Changing attitudes towards migration in Europe. Dynamic analyses (2002-2018).

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opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

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Horizon 2020
European Union Funding
for Research & Innovation
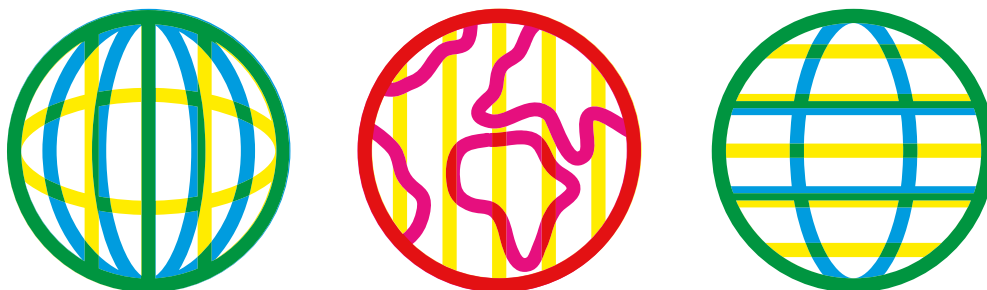
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Dynamic Analyses
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Work Package 4 – Deliverable 4.2

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Extended abstract

In a growingly diverse Europe, understanding what European citizens think about migrants and refugees becomes increasingly relevant. This report seeks to contribute to a better understanding of migration preferences, by examining the changing attitudes of citizens towards immigrants and migration policies in Europe. The aim of the report is two-fold. First, it seeks to understand how attitudes have changed in the last two decades in Europe (2002-2018), and what might be driving these changes. Second, the report uncovers individual and country level typologies of migration preferences.

Part one of the quantitative analyses builds on group conflict, and contact theory. Group conflict theory argues that intergroup competition influences attitudes towards the representatives of an outgroup, such as ethnic minorities or immigrants. These perceptions are not only influenced by the structural position of the individual (e.g., socio-economic status), but also by contextual factors, such as changes in a country's economic situation or an influx of migrants. In contrast, contact theory suggests that more diversity can lead to more support for migration through increased intergroup contact between the host nation and immigrants. Building on these theories and using all nine rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS), the analyses delineate the change in attitudes towards immigrants and migration before, during, and after the refugee crisis of 2015-2016, covering the period between 2002 and 2018. The report examines relevant explanatory factors at the individual (e.g., social class) and contextual level (e.g., % of foreign-born population). Mixed evidence is found for the notion that countries that receive more immigrants, or those that experience an economic downturn, are less supportive of migration. Cleavages between citizens in terms of political attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics, on the other hand, appear to be important drivers of migration preferences. The analyses can thus only partially confirm group conflict or contact theory. There are also some indications that migration attitudes in most European countries have become more positive in the last two decades.

Part two of the analyses investigates the multidimensionality of attitudes towards migration in the European population, through creating a typology of different perspectives on migration. Analyses are based on the European Social Survey's 2002 module, which focuses on attitudes towards migration and asylum policy, and on the 2016 module, which was fielded after the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. These analyses provide evidence for three distinct individual level profiles. Most European citizens can be classified as having either outspokenly open, or restrictive attitudes about migration, and do not distinguish between the type of immigrant, or the aspects of migration citizens find the most threatening. A sizeable group of citizens, moreover, is selective about migration. They are supportive of migration in general, but also fear the impact

of immigrants on their society. Hence, most European citizens remain luke-warm about migration, and this pattern is also reflected at the country level.

1. Introduction

While the European Union is becoming more diverse through increased levels of internal and external migration, it is uncertain if European citizens welcome this diversity. The extent to which European citizens are supportive of immigrants and open border policies, however, can have important implications for immigrants' integration in society (Dempster & Hargrave, 2017), the types of political parties supported by Europeans (Ford & Jennings, 2020; Kriesi et al., 2012), and for Europe's social cohesion in general (Ivarsflaten & Strømsnes, 2013; Putnam, 2007). If most European citizens mainly think of migration as a threat to their country, the risk of societal polarisation, and an increasingly hostile environment for migrants could become a reality. Following the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, it indeed seemed like Europe was becoming more polarised on the issue of migration, as the crisis provided fertile ground for anti-immigrant narratives and led to the rise of radical parties campaigning on these issues (Claassen & McLaren, 2021; Rea et al., 2019). On the other hand, an unprecedented wave of support for refugees ("*Wir Schaffen Das*") was observed in many countries (Rea et al., 2019), and such support for refugees has again been observed in response to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Through analyses of European survey data over a period of almost two decades (2002-2018), **this report** examines attitudes towards immigrants in Europe. It **sheds light on what European citizens think about migration, what explains these attitudes over time, and whether specific individual and country typologies can be found**. By doing so, the differences between European citizens and between European countries are explored.

This report forms part of a larger research endeavour, in the auspices of the OPPORTUNITIES Horizon 2020 project on migration narratives (see Box 1 for more details). Concretely, the report investigates the general hypothesis of the OPPORTUNITIES project: did the refugee crisis of 2015-2016 turn into a crisis of Europe itself, in which citizens became more divided on the question of diversity? Are changing attitudes towards immigrants and migration connected to the rise of right-wing parties, nationalistic attitudes, and Euroscepticism? More specifically, this study seeks answers to the following research questions, as identified in the project's grant agreement:

- What is the evolution of attitudes towards migration across European countries?
- What is the impact of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis on citizens' perceptions of migration and immigrants?
- Which relevant factors at the individual and at the contextual level influence citizens' perceptions of migration and changes therein?
- Can we identify a typology of attitudes towards immigrants in the European population?
- Can we identify country-level typologies according to the dominant attitudes of their citizens towards migration?
- Are attitudes towards migration associated with nationalism, (right-wing) populist voting, and support for EU integration?

Box 1 The Opportunities project (Horizon 2020)

In the light of increasingly hostile and toxic narratives on migration in Europe, the OPPORTU-NITIES consortium, a Horizon 2020 project funded by the European Commission, strives to initiate a new, forward-looking debate on migration, which is grounded on the principles of fair dialogue, multi-perspectivity, and an ethics of listening.

OPPORTUNITIES brings together migrants, citizens, and stakeholders on national, local, and regional levels in several African and European countries, encouraging them to listen to each other and to create shared narratives of migration through cross-talks. The main objective of these cross-talks, a method of collaborative storytelling designed for the project, is to establish common ground for a fair conversation that seeks to integrate African and European perspectives. On national and transnational levels, OPPORTUNITIES seeks to introduce the notion of level telling fields, initiating a new debate on migration and integration. The project combines theoretical and practical research in an innovative manner. By combining qualitative and quantitative research from the fields of interdisciplinary narrative research and the social sciences, OPPORTUNITIES explores, analyses, and evaluates representations of migration and immigration in various media, especially the press and social media. Art-based methods (e.g., short film productions and exhibitions) and an international theatre production, moreover, serve to promote and encourage a fair conversation on migration and integration across national borders and across different parts of society.

This study builds on the analyses conducted in the OPPORTUNITIES report of Goubin, Ruelens and Nicaise (2022) "Trends in attitudes towards migration in Europe". This initial report, based on descriptive statistical analyses, found evidence for important cleavages between citizens in their migration attitudes, and between European countries in average levels of migration attitudes. Less well-to-do citizens, or right-leaning citizens tend, on average, to be more negative about migration. Further, citizens of Eastern and Central European countries were found to be more sceptical about migration, while citizens of Scandinavian and Western European countries are more accommodating. In contrast, the report found only mixed evidence for an impact of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis on migration attitudes. Given that this first report only documented average levels of migration attitudes and trends over time, ample scope is left for more detailed and advanced statistical analyses. Therefore, the current report examines what factors explain attitudes towards migration in Europe, on the basis of multilevel regression and latent class analyses.

1.1   Overview of sections and empirical approach

This report is structured into three sections:

Section 2 (Drivers of migration attitudes in Europe) provides the reader with an overview of the literature on drivers of migration preferences. It also describes the empirical framework and measurement strategy used in the report.

Section 3 (Explaining changing attitudes towards migration) presents analyses on possible **determinants of migration attitudes** in Europe. It starts with exploring national and regional trends in migration attitudes in Europe. The section discusses several indicators of migration attitudes, and their

development over time. Next, the section examines if migration attitudes are informed by objective trends at the national level (e.g., does an influx of migrants generate a more hostile environment towards migration), and studies relevant individual level drivers of migration attitudes. Finally, Section 3 discusses the association of changing attitudes towards migration with political variables. The statistical analyses rely on multilevel regression analyses based on the European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Section 4 (Typologies of migration attitudes) uncovers a **typology of attitudes towards immigrants and migration**. Specifically, this section explores whether citizens make distinctions between the type of immigrant, and migration or refugee policies, or whether citizens are consistently restrictive or open about migration, regardless of the type of immigrant or policy choice. These analyses rely on the data from the European Social Survey. The typologies are uncovered on the basis of multilevel latent class analyses.

1.2   Terminology

Debates on immigrants and migration, and public opinion on migration, are often characterised by their complexity. This report adheres to the definitions of the Opportunities' Glossary.[1] When referring to **migration**, we mean the general cross-border movements of people, without further specifying the reasons for this movement (economic, social, forced migration…), or the direction of this movement (away or towards a given country or region). The report assumes that **migrants** are heterogenous groups of people. When applying the term **immigrant**, the report specifically refers to (a member of) an outgroup that has moved to a new region or country of residence. **Emigrants** are those who move away from their own country/region. We follow the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and define a **refugee** as any person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (Article 1.A(2)). Hence, refugees can be seen as a specific subset of migrants. The term **asylum seekers** is used for those refugees that have been recognised by their host country as being entitled to asylum.

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[1] . https://www.opportunitiesproject.eu/resources/glossary.

2. Drivers of migration attitudes in Europe: theory and measurement

2.1   Migration in Europe: a pressing political topic

Across Europe, the question of migration is one of the most pressing and politically salient topics. In the aftermath of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, for instance, 48% of Europeans marked migration as one of the most important issues facing the EU (Eurobarometer, 2016). Years after this specific crisis, **Europeans continue to indicate that migration is one of Europe's main challenges, after climate change, and increasing living costs** (Eurobarometer, 2022). The European Union is a migrant-receiving community: over 3 million people migrated to one of the European Union member states in 2020, of which about 2 million were originally non-EU residents (Eurostat, 2022). As can be observed from Figure 2.1, the inflow of migrants towards the EU has been increasing steadily in recent years, with spikes occurring during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, but also more recently in 2019. In 2020, these numbers declined, as the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted international movements. The European Union is receiving more immigrants from outside the EU, than people emigrate away from the EU. In 2020, about 1 million European inhabitants emigrated to non-EU countries, **which means that the EU population effectively grew by about 1 million inhabitants through migration inflows**.

