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# Political elite discourses polarize attitudes toward immigration along ideological lines. A comparative longitudinal analysis of Europe in the twenty-first century

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## ABSTRACT

Immigration is a hotly-debated topic in many countries around the world. We examine how immigration-related political elite discourses affect natives' attitudes towards immigration and how these discourses contribute to polarisation along political and socio-economic dimensions. Drawing upon longitudinal cross-national data from the European Social Survey over 18 years and a genuine within-country estimator for both country-level main effects and cross-level interactions, our results show that, controlling for actual immigration, anti-immigrant attitudes increase when political elites express more exclusionary sentiments towards immigration and decrease when political elites express more inclusionary sentiments. Deeper analyses reveal exclusionary political elite discourses primarily resonate with voters on the right, whereas the effects of inclusionary discourses do not vary with political orientation. We do not find any attitude polarisation between lower- and highly-educated individuals. In sum, our results indicate that ideological and discursive aspects of inter-group conflict are more important than real-world conditions.

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## KEYWORDS

Migration; political discourse; polarisation; anti-immigration attitudes; multilevel

## Introduction

Immigration has become one of the most contested political issues in Europe in recent years (Green-Pedersen and Otjes 2019; Hutter and Kriesi 2021). Far-right politicians have framed immigration as an existential threat to Western societies, with one example being Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orbán's statement that 'all the terrorists are migrants' in 2015 (Kaminski 2015). Anti-immigrant rhetoric, however, is not limited to far-right parties (Abou-Chadi, Cohen, and Wagner 2021; van Spanje 2010) and might even affect left-wing parties (Alonso and da Fonseca 2012). At the same time, prior research has documented significant differences in public openness toward newcomers between EU-member states (Quillian 1995; Semyonov et al. 2004; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2008; Sides and Citrin 2007), as well as a polarising trend in public attitudes toward immigration (Bohman and Hjerm 2016; van der Brug and Hartevelde 2021;

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Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006). Our goal is to test how variation in national elite discourses polarise certain segments of society over time, based on comparative data over 18 years. We define polarisation as a growing difference in attitudes between groups (similar to, e.g. Bail et al. 2018).

One of the most common explanations of anti-immigration attitudes is the argument that natives perceive immigrants as a threat to the national status quo (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958). However, the cause of such threat perception is debated. Some cross-national studies operationalised threat by the stock or the inflow of immigrants (Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet 2009; Quillian 1995; Semyonov et al. 2008). A growing share of research, however, casts doubt on the impact of actual immigration numbers on hostility toward newcomers (Hjerm 2007; Semyonov et al. 2004; Sides and Citrin 2007), not least because natives tend to significantly misperceive immigration numbers (Alba, Rumbaut, and Marotz 2005; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2020; Herda 2010; Hopkins 2010; Wong 2007). If natives misperceive real-world conditions, these conditions cannot be (directly) the origin of their views. We, thus, add an important theoretical component that has received less attention in previous research: The country's political climate shaped by its political elites. Political elites play an important role in defining the semantic space in which the immigration issue is discussed (Blumer 1958; Flores 2018). It seems reasonable to assume that they also shape the perception of immigrants as more or less threatening. In line with this reasoning, prior cross-sectional research found that exclusionary political elites are associated with more hostile public opinion (Bohman 2011; Hjerm 2007), while openness toward newcomers is more common in countries with inclusionary political elites (Czymara 2020). However, these studies are based on comparisons *between* countries, which might be plagued by unobserved confounders. There is a lack of longitudinal evidence. Two notable exceptions are Heizmann and Huth (2021), who find that short-term effects on economic threat perceptions are stronger for actual immigration numbers while party positions are better predictors of long term differences, and Mitchell (2021), who shows that anti-immigration attitudes are higher in countries with patriotic and nationalistic political elites, but this connection is not statistically significant within countries. We want to contribute to this line of research by testing how within-country variation in different types of political elite discourses, first, influence anti-immigration attitudes and, second, how they polarise the European public along political and socio-economic dimensions. To this end, we draw upon public opinion data from the first eight waves of the European Social Survey (ESS), manifesto data from the Manifesto Project Database, and demographic data from the OECD. In total, our data includes information on over 320,000 respondents from 22 countries over 18 years. Statistically, we employ within-country estimators for both the country-level coefficients and the cross-level interactions (Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran 2019), controlling for all time-invariant country characteristics, such as national histories or differences in political or legal factors. Our empirical approach thus offers a more thorough test of the impact of national conditions and their polarising effects over time.

## Political elite discourses and anti-immigration attitudes

One of the most prominent explanations for the emergence of anti-immigrant attitudes is the group threat-paradigm (Blalock 1967; Quillian 1995). According to this reasoning,

exclusionary attitudes on the side of the native population are the result of struggles over the allocation of resources. In this view, migrants are threats to the social status quo. These resources are not necessarily economic in nature, but can also be cultural (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). In fact, cultural concerns have more impact than economic ones on immigration-related attitudes (Card, Dustmann, and Preston 2012; Sides and Citrin 2007; Sniderman et al. 2004).

The classic hypothesis derived from the group threat-paradigm in comparative social research is that public opinion responds to real immigration (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). That is, natives should become more exclusionary as the size of the ethnic outgroup increases because a larger outgroup implies a stronger competitor (Blalock 1967). However, empirical evidence of this relationship is mixed at best. While some studies report that greater numbers of migrants are associated with more negative attitudes (Meuleman et al. 2009; Quillian 1995; Semyonov et al. 2006), others fail to find such correlations (Hjerm 2007; Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes 2017; Semyonov et al. 2004; Sides and Citrin 2007). Our first aim is to test the effect of *the actual inflow of immigrants on anti-immigrant attitudes*. In contrast to much of previous comparative research, which was often based on cross-sectional research designs, we take a longitudinal perspective, estimating models that control for all unobserved time-constant country characteristics. Indeed, prior research indicates that threat arises primarily when the outgroup gains relative advantage, meaning that natives react more to *changes* in the outgroup size than they notice the average *level* of group size (Czymara 2021; Heizmann and Huth 2021; Meuleman et al. 2009; Newman and Velez 2014). Our first aim is to test the classical group threat hypothesis, but from a longitudinal perspective:

Hypothesis 1: Public opinion becomes more negative during times of high in-migration.  
(Group Size-Hypothesis)

Many studies on the group threat-paradigm draw upon the work of (Blumer 1958), who argued that racial prejudice stems from perceptions about the relative positions of a society's ethnic groups. However, the lion's share of these studies so far has neglected an important aspect of Blumer's original argument. Blumer states that '*representatives and agents of the dominant group*' play an important role in '*characterising the subordinate group as such*' (Blumer 1958:6). Generating a collective image of the ethnic outgroup through public speakers is hence an important prerequisite of ethnic prejudice. Political elites are one of the key sources of such images because they inform the general public about social and political conditions and developments (Flores 2018). By interpreting such information, political elites influence natives' understanding of social reality (Careja 2015; Chong and Druckman 2007). This reasoning is corroborated by a literature review of Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014), who conclude that '*elite rhetoric play[s] a central theoretical role[...]* in explanations of immigration attitudes' (244).

Following Czymara (2020), we define political elite discourses as 'the sum of political elites' frames, arguments, and narratives' and as a 'contextual character, in the sense that they are a feature of a country at a certain time point' (1215). Individuals are exposed to political elite discourses either directly, such as through the consumption of mass media (Meltzer et al. 2020), or indirectly, such as through personal communication (Kalogeropoulou and Hopmann 2018) or the use of social media (Bail et al. 2018). Political elite discourses hence theoretically concern all natives, although not to the same degree.

