichweite-der-meistbesuchten-nachrichtenwebsites/

[2]Also mind that none of the events mentioned before took place immediately before the first wave.
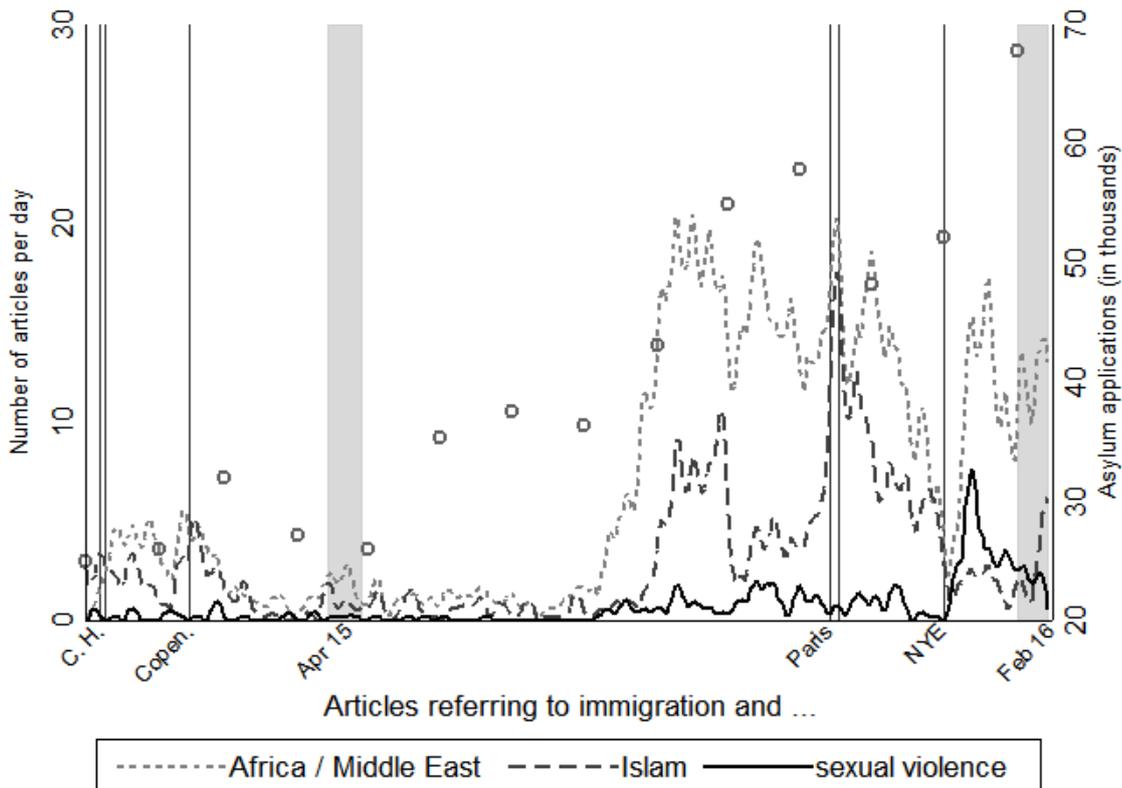
Figure 4.1: Salience of different aspects of the immigration issue in popular German online media over time

Note: based on the number of daily articles from Spiegel Online, Welt Online and Zeit Online (topics not mutually exclusive), source: Nexis (for search string see supplementary appendix C: Search strings for Figure 4.1), grey circles are monthly asylum applications (right axis), grey bars indicate survey waves.
Salient events and attacks: C. H.: Charlie Hebdo & Jewish supermarket (Jan. 15); Copen.: cultural centre and Synagogue in Copenhagen (Feb. 15); Paris: Bataclan and others as well as cancellation of soccer game in Germany (Nov 15); NYE: New Year's Eve 15/16

Weiland, 2016). The assaults also boosted the opposition of the PEGIDA movement, by emphasising the danger of 'Islamisation'. But the events were not only discussed by the far right. For example, Germany's Federal Minister of the Interior at the time referred to the 2015/2016 NYE as a 'turning point' in the German refugee debate, emphasising that newcomers must respect 'our' (so: German) values and culture (Spiegel Online, 2016).[3] Immigrants were hence prominently discussed as emanating *symbolic* threats, harming what is seen as the established norms and values (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 234 ff.).

Finally, Figure 4.1 shows that the previously niche topic of immigration and sexual violence suddenly became important after NYE, as this was exactly what these events were about. This was also addressed by public speakers, especially from the far right, who stressed the 'sexual danger' that the inflow of male migrants from Arab and North African countries would cause (Weiland, 2016). For example, the far right party Pro NRW slandered refugees as 'testosterone-ridden newcomers hunting down young native women' (Meisner and Wischmeyer, 2016). Hence, immigrants were not only discussed as being symbolically threatening but also as threats to the collective as well as to the individual *safety* (de Rooij et al., 2015), the latter especially concerning native women.

4.4 Hypotheses

Several important events took place between our two survey waves: the fatal attacks in the inner city of Paris, the cancellation of a football match in Germany due to terror threat (both in November 2015), and the assaults on NYE 2015/2016 in Germany. This makes the isolation of the effect of a single event impossible with our data.

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[3]All statements translated by the authors.

However, given that all events were part of the broader discourse of the 'migrant crisis', we think that the effects of the later events are *generally* not independent of the previous ones. This is because these events all happened in relatively short time, and they share a common core – they were all connected to the inflow of refugees by many public speakers. Thus, we assume that the effect of an event carries over and gets, at least partly, reactivated with each new event. This means that the effect of the most recent event of our analysis may cumulatively include parts of the events before. Since our survey was carried out in Germany, where the most recent prominent event in this chronology happened (the assaults on NYE 2015/2016), we hypothesise that general public acceptance of immigrants significantly decreased in the second wave of our survey because the events increased both safety and symbolic threat perceptions (de Rooij et al., 2015).

Hypothesis 1 Immigrants are less accepted after NYE, irrespective of their characteristics. (General Threat-Hypothesis)

As discussed, the NYE assaults were clearly linked to the inflow of *male* refugees coming from *North African* and Arab – and predominantly *Muslim* – countries by many public speakers. This may create, or reinforce, a 'racial image' (Blumer, 1958) of particular out-groups. The potential economic burdens of migration, on the other hand, were addressed to a much lesser extent after the events, and we therefore expect the evaluation of economic characteristics to be unaffected by the events. Symbolic and safety threats should therefore be primarily connected to those immigrant characteristics which were associated with the perpetrators of these events by political and public speakers:

Hypothesis 2 A negative change in public acceptance of immigrants after NYE
2015/2016 depends especially on three factors: their country of origin, being
Muslim, and being male. (Specific Threat-Hypothesis)

Deriving a hypothesis regarding changes in the acceptance of refugees between both
waves is less clear. On the one hand, many public speakers linked the events in
general, and the assaults of NYE in particular, directly to the inflow of refugees,
as discussed above. Moreover, evidence indicates that respondents who primarily
have asylum seekers in mind when thinking about 'immigrants' tend to be more
restrictionist (Blinder, 2015). On the other hand, several studies found that people
were more positive towards immigrants if the reasons of forced migration, such as
repression or persecution, were made explicit or emphasised (Newman et al., 2013;
Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2015; Bansak et al., 2016). With rising refugee rates, the
media also increasingly focused on the war in Syria, other humanitarian crises in the
refugees' countries of origin, and the dramatically large number of migrants who died
trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Such shocking information may also increase
natives' readiness to help.

Our study is the first to test whether the perceived threat caused by external events
outperforms the humanitarian concerns which generally determine attitudes towards
persecuted immigrants. Since both effects are plausible, we formulate two competing
hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a Immigrants who want to enter Germany because they are fleeing from
persecution are *less* accepted in the second than in the first wave. (Refugee
Threat-Hypothesis)

Hypothesis 3b Immigrants who want to enter Germany because they are fleeing
from persecution are *more* accepted in the second than in the first wave. (Humanitarian Needs-Hypothesis)

Finally, as the most recent event under study was mainly about sexual assaults against
women, we also test whether the event affected male and female respondents differently, hypothesising that sexual threat perceptions are stronger for female than for
male respondents (cf. Navarrete et al., 2010). Female respondents should thus be
more concerned about *individual* safety threats compared to males.

Hypothesis 4 The negative change in the acceptance of immigrants who are male or
Muslim or from Arab or North African countries is stronger for female than for
male respondents. (Sexual Threat-Hypothesis)

In an innovative and unique design, we combine the analysis of external events (as
in Hopkins, 2010; Finseraas and Listhaug, 2013; Legewie, 2013) with the strengths
of multi-factorial survey experiments (as in Iyengar et al., 2013; Hainmueller and
Hopkins, 2015; Bansak et al., 2016) relying on intra-individual variation over time to
test these hypotheses.

4.5 Research design, data, and method

Our data come from a two-wave panel survey of a convenience online pool administered through the SoSci-Panel.[4] Initially, 4,991 individuals were invited of which
1,352 participated in the first wave and 738 again in wave 2. The drop-out rate hence
amounts to 45.41 per cent. We tested for selection into the second wave by using a
logistic regression, where drop-out after wave 1 was regressed on the mean rating of

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[4]Data and do-files for replication are available under the following link:
http://dx.doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/VEQRH.

each respondent across all immigrant profiles *in wave 1*[5] as well as on a large number of covariates.[6] Neither a single variable nor the complete model was significant [Likelihood-Ratio-test (LR-test): χ^2 (df = 12) = 18.45, P = 0.103]. Thus, there is no evidence indicating that unit non-response was selective.

Outcome: acceptance of immigrants

Respondents were asked to rate their willingness to give various fictive immigrant profiles the right to live in Germany on a seven-point Likert scale.[7]

Figure 4.2 presents the distributions of the dependent variable separately for both waves, showing that acceptance of immigrants somewhat declined between both waves, from an average value of 5.12 in Wave 1 to 4.88 in Wave 2. Public opinion thus seems to have shifted during this time, and we will dissect these changes in our analysis below.

Treatments: immigrant characteristics

Each immigrant profile consists of the six attributes: gender, country of origin, reason for migrating, qualification, language skills, and religious denomination. Table 4.1 presents all six characteristics with their values. Qualification and language skills are, at least partly, indicators of economic characteristics, while country of origin and reli-

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[5]The mean ratings of our outcome (the right to live in Germany) in the pre-event survey was 5.12 for those who did not drop out after the first wave and 5.24 for those who did. A simple mean comparison already indicates that the difference between both groups is not significantly different from zero at the 5 per cent level.

[6]The other covariates include gender, education, employment status, religious denomination, having migrant friends, and coming from East Germany.