Figure 2.1 Immigration to and emigration from the EU (2013-2020)

(Number of people reported)
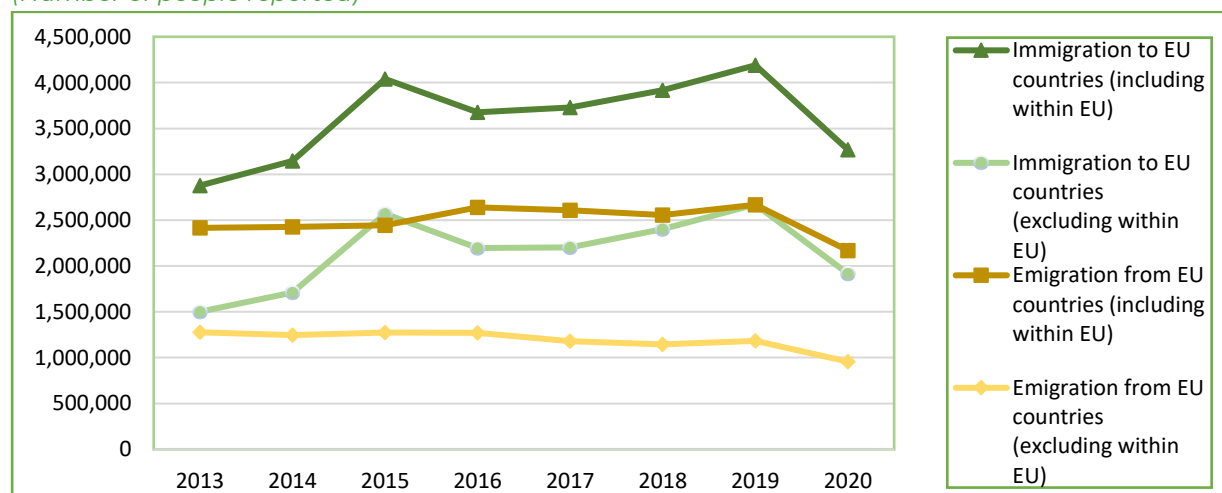
Note: EU-27 member states reported (United Kingdom excluded, Croatia included).
Source: Eurostat (2022).

In political terms, this growing diversity of the European population has been associated with several political outcomes. First, already in the 1980s and 1990s, a substantial rise in anti-foreigner sentiment was observed (Semyonov, Raijman, & Gorodzeisky, 2006), which eased off in the early 2000's (Heath & Richards, 2016a). In the wake of the 2007-2008 Great Recession (Meuleman et al., 2018), and the 2015-2016 refugee crisis (Claassen & McLaren, 2021), authors again observed (short-term) increases in negative attitudes towards immigrants and open border policies.

Second, **the question of migration** (and globalisation more in general) **dominates public debates**. The salience of the migration has given rise to the appearance of a new political cleavage that is fundamentally reshaping Europe's party system and democratic decision-making (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). **Citizens are divided along a transnational cleavage**: whether they are in favour of globalisation, liberal values and "open borders", or whether they have the tendency to "pull the drawbridges up"[2], support closed border policies, and attach more value to protecting their national culture, and perceived traditional values. Unsurprisingly, parties that campaign on this transnational cleavage, such as radical right and populist parties, are increasingly supported by voters in Europe (Figure 2.2) (Ford & Jennings, 2020; Kriesi, 2014; Rooduijn, 2019).

Figure 2.2 Vote shares of populist and radical parties in Europe (2000-2019)

(Percentages reported)
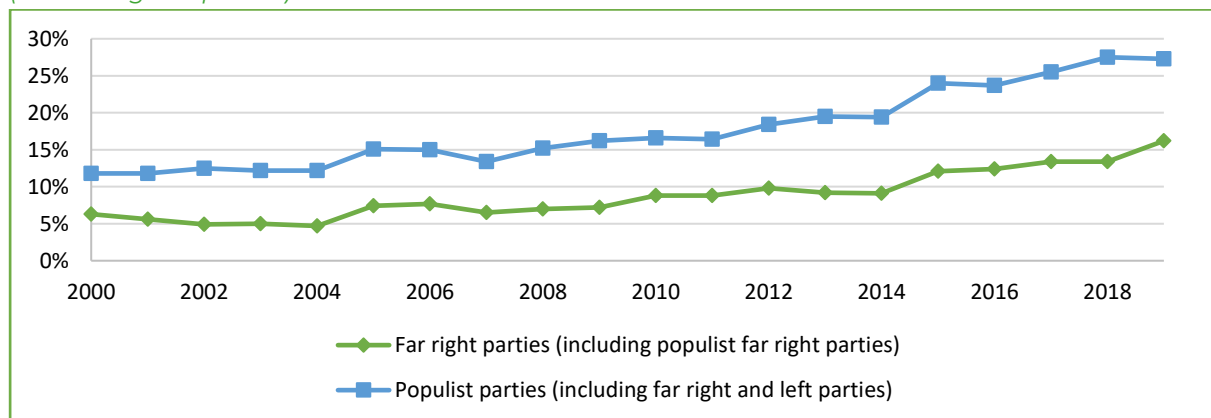
Source: Operationalisation of parties through PopuList 2.0 dataset (Rooduijn et al., 2019), operationalisation of vote shares through Parlgov data (Holger, Huber & Manow, 2022).

In summary, increasing diversity through rising levels of migration is a political reality in Europe, that has led to a changing political landscape. The remainder of this report will investigate to what extent European citizens are sceptical of this increasing diversity, and what is driving migration attitudes of Europeans. This section continues with the theoretical and empirical framework of the report.

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[2] . A term used by the Economist in their briefing article of 2016: The Economist (2016). Drawbridges up. The new divide in rich countries is not between left and right but between open and closed. https://www.economist.com/briefing/2016/07/30/draw-bridges-up.

2.2 Drivers of migration attitudes: theoretical framework

Attitudes towards immigrants and migration are a reflection of a belief system of people, in which social groups are contrasted with one another (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2016). While drivers of migration preferences are manifold, there are two most dominant theoretical frameworks of determinants of migration attitudes: group conflict theory and contact theory.

2.2.1 Group conflict theory

Group conflict theory hinges on the idea that hostility against immigrants is connected to the extent to which members of the host society (i.e., the "in-group") think that immigrants are a threat for their society. Hence, this theory predicts that the general sentiment of the in-group about immigrants, or foreigners in general, strongly depends on the extent to which citizens are prejudiced and have a hostile opinion about migrant groups (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958). Perceived threats take on two key forms, i.e., **perceived realistic threats**, and **symbolic threats**. Immigrants can pose a realistic threat for members of the in-group, if citizens believe, for example, that immigrants compete for their jobs, and thus pose a threat to their income generating activities and economic-well-being. Another type of realistic threat is situated at the national level: the extent to which citizens fear that immigrants will pose a threat to their country's economy, the functioning of their welfare state, etc. (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Quillian, 1995; Scheepers, Gijsberts & Coenders, 2002).

Symbolic threats are connected to the assumed cultural distance between immigrants and the host country members. When the latter believe that immigrants do not share similar cultural and social values, they become more hostile about immigrants. In this light, the origins of anti-immigrant attitudes can be perceived of as being closely connected to the generation of prejudice. Citizens develop more hostile attitudes about immigrants as a psychological coping mechanism, with members of the host nation having the perception that immigrants have a different culture (Albada, Hansen & Otten, 2021; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2016).

A second key assumption of the group conflict theory is that the **size of the out-group** determines how threatening immigrants are for their host society. The size of the out-group determines the out-group's symbolic or realistic threat, i.e., their impact on the **in-group's** socio-economic resources, identity or social cohesion. It is predicted that a larger out-group size will strengthen competition over the scarce resources in their host society, and thus increase anti-immigrant sentiments. It should be highlighted that group conflict theory has both a "static" and a "dynamic" aspect. The size of the outgroup determines symbolic and realistic threats, but changes in the size of the out-group over time should also lead to changes in attitudes about this out-group, independently of the extent to which this out-group was already living in a given society (Meuleman et al., 2009, 2018).

Empirically, authors have tested this theory in several ways, through distinguishing individual, and nation-wide drivers of threat perceptions. With regards to **realistic threat perceptions** at the individual level, studies have found that citizens with a more insecure employment status, lower incomes or a blue-collar employment background have higher levels of realistic threat perceptions. As these citizens are more vulnerable in the labour market, they will fear the economic competition supposedly caused by immigrants more strongly, which leads to lower levels of support for migration (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Rustenbach, 2010; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001). Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014), however, have contested this view in their overview work on anti-immigrant attitudes. They demonstrate that the effects of nation-wide concerns are far more important than potential individual level considerations. Hainmueller and Hopkin's research suggests that support for migration mainly depends on citizens perceptions of the extent to which immigrants can contribute to the well-being of their country.

Research in this tradition further highlights the **importance of contextual level characteristics**. Studies have found that citizens living in countries which are economically more powerful, with more

globalised economies, or lower levels of corruption, are more supportive of migration (Meuleman et al., 2018; Rustenbach, 2010). These studies argue that citizens of more prosperous countries are less worried about "realistic threats" generated by immigrants. In consequence, they will be more tolerant towards foreigners.

With regards to **perceived cultural threats**, studies have consistently found that these are important drivers of anti-migration opinions. Research shows that citizens who feel culturally marginalised, or believe that immigrants have a different religion or divergent social values, are more sceptical about immigrants and migration (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

To summarise, based on the group conflict theory, we could expect that citizens' (a) socio-economic status, and (b) their attachment to their national culture, values and religion, will explain their attitudes about migration, as these are key drivers of citizens' economic and symbolic threat perceptions. Further, at the country level, the size of the immigrant population, and economic conditions should also be associated with migration attitudes.

2.2.2   Contact theory

In contrast to group conflict theory, **contact theory** suggests that increasing diversity can lead to more opportunities for intergroup contact, and thus towards more tolerance for foreigners (Pettigrew, 1998). A growing size of the out-group makes more social exchange between different groups in society possible. Through direct contact with migrant friends, colleagues, or neighbours, citizens can grow more tolerant and mutual respect can be created (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Ivarsflaten, 2005). Yet, diversity also matters indirectly, through spatial dynamics. Citizens living in more diverse neighbourhoods, regions or countries, tend to be more tolerant about immigrants and migration, regardless of whether they personally know immigrants. As the size of the out-group grows, so does the potential of social interaction. Citizens habituate to living in more diverse contexts (Czaika & Di Lillo, 2018; Rustenbach, 2010).

The tension between group conflict theory and contact theory is clear and has long been recognised in the literature (e.g., Schneider, 2008). Both theories assume that the size of the out-group matters, with more diversity leading to less tolerance, according to group conflict theory, or more tolerance, in the case of contact theory. Authors that have aimed to reconcile both theories have argued that it is important **to distinguish between short-term and long-term migration dynamics** (Meuleman et al., 2018; Schneider, 2008). In the **short-term**, migration shocks may indeed lead to a "**backlash**" against immigrants, and a more negative migration mood (Claassen & McLaren, 2021; Meuleman et al., 2009, 2018). The few studies that have looked at longitudinal effects argue that these backlash effects are relatively short-lived, and that citizens **become more supportive of migration in the years after a given migration shock**, or when the country remains at its new levels of diversity, as predicted by the contact theory (Claassen & McLaren, 2021; Schneider, 2008). However, because most studies only consider differences in levels of tolerance or migration preferences at one point of time between countries, this potential **dual dynamic** is not explored thoroughly in the current literature. **Therefore, the analyses of this report will consider the difference between average levels of diversity, and the changes in these diversity levels.** In particular, the analyses investigate if the size of the immigrant population in European countries, and changes over the years in migration levels, are associated with migration attitudes.

Finally, both theories argue that **attitudes towards immigrants and migration are multidimensional**, as attitudes will depend on the "qualities" of specific out-groups. For instance, if the out-group shares a similar cultural background with the host country, then such a group should be perceived of as less threatening. Put differently: contact theory also recognises that contact with out-groups that are more proximate, will be easier (Hewstone & Swart, 2011). An adjacent literature further highlights that citizens' migration preferences depend on the perceived deservingness of foreigners (De Coninck & Matthijs,

2020). Abdelaaty and Steele (2022), for instance, argue that citizens make a distinction between refugees and immigrants in general. As refugees flee persecution, and have a specific political and legal status, they are perceived as more "deserving". Preferences about migration and attitudes towards refugees were only weakly correlated in their study. Other authors, however, have suggested that it is possible to study a generalised "migration mood" or "anti-foreigner sentiment", that reflects a broader and more diffuse sentiment of citizens towards foreigners, and goes beyond specific out-groups (Claassen & McLaren, 2021; Meuleman et al., 2009; Schneider, 2008; Semyonov, Raijman Gorodzeisky, 2006).