Accordingly, research has shown that a more negative political climate is associated with more exclusionary public opinion (Bohman 2011; Hjerm 2007). This relationship is not limited to negative views, as countries where political elites are more inclusionary tend to have more open populaces (Czymara 2020). However, the aforementioned studies mostly compare differences between countries, which complicates causal claims. We investigate temporal variation in political elite discourses and variation in public opinion within countries, thereby ruling out time-constant omitted variable bias on the country-level (also see: Heizmann and Huth 2021; Mitchell 2021). We formulate the following complementary hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: Public opinion becomes more negative during times political elites are more *exclusionary*. (*Exclusionary Discourse-Hypothesis*)

Hypothesis 2b: Public opinion becomes more positive during times political elites are more *inclusionary*. (*Inclusionary Discourse-Hypothesis*)

## Political orientation and education as predictors of anti-immigration attitudes

We are interested in the role of two individual-level characteristics: Political orientation and education. Anti-immigration views have become a core element of the political right's ideology (Abou-Chadi et al. 2021; Gessler and Hunger 2021; de Vries, Hakhverdian, and Lancee 2013). A right-wing orientation is, thus, one of the most robust predictors in the literature on anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g.: Bohman 2011; Careja 2015; Heizmann and Ziller 2020).

Similarly, research unambiguously shows that individuals with a higher education are more open toward immigrants. The interpretation of this finding, however, gives rise to scholarly debate. On one hand, individuals with higher education are more likely to be economically and socially secure and thus might feel less threatened by newcomers (Quillian 1995; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). On the other hand, higher education may also have a liberalising effect by transmitting values of openness and tolerance (Cavaille and Marshall 2019; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007) or higher cultural capital (Van der Waal and De Koster 2015). A third branch of research even argues that education itself does not have a causal effect on attitudes, but that those individuals who develop their openness early in life tend to self-select into higher education (Lancee and Sarrasin 2015; Weber 2022). All three mechanisms predict that those with higher education should be less likely to feel threatened by immigration, thus, hold more positive attitudes toward immigrants.

## Political orientation and education as moderators

Crucially, the macro- and micro-level determinants we discussed so far can also have a combined effect on anti-immigration attitudes. That is, changes in macro-level conditions might affect certain segments of society more than others, which can lead to polarisation.

Based on the idea of group threat, increasing immigration rates should resonate most with the political right and those with lower education. The political right's out-group

hostility (Abou-Chadi et al. 2021; Gessler and Hunger 2021) should be most relevant in contexts where immigration is rising. Hence, those on the political right should react most to immigration. This reasoning has been supported in the context of the 2015/16 refugee influx to Europe (Czymara 2021:1321 f.).

Hypothesis 3: Polarization among the political left and right increases in times of high immigration. (*Immigration Ideology Polarization-Hypothesis*)

Moreover, those with higher education should feel less threatened by education, both because of their more secure social status and because they are likely to be more tolerant.

Hypothesis 4: Polarization between educational groups increases in times of high immigration. (*Immigration Education Polarization-Hypothesis*)

Social polarisation may not be primarily caused by actual immigration, but by the political elite discourses surrounding it. That is, different types of elite discourses can boost polarisation along preexisting ideological lines and education levels.

Political elite discourses should have a stronger effect on threat perceptions based on existing beliefs and values of an individual (Bail et al. 2018), ultimately captured by their political orientation. Political information that is congruent with natives' existing orientations is more likely to be incorporated into their own argumentation and should thus reinforce attitudes, whereas challenging information should more often be rejected (Careja 2015; Taber and Lodge 2006). Being politically right-wing implies harbouring more traditionalist values, hence being more negative toward immigration (de Vries et al. 2013). Importantly for cross-national research, the political right is associated with traditionalist values across different social contexts, i.e. in Western Europe but also in the Eastern post-communist countries (Thorisdottir et al. 2007). This means that people aligning themselves with the political right are likely to feel vindicated in contexts where political elites refer to immigration-related issues more negatively. In the same fashion, those adhering to the political left should feel vindicated in contexts where political elites refer to immigration and diversity more positively (Czymara 2020). Thus, we expect that:

Hypothesis 5: Inclusionary and exclusionary political elite discourses increase the difference between attitudes of the political left and right. (*Discourses Ideology Polarization-Hypothesis*)

Finally, education can play multiple roles regarding the impact of political elite discourses. Those with a more secure social standing and an established norm of tolerance and openness should be less receptive toward elite discourse. In addition, education is the main source of political knowledge (Highton 2009), which determines voters' openness toward political information (Schemer 2012; Zaller 1992). While these mechanisms differ theoretically, they ultimately lead to the same prediction: political elites should be more likely to convince voters with lower education, which is our final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: Inclusionary and exclusionary political elite discourses increase the difference in attitudes between educational groups. (*Discourses Education Polarization-Hypothesis*)

## Data

Individual-level data come from eight rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS), covering 2002–2019. Instead of the survey rounds, which refer to broad periods (regularly

stretching over two years) we measure the exact year of the interviews to construct our indicator of time. This results in a variable which captures 18 consecutive years. Table A1 in the appendix provides an overview of our sample. It shows the countries, years, and sample sizes at all levels of the analysis. In total, our sample includes 22 countries, 290 country-time combinations, and 322,044 individual observations, of which 35,029 observations (10.88%) could be included by means of multiple imputation (see below).

### ***Outcome: anti-immigration attitudes***

Three items in the ESS are surveyed each round and aim to measure anti-immigration attitudes: (1.) ‘Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]’s economy that people come to live here from other countries?; (2.) ‘[...] would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?; (3.) ‘Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?’ While these items tap into economic and cultural issues, factor analyses show that responses form a single factor (e.g.: Billiet, Meuleman, and De Witte 2014:142; Kuntz, Davidov, and Semyonov 2017). We therefore construct a one-dimensional index of anti-immigrant attitudes. Originally, the items were measured on 11-point scales where higher values mean more positive attitudes. We reversed the items for the analysis to measure anti-immigration attitudes. The index is based on the average response across the three measures and has been standardised for the analysis. For respondents with missing values on one or two of the items, the index has been constructed from the non-missing observations.

### ***Macro-level independent variables***

At the country-level, we measure the actual inflow of foreigners as a percent of the total population. The absolute inflow is taken from the OECD’s International Migration Data Base. To calculate the relative inflow as a percent of the population, we used additional data from the OECD’s Historical Population Data Base. We control for economic prosperity, using the Gross Domestic Product per Capita (GDP/c). GDP/c is measured in thousands of US dollars and comes from the OECD’s Dataset Gross Domestic Product. To control for short-term economic conditions, we also include the unemployment rate as a percent of the labour force, which is taken from the OECD’s Annual Labor Force Statistics Summary Tables. The OECD data on unemployment rates had some missing values, which have been imputed by linear inter- and extrapolation (7.2% of the data).

In addition to OECD data, we draw upon the data of the Manifesto Project Database to measure political elite discourses (Werner, Lacewell, and Volkens 2015). The Manifesto Project Database is based on quantitative content analyses of party manifestos before elections. In particular, the data report the share of each party’s manifesto that is devoted to certain pre-defined topics (Klingemann et al. 2006). The share could theoretically range from 0 (issue not mentioned) to 100 (nothing else mentioned). Importantly, the coding is based on the same instructions across all countries and time points, which makes the data ideally suited for cross-national as well as temporal comparisons (Careja 2015; Schmidt and Spies 2014).



