Discussion

Interpretation of average results in Europe

**Interpretation of Differences Hungary vs. Germany:**

These differences likely reflect the distinct political and social contexts of Germany and Hungary in relation to immigration.

* **Government Response:** Germany, particularly in the initial phase of the 2015 crisis, adopted a more welcoming stance ("Wir schaffen das!"). In contrast, Hungary's government, led by Viktor Orbán, took a strong anti-immigration stance, framing immigrants as threats and erecting border fences. This stark difference in official responses likely shaped public opinion and the dynamics of polarization in each country.
* **Public Discourse:** The public discourse surrounding immigration in the two countries also varied significantly. In Hungary, the government's strong anti-immigration rhetoric likely contributed to a more negative framing of the issue. While Germany initially showed more support for refugees, negative sentiments and concerns about integration also grew, particularly after events like the 2015/16 New Year's Eve incidents in Cologne.
* **Transit vs. Destination Country:** Germany was a primary destination for many refugees during the 2015 crisis, while Hungary largely served as a transit country. This difference in experience with the direct impact of refugee flows could have influenced public perceptions and the resulting polarization.
* **Pre-existing Attitudes:** Pre-existing attitudes towards immigration and the level of societal homogeneity also differed between the two countries, which could have influenced how the refugee crisis impacted public opinion.

**Conclusion:**

While the 2015 refugee crisis acted as a significant polarizing event in both Germany and Hungary, the specific patterns and magnitudes of change in opinion polarization differed. Germany generally experienced a clearer shift towards negative sentiment and increased polarization across various dimensions after the crisis. Hungary's response was characterized by a strong government-led anti-immigration stance, which likely contributed to a distinct pattern of opinion polarization compared to Germany. The comparison highlights how a major European event can interact with different national contexts to produce varying effects on public opinion and its polarization.