[7]Respondents were also asked to rate the immigrant profiles with respect to the right to work and the right to receive social benefits in Germany. In this paper, we analyse only respondents' ratings of the right to live in Germany because firstly, results are generally quite similar for each of the three ratings with respect to our event treatment and, secondly, given the interest in the effect of the assaults, we theoretically expect this to affect primarily the general right to enter the country and not particularly the rights to work or receive benefits in Germany.
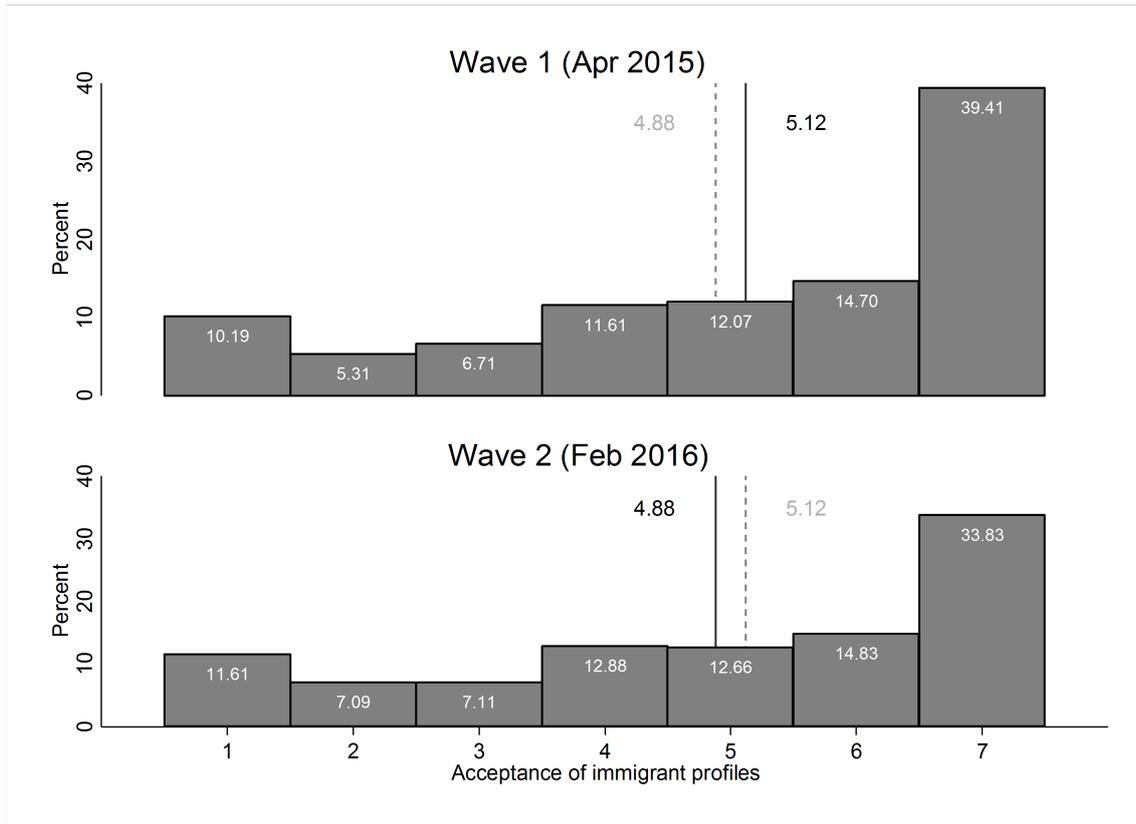
Figure 4.2: Distribution of dependent variable (in percent)

Note: vertical lines indicate mean values in the first and second wave

gious denomination indicate cultural distance. The reason for migrating was included to test whether respondents differentiated between those who came as refugees, i.e. fleeing from political persecution, and those who came for economic reasons. We included three countries of origin: Lebanon, Kenya, and France. While the latter is culturally similar to Germany, Lebanon, and Kenya represent one country from the Middle East and one from Africa, two culturally more distant areas. These particular countries were chosen because they were not in the centre of public debates and therefore not confounded with specific aspects like war. Furthermore, they have religiously mixed populations, making the different combinations of countries and re-

Table 4.1: Immigrant profile characteristics

Attributes	Values
Gender	(1) Female
	(2) Male
Reason for immigration	(1) Prospective job in Germany
	(2) Better live, no prospective job
	(3) Political persecution
Country of origin	(1) France
	(2) Lebanon
	(3) Kenya
Qualification	(1) Low ('low qualification')
	(2) High ('university degree')
Language skills	(1) Bad
	(2) Good
Religious denomination	(1) No religion
	(2) Christ
	(2) Muslim

ligious denominations plausible. For a detailed description of these profiles and their attributes and values also see the supplementary appendix A: Construction of immigrant profiles as well as Czymara and Schmidt-Catran (2016). Respondents were asked to rate the same set of 14 profiles in each wave, with randomised order. The 14 profiles contain a specific set of all possible combinations of attribute values. We drew a sample from all possible combinations in such a way that the values of each attribute tend to occur with the same frequency (*balance*) and to be uncorrelated (*orthogonality*).[8] This allows the estimation of the attributes' causal effects under the assumption that interaction effects between them are negligible (Dülmer, 2007: 386).[9] For two reasons our set is only approximately balanced and orthogonal: first, because it is practically impossible to divide all values for all attributes equally in 14 profiles and, secondly, because we imposed a restriction for the highly implausible

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[8] We drew this sample with the %Mktex macro for SAS from Kuhfeld (2010) using the Modified Federov algorithm; seed number: 819179.

[9] Possible consequences of the violation of this assumption for the estimats of our main effects are discussed in Czymara and Schmidt-Catran (2018).

combination of immigrants originating from France and migrating because of political persecution. This is no drawback, however, since 'semi-orthogonal' designs can be more efficient than perfectly orthogonal ones, e.g. in case of asymmetric numbers of values across attributes (Kuhfeld et al., 1994; Dülmer, 2016) – which is true for our set. Still, our set comes very close to the ideal of perfect balance and orthogonality.[10] Table 4.5 (Supplementary appendix) shows the correlations between the attribute values and Table 4.2 their descriptive statistics.

To keep the approximate orthogonality, rating all immigrant profiles was programmed as mandatory. In total, 5.1 per cent of the respondents were excluded from the analysis because they dropped out during this part of the survey in the first wave (69 in total) and 2.57 per cent in the second wave (19 in total). Thus, item non-response in the main part of our survey is negligible.

We rely only on the data of those respondents who rated all 14 immigrant profiles in *both* waves for our analysis. This allows the direct comparison of the effect sizes of each immigrant attribute because the same respondents rated the same outcome on the same scale for the same set of immigrant profiles in both waves. We furthermore excluded respondents which had missing values on one of the respondent-level variables controlled in the regression analysis. In total, our final sample contained 644 respondents rating 14 immigrant profiles at two time points, leaving us with a total of 18,032 profile ratings.

Treatment: events during the 'Migration Crisis'

Wave 1 of the survey took place in April 2015 and Wave 2 1 month after NYE. To capture changes between both waves, we generated a dummy variable t (0 = first wave,

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[10]The goodness of such a design can be quantified by its D-efficiency, where a value of 100 indicates a perfectly balanced and orthogonal design (Kuhfeld et al., 1994). We were able to obtain a D-efficiency of 96.94.

1 = second wave). As we rely on intra-individual variation for the estimation, this time effect is not correlated with unobserved heterogeneity and therefore less prone to omitted variable bias. Furthermore, since the set of immigrant profiles was identical in both waves, we can estimate how the effects of the immigrant characteristics changed after the events by accounting for an interaction between the profile characteristics and t.

Respondents' characteristics

As the immigrant profile attributes are uncorrelated with respondents' characteristics by design, it is not strictly necessary to control for them to obtain unbiased effects of the immigrant profiles. Nevertheless, we included several characteristics of the respondents in our analysis out of general interest. These variables are gender, employment status (full-time, part-time, unemployed, out of labour force), education (low, medium, high), religious denomination (Christian, other, none), age, living in East Germany, and number of migrant friends (many, some, few, none). Table 4.2 provides their summary statistics.

Validity and representativeness

Our design is (quasi-)experimental and therefore does not require a representative sample to yield relevant results. However, as we are dealing with a sample from an online access pool, the issue of representativeness shall be briefly discussed to demonstrate that our results are likely to be generalisable. Table 4.3 presents the distribution of the socio-demographic variables age, gender, and education in the German population and in our survey. With respect to gender, our sample seems to be perfectly representative. With respect to age we observe the expected over-

representation of young and under-representation of older people, but overall this effect appears not dramatic except for those being older than 74.

We observe a strong over-representation of both low- and high-educated individuals compared to those with medium education. This is due to the fact that we oversampled low-educated people to compensate their usual under-representation in online panels.

Based on the weighted multivariate distribution of age, gender, and education in the German Socio-Economic Panel, we constructed weights for our data set and compared the results from an unweighted and a weighted analysis. We performed a test proposed by DuMouchel and Duncan (1983), which indicates that the weighted estimates do not differ significantly from those in the unweighted models. Therefore, we present the unweighted analysis in the article. The weighted effects are in general very similar, but with slightly different p-values for a few variables. We report a comparison between weighted and unweighted models in Supplementary Figures 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 (Supplementary appendix).

Statistical model

We estimated three-level mixed models with the ratings at level 1, nested in the survey wave, nested in respondents. This structure accounts for the statistical dependencies of the multiple ratings by each respondent (via Level 3) and for the additional dependency of the respondents' ratings within one survey wave (via Level 2). We treat the seven-point Likert scale as quasi-metric and therefore estimate linear random effects models.[11]

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[11]We used the `mixed` command in Stata 14.2 to estimate the models.

4.6 Results

Table 4.4 presents the results from a series of four models. Model M0 is an empty model showing that the mean rating across all profiles and time is almost exactly 5. Since 7 is the most positive value, respondents rated immigrants rather positively on average. The model furthermore indicates that most of the variance is located at the immigrant profile level (2.18), meaning that respondents did indeed react to the varying immigrant characteristics. However, there is also a considerable amount of variance between respondents (1.52) and, more important for this study, between waves (0.61).