Following Czymara (2020), we use the positive and the negative versions of two broader categories that include immigration-related issues: *national way of life* and *multiculturalism*.<sup>1</sup> A country's political elite discourse is operationalised in the following way: We first take the values for each of the four items [national way of life positive (per601), national way of life negative (per602), multiculturalism positive (per607), and multiculturalism negative (per608)] for each party in a national election. To account for the fact that statements put forward by larger parties are more likely to influence public opinion, we weight these values with a party's actual vote share. Based on the values for each party on each issue, we generate four new variables for each country. These variables are the country means for each of the four items over all parties during one election. Finally, we combine these country means to operationalise *exclusionary party discourse* as the country mean of multiculturalism(negative) added to the country mean of national way of life(positive) and *inclusionary party discourse* as the country mean of multiculturalism(positive) and national way of life(negative).

As our individual data are measured at intervals of one year, while elections are typically less frequent, we impute missing data for the two discourse variables. We use linear inter- and extrapolation, since we assume that these variables proxy the discursive political elite climate, but they do not cause shifts in the discourse themselves. Overall, we imputed 74% of the discourse measures, reflecting the fact that elections typically happen every four years. Please see Section F in the online appendix for detailed information on the macro-level data and the imputation procedure.

### **Individual-level independent variables**

At the individual level, our interest lies in political orientation, which we capture with the left-right-self-placement (11-point scale) and educational level. We differentiate between low (ISCED 0-2), medium (ISCED 3-4) and high (ISCED 5-6) education levels. We furthermore control for age, sex, and migration background. We treat respondents as having a migration background if they or at least one of their parents was born outside their country of residence.

### **Multiple imputation**

For the dependent variable as well as the independent variables of sex, age, education, and migration background, we find only a small number of missing values, ranging from 0.08% for sex to 1.38% for anti-immigrant sentiments. The latter number holds because we estimated the index of anti-immigrant sentiments whenever the data provides at least one valid response. Following the general recommendation that missing data of less than 5% can be ignored (Schafer 1999), we performed listwise deletion of our data if any of the aforementioned variables had a missing value. In total this amounts to 2.87% of observations. With the remaining observations ( $n = 322,044$ ), we performed multiple imputations for the left-right self-placement, which has a substantial number of missing values (11.55%). In total, we imputed  $m = 5$  values for every missing observation of left-right self-placement. All estimates presented in the following are based on these multiple imputations, using Rubin's rules for the combination of multiple estimates (Rubin 2004). Section D in the online appendix provides more details about the imputation procedure.



## Standardization

For the multivariate statistical analysis, we z-standardised all non-dichotomous variables: anti-immigrant attitudes – the dependent variable – and the independent variables of left-right self-placement, age, GDP/c, unemployment rate, inflow of foreigners, exclusionary discourse, and inclusionary discourse. This allows for better comparability of effect sizes across these measures. More importantly, centering around zero is helpful for the interpretation of the complex interaction models.

## Method

We pool data from eight waves of the ESS, which provides a data set with a three-level structure in which individuals are nested in country-years, which are, in turn, nested in countries (Schmidt-Catran and Fairbrother 2016). This structure allows for an estimation of within-country effects of macro-level variables (Fairbrother 2014; Schmidt-Catran, Fairbrother, and Andreß 2019). Following Fairbrother, we employ a hierarchical mixed effects model and decompose all country-level variables' effects into their within- and between-country components. The basic model has the following form:

$$y_{jti} = \alpha + \beta X_{jti} + \gamma^{BE} \bar{Z}_j + \gamma^{WE} (Z_{jt} - \bar{Z}_j) + u_{0j} + u_{1jt} + e_{jti}$$

where  $y_{jti}$  is the value of the dependent variable in country  $j$ , at year  $t$  for individual  $i$ .  $X_{jti}$  is a vector of individual-level variables with corresponding coefficients  $\beta$ . Country-level characteristics are included in the vector  $Z$ , which is decomposed into its within ( $Z_{jt} - \bar{Z}_j$ ) and between ( $\bar{Z}_j$ ) country components. While the between effects ( $\gamma^{BE}$ ) are based on cross-sectional variation and describe differences between countries, the within effects ( $\gamma^{WE}$ ) are identified from longitudinal variation within countries over time and are controlled for any time-constant characteristics on the country-level. This modelling technique has become very prominent, as it combines the virtues of panel data analysis with multilevel modelling and promises to provide better causal estimates (Schmidt-Catran et al. 2019).

We have a specific interest in cross-level interaction effects, for which Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran (2019) have demonstrated that the standard modelling approach, as proposed by Fairbrother, does not work, because it mixes within and between components in the estimation of such interaction effects. We, therefore, employ a model specification that identifies also the cross-level interactions solely from within-country variation. For example, we estimate how the effect of political orientation depends on within-country variation in political elite discourse. This is done via an extension of Fairbrother's model, which decomposes also the cross-level interaction effects into their within- and between-country components (Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran 2019). At the country level, this specification controls not only for unobserved heterogeneity, but also for unobserved *effect* heterogeneity in the individual-level variable of interest. Specifically, we partial out the between-effects of the interaction of interest:

$$\begin{aligned} y_{jti} = & \alpha + \beta X_{jti} + \gamma_X^{BE} \bar{X}_j + \gamma_Z^{BE} \bar{Z}_j + \gamma^{WE} (Z_{jt} - \bar{Z}_j) + \delta^{WE} X_{jti} (Z_{jt} - \bar{Z}_j) + \delta^{BE} X_{jti} \bar{Z}_j \\ & + u_{00j} + u_{01j} X_{jti} + u_{10jt} + u_{10jt} X_{jti} + e_{jti} \end{aligned}$$

Note that  $X$  and  $Z$  are vectors of individual- and country-level variables, but the interactions are estimated only for the variables of interest, not the entire vector. To estimate these interactions the model adds a number of terms:  $\delta^{WE}X_{jti}(Z_{jt} - \bar{Z}_j) + \delta^{BE}X_{jti}\bar{Z}_j$  decomposes the interaction effect into its within and between components, where  $\delta^{WE}$  is the within and  $\delta^{BE}$  the between effect.  $\gamma_X^{BE}\bar{X}_j$  partials out the between effect of the individual variable of interest, which is not strictly necessary to decompose the within and between effect of the interaction, but it makes the coefficient  $\beta$  a within country estimate. Due to the centering of the interacted variables  $Z$ ,  $\beta$  then provides the average within effect across all countries. As the decomposition only accounts for effect heterogeneity of  $X$  that is correlated with  $Z$ , we also add random slopes of the individual-level variable of interest ( $u_{01j}X_{jti}$  and  $u_{10jt}X_{jti}$ ), accounting for the general effect heterogeneity of  $X$ . This is important to avoid downward bias in the standard errors (Heisig and Schaeffer 2019) and allows us to quantify the variation explained by the cross-level interactions.

## Results<sup>2</sup>

In the first step of our analysis, we ask whether there is a time trend in anti-immigration attitudes and how it is best modelled. Table A2 in the appendix shows four models: M0 is an empty model, which estimates the distribution of variances across the three levels and provides a reference for all following models; models M1 to M3 employ different specifications of time trends. The empty model M0, unsurprisingly, shows that the largest share of variance is located at the individual level (89%). However, it still leaves a substantial part of variance at the contextual levels (11%). Most of the contextual variance is between-country variation, but there is sufficient within-country variation over time to support our estimation strategy, which uses exactly this source of variation to identify the effects of interest: About 23% of higher-level variation, i.e. country and country-year variation, is variation within countries over time.

Model M1 accounts for variation over time by means of dummy variables, while M2 imposes a linear time trend and M3 adds an additional quadratic component. The quadratic model does not yield any significant component, while the dummy and the linear specification both show a significant decline in anti-immigration attitudes. Based on the AIC and BIC, which both penalise model complexity, we select the model with the linear function as the preferred specification. Therefore, from here on we treat time as having a linear effect. Overall, the trend is neither very strong, nor does it explain much of the variation within countries over time. The dummy specification reduces the residual variation at the country-year level by about 16%, while the linear trend explains about 8% of the variation. Thus, within our sample there is not much of a global time trend in anti-immigration attitudes. Nevertheless, we keep time in the models to avoid attributing any global trend to our variables' effects.

