Discussion

Interpretation of average results in Europe

Political elite discourses, especially exclusionary rhetoric from right-leaning parties, have contributed to growing polarization of attitudes toward immigration along ideological lines. Right-wing voters are particularly responsive to exclusionary messages, while inclusionary discourses do not show the same polarizing effect. However, there is little evidence of polarization between different education levels (Schmidt-Catran & Czymara, 2022)

Van der Brug & Hartefeld (2021) report that the refugee crisis (2014–2016) intensified opinion polarization regarding immigration between left- and right-leaning citizens. Hutter & Kriesi (2021) report the same, but note that this is driven in particular by radical right parties in Northwestern and Central Europe ()

Such as Hungary

Under Viktor Orbán, Hungary is being governed by such an aforementioned radical right party (Bösckei & Molnár, 2019; Vadhanavisala 2020)

The party’s governance is marked by populist, nativist, and authoritarian tendencies, with a strong emphasis on nationalism and welfare chauvinism, and a dismissive stance toward the European Union and liberal democratic values (Lugosi, 2018; Hegedüs, 2018)

Germany

As of 2015, Germany became a primary destination for refugees. Initially, there was a significant wave of sympathy and support for the arriving refugees. This was evident in the warm welcomes at train stations, with many Germans offering food, water, clothing, and shelter. Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Wir schaffen das" ("We can manage this") became a widely cited expression of confidence and a symbol of this welcoming culture. his period was characterized by widespread volunteer efforts, public displays of support, and a strong humanitarian response, especially in major cities and at train stations where refugees were greeted by cheering crowds (e.g., Funk, 2016; Neis, Meier & Furukawazono, 2018; Zimmerer, 2016). However, with time, concerns among the German citizens and political parties started to rise. These concerns often revolved around the capacity of the country to integrate so many people, potential impacts on social cohesion, and security issues. Previous research suggests that there seems to no overall trend in anti-immigration sentiment overall, but instead only in specific subgroups. Longitudinal analyses show that, despite increased public debate and the heightened salience of immigration since 2015, there is no consistent evidence of a significant rise in overall or between-group polarization on immigration issues in Germany. Attitudes toward immigration have remained relatively stable over time, even as the topic became more prominent in public discourse (Teney & Rupieper; Dochow-Sonderhaus & Teney, 2024). According to Helbling et al (2023), both generally pro- and anti-immigration groups share similar preferences on specific policy details, suggesting less polarization than often assumed. There is some divergence in attitudes between occupational classes, with working-class respondents generally expressing more unfavorable views toward immigration. However, significant heterogeneity within these groups limits the extent of structural polarization. Regional differences also exist, with certain areas showing higher support for anti-immigrant parties, but these do not amount to a nationwide increase in polarization (Dochow-Sondershaus & Teney, 2024).

* Imbgeco in Germany

Also

* Interpret increasing proportion of explained variance of PC1 as evidence for issue alignment
* Limitations sections
  + Only two countries considered besides European averages
  + Not this method used that identifies trend in time series (find smart arguments against it, e.g., too few data points or something)