Model M1 adds the immigrant characteristics and the wave dummy. Because both are uncorrelated by design, the coefficient of t indicates that the *average* acceptance of immigrants has significantly declined in the second wave (-0.241, P < 0.001), supporting H1. This effect represents the *general* negative effect of the events between both waves and may thus be understood as an equivalent to the event effects of the studies discussed above. This negative effect is about as large as the discrimination against Muslims compared with non-religious immigrants. Since the effects of the immigrant characteristics in Model M1 are averaged over both waves, and we are primarily interested in the changes between waves, Model M1 is not our main interest. Nevertheless, we briefly review the estimated parameters. Most interestingly, immigrants fleeing persecution are more likely to be accepted than those who come for economic reasons but have a prospective job, which is by far the strongest effect in the model, while those who come for a better living without having a job opportunity are consigned to the lowest rank. This already indicates a strong general willingness to help refugees in our sample. Moreover, male immigrants are more accepted than females, and all other effects are in the direction one would assume: immigrants from

Kenya or Lebanon are less accepted than immigrants from France, immigrants with high qualifications and good language skills are more accepted than immigrants with low ones, and Muslim immigrants are less accepted than non-religious or Christians (for a more detailed discussion of similar results, see Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2016).

Model M2 adds interaction effects between t and all immigrant characteristics, plotted in Figure 4.3. These interactions test how the effects of immigrant profile characteristics have *changed* between both waves. They can thus be understood as a test for the universality of the t effect estimated in M1 (mind that the main effect of t in M2 is now conditional for a female, non-religious migrant from France coming for a better life with low qualification and low language skills). An LR-test comparing Models M1 and M2 indicates that, overall, the effects of immigrant characteristics have indeed changed between waves ($\chi^2 = 19.09$, P < 0.05).

However, looking at the single coefficients of the interactions in M2, we see that only the changes in the effects of country of origin and reason for immigration are statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. The most outstanding effect relates to immigrants fleeing political prosecution – who were strongly favoured over those who come for a better living in Wave 1 already (1.542, P<0.001). They are favoured even more in Wave 2 (effect at t = 2: 1.705, P < 0.001). This indicates that humanitarian needs can, at least in this hypothetical situation, by far outperform potential threats, clearly favouring H3a over H3b.

On the other hand, respondents in the first wave strongly preferred immigrants from France over those from Lebanon (-0.230, P < 0.001) or Kenya (-0.263, P < 0.001), two countries culturally more distant to Germany. In line with our expectations, M2 reveals that these origin-effects became even stronger in the second wave (conditional effect of Lebanon after event: -0.369, P < 0.001; Kenya: -0.409, P < 0.001). Thus,
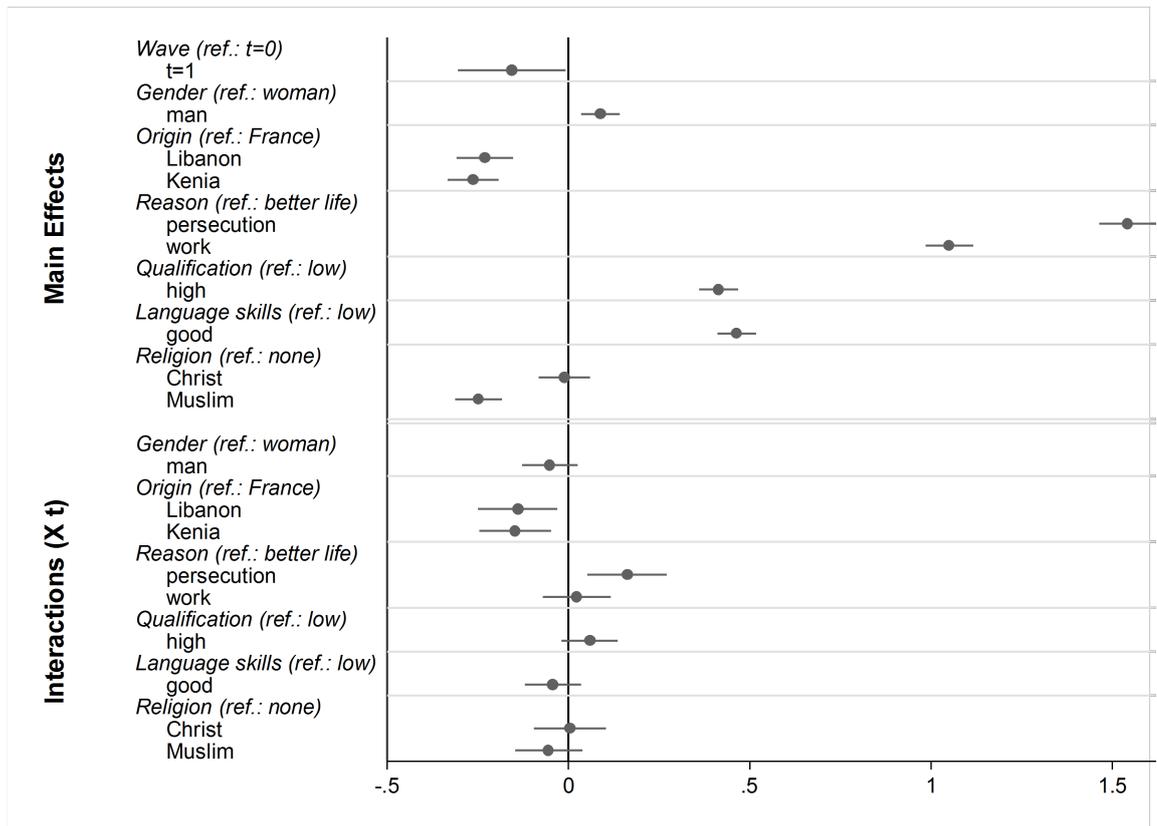
Figure 4.3: Coefficients plot for main and interaction effects

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence interval, based on model M2 (Table 4.4 in the Appendix).

the events, especially NYE, had an additional negative effect on the acceptance of immigrants from Africa or the Middle East *on top* of the general negative effect of cultural distance, providing solid support for the cultural threat H2.

While not statistically significant, there are also substantive changes regarding gender: while male immigrants were preferred over females in the first wave (0.089, P = 0.001), this is no longer the case in the second wave (conditional effect of male immigrant profile in the second wave: 0.038, P = 0.167). The model thus lends some support to the expectation that the events, and especially NYE, affected the acceptance of male immigrants (H2), though the change in the gender effect itself is not very strong and not statistically significant.

Changes in the effects of qualification level and language skills are rather small compared to their main effects and not statistically significant. It thus seems that, as expected, the events hardly affected economic aspects. But interestingly, the same also applies to religious denomination: while Muslims were the least accepted by a large degree in Wave 1 (-0.247, P < 0.001), the additional negative effect for Muslims in wave two is much weaker than expected and also not statistically significant (effect at t = 2: -0.301, P < 0.001). Interestingly, neither the Islamist terror attacks nor the recent disproportionately high influx of Muslims significantly altered the public acceptance of Muslim migrants in our sample.

Finally, we added three-way interaction terms between the immigrant characteristics, t, and respondents' gender in Model M4 to test whether the changes of effects over time differ for female and male respondents. Because these parameters are quite complex, we present them as marginal effects of the immigrant characteristics here, conditional on respondent's gender and t. Moreover, we show only those effects which changed significantly between the two waves in M2. These marginal effects are shown in Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6, and the full model can be found in the Table 4.4.
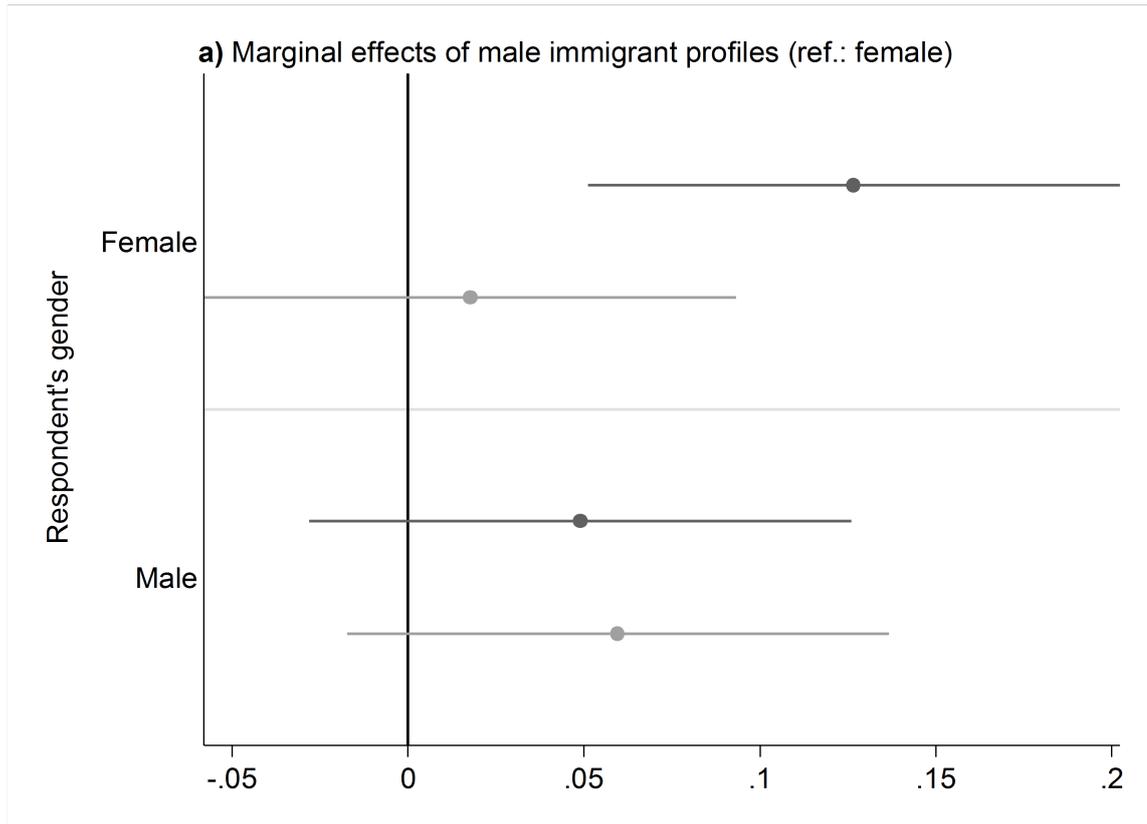
Figure 4.4: Marginal effect of an immigrant's gender, conditional on respondent's gender and time point

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals, based on model M4 (Table 4.4 in the Appendix).

Interestingly, Figure 4.4 reveals that the initial preference for male immigrants is mainly due to female respondents (0.127, P = 0.001), whereas men were largely indifferent in this respect (0.049, P = 0.214). Moreover, the diminishing of the preference for male migrants in the second wave is also largely due to the statistically significant drop of female approval of males (-0.109, P = 0.046), practically resulting in female indifference about gender at t = 2 (0.018, P = 0.648). This lends some support to the hypothesis that individual safety concerns play a role for women but not for men (H4).