Empirically, the question of preferences towards specific out-groups in Europe has mainly been studied from a country-level perspective: do average levels of support for migration change, depending on the influx of specific groups of immigrants (e.g., with a Muslim versus Christian background, with an Eastern European versus Western European background.)? This report, in contrast, **proposes a person-centred approach towards this topic.** It moves beyond studying the impact of the influx of specific types of immigrants at the national level and focuses on individual level preferences. **Do European citizens have consistent opinions about migration?** The report addresses this puzzle through investigating if citizens have varying response patterns on several survey questions on migration policy preferences and attitudes towards immigrants.

Further, from previous research it is clear that some countries are characterised by higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than others. This suggests that individual level migration typologies, could be strongly clustered by the country level (De Coninck, Mertens & D'haenens, 2021; Goubin, Ruelens & Nicaise, 2022). Therefore, the report also examines if specific country-level typologies can be detected in terms of their citizens' migration preferences, and attitudes towards immigrants.

2.3   Measurement and methodological strategy

In order to study public opinion on migration in Europe, the current report relies on the European Social Survey (ESS). The key advantage of this survey is its coverage across countries and years. The survey is representative for national European populations, and it has been organised every two years since 2002. Over 30 countries participated in at least one of the nine currently available survey waves. As the ESS contains several questions on migration preferences, as well as two special modules that have more in-depth questions on migration, it is a particularly well-suited source of material to trace changing attitudes towards migration over time. The ESS also includes questions about several types of immigrants and migration policies, allowing us to investigate individual level and country typologies.

2.3.1   Explaining changing attitudes: measurement strategy

This study captures changing attitudes about migration in Europe on the basis of **two key indicators.** First, a scale is constructed which gauges European citizens' **general preferences about migration**. This indicator measures citizens' preferences about **which immigrant groups** are allowed to **enter** their country, and how many immigrants may enter (ranging from none to many). The **second** indicator captures **citizens' perceptions of the impact of immigrants on their country**, i.e., the extent to which citizens feel **threatened** by immigrants, or rather believe that immigrants have a positive impact on their country. Table 2.1 provides more information on how these variables are constructed.

Both indicators are closely connected to group conflict theory, as they are based on the assumption that citizens find migration threatening and make a distinction between different immigrant groups. These indicators have been widely applied and validated in studies on group conflict theory (Heath & Richards, 2016a, 2016b; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2016; Meuleman et al., 2009, 2018). However, a key limitation of these indicators is precisely that they nudge respondents into thinking about migration

as something that is potentially threatening. By doing so, these indicators reconfirm the crisis narrative on migration, and push citizens towards a specific perspective. On the other hand, these questions are ideally suited to test the predictions of the dynamic group conflict theory, which is the key focus of the present report. Further, there is also a practical consideration: the ESS has only these two question batteries available longitudinally for analysis across all ESS waves. More detailed questions on migration attitudes are asked in the ESS' migration modules and will be analysed in this study when examining if individual and country typologies of migration attitudes can be discerned.

Table 2.1 Operationalisation of attitudes towards migration

Dependent variables	Operationalisation
Perceived impact of immigrants on society	A sum-score based on three original questions: To what extent do you think that migration • Is bad/is good for economy (ranging from 0: bad; to 10: good) • Undermines/enriches cultural life (ranging from 0: undermines; to 10: enriches) • Country is a worse/better place to live (ranging from 0: worse; to 10 better) The original questions were summed up and divided by 3 to keep the original 11-point scale.
Migration preferences	A sum-score based on three original questions: To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of • the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here? • of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people? • How about people from the poorer countries outside Europe? Answering options are: (1) allow none, (2) allow a few, (3) allow some, (4) allow many. Higher values indicate more support for migration. The original questions were summed up and divided by 3 to keep the original 4-point scale.

Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Several expectations can be derived from the group conflict and contact theory about the drivers of migration attitudes. Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 provide an overview of how these individual and national level determinants are operationalised. Group conflict theory highlights the importance of economic and cultural threat concerns. Hence, at the individual level, the empirical models include several indicators of socio-economic status to capture potential economic concerns. In the case of cultural concerns, the analyses are restricted to only one indicator on religiosity, in the absence of other appropriate and longitudinally available indicators.

At the national level, the analyses incorporate the size of the immigrant population and the strength of the economy as key drivers of changing attitudes towards migration. In keeping with the literature (Abdelaaty & Steele, 2022; Claassen & McLaren, 2021), the analyses make a distinction between migration stocks and flows. To capture 'migrant stocks', the percentage of the population which is foreign born is included, while the 'migration flow' indicator captures the influx of immigrants towards a country in a given year. Both indicators consider the population size: the foreign-born population and the number of immigrants arriving in the country are both compared to the total population and expressed in percentages. By doing so, these indicators control for the fact that more populous European countries tend to attract a higher number of immigrants (Eurostat, 2022). Economic indicators in the statistical analyses are the GDP per capita, which measures the size of the economy, and the unemployment rate, which

captures the percentage of the population that is excluded from economic activities (Abdelaaty & Steele, 2022; Meuleman et al., 2018).

Table 2.2 Drivers of attitudes towards migration (individual level)

Individual level drivers	Operationalisation
Economic threat	**Income situation**: how comfortable is your household's income situation? (*Scale ranges from 1. Difficult on present income, to 4. Living comfortable on present income*) **Social class** (*Categories are: 1. Higher service class, 2. Lower service class, 3. Small business owners, 4. Skilled workers, 5. Unskilled workers*) **Education level** (*Scale ranges from 1. Less than lower secondary to 5. Tertiary education completed*)
Symbolic/cultural threat	Does the respondent belong to a **particular religion or denomination**? (*Categories are: 0. No, 1. Yes*)

Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

A further note is warranted with regards to the measurement of the national level indicators. Dynamic group conflict theory and contact theory make a distinction between the impact of average levels of migration and economic well-being, versus the changing levels of migration. Hence, the analyses include country indicators in two different ways. F**irst, an overall mean at the country level is computed for each of the national level drivers under study**. For instance, in the case of France, the average percentage of the population that is foreign born was 11.63% between 2002-2018, and in Latvia, it was 14.64%. Group conflict theory would thus predict that the population of France would be more favourable towards immigrants than in Latvia, because its society is on average less diverse. Contact theory would predict the opposite: because Latvia is more diverse, opportunities for social interchange increase, and so do welcoming attitudes about immigrants.

Second, our statistical models include 'change indicators'. These **change indicators gauge if the value of a national level indicator was higher or lower in a given year** (e.g., 2018) **than its average level** (over the period from 2002 to 2018). For example, in 2018, about 12.5% of the French population was born abroad. Hence, the "change indicator" is 0.87: in that year, the percentage of foreign-born inhabitants in France was 0.87 points higher than France's average percentage of 11.63%. In Latvia, in contrast, we find the opposite: the change indicator is "-1.84", which means that there are fewer foreign-born inhabitants in the country in 2018 than what was the case on average (12.8% in 2018, versus the average percentage of 14.64%). An increase in migration levels (versus the average levels), or a decrease in national economic well-being (versus the average levels), should lead to more unfavourable attitudes, according to group conflict theory, or to more welcoming attitudes, according to contact theory.

Table 2.3 Drivers of attitudes towards migration (national level)

National level drivers	Operationalisation
Importance of the diversity of country and the size of the immigration population (static component)	**% inflow of migrants (average percentage for period 2002-2018):** Expressed in % of the total population *(Source: Eurostat, own calculations).* **% of population foreign born (average percentage for period 2002-2018):** Expressed in % of the total population *(Source: OECD).*
Importance of the diversity of country and the size of the immigration population (dynamic component)	**% inflow of migrants (yearly deviation from average percentage for period 2002-2018):** Expressed in % of the total population *(Source: Eurostat, own calculations).* **% of population foreign born (yearly deviation from average percentage for period 2002-2018):** Expressed in % of the total population *(Source: OECD).*
Importance of economic strength (static component)	**GDP per capita (average GDP per capita for period 2002-2018):** GDP distribution per head of population, expressed in euros, controlled for PPP (*Source: Eurostat*). **Unemployment rate (average unemployment rate for period 2002-2018):** Expressed in % of the population in the labour force. (*Source: Eurostat*)
Importance of economic strength (dynamic component)	**GDP per capita (yearly deviation from average GDP per capita for period 2002-2018):** GDP distribution per head of population, expressed in euros, controlled for PPP (*Source: Eurostat*). **Unemployment rate (yearly deviation from average unemployment rate for period 2002-2018):** Expressed in % of the population in the labour force. (*Source: Eurostat*)

Source: Eurostat and OECD data (2022).

Methodologically, given the specific operationalisation of the country level indicators, Random-Effects-Within-Between (REWB) models are estimated, in which individual survey responses are clustered by their respective survey wave, and by the country respondents relate to. The models also control for a time trend (Fairbrother, 2014). By so doing, this report contributes to the state-of-the-art in migration attitudes research, as most studies focus on comparing attitudes between countries, but do not take the time element into account (e.g., Van Hootegem, Meuleman & Abts, 2020; Steele & Abdelaaty, 2019; but see Meulemans et al., 2018).

In order to ensure the robustness of the findings presented below, the analyses include several relevant control variables that are connected to support for migration (Abdelaaty & Steele, 2022; Goubin, Ruelens & Nicaise, 2022; Meulemans et al., 2009, 2018; Rustenbach, 2010; van Hootegem, Meuleman & Abts, 2020). At the individual level, these include the gender, age, and place of residence (rural-urban) as socio-demographic control variables. The analyses further control for the influence of several political variables: whether citizens voted in the last elections and whether they express political interest (as indicators of how politically engaged they are), their level of trust in other people in society and in political

institutions, and their political orientation. At the national level, the political orientation of the government is controlled for.[3]

It should be acknowledged that the dynamic analyses are subject to several limitations. First, the longitudinal ESS file only has limited information on individual contact with immigrants, or drivers of perceived cultural threat, so the expectations of group conflict and contact theory could not be studied in further detail (Rustenbach, 2010). Second, there are only 9 ESS rounds, which inherently makes the variance over time more limited than the variance between countries. Third, the analyses hinge on the assumption that objective country level conditions influence migration attitudes through threat perceptions, which is still contested by some studies (Dinesen & Hjorth, 2020).

2.3.2   Defining individual and country typologies: measurement strategy

The last research goal of this report is to uncover whether individual and country typologies in migration attitudes are present in this European data sample. In order to capture the multidimensionality of migration attitudes, a varied set of ESS questions on attitudes about immigrants and refugees, and policy preferences are investigated through applying multilevel latent class analysis (LCA). This type of analysis explores the different patterns of responses to survey questions and detects underlying consistencies in these answering patterns. Further, latent class analysis categorises individuals in specific and mutually exclusive types or "classes". The advantage of this analysis is that it – to some extent – overcomes the challenge of the narrative assumptions made by the ESS. The ESS survey questions have been designed based on specific criteria, such as the perceived threat and deservingness of immigrant groups, and thus reflect specific theoretical assumptions on migration attitudes. Latent class analyses can demonstrate if respondents adhere to these predefined criteria and divisions in the survey questionnaire. Self-evidently, the analyses are still restricted by the types of survey questions that were designed, so not all types of immigrants or migration policies can be included, nor can the potential conceptual lacunae in the survey be fully addressed.

The *multilevel* aspect of the analyses implies that individuals are clustered in countries. The method allows to investigate the distribution of the individual typologies across the countries under study: are some profiles more present in some countries over others? The focus lies on data from two ESS rounds, i.e., 2002 and 2016, as these rounds included a more varied set of questions on migration attitudes. Through studying two waves of data, we could compare whether the typologies structurally changed over the last two decades. Because of methodological requirements, all survey items are recoded into two categories: 0, a negative or neutral answer, and 1, a positive answer (see Table 2.4 for details on the operationalisation) .