In the next step, we add all individual-level variables to our model (M4 in Table 1) to account for compositional effects first. In models M5 to M10 (Table 1), we add the country-level variables separately and in various combinations. In these models we examine the main effects of the country-level variables. In model M5, we add the actual inflow of foreigners. Both the within and between effects are significantly negative, which is actually the opposite of what the group-size Hypothesis (H1) predicts. Interestingly, this negative within effect holds in all model specifications (M5, M9 and M10). In

**Table 1.** Main effects on anti-immigrant sentiments.

	M4		M5		M6		M7		M8		M9		M10	
Year	−0.005	**	−0.002		−0.006	***	−0.004	*	−0.006	***	−0.003	*	0.004	
<i>Individual-level variables</i>														
Sex (Ref. = male)														
Female	0.033	***	0.033	***	0.033	***	0.033	***	0.033	***	0.033	***	0.033	***
Age	0.076	***	0.076	***	0.076	***	0.076	***	0.076	***	0.076	***	0.076	***
Age <sup>2</sup>	−0.020	***	−0.020	***	−0.020	***	−0.020	***	−0.020	***	−0.020	***	−0.020	***
Migration background (Ref. = no)														
Yes	−0.310	***	−0.310	***	−0.310	***	−0.310	***	−0.310	***	−0.310	***	−0.310	***
Education (Ref. = ISCED 5-6)														
ISCED 4-5	0.390	***	0.390	***	0.390	***	0.390	***	0.390	***	0.390	***	0.390	***
ISCED 0-2	0.574	***	0.574	***	0.574	***	0.574	***	0.574	***	0.574	***	0.574	***
Left-right	0.085	***	0.085	***	0.085	***	0.085	***	0.085	***	0.085	***	0.085	***
<i>Context-level variables</i>														
Inflow foreigners [BE]			−0.165	***							−0.142	**	−0.124	*
Inflow foreigners [WE]			−0.068	***							−0.070	***	−0.059	***
Exclusionary Discourse [BE]					0.135	*			0.148	*	0.097		0.070	
Exclusionary Discourse [WE]					0.039	**			0.048	**	0.056	***	0.056	***
Inclusionary Discourse [BE]							0.052		−0.028		−0.018		−0.003	
Inclusionary Discourse [WE]							−0.038	**	−0.045	***	−0.038	**	−0.041	***
GDP/c [BE]													−0.064	
GDP/c [WE]													−0.072	**
Unemployment rate [BE]													−0.040	
Unemployment rate [WE]													0.002	
Constant	−0.251	***	−0.270	***	−0.235	***	−0.255	***	−0.240	***	−0.256	***	−0.325	***
Variance components	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)
Var(Country)	0.083	(0.026)	0.057	(0.018)	0.071	(0.022)	0.080	(0.025)	0.070	(0.022)	0.052	(0.016)	0.051	(0.016)
Var(Country-year)	0.019	(0.002)	0.017	(0.002)	0.018	(0.002)	0.018	(0.002)	0.018	(0.002)	0.016	(0.002)	0.015	(0.002)
Var(Residual)	0.831	(0.002)	0.831	(0.002)	0.831	(0.002)	0.831	(0.002)	0.831	(0.002)	0.831	(0.002)	0.831	(0.002)

Notes: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (one-sided tests). Estimates are based on multiple imputations ( $m = 5$ ). For variance estimates, we report standard errors (se) instead of significance-levels. N (country) = 22, N(country-year) = 290, N(individual) = 322,044.

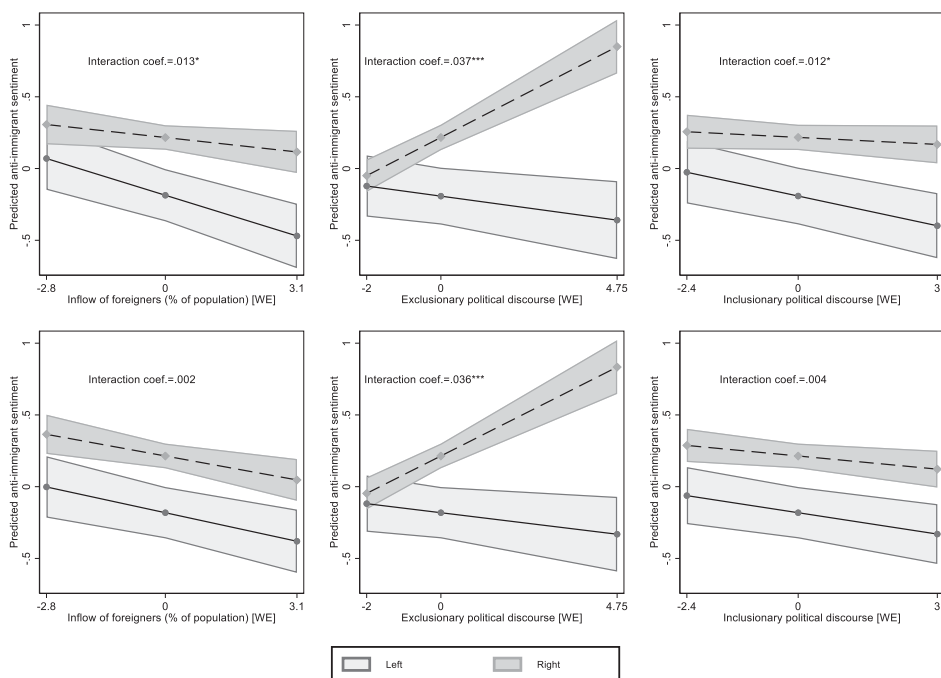
contrast to the unexpected effect of within-country variation in actual immigration, our measures of exclusionary political elite discourse show the positive within and between effects on anti-immigration attitudes that we would theoretically assume (see model M6). The positive and significant within effect of exclusionary discourse also holds in the models controlling for the actual inflow (M9) and additional controls (M10). In contrast to exclusionary discourse, inclusionary discourse is negatively associated with anti-immigrant attitudes within countries. The significant within effect of inclusionary discourse shows up in any of the model specifications (M7 to M10). This means we can confirm Hypothesis H2a as well as Hypothesis 2b, as both discourse variables have the effect we expected.

Looking at the final model M10 in Table 1, we conclude that the actual inflow of foreigners has a *negative* effect on anti-immigrant attitudes, while exclusionary discourses have a *positive* effect and inclusionary discourses have a *negative* effect. Interestingly, the within estimates of the positive and negative discourse effects are of a somewhat comparable size. Thus, the net effect of political discourse on anti-immigrant attitudes depends on how the political discourse is balanced. From the control variables, GDP/c and unemployment rate, only GDP/c has a significant effect, while the unemployment rate does not. We therefore excluded the unemployment rate from all further models. For each country-level variable we find that the within and between effects point in the same direction, though the between effects are mostly not significant. However, this is still interesting, as we see the within effects as better tests for causal relationships. The between effects, however, indicate that the relationships suggested by the within-estimates may also shape the patterns we observe between countries.

After establishing that immigration and discourses are significant predictors of anti-immigrant attitudes, our goal is to test whether they increase polarisation. To this end, we estimate cross-level interactions between the country-level variables and the respondents' political orientations and education levels. We estimated a large number of models, using different estimation strategies (random and fixed effects [RE/FE] as well as two-stage models) and a variety of model specifications. Here we present only the central results from a selection of models. We discuss our additional tests in the section on robustness below and in much more detail in the online appendix (Sections B and C).