Deeper analysis also uncovers that men were the main drivers behind the decrease of acceptance regarding immigrants from Lebanon or Kenya in Wave 2 reported in Model M2 (cf. Figure 4.5).
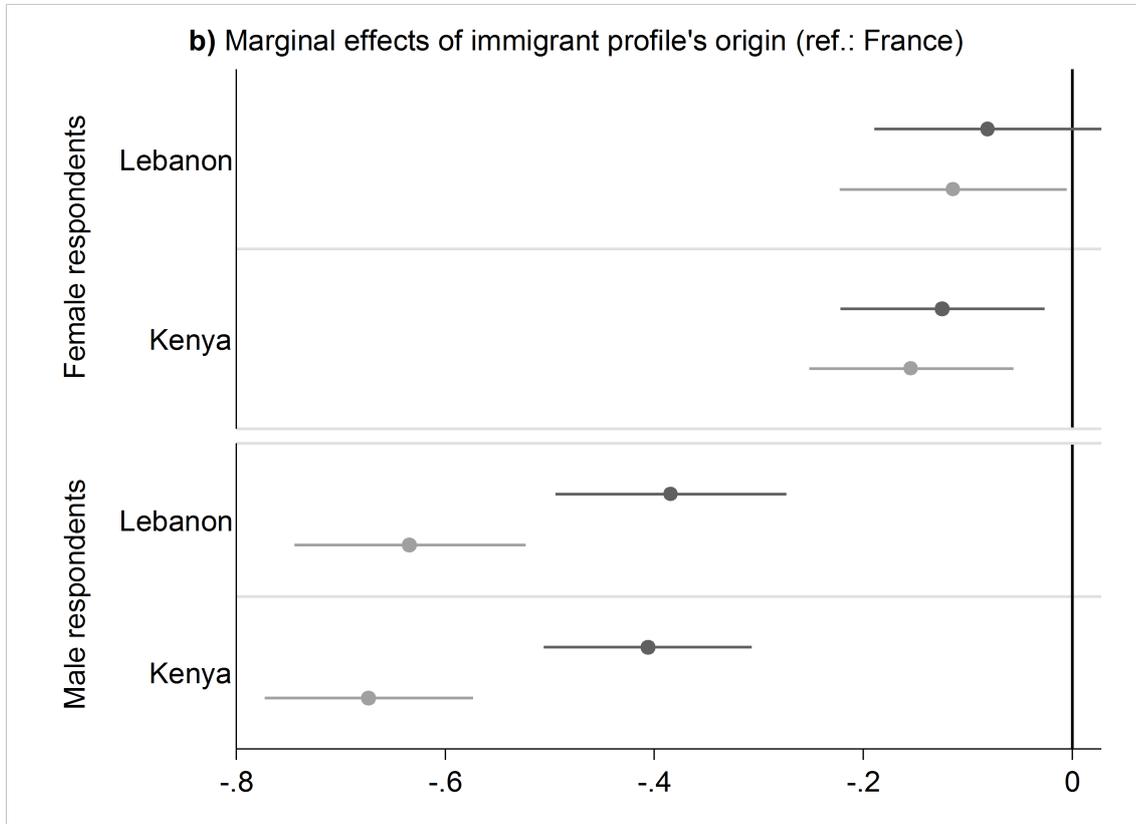
Figure 4.5: Marginal effect of an immigrant's origin, conditional on respondent's gender and time point

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals, based on model M4 (Table 4.4 in the Appendix).

While female respondents exhibit a stable and rather modest negative preference regarding an immigrant's origin over time, men show a quite strong decline in addition to their already very negative ratings at Wave 1 (Lebanon: t = 0: -0.384, P < 0.001, t = 1: -0.634, P < 0.001, change: -0.250, P = 0.002; Kenya: t = 0: -0.406, P < 0.001, t = 1: -0.673, P < 0.001, change: -0.267, P < 0.001).

This result is not in line with the expectations from H4 and difficult to explain ad hoc.

The increasing support for immigrants fleeing prosecution reported before is almost irrespective of gender (cf. Figure 4.6). However, the change for women (0.180) is statistically significant at the 1 per cent level (P = 0.006), while the effect's increase for men (0.143) does not reach the 5 per cent level of significance (P = 0.072). Finally, neither men nor women appear to have significantly altered their view of Muslim immigrants between both waves.
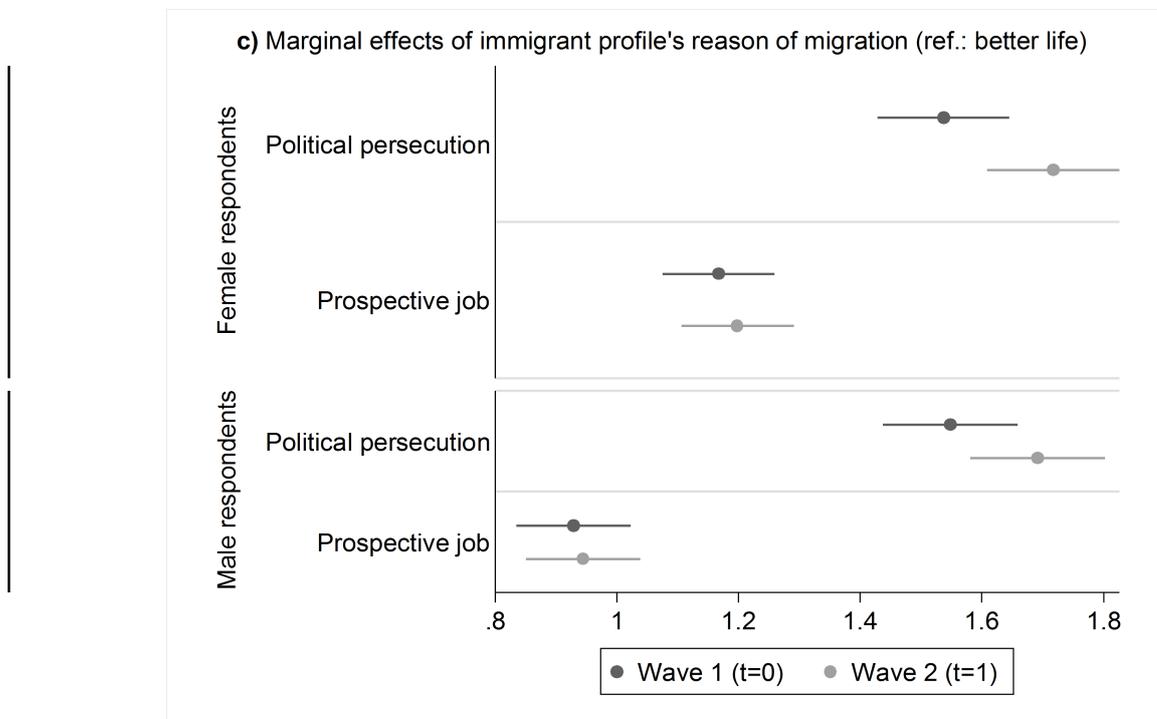
Figure 4.6: Marginal effect of an immigrant's reason for migration, conditional on respondent's gender and time point

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals, based on model M4 (Table 4.4 in the Appendix).

4.7 Summary and discussion

Our results indicate that the public acceptance of immigrants in Germany decreased significantly between April 2015 and January 2016. This change can be attributed to several events: the strong increase of refugees, several fatal attacks of Islamist terrorism, and the assaults of NYE 2015/2016 happening shortly before our second survey wave. This decrease, however, does not universally relate to all immigrants in the same way. It was about twice as large for immigrants from the Middle East and Africa compared with those from France. Both areas had been specifically emphasised in the German media after NYE 2015/2016, although neither of the two countries we included in our experiment (Kenya and Lebanon) were particularly in the centre of the current European immigration debate. In fact, avoiding such confounding was the reason why we opted for these countries in the first place. Thus, effects may differ for immigrants from, for example, Syria or Iraq.

But the most striking finding in our eyes is that immigrants who flee from persecution were not only by far accepted the most from the beginning but that their initial lead even further increased over time. Given the strong increase in the number of asylum applications between both waves (cf. Figure 4.1), this clearly refutes explanations of exclusionary attitudes by rising out-group sizes. Be aware, however, that the effect is relative to the reference group: immigrants who come for a better living but without a prospect of a job. This also allows for the interpretation that these immigrants have become less accepted relative to refugees. Moreover, external validity may be problematic in case respondents think of actual asylum applicants not only as those 'fleeing persecution' but also as people who come 'for a better life' under the legal status of asylum seekers. We did not label either of the groups explicitly as 'refugees' or 'asylum seekers' to avoid being too suggestive.

In contrast to our expectations, the *change* in the acceptance of Muslims migrants between both waves was weak and statistically insignificant, though the baseline of the initial acceptance of Muslims was already low. The media coverage in the first days after NYE focused mainly on reports from witnesses, who mostly described the offenders as originating from Arab or (North-)African countries (cf. Figure 4.1). Religion was less a manifest characteristic in this context. While not overinterpreting our finding, one could derive that this reporting did not set Islam very high on the public agenda directly after NYE. Looking at men's and women's preferences separately, we observed that women tended to evaluate immigrants more based on gender than men, while men tended to discriminate more by country of origin. An obvious explanation for the finding that women's initial preference for male immigrants mostly vanished in the second wave is that women are primarily affected by sexual assaults. They may thus see male immigrants after NYE not only as a threat to the collective, and somewhat more abstract, security but also as threatening their concrete individual safety. It is far less clear why male respondents rejected immigrants from the Middle East and Africa even more in the second wave, while this pattern was far less observable for women. Since we are not able to perfectly disentangle individual and collective safety threats and symbolic threats with our design, a clearer distinction between these three sources of threat might be helpful to explain this finding in future research. Another weakness of our design is that it does not allow the estimation of interaction effects between immigrant characteristics. In fact, we assume that such interaction effects are negligible for the estimation of their main effects. This is a drawback of our within variation design, where all respondents rated the same set of immigrants in both waves. However, it would be interesting to investigate whether, for example, refugees were rated less positively in the second wave if they were Muslim, also because such interactions may partly be confounded with main effects (cf.

Dülmer, 2007: 386). Keep in mind though that our main interest in this study was *not* in the main effects but in the *changes* of effects over time. Finally, we assume that the effect of salient events gets (partly) reactivated with each new 'similar' event happening soon after. It may also be possible, however, that the effects wear off with each new event, as the public 'gets more used' to such tragic events.

In sum, our findings point to a paradoxical situation: On the one hand, people are clearly supportive of migrants in need. On the other hand, however, they seem to be critical toward those who actually enter their country as refuges. Tackling this paradox can be the key to securing social cohesion in Germany and Europe in general.