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[3] . In keeping with the grant agreement, additional robustness tests were conducted, and are available upon request.

Table 2.4 Measurement for individual and country typologies

Main expectations	Operationalisation
Citizens have multidimensional attitudes towards migration, that are clustered by the deservingness and perceived threat of immigrants.	**Based on nine survey items:** **Migration preferences: to what extent should your country allow immigrants from:** 1. Same ethnicity 2. Different ethnicity 3. Poor countries outside Europe 0 = Allow none/a few 1 = Allow many/some **Perceived impact of immigrants on society: To what extent do you think that migration:** 1. Is bad/is good for economy 2. Undermines/enriches cultural life 3. Country is a worse/better place to live 0 = Negative or neutral about impact (score of 0-6 on original scale); 1 = Positive about impact (score of 7-10 on original scale) **Refugee policy preferences:** 1. The government should be generous in judging people's applications for refugee status. 2. Most applicants for refugee status are in real fear of persecution in their own countries 3. Refugees whose applications are granted should be entitled to bring in their close family members 0 = Unfavourable or neutral about welcoming refugees (Disagree strongly to Neutral); 1 = Supportive of welcoming refugees (Agree or Agree Strongly)
Country typologies in migration preferences can be detected based on the dominant attitudes of their citizens towards migration.	Based on the distribution of the individual typologies.

Source: European Social Survey (wave 2002 and 2016).
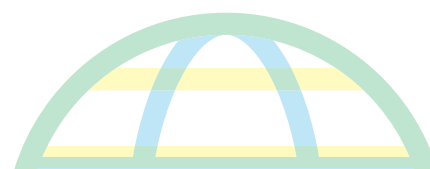
3. Explaining changing attitudes towards migration

This section studies explanatory factors of migration attitudes, through a comprehensive multilevel analysis of drivers of migration attitudes. The section begins by presenting descriptive trends of the migration attitudes under study (Subsection 3.1). The presentation of the multilevel regression analyses is divided into Subsection 3.2 on individual level correlates of migration attitudes, and Subsection 3.3 on national level explanatory factors. Afterwards, the consequences of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis are studied (Subsection 3.4), and the association between changing attitudes towards migration and political attitudes is examined (Subsection 3.5).

3.1   Attitudes towards migration: descriptive trends

Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2, descriptively explore European attitudes towards migration. Figure 3.1 depicts average levels of European perceptions of the impact of immigrants on their society, per country. A high average indicates that citizens are more favourable about immigrants than citizens of countries with lower averages, as a low average indicates that citizens tend to believe that immigrants are threatening to their country. Figure 3.2 documents migration preferences (average levels on a 1-4 scale). High averages in this figure indicate a preference for allowing many immigrants to arrive in the country, while lower scores suggest that citizens have more restrictive migration preferences.

Figure 3.1 Perceived impact of immigrants in Europe (2002-2018)
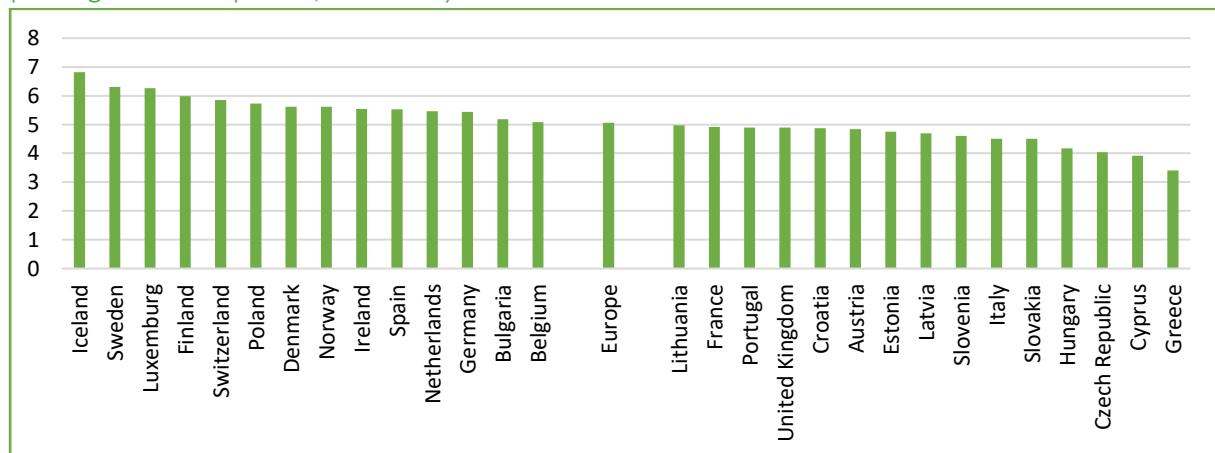
(Average values reported, 0-10 scale)

Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). More information on the coding of this scale can be found in "Table 7.2 Coding scheme for operationalisation of key variables" of the Appendix. The scale of the figure is adjusted to better visualise the differences.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Figure 3.2 Migration preferences in Europe (2002-2018)
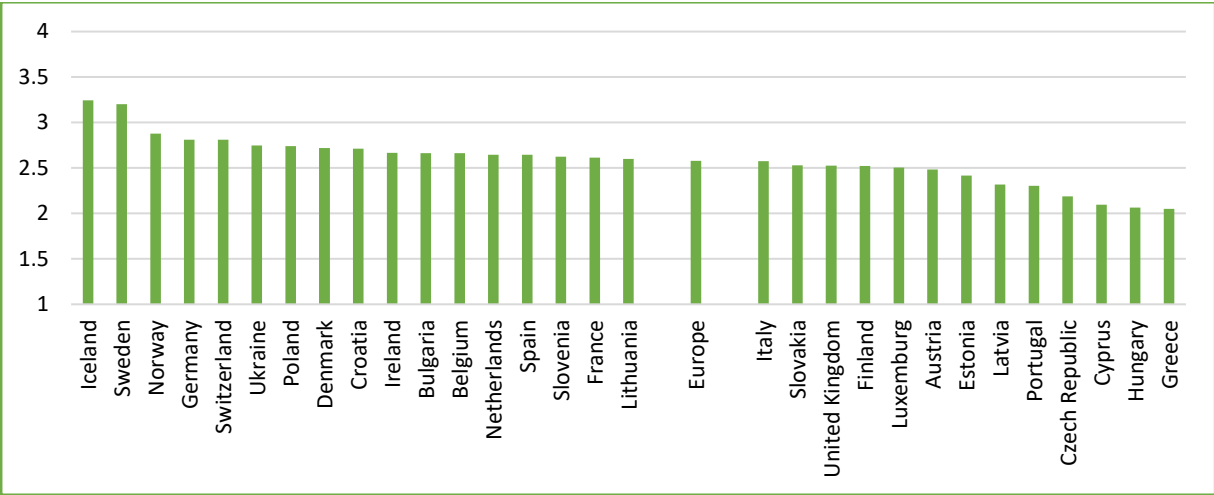
(Average values reported, 1-4 scale)

Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). More information on the coding of this scale can be found in "Table 7.2 Coding scheme for operationalisation of key variables" of the Appendix.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

In general, these figures reflect **the ambivalence of European citizens towards migration**. Average levels of the perceived impact of immigrants, and migration preferences are neither very high nor low. The averages are hovering around the midpoint of the scales: 5.08 on the perceived impact question, and 2.58 on migration preferences question. This also mirrors the findings of the report by Goubin, Ruelens and Nicaise (2022) which concluded that most Europeans are lukewarm about supporting migration. More strikingly are the important differences between European countries (see also Czaika & Di Lillo, 2018; De Coninck, Mertens & D'haenens, 2021). Citizens of Greece, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Cyprus are the most negative about migration in Europe. Their average levels of support are 3 points (cfr. Figure 3.1), or 1 point (cfr. Figure 3.2) respectively lower than the mean scores of countries like Germany, Norway, Iceland or Finland. These results also indicate the **importance of looking at migration attitudes from a regional perspective**: citizens of Eastern and Central European countries are more negative about migration, on average, and citizens of Scandinavian countries are the most supportive. Most European countries, however, have mean levels that closely resemble the European average.

Upon closer inspection of the data, less than 30% percent of the interviewed Europeans give a score that is outspokenly negative about migration on the perceived impact of immigrants indicator (cfr. a score below 4), or on the migration preferences indicator (cfr. a score below 2).

However, country averages across two decades of survey information, could hide important changes within countries over time. Hence, Figure 3.3 explores the time dynamics for European perceptions of the impact of immigrants, and Figure 3.4, regarding migration preferences. Countries are structured by region, because dynamics are similar within these European regions.

Figure 3.3 Perceived impact of immigrants: regional trends (2002-2018)

(Average values reported, 0-10 scale)
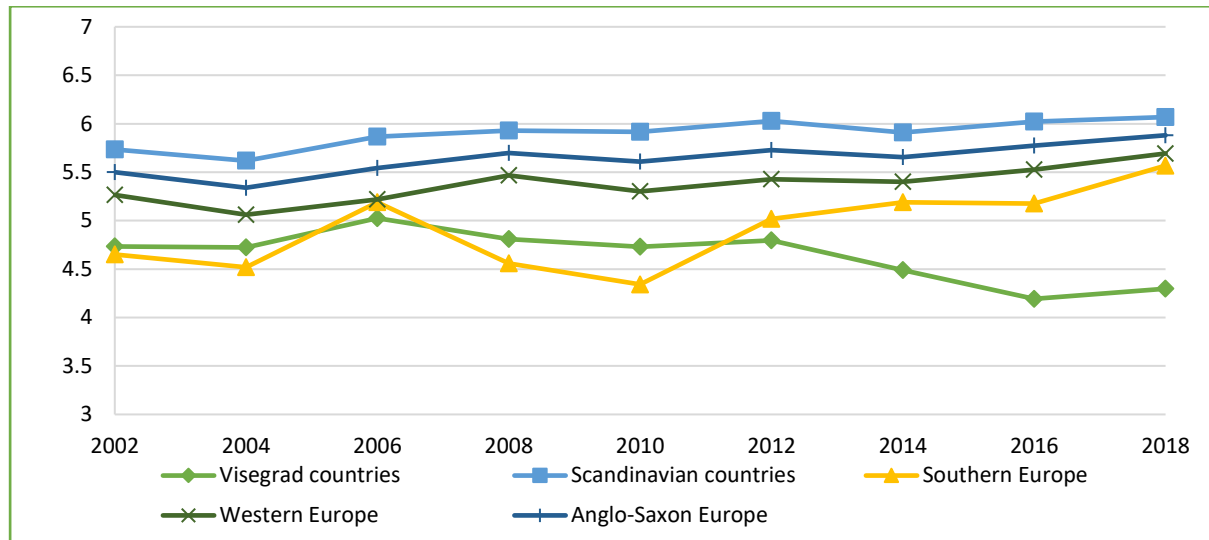
Note: Country averages per year were computed on the perceived impact of migration indicator. These were further averaged per region and year. Missing data were deleted listwise. A selection of ESS participant countries is presented. Western Europe: Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Anglo-Saxon Europe: Ireland and the United Kingdom. Southern Europe: Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal. Visegrad countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Weighted data reported (dweight). The scale in the figure is adjusted to better visualise the regional differences.
Data: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

As a general observation, **migration preferences are more variable over time than the perceptions of Europeans about the impact of immigrants on their country**. With regards to impact perceptions, these **hardly varied over time**, on average, **in Western Europe, the Scandinavian and the Anglo-Saxon countries**. Within Southern Europe, an unfavourable climate towards immigrants can be observed in the survey years around the Great Recession (2008-2010), but the scores generally became more positive from 2012 onwards.[4] In the **Visegrad countries**, in contrast, impact perceptions were, on average, **the most negative** at the start of the 21st century. Since the Great Recession, Eastern and Central European citizens have become even more sceptical about migration. The more hostile reception of refugees and immigrants in these countries during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis (Rea et al., 2019) could potentially be connected to the generally unfavourable attitudes towards migration in these countries.