Figure 1 summarises the results with regards to political orientation as measured by the left-right dimension (the complete models are in Table A3 in the appendix). All models presented here include random slopes of political orientation at the country and country-year levels and decompose the interaction effects into their within and between components. Figure 1 shows the predicted anti-immigrant sentiment for the left and the right, depending on the three country-level variables of interest; more precisely, conditioned on within-country variation in these variables: The graphs show how polarisation between left and right changes when the country-level variables vary within countries over time. As we partial out the between effect of political orientation, these effects are genuine within-country effects.

When tested separately, the interactions between political orientation on the one hand and actual inflow, inclusionary discourse, and exclusionary discourse on the other hand, are all significantly positive (one-sided tests), but the interaction with exclusionary discourse is about three times the size of the other two interaction effects. The conditional effects from three separate models, each including only one cross-level interaction, are



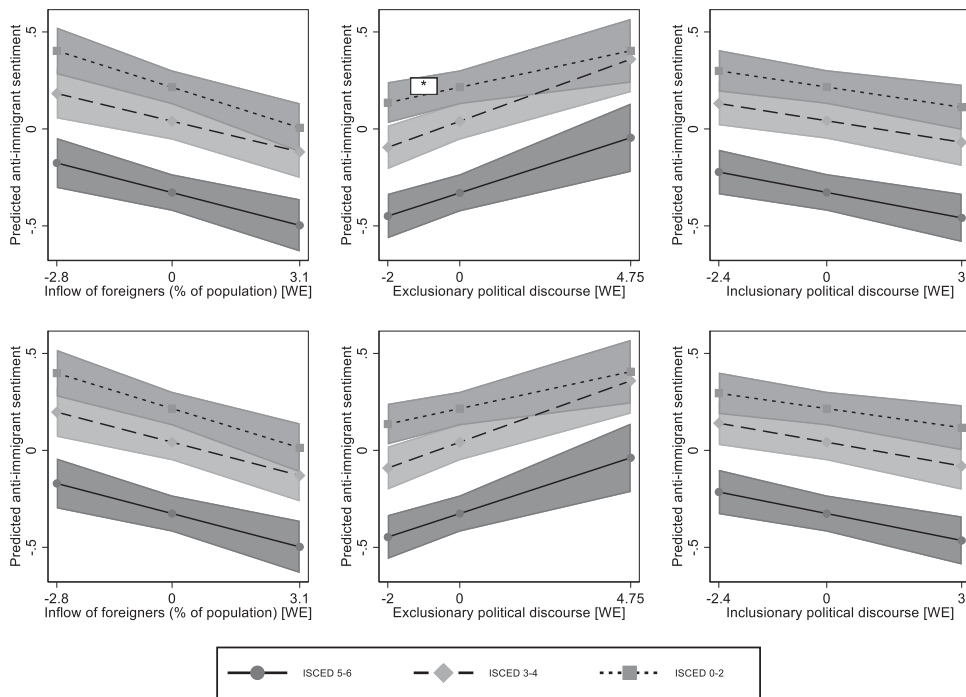
**Figure 1.** Predicted anti-immigrant sentiment from cross-level interaction effects with left-right, conditioned on within-country variation. Notes: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , one-sided tests (significance stars after coefficients relate to the estimated within effect of the cross-level interaction itself, while the 95%-confidence intervals of predictions are based on additional uncertainty from the complete regression function). All estimates use multiple imputation ( $m = 5$ ). The upper panel shows three separate models, each including only one interaction at a time (models M12, M13, and M14 from Table A3). The lower panel shows the three cross-level interactions estimated from a combined model, which includes them all simultaneously (model M15 in Table A3).

shown in the upper panel of Figure 1 (models M12, M13, and M14 in Table A3). These models suggest that polarisation between the political left and right increases when the actual inflow of foreigners increases, as suggested in Hypothesis 3. More importantly, polarisation between the political poles increases with political elite discourses – independent of whether these discourses are positive or negative, as suggested in Hypothesis 5. This is particularly interesting because the main effects of exclusionary and inclusionary discourse are in the opposite direction. Put differently, exclusionary political elites, on average, lead to more hostile attitudes, and this effect is stronger for those on the political right, leading to a polarisation between left and right. Inclusionary political elites, on the other hand, generally reduce anti-immigrant attitudes, but primarily on the political left. This also results in polarisation between the left and the right. In other words, inclusionary discourses may be able to counteract exclusionary discourses on the aggregate level, but they resonate with different parts of society. Consequently, both kinds of discourse may increase polarisation between left and right.

When all three interactions are tested simultaneously, only the interaction with exclusionary discourse remains significant (at the .1 percent-level, one-sided test), while the other two interactions are no longer significant. This, however, may also be due to the

high collinearity in the model, which simultaneously includes three cross-level interactions with and a random slope of the same individual-level variable. The interaction effects from this complete model are depicted in the lower panel of Figure 1. Exclusionary discourse is clearly the strongest driver of polarisation between left and right. The conditional effect of left-right self-placement varies between 0.016, when exclusionary discourse is at its minimum, and 0.255 when it is at its maximum. The interactions with actual inflow and inclusionary discourse are much smaller in size. In the separate models (upper panel of Figure 1), this is also reflected in the variance reductions in the random slope of the left-right self-placement. While the interaction effects with actual immigration and inclusionary discourse explain less than 3 percent of within-country variation in the effect of political ideology, the interaction with exclusionary discourse explains 23 percent of the variation in the slope. Again, exclusionary discourse seems to be the main driver of polarisation between left and right.

Immigration and immigration-related discourses may not only polarise people along ideological lines, but also regarding educational levels. In the next step, we test the cross-level interactions with education. Figure 2 summarises these results. Again, the upper



**Figure 2.** Cross-level interaction effects with education, conditioned on within-country variation in three country-level variables. Notes: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , one-sided tests (significance stars in boxes relate to the estimated within effect of the cross-level interaction itself, while the 95%-confidence intervals of the predictions are based on additional uncertainty from the complete regression function). All estimates use multiple imputation ( $m = 5$ ). The upper panel shows three separate models, each including only one cross-level interaction (models M17, M18, and M19 in Table OA1). The lower panel shows the three cross-level interactions estimated from a combined model (model M20), which includes them all simultaneously. Full models are shown in section A, Table OA1, in the online appendix.

panel shows results from three separate models, in which education interacts with only one of the macro-level variables, while the lower panel presents results from a combined model, in which all three macro-level variables are interacted simultaneously. All models include random slopes for the educational levels at the country- and country-year level. The full models are in the online appendix (Section A, Table OA1). Although we find one significant interaction in the separate models, the overall pattern of the estimated conditional effects clearly speaks against the Hypotheses of increasing polarisation based on education levels (H4 and H6). In the separate models (upper panel in [Figure 2](#)), exclusionary discourse has a significant negative effect on lower-educated individuals, reducing the polarisation between those with high and low educations. This relationship is the opposite of what Hypothesis H6 suggested, but we do not view this model as an indicator of decreasing polarisation either. In fact, there is no consistent effect across the educational groups, as the model also suggests that polarisation between those of high and mid-level education increases at the same time. In the combined model, we do not find any significant interaction between the three country-level variables of interest and educational levels of the respondents.