4.8 Appendix

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics of all variables

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.
Immigrant profile characteristics					
Gender (male: 1; female: 0)	18,032	0.50	0.50	0	1
Country of origin (ref.: France)					
Lebanon	18,032	0.29	0.45	0	1
Kenya	18,032	0.43	0.49	0	1
Reason for immigration (ref.: better life)					
pol. persecution	18,032	0.29	0.45	0	1
job	18,032	0.43	0.49	0	1
Qualification (high: 1)	18,032	0.50	0.50	0	1
Lang. skills (high: 1)	18,032	0.50	0.50	0	1
Religious denomination (ref.: none)					
Christian	18,032	0.29	0.45	0	1
Muslim	18,032	0.43	0.49	0	1
Respondent characteristics at t = 0					
Gender (male: 1; female: 0)	644	0.49	0.50	0	1
Employment status (ref.: not in labour force)					
full-time employed	644	0.43	0.50	0	1
part-time employed	644	0.23	0.42	0	1
unemployed	644	0.11	0.32	0	1
Education (ref.: low)					
medium	644	0.51	0.50	0	1
high	644	0.43	0.50	0	1
Religious denomination (ref.: none)					
Christian	644	0.51	0.50	0	1
other	644	0.05	0.21	0	1
Age	644	45.95	15.22	17	80
Region (East : 1, West: 0)	(East	0.25	0.43	0	1
Migrant friends (ref.: none)					
many	644	0.08	0.28	0	1
some	644	0.31	0.46	0	1
few	644	0.32	0.47	0	1

Note: Immigrant profile-level statistics are based on 28 observations per respondent (2 waves × 14 immigrant profiles), while respondent-level statistics are based on the 644 single respondents.

Table 4.3: Comparison of our sample's socio-demographic composition with population

Variable	GSOEP 2015 (weighted)	Our data
Gender		
men (per cent)	48.89	49.07
women (per cent)	51.11	50.93
Age		
16 – 29 years (per cent)	17.83	19.88
30 – 44 years (per cent)	21.67	23.60
45 – 59 years (per cent)	27.32	35.71
60 – 74 years (per cent)	20.28	18.94
75 and older (per cent	12.89	1.86
Mean (st. dev.)	50.21 (19.09)	45.95 (15.22)
Education		
low (per cent)	16.03	30.75
medium (per cent)	61.38	41.46
high (per cent)	22.59	27.80

Note: Population is defined as persons of 16 years of age and older who are living in Germany. Representative data are from the cross-national equivalence file of the German Socio-economic Panel (GSOEP) and have been weighted with the cross-sectional weights for 2015. Low education = low or intermediate secondary school; medium education = upper secondary school degree and/or apprenticeship and/or vocational school; high education = tertiary education. Note that the categorization of educational degrees in the GSOEP differs from the categorization we use for our analysis. For this comparison with the GSOEP, we adjusted our categorization to match the one of the GSOEP. This explains why the percentages of the categories low, medium, and high in Table 4.2 are different from the percentages found in Table 4.3, which presents the variable education, as it is used in our analysis.

Table 4.4: Full regression models

Variable	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4
t: 1 (ref.: t: 0)		-0.241***	-0.156*	-0.110	-0.277**
		(-5.04)	(-2.05)	(-1.44)	(-2.60)
Immigrant profile characteristics					
Male (ref.: female)		0.0634**	0.0885**	0.0885**	0.127**
		(3.24)	(3.20)	(3.20)	(3.28)
Country of origin (ref.: France)					
Lebanon		-0.300***	-0.230***	-0.230***	-0.0811
		(-10.67)	(-5.79)	(-5.79)	(-1.46)
Kenya		-0.336***	-0.263***	-0.263***	-0.124*
		(-13.28)	(-7.35)	(-7.35)	(-2.49)
Reason for immigration (ref.: better life)					
pol. persecution		1.624***	1.542***	1.542***	1.537***
		(57.80)	(38.85)	(38.85)	(27.74)
job		1.062***	1.050***	1.050***	1.167***
		(44.42)	(31.08)	(31.08)	(24.75)
High qualification (ref.: low)		0.444***	0.415***	0.415***	0.380***
		(22.70)	(14.99)	(14.99)	(9.84)
High lang. skills (ref.: low)		0.443***	0.464***	0.464***	0.471***
		(22.64)	(16.79)	(16.79)	(12.21)
Religious denomination (ref.: none)					
Christian		-0.00873	-0.0109	-0.0109	-0.0198
		(-0.34)	(-0.30)	(-0.30)	(-0.40)
Muslim		-0.274***	-0.247***	-0.247***	-0.233***
		(-11.59)	(-7.39)	(-7.39)	(-4.99)
Immigrant profile characteristics × t					
Male (ref.: female)			-0.0503	-0.0503	-0.109*
			(-1.29)	(-1.29)	(-2.00)
Country of origin (ref.: France)					
Lebanon			-0.139*	-0.139*	-0.0328
			(-2.48)	(-2.48)	(-0.42)
Kenya			-0.146**	-0.146**	-0.0298
			(-2.89)	(-2.89)	(-0.42)
Reason for immigration (ref.: better life)					
pol. persecution			0.162**	0.162**	0.180*
			(2.89)	(2.89)	(2.30)
job			0.0234	0.0234	0.0312
			(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.47)
High qualification (ref.: low)			0.0589	0.0589	0.0657
			(1.51)	(1.51)	(1.20)

Table 4.4 (continued)

High lang. skills (ref.: low)	-0.0425	-0.0425	-0.0308
	(-1.09)	(-1.09)	(-0.56)
Religious denomination (ref.: none)			
Christian	0.00427	0.00427	0.0663
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.94)
Muslim	-0.0538	-0.0538	-0.0242
	(-1.14)	(-1.14)	(-0.37)
Respondent characteristics			
Gender (male: 1; female: 0)		0.00821	0.263
		(0.08)	(1.85)
Employment status (ref.: not in labour force)			
full-time employed		0.0204	0.0204
		(0.17)	(0.17)
part-time employed		0.133	0.129
		(1.04)	(1.01)
unemployed		0.139	0.134
		(0.91)	(0.88)
Education (ref.: low)			
medium		0.381	0.380
		(1.74)	(1.74)
high		0.874***	0.875***
		(3.88)	(3.88)
Religious denomination (ref.: none)			
Christian		-0.221*	-0.221*
		(-2.02)	(-2.02)
other		-0.0101	-0.00873
		(-0.04)	(-0.03)
Age		-0.0108**	-0.0108**
		(-2.87)	(-2.87)
Region (East : 1, West: 0)		-0.106	-0.107
		(-0.83)	(-0.84)
Migrant friends (ref.: none)			
many		0.642***	0.634***
		(3.88)	(3.83)
some		0.432***	0.431***
		(4.27)	(4.25)
few		0.167	0.164
		(1.90)	(1.87)
Immigrant profile characteristics × male respondent			
Male (ref.: female)			-0.0778
			(-1.41)

Table 4.4 (continued)

Country of origin (ref.: France)	
Lebanon	-0.303***
	(-3.83)
Kenya	-0.282***
	(-3.96)
Reason for immigration (ref.: better life)	
pol. persecution	0.0113
	(0.14)
job	-0.238***
	(-3.54)
High qualification (ref.: low)	0.0710
	(1.29)
High lang. skills (ref.: low)	-0.0141
	(-0.26)
Religious denomination (ref.: none)	
Christian	0.0182
	(0.25)
Muslim	-0.0294
	(-0.44)
Male respondent × t	0.340*
	(2.25)
Immigrant profile characteristics × t × male respondent	
Male (ref.: female)	0.120
	(1.54)
Country of origin (ref.: France)	
Lebanon	-0.217
	(-1.94)
Kenya	-0.237*
	(-2.36)
Reason for immigration (ref.: better life)	
pol. persecution	-0.0368
	(-0.33)
job	-0.0160
	(-0.17)
High qualification (ref.: low)	-0.0138
	(-0.18)
High lang. skills (ref.: low)	-0.0238
	(-0.31)
Religious denomination (ref.: none)	
Christian	-0.126
	(-1.25)

Table 4.4 (continued)

Muslim					-0.0603
					(-0.64)
Constant	4.997***	4.073***	4.030***	3.798***	3.678***
Variance components					
Respondent	1.524***	1.539***	1.539***	1.310***	1.312***
T	0.610***	0.618***	0.618***	0.613***	0.611***
Immigrant	profile	2.180***	1.664***	1.662***	1.662***
N (respondents)	644	644	644	644	644
T (T × N)	1,288	1,288	1,288	1,288	1,288
n (immigrant profiles)	18,032	18,032	18,032	18,032	18,032
Log-likelihood	-34,153.82	-31,882.27	-31,872.73	-31829.14	-31761.38
LR-tests		M1 vs. M0	M2 vs. M1	M3 vs. M2	M4 vs. M3
LR χ^2 (df)		4,543.1 (10)	19.09 (9)	87.18 (13)	135.52 (19)
Probability $> \chi^2$		< 0.0001	0.0245	< 0.0001	< 0.0001

Note: * P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01; *** P < 0.001 (two-sided tests).

4.9 Supplementary appendix

A: Construction of immigrant profiles

The immigrant profiles used in this study are standardised descriptions of immigrants which all consist of the same six attributes: *gender, country of origin, reason for migration, qualification, language skills*, and *religious denomination*. The values of each attribute where chosen in a way that minimises implausible combinations and confounding stereotypes of, e. g. certain countries of origin. Each immigrant profile is a unique combination of the values of these different attributes (compare Table 4.1 for an overview of all values). Additionally, each immigrant profile was characterised by a random letter that indicated the abbreviation of a surname. An example of an immigrant profile thus reads: '*Mr G.* wants to migrate from *Kenya* to Germany because *he has a prospective job*. He has *higher education*, *good* skills in the German

language and is *Muslim*.' and respondents should, among other things, rate whether 'Mr G. should be allowed to live in Germany' on a 7-point scale (for the original German phrases and a more detailed discussion of the single attributes and values see Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2016). Because our design measures the impact of all attributes simultaneously and on the same outcome and all respondents rated the same set of immigrant profiles in both waves, it is possible to directly compare the effect sizes of the attributes with each other, under the assumption that interaction effects between the attributes are negligible. This assumption is necessary because the main effects and certain higher-order interactions of the attributes are partly confounded. Since the design is based on this assumption, it does not allow the post hoc estimation of interaction effects (cf. Dülmer, 2007: 386, Czymara and Schmidt-Catran, 2018).