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[4] . It should be noted that Greece is not included anymore from 2012 in the European Social Survey, which might have affected this trendline.

Figure 3.4 Migration preferences: regional trends (2002-2018)

(Average values reported, 1-4 scale)
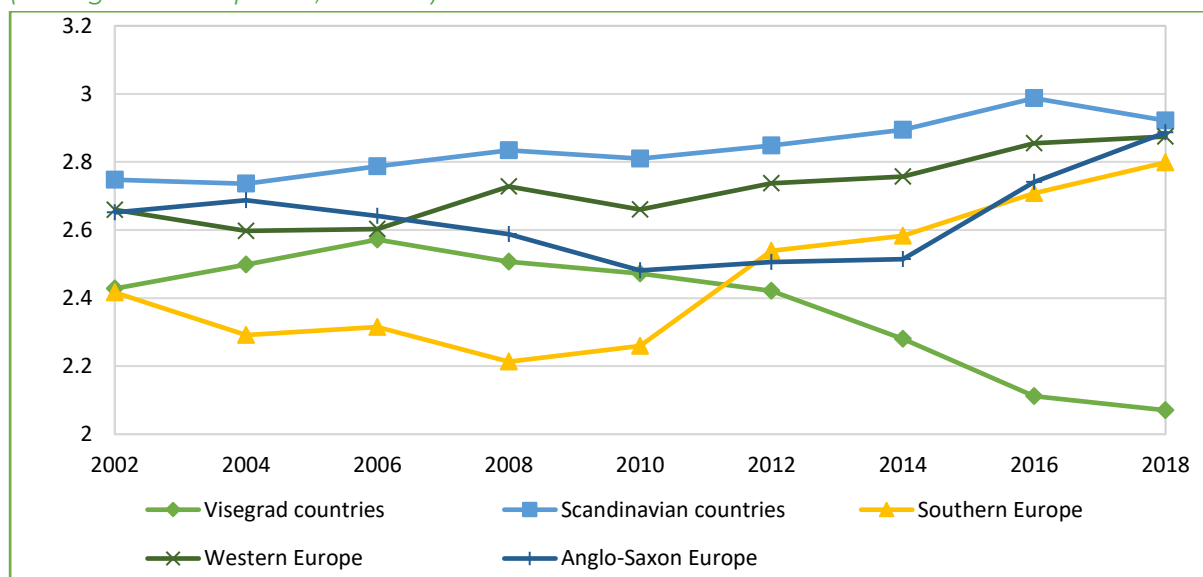
Note: Country averages per year were computed on the migration preferences indicator. These were further aver-
aged per region and year. Missing data were deleted listwise. A selection of ESS participant countries is presented.
Western Europe: Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Scandinavian countries: Denmark,
Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Anglo-Saxon Europe: Ireland and the United Kingdom. Southern Europe: Spain,
Italy, Greece and Portugal. Visegrad countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Weighted data
reported (dweight). The scale in the figure is adjusted to better visualise the regional differences.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Migration preferences have been more variable across time and regions. First, in Western Europe and
Scandinavian countries, populations have, on average, become more supportive of migration over time.
In the Visegrad countries, in contrast, citizens have over the years developed more restrictive migration
preferences. In Anglo-Saxon and Southern Europe, average support for migration was at an all-time low
after the 2007-2008 Great Recession but increased steadily afterwards.

Altogether, this introduction of descriptive trends of migration attitudes indicates that both important
between-country differences, and over-time dynamics are present. In the remainder of Section 3, this
report empirically investigates and explains these changes in detail through multilevel statistical anal-
yses.

3.2   Individual level results

Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6 summarise the results of the impact of the individual level drivers of migration attitudes that are measured on a continuous measurement scale, such as education level or political trust. Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8 present the results of drivers measured on a categorical scale, i.e., drivers such as one's gender or religion.[5]

   The results indicate that **citizens who experience income difficulties, or those who are employed in low skilled jobs, are less likely to think that immigrants have a positive impact on their society.** These respondents are also **less supportive of migration** in general. Next, religious respondents are less likely to support migration in general, and they think more negatively about the impact of immigrants. **Higher educated citizens**, in contrast, are more likely to **support migration**, and believe that immigrants are of added value for their country. Therefore, these results confirm the expectations of the group conflict theory. As discussed above, this theory predicts that being less well-off, or more attached to traditional values or one's religion, is associated with lower support for migration.

Figure 3.5 Explaining perceptions of the impact of immigrants (continuous drivers)

(Change in perceived impact associated with a one standard deviation increase in the explanatory variables) (0-10 scale)
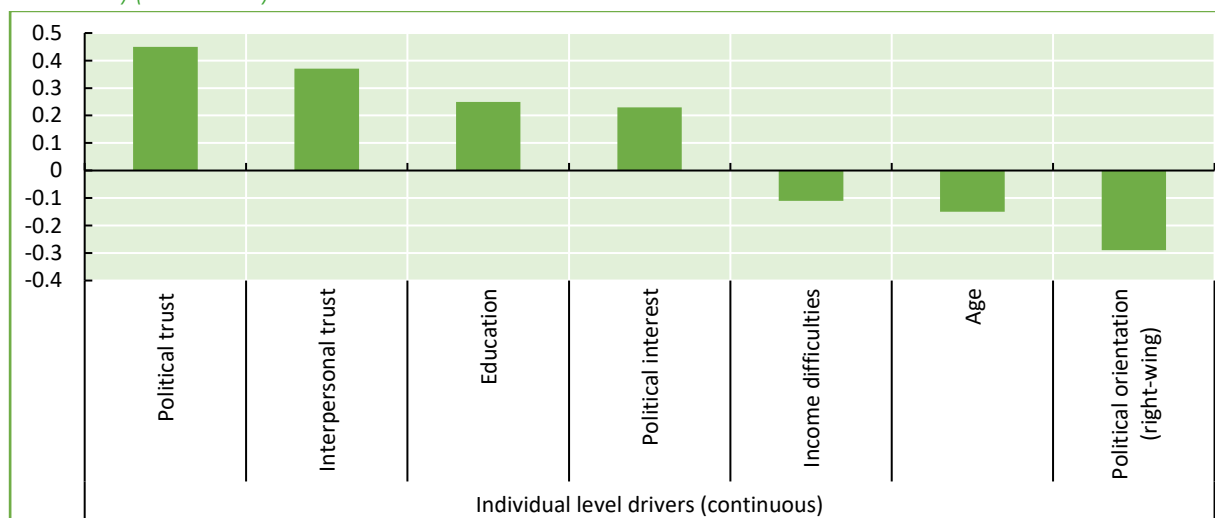
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). All variables are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

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[5] . The detailed empirical results tables on which these figures are based, are available upon request.

Figure 3.6 Explaining migration preferences (continuous drivers)

(Change in migration preferences associated with a one standard deviation increase in the explanatory variables) (1-4 scale)
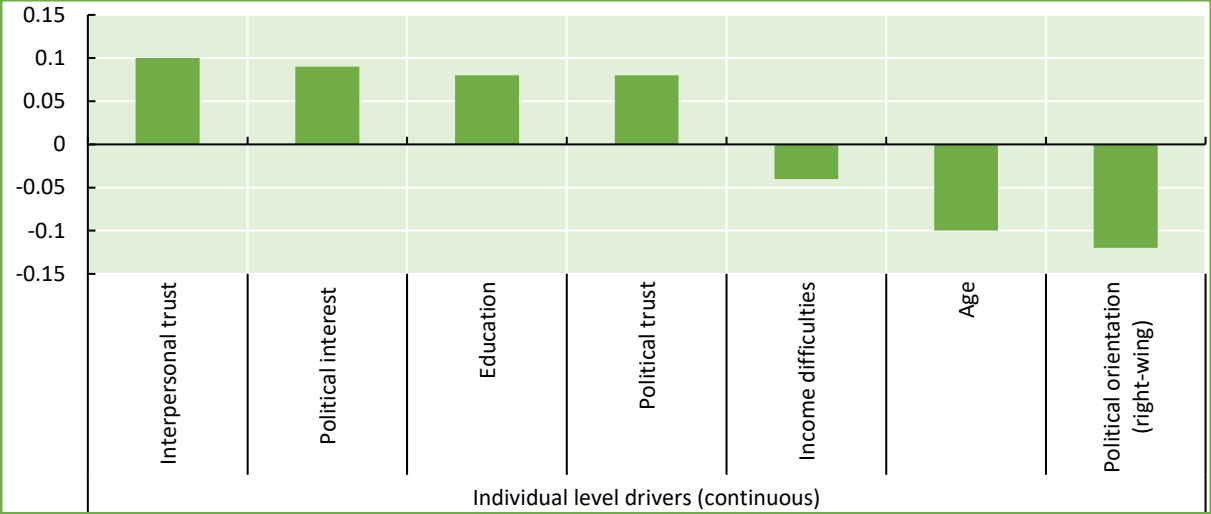
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). All variables are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

When examining the link between the control variables and migration attitudes, it becomes clear that political attitudes are especially relevant correlates. Citizens with more trust in political institutions, who have a higher interest in politics, or those more trusting of others, are more supportive of migration: they prefer a more welcoming migration policy and believe that immigrants have a positive influence on their society. Right-wing citizens, in contrast, are much less likely to think positively about the impact of immigrants on their countries or to express support for migration in general. An increase of one standard deviation in being right-wing is associated with a -0.3 drop in impact perceptions, which is quite substantial when considering that most respondents scored between 4 and 6 on the 0-10 scale. Furthermore, the elderly and rural residents tend to be more hostile about migration and its perceived consequences. Finally, female respondents are more supportive of migration, and are optimistic about the impact of immigrants.

   Altogether, the results of the analyses suggest an "**insider-outsider dynamic**". Respondents that feel more closely connected to their society, either because they are more well-to-do, politically empowered, or trusting, exhibit more favourable attitudes towards migration. Hence, the **results of these analyses are in line with the group conflict theory, which suggests that that citizen who do not feel threatened by migration, are also more positive about immigrants**.