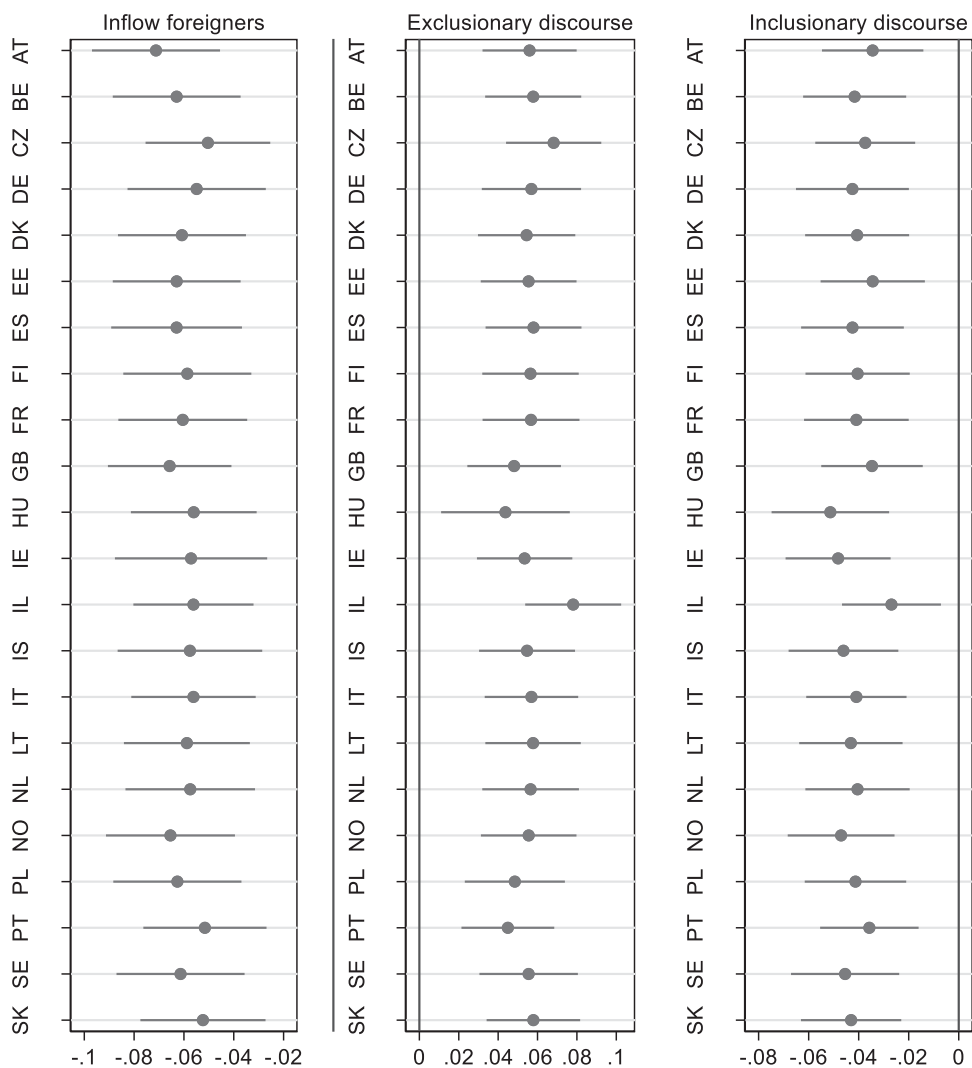
### **Robustness checks**

Multilevel models with countries are characterised by a low number of higher-level clusters and therefore are at risk of highly influential cases (Schmidt-Catran et al. 2019; Van der Meer, Te Grotenhuis, and Pelzer 2010). We therefore tested model M10 (compare [Table 1](#)), which led us to conclude that actual inflow as well as inclusionary and exclusionary discourses have significant effects on anti-immigrant attitudes, with a delete-one approach. One at a time, we excluded each of the 22 countries from the estimation sample and re-estimated the model.<sup>3</sup> The results are presented in [Figure 3](#), which shows the within-country effects of the three country-level variables of interest. Overall, we see these results as a confirmation of our conclusion from the full sample, as results are quite stable.

We also tested the cross-level interaction models (M15 and M20) with a delete-one approach. [Figure 4](#) shows the results for model M15. With the full sample, the within-country interaction between exclusionary discourse and political orientation was significantly positive. This result was confirmed in all models of the delete-one approach. In fact, two outliers (Hungary and Spain) drag the interaction effect between negative political discourse and left-right-self-placement towards zero; indicating that the effect may be even stronger. In other words: our conclusion of a positive significant effect is conservative. Overall, we conclude that our results are sufficiently robust with regard to outliers at the country level. The delete-one results for model M20 are presented in the online appendix (section B, [Figure OA1](#)) and confirm that there are no consistent interaction effects between education levels and the country-level variables. In sum, the delete-one robustness checks support the effects identified in models M10 and M15. Therefore, we tested these two models with a variety of additional checks to ensure that these effects are robust.

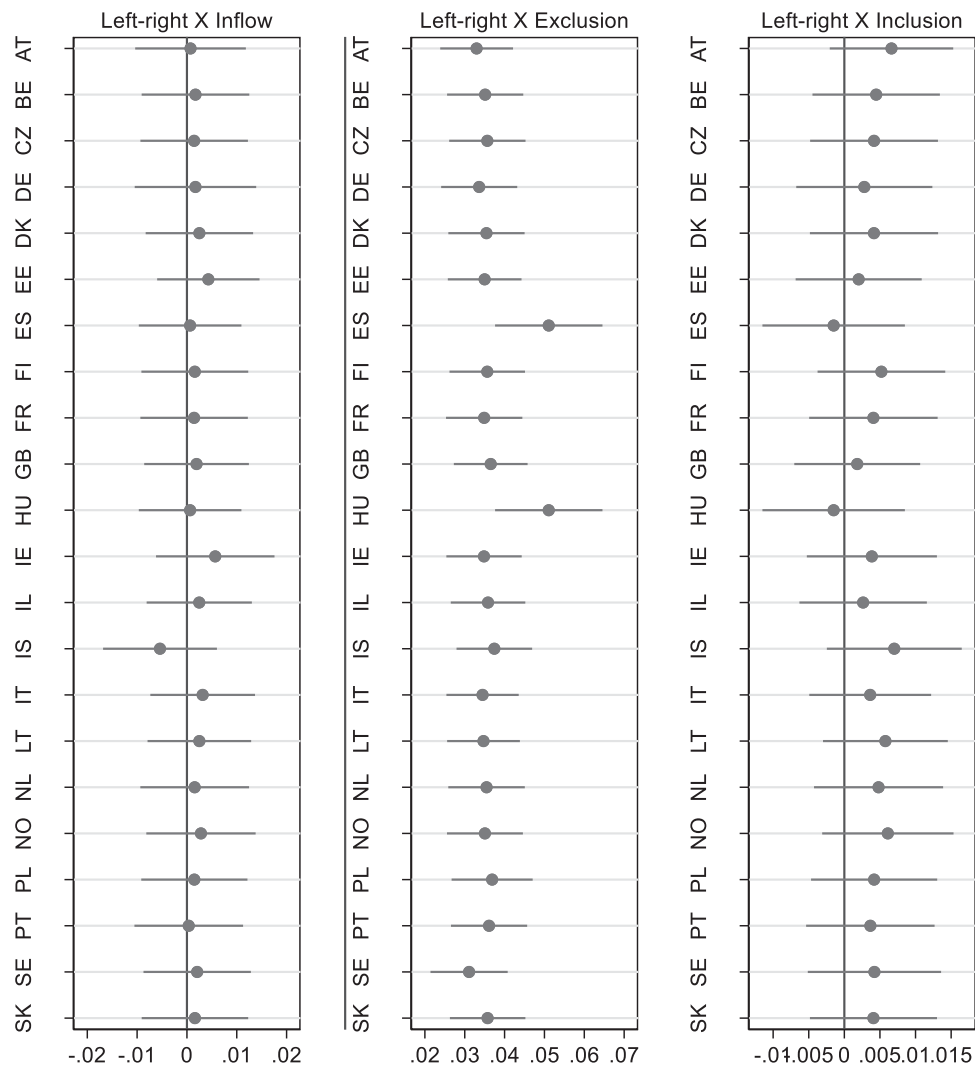
The models M10 and M15 have been re-estimated with an alternative operationalisation of the discourse variables, in which we did not use linear interpolation but instead forward interpolation. This results in a step function, rather than the continuous function