Table 4.5 presents the correlations between each of the immigrant attributes. Almost all correlations between the different dimensions are weak or zero. Note that the values within each attribute (e. g., *France* and *Kenya*) are correlated by design. Out of all other associations, only five are higher than 0.2. These correlations are all between values of the dimension *Country of origin* and the dimension *Reason for migration* – the highest correlation (0.4) is between *France* and *Political persecution*, which is the restriction we built into the design for plausibility reasons. Keep in mind, however, that we simultaneously include all attributes in our models for the analysis. In this way, even the small to moderate correlations between some attributes are controlled for and are unbiased under the assumption of negligible interaction effects between the profile characteristics. Even if this assumption is violated, the bias of the main effect estimates is likely to be very small as we demonstrate in Czymara and Schmidt-Catran (2018).

Table 4.5: Correlations between immigrant profile characteristics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 *Gender*: male	1											
2 *Qualification*: good	0.143	1										
3 *Language skills*: high	0.143	0.143	1									
Religious denom.:												
4 none	0	0	0	1								
5 Christian	0	0	0	*-0.4*	1							
6 Muslim	0	0	0	*-0.548*	*-0.548*	1						
Country of origin:												
7 France	0	0	0	-0.05	-0.05	0.091	1					
8 Kenya	0	0	0	0.091	0.091	-0.167	*-0.548*	1				
9 Lebanon	0	0	0	-0.05	-0.05	0.091	*-0.4*	*-0.548*	1			
Reason:												
10 political persecution	0	0	0	-0.05	-0.05	0.0913	**-0.4**	0.091	**0.3**	1		
11 prospective job	0	0	0	0.091	0.091	-0.167	0.091	0.125	**-0.228**	*-0.548*	1	
12 better life	0	0	0	-0.05	-0.05	0.091	**0.3**	**-0.228**	-0.05	*-0.4*	*-0.548*	1

Note: Pearson correlations, all variables are 0/1-coded. Correlations between variables from the same dimension are italic, other correlations larger than 0.2 are bold.

B: Comparison of weighted and unweighted analyses
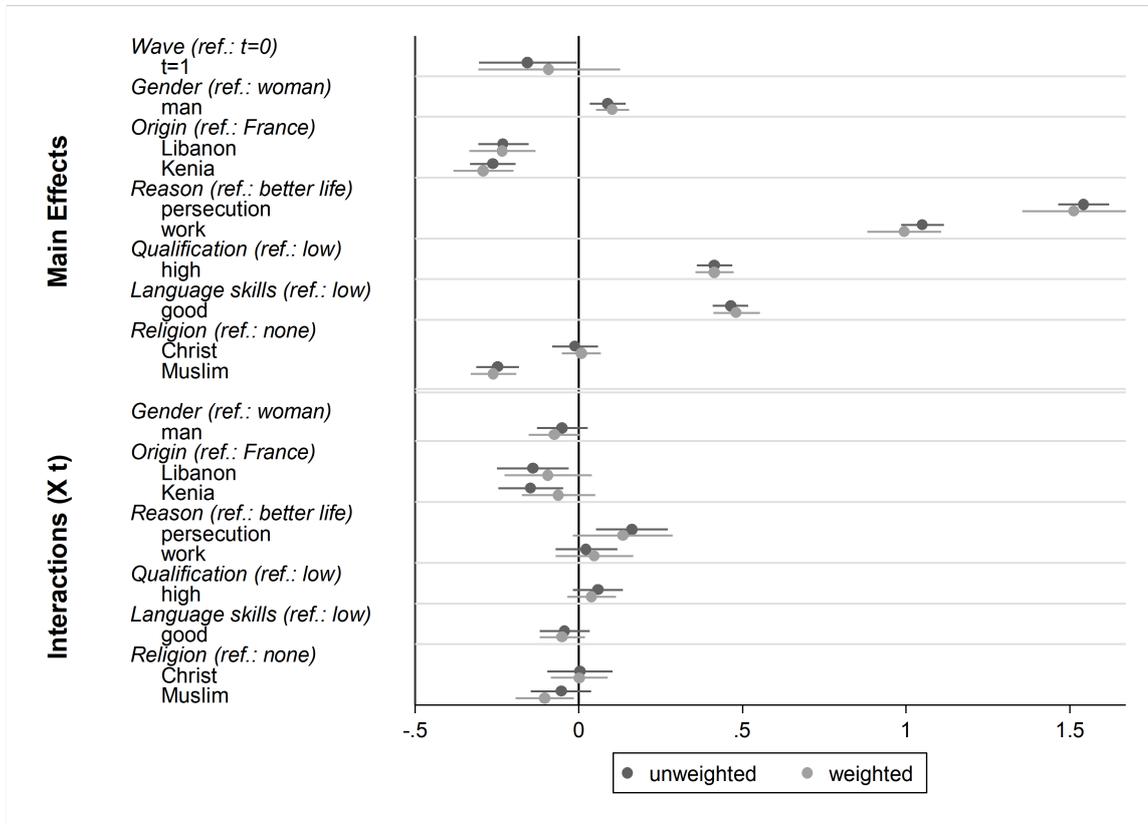
Figure 4.7: Weighted and unweighted coefficient estimates from Model M2 compared

Note: Weights have been constructed based on (weighted) SOEP data from the 2015 cross-national equivalence file. Weights are based on the multivariate distribution in a three-dimensional table of gender, age and education (compare Table 4.2 for more details on how age and education has been categorised). Note that the weighted and unweighted models are not significantly different from each other.
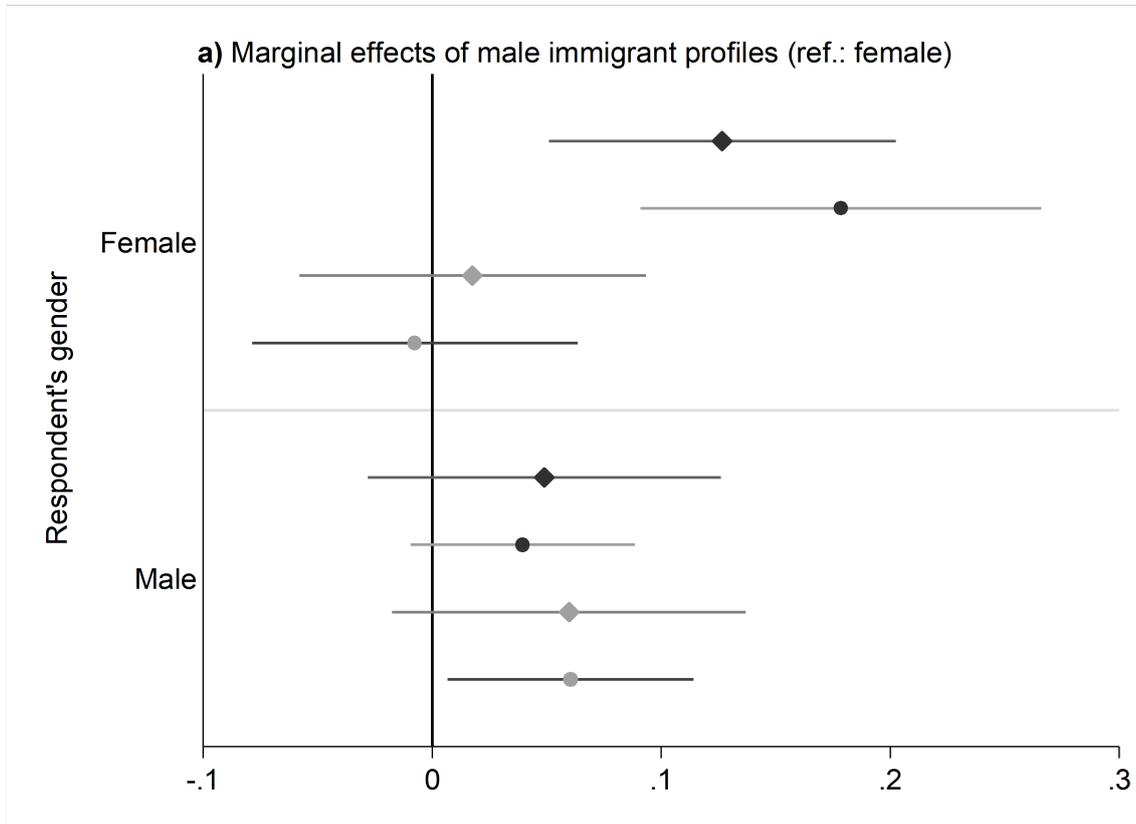
Figure 4.8: Weighted and unweighted marginal effect of immigrant's gender from Model M4 compared

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals, based on weighted and unweighted versions of model M4. Also see notes of Figure 4.7. Note that weighted and unweighted models do not significantly differ from each other.
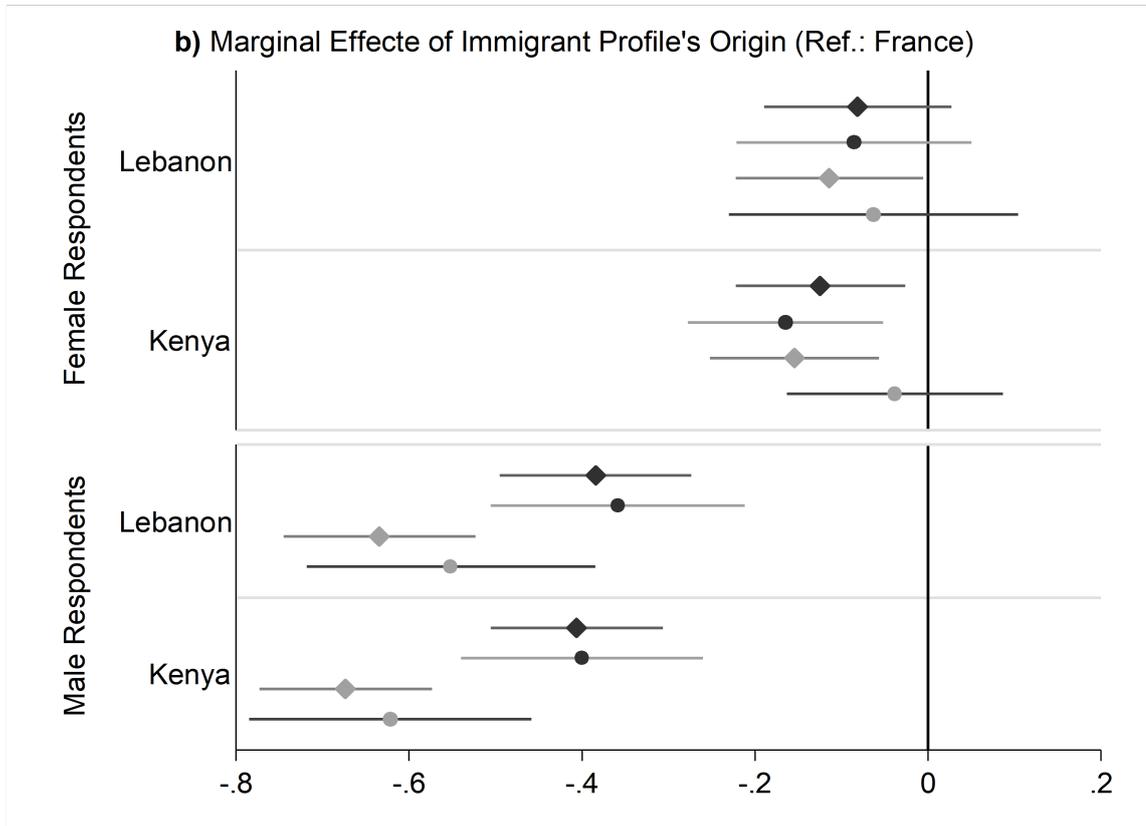
Figure 4.9: Weighted and unweighted marginal effect of immigrant's origin from Model M4 compared