Figure 3.7 Explaining perceptions of the impact of immigrants (categorical drivers)

(Change in perceived impact associated with a change in the explanatory variables) (0-10 scale)
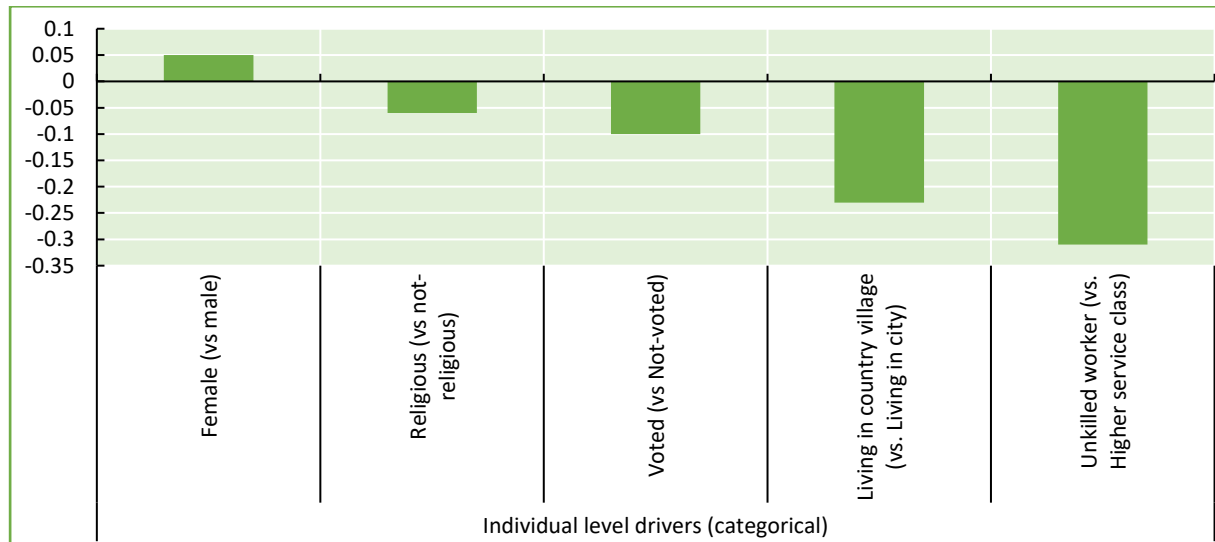
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). All variables are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Figure 3.8 Explaining migration preferences (categorical drivers)

(Change in migration preferences associated with a change in the explanatory variables) (1-4 scale)

Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). All variables are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

3.3   Country level results

As discussed in Section 2, group conflict theory predicts that more diverse countries are, on average, more negative about migration, while contact theory predicts the opposite. Group conflict theory further argues that economically more powerful and globalised countries are more supportive of migration and immigrants because their citizens feel less threatened by this growing diversity. Figure 3.9 and Figure 3.10, examine these predictions for the two dependent variables under study (perceived impact of im-migrants and migration preferences). As discussed in Subsection 2.3.1, both the impact of average levels of country-level indicators (2002-2018), and changes in these country indicators in a given survey year in comparison to average levels, are taken into account.

Figure 3.9 Explaining perceptions of the impact of immigrants (country level drivers)

(Change in perceived impact associated with a one standard deviation increase in the explanatory variables) (0-10 scale)
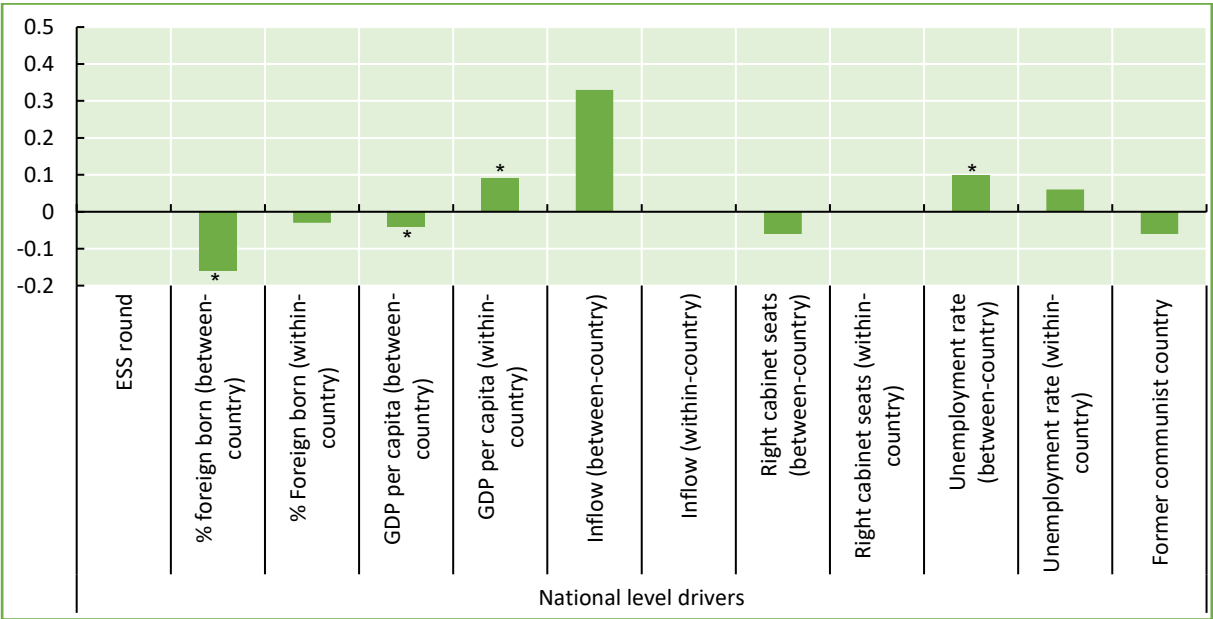
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). Statistically significant coefficients are depicted with an asterisk.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Figure 3.10 Explaining migration preferences (country level drivers)

(Change in being supportive of an open border policy associated with a one standard deviation increase in the explanatory variables) (1-4 scale)
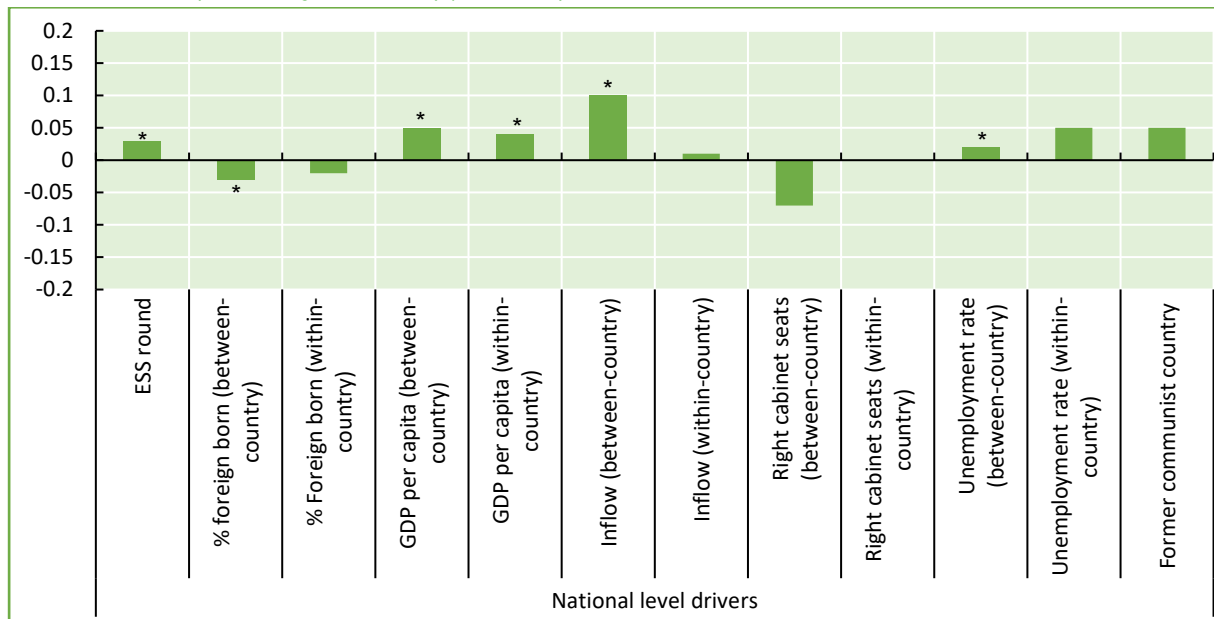
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). Statistically significant coefficients are depicted with an asterisk.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

The empirical findings for contextual effects are mixed, and do not fully support the predictions of group conflict theory. First, in line with group conflict theory, the analyses show that individuals living in countries that are on average more diverse (measured as % of population being born abroad), tend to be more negative about the impact of immigrants, and have more restrictive migration policy preferences. Changes in the percentage of inhabitants who were born abroad, however, are not associated with more negative impact perceptions, or with a reduction of support for migration. Further, no significant relationship is confirmed between countries that experience a greater influx of migrants (on average, or in yearly changes), and attitudes about migration. The analyses find support for the contact theory in the case of migration policy preferences: migration preferences are more welcoming in countries that experience big influxes of migrants (on average, no statistically significant effects for within-country changes are present).[6]

With regards to the economic indicators, when the indicators are statistically significant, the direction of their effects are conflicting and have little explanatory power. Citizens of countries with a higher GDP per capita, on average, express more open migration preferences, yet they are also more likely to believe that immigrants can be a threat for their country. Citizens of countries in which the GDP per capita grows in comparison to the average, tend to become more open about migration, and think more positively about the impact of immigrants. Citizens living in countries which have a higher unemployment rate, however, are slightly more positive about migration and the impact of immigrants, which goes directly against the predictions of group conflict theory. As the effect sizes of these economic indicators

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[6] . These null-effects might be due to the smaller variance at the within-country level (i.e., the differences between countries are larger than the changes within countries). In statistical terms, the ICC between countries is substantially higher than the ICC between rounds.

are also very small (<0.10 in Figure 3.9, or <0.05 in Figure 3.10), this does imply that even when the indicators reach statistical significance, they do not account for much of the differences between citizens or countries in migration attitudes. Finally, the control variables, namely having a communist past, and right-wing government composition, are not significantly related to attitudes about migration in this sample of the data.

When inspecting the results of the impact of the country level drivers, the conclusion is that no clear support for the group conflict theory is found for economic or diversity indicators. The evidence is inconclusive at best. This conclusion is in line with other studies (e.g., Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Steele & Abdelaaty, 2019), which have argued that the influence of country level drivers in statistical models is contingent on the type of the diversity measure, or economic power indicator, that authors include in their models. Another explanation for the absence of a consistent link between the objective country indicators and the migration attitudes under study, is the low variance between the ESS rounds within countries. Based on previous research, it could also be speculated that at the country level, it is more important to examine how the issue of migration is framed in the national media and political debates, how prevalent it is in public debates, and at the individual level, how salient it is for citizens (De Coninck, Mertens & D'haenens, 2021; Mertens, De Coninck & D'haenens, 2021). It seems likely that subjective assessments of, and narratives on migration, and individual values and self-interest mechanisms, are key drivers of migration preferences. As the ESS does not include longitudinal measurements on the salience of migration and includes only a limited number of media consumption variables (De Coninck, Mertens & D'haenens, 2021)[7], it is not possible to further investigate how the salience and framing of the migration issue influence attitudes about migration.[8]

3.4   Impact of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis

This subsection explores if the 2015-2016 refugee crisis has a significant impact on citizens' migration attitudes. On the one hand, past research using the European Social Survey has highlighted that migration attitudes were relatively stable features of European citizens and countries (Heath & Richards, 2016b). On the other hand, as the 2015-2016 refugee crisis strongly dominated political and societal debates, several studies have highlighted its impact on shifting attitudes towards migration (Claassen & McLaren, 2021; Rea et al., 2019). To study if the refugee crisis led to a shift in migration attitudes, Figure 3.11 examines if in the survey wave fielded directly after the crisis, respondents were, on average, less supportive of migration.[9] This figure is based on estimates of multilevel models, and shows the predicted European average of perceptions on the impact of immigrants on their society, and migration preferences in 2016. The figure further contrasts this post-crisis average with the predicted average for all other survey years.[10]

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[7] . Robustness test analyses including media consumption variables corroborated the main results of this report.

[8] . In their Opportunities Report, "Cross-country comparison of media selection and attitudes towards narratives of migration", De Coninck, Mertens and D'haenens (2021) have gathered more fine-grained measures on media consumption in Europe, and its association with migration attitudes.

[9] . Fielded in 2016.

[10] . i.e., 2002-2014, and 2018.

Figure 3.11 Are Europeans less supportive of migration after the 2015-2016 crisis?