**Figure 3.** Country-level within effects from delete-one estimation (M10). Notes: Compare Table A1 for explanation of country codes. We re-estimated model M10, excluding each of the countries one at a time. The presented coefficients are the within-country effects from the three country-level variables of interest. The dots represent the point estimates and the lines represent 90% confidence intervals, which, if they do not overlap with the vertical line at values 0, indicate significance at the 5%-level with a one-sided test. Estimates are based on multiple imputations ( $m = 3$ ).

we obtained from linear interpolation. We thereby follow Bohman (2011) and Mitchell (2021), who have worked with the same data and opted for this alternative (for more information, see section F in the online appendix). With this alternative operationalisation, the main effects decrease in size – by 35% for exclusionary and 24% for inclusionary discourse, but they remain significant. The interaction with the ideological position is unaffected by the operationalisation. Please see Section B and Table OA2 in the online appendix for details. Finally, we have re-estimated models M10 and M15 without a time trend to make sure that its inclusion does not produce methodological artifacts.



**Figure 4.** Cross-level interactions with left-right (within effects) from delete-one estimation (M15). Notes: Compare Table A1 for explanation of country codes. We re-estimated model M15, excluding each of the countries one at a time. The presented coefficients are the within-country cross-level interactions between inflow of foreigners (in % of population), exclusionary political discourse and inclusionary political discourse. The dots represent the point estimates and the lines represent 90% confidence intervals, which, if they do not overlap with the vertical line at values 0, indicate significance at the 5%-level with a one-sided test. Estimates are based on multiple imputations ( $m = 3$ ).

Apart from small changes in the coefficients, the results are substantially identical. We also estimated models which allowed the time trend to vary across countries. This was done in a fixed effects framework, as these models did not converge with a random effects specification. The results are presented in section C of the online appendix and show that our conclusions remain robust.

Multilevel models impose distributional assumptions about the random effects and shrink estimates towards the normal distribution. An alternative is a two-stage approach

(Gelman 2005), which does not shrink towards the normal distribution and generally imposes fewer restrictions. This is because any individual-level variable's effect is freely estimated for each country, while the multilevel models restrict all individual-level effects without a random slope to being equal across countries. We, therefore, estimated two-stage models to test the main effects and the cross-level interactions for robustness. These models confirm our results, as they replicate the effects from the multilevel models. Please see Section B and Table OA3 in the online appendix for details.

Finally, we tested our models with a fixed effects approach, as suggested by Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran (2019). We do so because the decomposition of multiple cross-level interactions and main effects into within and between components is very complex, as it requires multiple components in the fixed part and in the random part of the regression equation. To ensure that the models yield correct results, we identified the within effects also with a fixed effects approach, which is more straightforward. These models confirmed our estimation results from the RE models (see Section C in the online appendix).

Overall, we conclude from the robustness checks that the main effects of our country-level variables are robust, yet the size of the discourse effects decreases with an alternative operationalisation. The cross-level interaction of exclusionary political discourse and political orientation, in contrast, is very robust against different specifications.

## Conclusion

In contemporary Europe, few social phenomena are discussed as vividly as immigration. However, the relationship between immigration and public opinion is still subject to scholarly debate. In this study, we examined how both actual immigration and political discourses on this issue shape anti-immigration attitudes. Our results reveal that, in contrast to the argument of the group threat theory, rising immigration numbers are associated with less negative attitudes. At the same time, political elite discourses play an important role: When political elites in a country become more positive on immigration-related issues, Europeans – on average – tend to be more open as well. On the other hand, the public becomes more hostile toward foreigners in times where political elites are more exclusionary. Crucially, our results show that all these developments can lead to attitude polarisation along ideological lines. We found strong evidence that the gap in attitudes between the political left and right increases when political elites become more exclusionary. Some models also suggested that increasing immigration inflows and inclusionary discourse could increase polarisation. This implies that even positive and inclusionary rhetoric can have the unintended consequence of dividing the public. Modelling all interactions simultaneously, however, suggests that exclusionary discourses trump inclusionary ones in terms of attitude polarisation. We find no evidence for a polarisation based on educational levels.

In sum, our findings clearly rule out *realistic* group conflict as a driver of inter-group hostility. If anything, more immigration was associated with attitudes that are more positive. Yet, the results are in line with the broader argument that perceiving newcomers as threatening triggers exclusionary attitudes. As we show, however, the cause of these threat perceptions are not the actual conditions (i.e. immigration itself), but rather how national political elites frame immigration. This implies that the national context does

matter, but not so much in a demographic sense (mirroring the findings of the meta-analysis of Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes 2017). Rather, political discourses often concern, for example, the national way of life in a given country. Thus, it is likely that these discourses have nation-wide outreach (or at least are less limited to certain sub-national areas). In other words, from a country-perspective, discursive aspects are more important than objective conditions. Our findings extend the group threat paradigm in a second relevant way: In addition to the focus on negative attitudes that dominates the group threat literature, our findings suggest an ‘anti-threat’ effect, with positive discourses being associated with more welcoming attitudes. Since decreasing out-group hostility is an important goal, focusing on such positive effects could be a promising approach for future research and a fruitful political strategy to enhance inter-group relations.

The positive association between immigration and attitudes might be seen as somewhat puzzling. The most popular explanation for this is inter-group contact. Pettigrew (1998) most prominently brought forward the argument that interaction between ethnic groups can have the power to reduce ethnic and racial prejudice. However, we are cautious to apply this explanation to our study, as the national level is a very broad one. It is unlikely that people have contact with immigrants nationwide. Prior research rather has shown that contact is more likely on local levels (Weber 2015). Another explanation for our finding is that immigrants may self-select into more friendly countries. This should be particularly true for the years 2015/16, when refugees fled primarily to more welcoming countries such as Germany and Sweden. The dynamics between a ‘welcoming culture’ and selective immigration could be subject to further research. Similarly, our proxy for the political elite climate is somewhat crude, as it is based on party manifestos and thereby limited to election years. To solve this, we imputed values for the years between elections. Future research might want to use a more fine-grained measure of political rhetoric, perhaps by drawing upon parliamentary debates, politicians’ posts on social media, or press releases (Gessler and Hunger 2021). One should keep in mind, though, that collecting such data systematically across a large number of countries and over a long time span would be a very demanding project. Finally, we deliberately abstracted from the actual content of elite discourses to enable our cross-national and longitudinal comparisons. However, future research might want to look at the effects of specific arguments in more detail.

## Notes

1. Two sub-items directly relate to immigration and diversity/assimilation. These would fit the theoretical argument perfectly. However, we opt for the more general items because the more fine-grained ones are unfortunately not available for most of the countries in the analysis. We assume that the broader items proxy the immigration discourse.
2. Our complete analysis can be replicated using a replication package we provide. Please see section E in the online appendix for more information.
3. In the delete-one models, we reduced the number of imputed data sets to 3 instead of 5 to reduce the computation time.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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**Table A1.** Sample description.