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals, based on weighted and unweighted versions of model M4. Also see notes of Figure 4.7. Note that weighted and unweighted models do not significantly differ from each other.
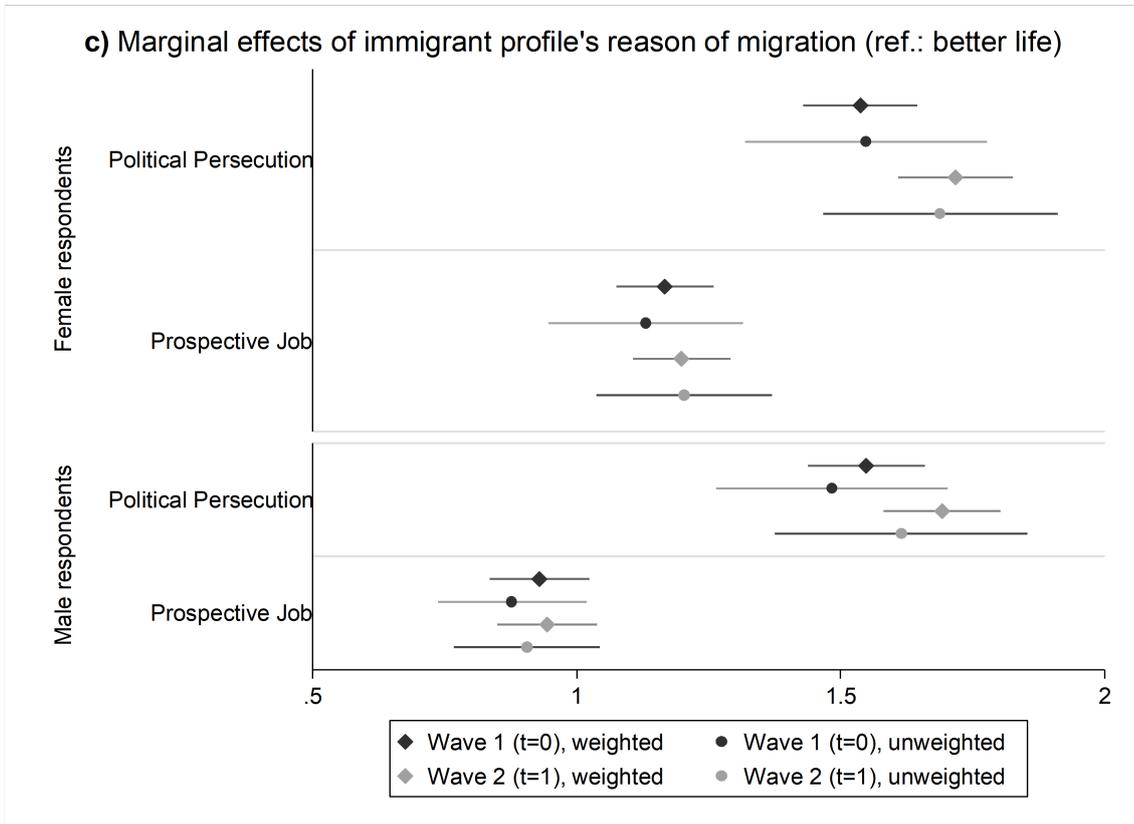
Figure 4.10: Weighted and unweighted marginal effect of immigrant's reason for migration from Model M4 compared

Note: point estimates and 95 percent confidence intervals, based on weighted and unweighted versions of model M4. Also see notes of Figure 4.7. Note that weighted and unweighted models do not significantly differ from each other.

C: Search strings for Figure 4.1

For articles referring to Immigration and Africa or the Middle East:

```
(zuwander! OR einwander! OR !migration! OR !migrant!
OR !flücht! OR !flucht! OR !asyl!) AND (arab! OR
!afrika! OR orient OR orientalisch OR syri! OR ((nah! OR
mitt!) w/2 ost!)) AND (deutschland OR bundesrepublik OR
brd)
```

For articles referring to Immigration and Islam:

```
(zuwander! OR einwander! OR !migration! OR !migrant!
OR !flücht! OR !flucht! OR !asyl!) AND (islam! OR
muslim! OR moslem! OR !kopftuch! OR moschee OR burka!)
AND (deutschland OR bundesrepublik OR brd)
```

For articles referring to Immigration and sexual violence:

```
(zuwander! OR einwander! OR !migration! OR !migrant!
OR !flücht! OR !flucht! OR !asyl!) AND (vergewaltig!
OR ((gewalt OR missbrauch! OR !nötig! OR belästig!) w/2
sex!)) AND (deutschland OR bundesrepublik OR brd)
```

Source: Spiegel Online, Welt Online and Zeit Online provided by nexis.com (retrieved Dec. 2016, updated May 2017)

5 Concluding remarks

5.1 Summary

Ethnic resentments and hostile attitudes towards immigrants are not only rooted in stable ideologies and traits of the individual members of ethnic groups but also depend on the social *contexts* of a society. This is indicated by the variation of attitudes between countries with different cultures and politics (cf., for example, Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007, or chapter 3). Moreover, they are also influenced by macro-level developments as systematic changes within countries over time show (for example, Legewie, 2013; Semyonov et al., 2006, or chapters 2 and 4). One of the most established explanation for the influence of macro-level conditions on attitudes towards ethnic out-groups is the group threat paradigm, which is based on the idea that people harbour images about these groups that are threatening their own group's social position (Blumer, 1958).

I began my argument in chapter 1 with a critique of one of the most most popular interpretations of the group threat paradigm, namely that perceptions of threat are the result of national immigration. This argument goes back to at least the 1950s (Blalock, 1957) and has become especially prominent since the 1990s (e. g., Quillian, 1995, for overview see Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010: 317 f.). My critique is based on the fact that most people have highly biased perceptions regarding immigration

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rates and the number of immigrants in their country (Herda, 2015; 2013; 2010; Wong, 2007; Alba et al., 2005, also see Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014: 231) as well as of the composition of its immigrant population (Blinder, 2015). If these numbers are largely misperceived, however, actual national immigration alone can not be the core driver of attitudes. In line with a number of previous studies (Hjerm, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2004), my findings by and large refute this interpretation of the group threat paradigm. This is most clearly the case in chapter 4, where the inflow of refugees sharply increased during the time of investigation. At the same time, however, the public acceptance of refugees actually *increased* as well according to the data. This is diametrically opposed to the theoretical predictions of the 'group size'-argument. In chapters 2 and 3 the effects of national immigration levels are either only modest or fail to be statistically different from zero.

Based on this critique, I developed a theoretical mechanism which connects contextual conditions on the country-level and individual attitudes. Combining the classical works of Blumer (1958) and Lippmann (1921), I have argued that key events and their discussions in the prevalent discourses of a society are important prerequisites for exclusionary attitudes. This is because such discourses are the basis of the pictures of ethnic out-groups people have in their heads (Lippmann, 1921). The more a discourse contributes to a threatening picture, the more powerful it is in generating hostility among the members of the majority group (Blumer, 1958). The underlying theoretical model draws upon the idea that real events and developments matter and adds the importance of their mediation, and possible distortion, through discursive framing (Wimmer, 1997: 26 f.). It consists of three main parts: certain key *events and developments* which national elites discuss, the resulting *discourses* shaping certain images and their impact on individual perceptions and *attitudes*. The different studies included in the present dissertation examine different aspects of this model. Whereas

chapters 2 and 3 deal with the potential *impact* of discourses on public opinion in larger temporal or spatial contexts over heterogeneous sets of discourses, chapter 4 examines also the emergence of a discourse based on a particular example.

The accumulated evidence supports my reasoning. Chapter 2 deals with the consequences of general media reporting on the immigration issue for individual concerns about this issue. To this end, my colleague Stephan Dochow and I combined a quantitative content analysis of articles in German print newspapers with survey data from the German Socio-Economic Panel, covering a time span of 15 years. We show that the number of articles about immigration related issues significantly and robustly increase concerns. The fact that the count variable we employ to measure the media environment does not differentiate between different kinds or tone of discourses suggests that mass media have an impact beyond certain idiosyncratic discussions. While it is reasonable to assume that certain discourses have a stronger effect on public opinion than others, we estimate an average effect across a heterogeneous set of discourses that took place in Germany in the last 15 years including, amongst others, Islamist terrorism, economic migration, or humanitarianism related to the inflow of people in need. Hence, the relationship reported in chapter 2 tells something about the general impact of salience.

Chapter 3 adds to this finding the importance of political elite discourses on attitudes towards specific immigrant groups. The way in which public elites discuss certain ethnic groups in a given social context is likely to have an impact on the picture of the particular immigrant subgroup which members of the public have in their heads (Lippmann, 1921; Meuleman et al., 2018). Accordingly, elite discourses primarily relate to attitudes towards these immigrant groups. I confirm this hypothesis taking a cross-national perspective and drawing upon the European Social Survey to measure individual attitudes towards different immigrant groups and the Mani-

festo Research on Political Representation project to measure the stance of political parties on immigration issues. When political elites are more negative, the individuals in a country are also more negative, especially towards Muslim and ethnically distant immigrants. These are the groups which were rather prominent in the investigated historical period. This especially refers to Muslim immigrants, which were in the focus of this study because they are a clearly defined group associated with potentially threatening traits (Helbling and Traunmüller, 2018). Positive political elite discourses, in contrast, were associated with less negative attitudes towards all different kinds of immigrants. Hence, whereas the emergence of potentially threatening images of ethnic out-groups (Blumer, 1958) and related discourses seem to be specific to certain social contexts (Meuleman et al., 2018), discourses promoting openness and tolerance seem to activate more positive sentiments towards various kinds of ethnic groups.