(Predicted mean values reported) (0-10 scale)
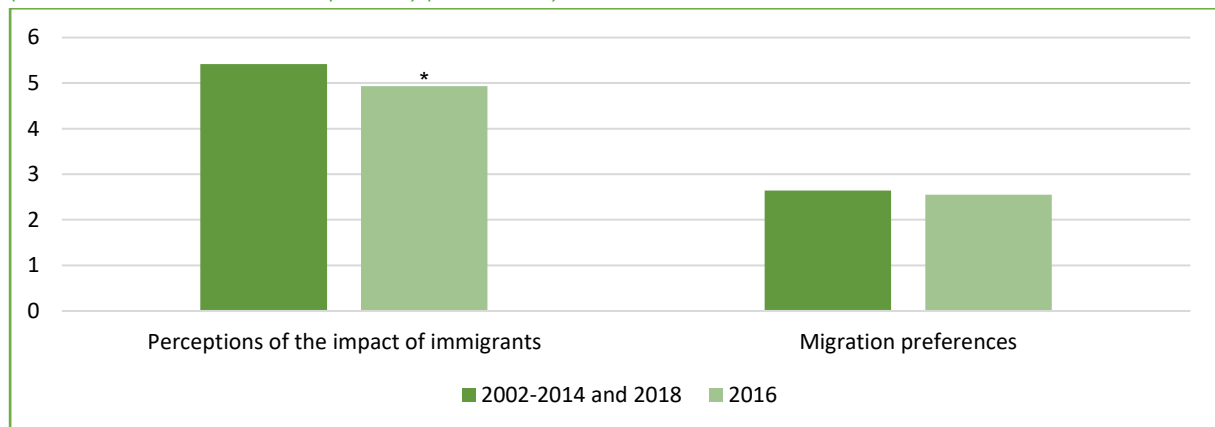
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). Statistically significant coefficients are depicted with an asterisk.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

Altogether, **the evidence for a growing hostility in the wake of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis is mixed**. In keeping with earlier studies (e.g., Claassen & McLaren, 2021; Rea et al., 2019), we observe a decline in 2016 in the perceptions of Europeans about the impact of immigrants on their society. After the crisis, Europeans were more likely to believe that immigrants pose a threat to their country. Yet, this effect is only present for the perceived impact of migration indicator. The 2015-2016 crisis did not, on average, lead to a general public demand to "pull up Europe's drawbridges": migration preferences remained relatively stable.

Heath and Richards (2016b) concluded that these mixed findings on the impact of the refugee crisis are due to differences between European countries, and the migration attitudes considered. When asked about refugee policy preferences in particular, countries which received a great influx of asylum applicants indeed became less supportive of accepting refugees. However, also in their report, the authors did not conclude that Europe, on average, became more negative about migration. Rather, a divergence between countries is uncovered.

Figure 3.12 and Figure 3.13 depict this divergence, and take a long-term perspective on changing migration attitudes in Europe (2002 versus 2018). While Heath and Richards (2016b) mainly focus on the immediate aftermath of the refugee crisis, this study asks if their conclusions can be replicated when taking a wider time span into account.

Figure 3.12 Change in perceived impact of immigrants (2002-2018)

(Average values reported, 0-10 scale)
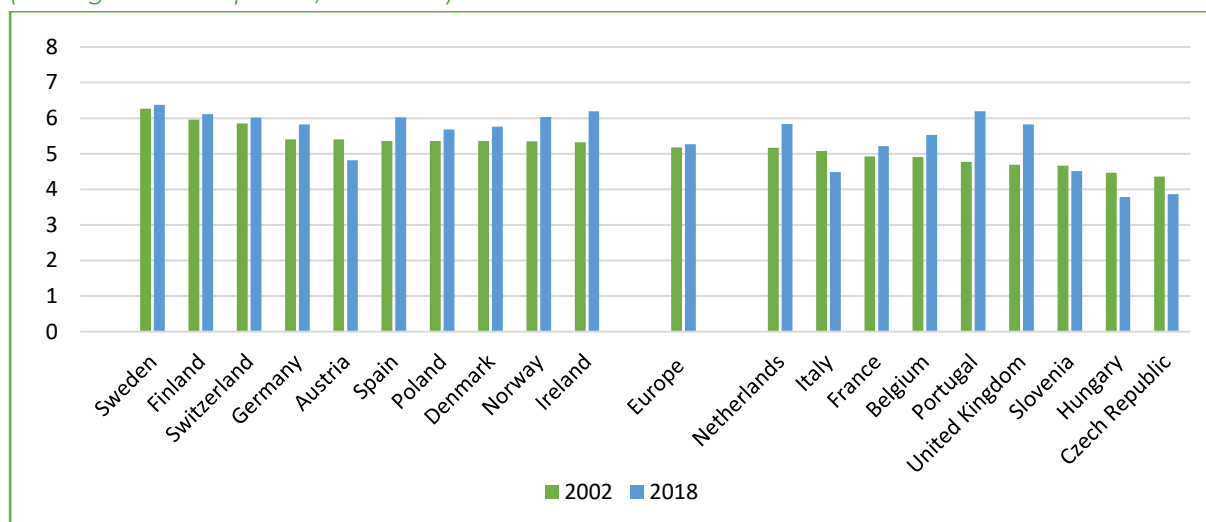
Note: Country averages per round are reported for countries which took part in both waves. Weighted data reported (dweight). The scale is adjusted to better represent the differences between countries.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018)

Figure 3.13 Change in migration preferences (2002-2018)

(Average values reported) (1-4 scale)
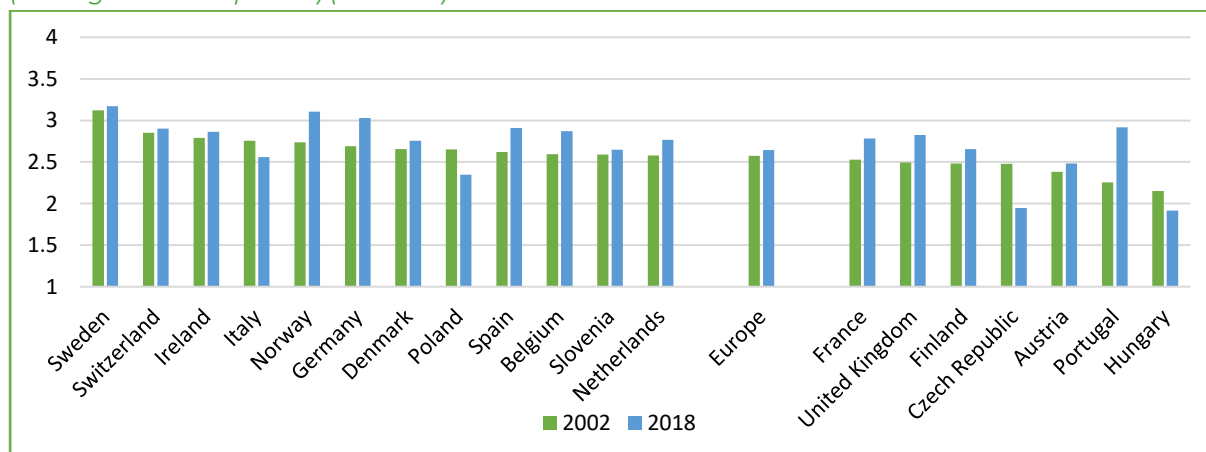
Note: Country averages per round reported. Country averages are reported for countries which took part in both waves. Weighted data reported (dweight)
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018)

The above figures confirm the relative stability of migration attitudes (see also Subsection 3.1 and Goubin, Ruelens & Nicaise, 2022). The reported averages suggest that migration attitudes are strongly dependent on the country context, with a clear ordering of more open and restrictive countries. Countries such as Sweden, Norway or Switzerland have citizens that are consistently more positive about migration, while citizens of countries such as Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic are consistently negative. Further, most European citizens have become (slightly) more positive about the impact of immigrants over time, with exception of citizens of Eastern European countries and Austria. In most Western, Scandinavian, or Southern European countries, there is no long-term negative backlash against migrants to be observed after the crisis. Indeed, the opposite holds true. Therefore, the figures corroborate Heath and Richards' (2016b) remark about a growing divergence between European countries: even though most respondents in this sample became more positive about migration, citizens of Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic have become more negative.

In summary: the 2015-2016 refugee crisis did not lead to a long-term decline in positive attitudes towards migration. Yet, a growing polarisation between European countries can be observed: while most Europeans are becoming more welcoming of immigrants, Eastern and Central Europeans are growing more hostile.

3.5   Changing attitudes towards migration: political correlates?

As a final analysis of Section 3 regarding changing attitudes towards migration, this subsection evaluates to what extent (changes in) attitudes towards migration are associated with political preferences.[11] Previous research suggests that growing anti-immigrant hostility drives the electoral success of nationalist and Eurosceptic parties, and that citizens' migration attitudes are connected to their support for globalisation and multilateral cooperation (Ford & Jennings, 2020; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). This final subsection further contributes to these discussions, through exploring if migration attitudes are correlated with nationalism, Euroscepticism, and voting for extreme or populist parties. This association is hypothesised to take place through individual level and country level dynamics. Individuals that are more sceptical about immigrants, should also be more Eurosceptic, nationalistic, and more likely to vote for parties that support restrictive migration policies. However, this study also examines if a more negative migration mood at the national level is correlated with citizens' political preferences. Socialisation processes play a key role in shaping citizens' political attitudes. If the society-wide norm is to be negative about diversity, this could have important repercussions for individual differences in anti-immigrant attitudes too (Putnam, 2007). A country-wide negative migration mood, could reinforce citizens' tendency to be Eurosceptic or nationalist.

Figure 3.14 starts with exploring if anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with Euroscepticism (left-hand side of the figure) and feelings of nationalism (right-hand side of the figure). Euroscepticism is gauged on an 11-point scale, through asking respondents if they believed that EU integration has gone too far (score of 0), or if they support further EU integration (score of 10). Feelings of nationalism are also asked on an 11-point scale. When respondents feel strongly emotionally attached to their country, they have a score closer to 10, while if this attachment is weak, they score closer to 0 (see Appendix Table 7.2 for the operationalisation). In keeping with the theory, both the impact of anti-immigrant attitudes at (a) the national and (b) the individual level is studied. At the individual level, the link between respondents' perceptions on the impact of immigrants on their society, and attitudes towards the EU and nationalism are examined. Furthermore, the analyses take into account the general migration mood

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[11] . The analyses incorporate measurements of political behaviour (voting) and political attitudes (Euroscepticism and nationalism), which is why the report applies the terms political preferences, or political correlates, which cover both aspects.

at the national level, i.e., did the country become more/less positive, on average, about the perceived impact of immigrants on their country in that specific survey year.

Figure 3.14 Explaining support for the EU and nationalism in Europe

(Change in support for the EU and nationalistic sentiments associated with a one standard deviation increase in the perceived impact of migration on one's country) (0-10 scales)

Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). Statistically significant coefficients are depicted with an asterisk.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

The analyses show **that being in favour of migration is strongly correlated with being in favour of the EU**. Countries that become more positive about immigrants over time, become more positive about the European Union. At the individual level, the results presented in Figure 3.14 also lends support for the idea that citizens who are supportive of migration, tend to be in favour of more EU integration. Support for globalisation and support migration are also positively correlated, a result that confirms the rise of the transnationalist political cleavage in Europe (Kriesi et al., 2012). Feelings of nationalism, however, are not shown to be associated with anti-immigrant attitudes in this study. Citizens with anti-immigrant attitudes, or Europeans who live in a country where most citizens are sceptical about migration, are equally likely to express strong or weak nationalist sentiments. This result disagrees with previous findings, which uncovered that nationalistic citizen were more xenophobic in the USA (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

Next, Figure 3.15 examines if citizens' attitudes about migration are connected to their likelihood of voting for extreme parties. The rise of these challenger parties has been framed as a threat to European democracies, as these parties criticise democratic processes, and usually favour a nativist and exclusionary political agenda (Kriesi, 2014; Rooduijn, 2019). Here, it is explored if the popularity of these parties hinges on citizens' anti-immigrant views, that are operationalised through respondents' perceptions of the impact of migration on their society. To study the popularity of these parties, respondents were asked for which party they voted for in the last general elections of their country. On the basis of this survey question, we identified extreme and populist voters, as well as the remainder of the electorate and non-voters. Afterwards, based on statistical analyses, the likelihood of voting for these parties was calculated. [12]

The left-hand side of Figure 3.15, presents the likelihood of voting for an extreme party, i.e., for a party that can be categorised as populist, and/or, as radical left or radical right. On the right-hand side,

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[12] . The results of statistical models for this section are available from the authors upon request.

at the national level, i.e., did the country become more/less positive, on average, about the perceived impact of immigrants on their country in that specific survey year.