Country	Year																		Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Austria (AT)		2,162		2,218		2,350							265	1,510	1,985		2,298	174	12,962
Belgium (BE)	1,662	97	1,631	138	1,144	648	997	747	797	896	1,845		1,675	76	1,605	139	1,526	229	15,852
Czech Republic (CZ)	866	349	2,714					1,952		2,322		1,796	670	1,376	2,248		1,127	1,225	16,645
Germany (DE)	221	2,652	2,365	413	2,551	273	2,125	581	1,976	1,001	2,689	196	2,420	583	2,484	324	1,806	514	25,174
Denmark (DK)	1,315	133	1,416	41	1,151	312	1,551	36	1,065	496		1,627	1,464	27			1,536	7	12,177
Estonia (EE)			1,299	535	597	832	433	1,131	1,746		2,209	100	1,986		1,775	205	1,693	191	14,732
Spain (ES)	1,402	233	1,438	144	1,361	483	2,515	15		1,871		1,859		1,907		1,936		1,360	16,524
Finland (FI)	1,972		1,998		1,882		1,921	265	1,862		1,876	313	1,903	170	1,537	373	1,484	251	17,807
France (FR)		1,490	862	922	1,319	648	1,967	89	1,443	265		1,949	1,557	334	1,446	595	1,123	852	16,861
Great Britain (GB)	1,870	140	1,429	325	2,336	16	2,263	41	2,150	144	1,925	234	1,596	568	1,712	158	1,844	267	19,018
Hungary (HU)	1,576			1,451	1,286	149		1,506	1,520		1,817	114		1,662		1,543		1,584	14,208
Ireland (IE)	26	1,959		2,229	585	1,006		1,324	421	2,370	1,120	1,606	1,767	550	177	2,519	390	1,751	19,800
Israel (IL)	2,196	151					1,193	1,176		2,111	2,016	242		2,440	1,858	536			13,919
Iceland (IS)				495							594	148			234	629		776	2,876
Italy (IT)		1,174										901				2,555	106	2,577	7,313
Lithuania (LT)										1,508		1,992		2,126		2,034		1,780	9,440
Netherlands (NL)	2,025	323	1,497	374	1,404	475	1,119	650	1,167	651	1,475	364	1,811	81	1,450	217	1,535	109	16,727
Norway (NO)	1,929	70	1,735	20	1,744		1,515	26	1,347	170	1,436	178	1,427		1,535	1	598	766	14,497
Poland (PL)	1,998		1,662		1,661	2	1,408	168	1,669	32	1,840	13		1,571	1,350	302	946	497	15,119
Portugal (PT)	1,350	95	548	1,424	735	1,323	968	1,305	186	1,916	391	1,709		1,250	236	1,016	107	909	15,468
Sweden (SE)	1,970		1,810	115	1,674	230	1,648	162	1,021	458	1,041	787	1,754	13	1,397	129	1,010	488	15,707
Slovaika (SK)			1,306		817	791	1,066	631	1,267	502	1,364	416						1,058	9,218
Total	22,378	11,028	23,710	10,844	22,247	9,538	22,689	11,805	19,637	16,713	23,638	16,544	20,295	16,244	23,029	15,211	19,129	17,365	322,044

Note: Sample size after multiple imputation of missing values in left-right self-placement. Sample size before imputation was 287,015.

**Table A2.** Empty model and time trend of anti-immigrant sentiments.

	M0		M1		M2		M3	
Year dummies (Ref. = 2002)								
2003			−0.074					
2004			0.044					
2005			0.011					
2006			−0.035					
2007			−0.076					
2008			−0.098					
2009			−0.107					
2010			−0.050					
2011			−0.014					
2012			−0.099					
2013			−0.068					
2014			−0.059					
2015			−0.049					
2016			−0.139*					
2017			−0.092					
2018			−0.198***					
2019			−0.173***					
Year					−0.009***		−0.002	
Year <sup>2</sup>							−0.000	
Constant	−0.011		0.065		0.068		0.049	
<i>Variance components</i>	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)
Var(Country)	0.086	(0.027)	0.087	(0.027)	0.086	(0.027)	0.086	(0.027)
Var(Country-year)	0.025	(0.002)	0.021	(0.002)	0.023	(0.002)	0.023	(0.002)
Var(Residual)	0.907	(0.002)	0.907	(0.002)	0.907	(0.002)	0.907	(0.002)
<i>Statistics</i>								
AIC	883457.932		883450.337		883438.409		883439.309	
BIC	883500.662		883674.668		883491.821		883503.403	

Notes: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (two-sided tests). For variance estimates, we report standard errors (se) instead of significance-levels.  $N(\text{country})=22$ ,  $N(\text{country-year})=290$ ,  $N(\text{individual})=322,044$ .

**Table A3.** Cross-level interaction effects with left-right.

	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	
Year	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	
<i>Individual-level variables</i>						
Sex (Ref. = male)						
Female	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***	0.037***	
Age	0.069***	0.069***	0.069***	0.069***	0.069***	
Age <sup>2</sup>	-0.020***	-0.020***	-0.020***	-0.020***	-0.020***	
Migration background (Ref. = no)						
Yes	-0.302***	-0.302***	-0.302***	-0.302***	-0.302***	
Education (Ref. = ISCED 5-6)						
ISCED 4-5	0.378***	0.378***	0.378***	0.378***	0.378***	
ISCED 0-2	0.564***	0.564***	0.564***	0.564***	0.564***	
Left-right	0.091***	0.088***	0.090***	0.090***	0.087***	
<i>Context-level variables</i>						
Inflow foreigners [BE]	-0.117	-0.322***	-0.254***	-0.255***	-0.327***	
Inflow foreigners [WE]	-0.059***	-0.061***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	
Exclusionary Discourse [BE]	0.086	0.284***	0.281***	0.283***	0.242***	
Exclusionary Discourse [WE]	0.061***	0.061***	0.051***	0.061***	0.051***	
Inclusionary Discourse [BE]	-0.001	-0.096	-0.094	-0.079	-0.067	
Inclusionary Discourse [WE]	-0.039***	-0.039***	-0.039***	-0.042***	-0.040***	
GDP/c [BE]	-0.050	0.221**	0.220**	0.221**	0.219**	
GDP/c [WE]	-0.073**	-0.075**	-0.074**	-0.075**	-0.075**	
Left-right [BE]		-1.581***	-1.577***	-1.582***	-1.574***	
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>						
Left-right X Inflow foreigners [BE]		0.051*			0.056**	
Left-right X Inflow foreigners [WE]		0.013*			0.002	
Left-right X Exclusionary Discourse [BE]			0.001		0.031	
Left-right X Exclusionary Discourse [WE]			0.037***		0.036***	
Left-right X Inclusionary Discourse [BE]				-0.012	-0.021	
Left-right X Inclusionary Discourse [WE]				0.012*	0.004	
Constant	-0.320***	-0.306***	-0.309***	-0.309***	-0.305***	
<i>Variance components</i>						
	Var	(se)	Var	(se)	Var	(se)
<i>Country level (between country)</i>						
Var(Constant)	0.052	(0.016)	0.052	(0.021)	0.056	(0.024)
Var(Left-right)	0.014	(0.004)	0.011	(0.004)	0.014	(0.004)
Cov(Constant, Left-right)	0.001	(0.008)	-0.016	(0.008)	-0.020	(0.010)
<i>Country-year level (within country)</i>						
Var(Constant)	0.015	(0.001)	0.015	(0.001)	0.015	(0.001)
Var(Left-right)	0.003	(0.000)	0.003	(0.000)	0.003	(0.000)
Cov(Constant, Left-right)	-0.001	(0.001)	-0.001	(0.001)	-0.001	(0.001)
Var(Residual)	0.815	(0.002)	0.815	(0.002)	0.815	(0.002)

Notes: \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001 (one-sided tests). Estimates are based on multiple imputations ( $m=5$ ). For variance estimates, we report standard errors (se) instead of significance-levels. N (country)=22, N(country-year)=290, N(individual)=322,044. The within-country effects of left-right is labeled as 'Left-right', while the between-country effect is labeled 'Left-right [BE]'. The latter effect is not of any substantial interest but necessary to make the former a strict within-country estimate.