Finally, chapter 4 deepens this argument by examining changes in public opinion before and after the key events of New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Germany, where groups of men that were reported as having Arab and African appearance robbed and sexually assaulted women in various German cities. To this end, my colleague Alexander W. Schmidt-Catran and I conducted an online experiment where participants had to rate a set of hypothetical immigrants which differed in certain characteristics before and after the event. The results reveal that the events primarily had an impact on the evaluation of those immigrants which were particularly discussed as the main threats to society in the prevailing discourses, namely immigrants from Africa or the Middle East. However, this did not concern Muslim immigrants and refugees. An explanation for the stability of the initially lower acceptance of Muslims is that the assaults were actually not really connected to religiosity or religious fundamentalism. Hence, natives might retain more differentiated views also after the event. The fact

that refugees were actually even more welcomed in the second wave of the survey may be explained by an out-performance of humanitarian discourses over threatening ones.

So, on the one hand, general salience affects general concerns (cf. chapter 2). On the other hand, specific discourses have out-group-specific effects, depending on the overall tone (cf. chapter 3) as well as on the particular content (cf. chapter 4). In the terms of the model of multi-level agenda setting (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001), the first finding corresponds to the first and basic level, dealing with the transfer of salience of the immigration issue in general (in contrast to other issues) and the second one can be read as happening on a higher level of agenda-setting, dealing with the transfer of salience of certain attributes within the immigration issue.

Deeper analyses reveal that, throughout all studies presented in this dissertation, discourse and salience effects are significantly stronger for certain individuals than for others. Among those whose attitudes are especially affected by the discursive context are individuals with conservative ideology, lower education, or few daily experiences with foreigners. Perhaps problematically, these individuals are more likely to be among the readers of 'alternative' internet news outlets, which more often put forward opinions with a more radical slant and rumours. Such free online news are steadily gaining ground as alternatives to the 'classical', proofread media, whose readership is declining. It is an open question how these developments affect the dissemination of political information and news. However, it is not unlikely that independent online outlets report more sensationalistically as there is far less reviewing and it is easier to reach target groups which demand more radical opinions. Consequently, topics related to immigration and integration may become increasingly difficult to debate in a rational, facts-based manner which, in turn, is likely to lead to a further divide of Western societies.

But the divergence of societies is not the only problematic consequence of an increasingly hostile immigration discourse. It also re-defines the semantic space in which future discussions take place. This, in turn, can influence on policy evaluations and political practice (Flores, 2017). In this way, the discursive context is more than a soft characteristic. It has real and profound consequences for the individuals at whom certain policies are targeted and can result, for example, in criminalisation or deportation. Tighter borders and stricter asylum policies are among the key demands put forward in anti-immigration discourses. From a strictly economic point of view, such policies seem irrational as evidence suggests that, on the long run, the inflow of asylum seekers is likely to pay off for Western countries (D'Albis et al., 2018, also see Marbach et al., 2018). Moreover, since empirical evidence suggests that total immigration actually *decreases* the risk of terrorist attacks (Bove and Böhmelt, 2016), general restrictions is also unlikely to have the desired impact regarding public safety. However, one must also note that, globally, things look different regarding immigration from terrorist-prone countries of origin (ibid.). Avoiding border control is hence also no panacea.

5.2 Shoot the messenger? Chances and limitations of tackling the misperceptions causing ethnic prejudice

Freedom of the press and of speech are fundamental parts of democracy. Moreover, ignoring certain developments and events would not be a solution to the underlying social problems. However, there are aspects in the way the media, public speakers and political elites portray reality that can be regarded problematic. First, there is

a clear preference for novelty over regularity (Patterson, 2008). As indicated by the term itself, *news* concentrate on fresh stories, breaking developments and events. The problem is that many social issues are rather static and slow. Put differently, "[m]ost of society's problems look the same today as they did yesterday – a monotonous sameness that reduces their news value." (Patterson, 2008: 37) For example, immigrants may take many years, sometimes generations, to integrate fully into the host society. This means that social inequality may persist over decades. Selectively focussing on 'newsworthy' developments is thus likely to underestimate the importance of chronic conditions. This, in turn, can result in a severely distorted picture of reality. Moreover, the special focus on certain key events like New Year's Eve 2015/16 further increases such disparities between 'social reality' and 'news reality.' This is because such key events are rather anecdotes than systematic observations (Patterson, 2008). Even more problematically is that most abrupt events are of negative nature, such as terror attacks, whereas positive aspects often unfold over longer periods of time, such as successful integration. In the logic of the media market, positive matters are thus less newsworthy compared to negative ones (also see Soroka, 2014). With the focus of mass media reporting on salient (and negative) events, it does no longer apply that what is perceived more often also actually happens more often.

This leads to a second important point: The demand side the media's negativity bias (cf. Trussler and Soroka, 2014; Hrbková et al., 2017). Not only are negative events considered as more newsworthy, but negative news also often sell better and receive more public attention (cf., e. g., Soroka and McAdams, 2015; Soroka, 2014; Lengauer et al., 2012). There is strong evidence coming from cognition psychology that humans in general react more to negative than to positive information (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973), which also holds true regarding negative political news (Soroka, 2006; Ito et al., 1998). This 'bad news are good news' logic can lead to general pes-

simism and fatalism – with unintended negative consequences. For example, critical reporting on political elites is certainly an important aspect of a well-functioning democracy. However, focussing on negative aspects *only* can lead to the erosion of trust in political institutions in the general public. This, in turn, is a fruitful ground for 'anti-establishment' populists with easy answers to complex questions, as many of the recent elections in Western countries, most prominently in the US, have shown.[1]

Again, this does not mean that critical reporting should be abandoned nor that dramatic events should be neglected. But so-called *constructive journalism* might be able to counteract negative attitudes as well as biased perceptions of social problems and / or marginalised groups. Such kind of journalism focuses more on solutions than on conflicts. Moreover, it offers a contextualization of social situations and additional background information (McIntyre and Gyldensted, 2017). Ultimately, the idea is to give a more realistic view of the world based on information that does not *only* cover its negative aspects.

Political elites also have a responsibility since they have the power to create important events themselves which then become news. A recent example for this can be found in the 2016 US Presidential Election, when Donald Trump referred to Mexican immigrants as 'rapists' and 'criminals' which led to major debates. Flores (2018) shows that these statements negatively affected the public's view of migrants, especially among those who already harboured resentments. In this way, right-wing populist parties and elites are actually fuelling the fires of ethnic prejudice.

But even if news did reflect social reality perfectly, there is reason to assume that individual misperceptions would persist, at least to a certain extent. This is because such misperceptions in many cases are more than random ignorance, as indicated,

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[1]Similarly, there is evidence that viewers of political comedy in the US exhibit higher levels of political cynicism while simultaneously reporting higher self-rated levels of political sophistication, also known as *The Daily Show Effect* (Baumgartner and Morris, 2006).

for example, by the fact that they correlate with the perception of immigration as culturally threatening (Herda, 2015).

Herda (2010) distinguishes two different reasons for such misperceptions which both seem to correlate with biased perceptions independently from one another: Firstly, there are neutral cognitive mistakes which are caused by faulty generalisations of information coming from personal experience but also from mass media. Such mistakes generally lack an affective component. This cognitive aspect, which relates to the media's selective focus on news and events, could potentially be tackled by the provision of additional information. This is where constructive journalism can operate. However, the second reason for misperceptions according to Herda (2010) has an emotional component and includes negative judgements about an ethnic out-group. These emotional responses constitute perception biases which have very little to do with any actual prior evidence. Thus, these emotional aspects are much more resistant to change. They are rather rooted in established, internalised prejudice (also see Flynn et al., 2017).

The stability of individual prejudice is corroborated by scholars who suggest that changes in the discursive social climate after key events are less caused by attitudinal changes of the public's majority at large but rather by the changed behaviour of certain individuals. That is, those with a priori hostile attitudes towards immigrants become more active and thereby shift public discourse on the macro-level in their direction (Flores, 2017). While the evidence presented in the present dissertation suggests that attitudes can become more negative due to prevailing discourses, it does not deny stable forms of prejudice and it certainly does not reject the possibility that, additionally, individuals with more initial resentment become more active in public discussions after dramatic events related to immigration. Reaching these individuals could become a very difficult task.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

In the present dissertation, I analysed discourses as contextual sources of hostile attitudes towards immigrants in a quantitative manner. But measuring discourses is neither trivial nor easy. First and foremost, this is because of the latent character of the concept of discourse. Moreover, there is also no consensus or clear definition of what should be included in a discourse measure and what should not (cf. the discussion in section 2.8).

To account for the heterogeneous nature of the discourse concept, as well as for the variety of potential sources and messengers, I employed different operationalisations throughout the studies presented in this dissertation. However, none of these is perfect. In fact, the main explanatory variable in chapter 2 is not a measure of discourse but of salience, using a count variable of the number of articles each day which address immigration related issues. Our goal with this study was to provide a general effect of media salience, averaged over a large set of discourses, precisely to be independent of idiosyncratic debates. This operationalisation is well suited for our propose. Other more differentiated approaches, however, would be highly interesting, too. The discourse variables employed in chapter 3 are quantifications of party manifestos in various European countries. These quantifications are based on manual coding conducted by a large number of people which is not only highly cost and labour intensive but might potentially be prone to subjective decisions of individual coders (although the Manifesto Research on Political Representation project puts much effort into maximising the quality of data, Klingemann et al., 2006). Clearly, such a procedure is not feasible for single researchers or small research groups. Moreover, the data are by design restricted to times of elections. In chapter 4 the quantitative and qualitative indicators of discourse actually do not enter the final model due to the fact

that, in this research design, there is no one who is not receiving the treatment (who is not exposed to the national discourses of the event). Still, I am convinced that all three studies have socially and politically relevant findings and also fill important gaps in the existing body of literature.

But of course, these approaches could be improved further. As the amount of digitally available media data has increased sharply in recent years, machine-based methods could ideally complement my approaches (for overviews of such methods see, for example, Boumans and Trilling, 2016; Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). McLaren et al. (2018) and Flores (2017) are examples of different steps towards this direction. Developments and achievements in communication sciences, and the rapidly growing fields of computational social sciences and digital humanities are perfectly suited to extending the methodology of established quantitative social science research. The canonical paradigms that the past decades of survey research have established are likely to gain important additional facets by the application of the rapidly advancing methodology which large-scale quantitative content analysis has to offer.

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