Figure 3.14 Explaining support for the EU and nationalism in Europe

(Change in support for the EU and nationalistic sentiments associated with a one standard deviation increase in the perceived impact of migration on one's country) (0-10 scales)

Note: Weighted data reported (dweight). Statistically significant coefficients are depicted with an asterisk.
Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).

The analyses show **that being in favour of migration is strongly correlated with being in favour of the EU**. Countries that become more positive about immigrants over time, become more positive about the European Union. At the individual level, the results presented in Figure 3.14 also lends support for the idea that citizens who are supportive of migration, tend to be in favour of more EU integration. Support for globalisation and support migration are also positively correlated, a result that confirms the rise of the transnationalist political cleavage in Europe (Kriesi et al., 2012). Feelings of nationalism, however, are not shown to be associated with anti-immigrant attitudes in this study. Citizens with anti-immigrant attitudes, or Europeans who live in a country where most citizens are sceptical about migration, are equally likely to express strong or weak nationalist sentiments. This result disagrees with previous findings, which uncovered that nationalistic citizen were more xenophobic in the USA (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

Next, Figure 3.15 examines if citizens' attitudes about migration are connected to their likelihood of voting for extreme parties. The rise of these challenger parties has been framed as a threat to European democracies, as these parties criticise democratic processes, and usually favour a nativist and exclusionary political agenda (Kriesi, 2014; Rooduijn, 2019). Here, it is explored if the popularity of these parties hinges on citizens' anti-immigrant views, that are operationalised through respondents' perceptions of the impact of migration on their society. To study the popularity of these parties, respondents were asked for which party they voted for in the last general elections of their country. On the basis of this survey question, we identified extreme and populist voters, as well as the remainder of the electorate and non-voters. Afterwards, based on statistical analyses, the likelihood of voting for these parties was calculated. [12]

The left-hand side of Figure 3.15, presents the likelihood of voting for an extreme party, i.e., for a party that can be categorised as populist, and/or, as radical left or radical right. On the right-hand side,

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[12] . The results of statistical models for this section are available from the authors upon request.

the likelihood of casting a vote for a populist radical right party is depicted (more information on the operationalisation can be found in Appendix Table 7.2). This distinction is made because of the characteristics of these two sets of parties. Extreme parties are characterised by an anti-elitist discourse, and radical ideologies. Citizens vote on these parties, because they protest against the current political system. Populist radical right parties share these characteristics but are distinct in the sense that radical right parties are also nativist, i.e., based on the idea that "the people" should be protected from and favoured over outsiders (Kriesi et al., 2012; Kriesi, 2014; Rooduijn, 2019). Hence, although several authors suggest that both sets of parties attract anti-immigrant voters (Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018), populist radical right voters are expected to be especially critical of immigrants.

Figure 3.15 Support for extreme and populist radical right parties, and migration attitudes

(Change in likelihood of voting for an extreme and populist radical right party associated with a one unit increase in…)
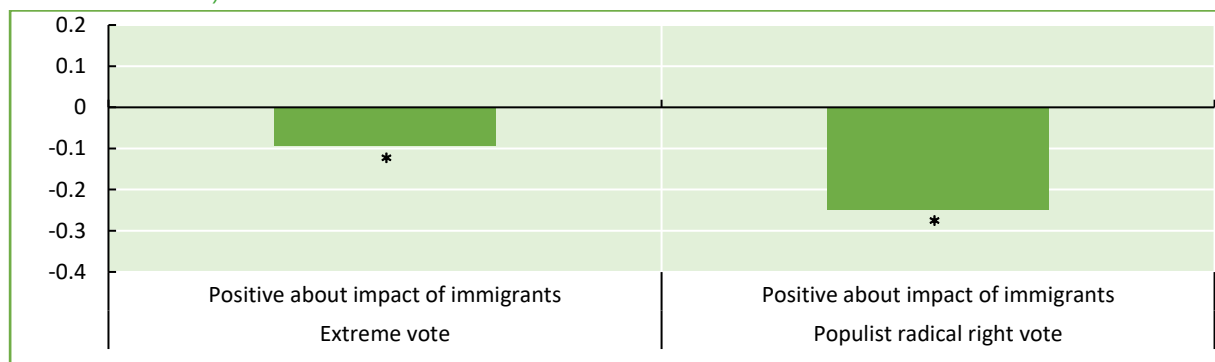
Note: Statistically significant coefficients are depicted with an asterisk.
Source: European Social Survey (2006,2010, 2014 – models extreme vote; 2016 – model populist radical right vote).

The findings indicate that respondents decrease their likelihood to cast a vote for an extreme party by 10%, and for a populist radical right party by about 25%, for every one-unit increase in how positively respondents think about the impact of immigrants on their society. These are substantial results, which demonstrate that these **extreme parties indeed are successful in attracting Europeans with anti-immigrant attitudes**. This effect is even stronger the case for populist radical right parties. The results are also in line with previous research, which highlights that citizens' migration attitudes are among the most important drivers of support for extremist parties in Europe (Rooduijn, 2019; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). What these analyses cannot explain, however, is to what extent populist or extreme parties simply benefit from Europeans' anti-immigrant attitudes, or if they are also key in further increasing anti-immigrant attitudes among their electorates, through their political rhetoric and growing popularity. The analyses also do not consider to what extent more mainstream parties adopt the more negative positions of these extreme and populist parties, thereby potentially further fuelling anti-immigrant opinions (de Jonge, 2021). Either way, given the salience of the issue of migration for European citizens, and the growing success of populist and extreme parties across Europe, these findings underline that citizens' migration preferences will remain an important voting motive.

4. Typologies of migration attitudes

The analyses in the previous sections shed light on the evolution of migration attitudes over time, as well as the potential drivers behind these developments. Altogether, these analyses indicate that drivers of migration preferences are similar across the two key dimensions under study (attitudes about the impact of immigrants on society, and migration preferences). Moreover, the evolutions of these indicators across time, and average differences between countries were comparable. These findings imply that migration preferences could be relatively stable characteristics of individual citizens and countries. On the other hand, various groups of citizens also think differently about migration, and country specific drivers exist (such as the percentage of foreign-born citizens). In the light of this discussion, Section 4 investigates to what extent consistent individual and country level typologies in migration attitudes are prevalent: can citizens and countries be classified in specific groups?

4.1   Individual level typology

In order to uncover a typology of migration attitudes at the individual level, answering patterns of respondents on nine individual survey items are analysed using multilevel latent class analyses. As highlighted in Subsection 2.3.2, this method examines if citizens have consistent answering patterns on survey items and assesses if the answering patterns of respondents correspond with each other. If they do, "latent classes", i.e., specific subsets of citizens or countries, can be determined on the basis of the consistency of the respondents' answers. In this regard, Figure 4.1 (next page) shows the nine survey items under analysis, and the percentage of respondents that agree with these statements on the basis of 2016 ESS data (the latest ESS wave on which we have information on all these questions).[13]

This bivariate figure indicates that respondents seem to differentiate between the survey items on immigrants and migration. For instance, only 37% of the respondents believe that their government should be generous when dealing with refugee applications, but 59% of the respondents believe that refugees are in real fear of persecution.

Bivariate distributions, however, only provide information about the European population as a whole, and do not give information about individual citizens and their answering patterns on the migration questions. Hence, we use multilevel latent class analyses to analyse these different patterns (Heath & Richards, 2020). On the basis of these analyses, three specific individual level profiles in migration preferences can be uncovered in Europe (in statistical terms: a three-class solution fitted the data best).[14] Figure 4.2 depicts the results of these latent class analyses at the individual level. At the y-axis of the figure, the likelihood of responding favourably to the nine survey items is represented (i.e., "*item response probabilities*"). The three different lines in the figure are the three different individual profiles that are uncovered. It should be noted that only 2016 data is reported in Figure 4.2, but that the same number of profiles are found in the 2002 and 2014 wave of the European Social Survey.

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[13] . Answering patterns, and the hierarchy of positive answers on these questions are similar across the three waves in which this information is available (2002, 2014, 2016), so the latest information is reported. The same statement holds true for the results of the latent class analyses and the different clusters and classes uncovered.

[14] . More details about fit indexes and model selection, and the model estimates can be found in the Appendix "Model information on the latent class analyses".

Figure 4.1 Distribution of answers on individual survey items
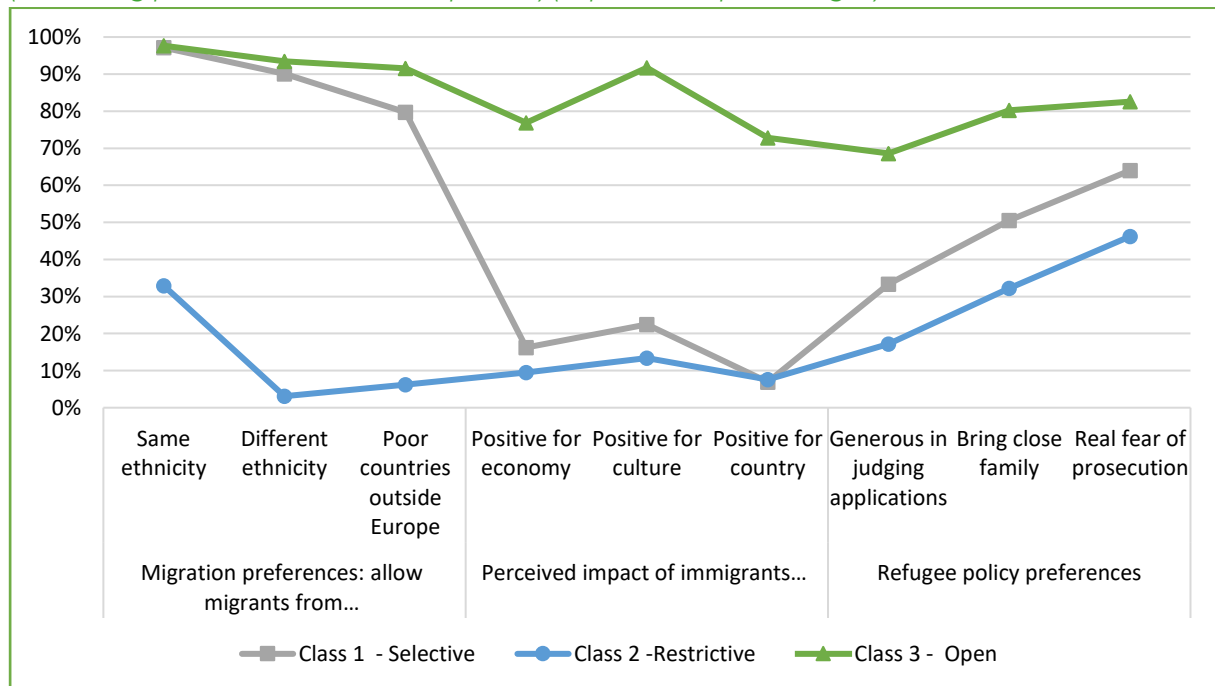
(Expressed in percentages)
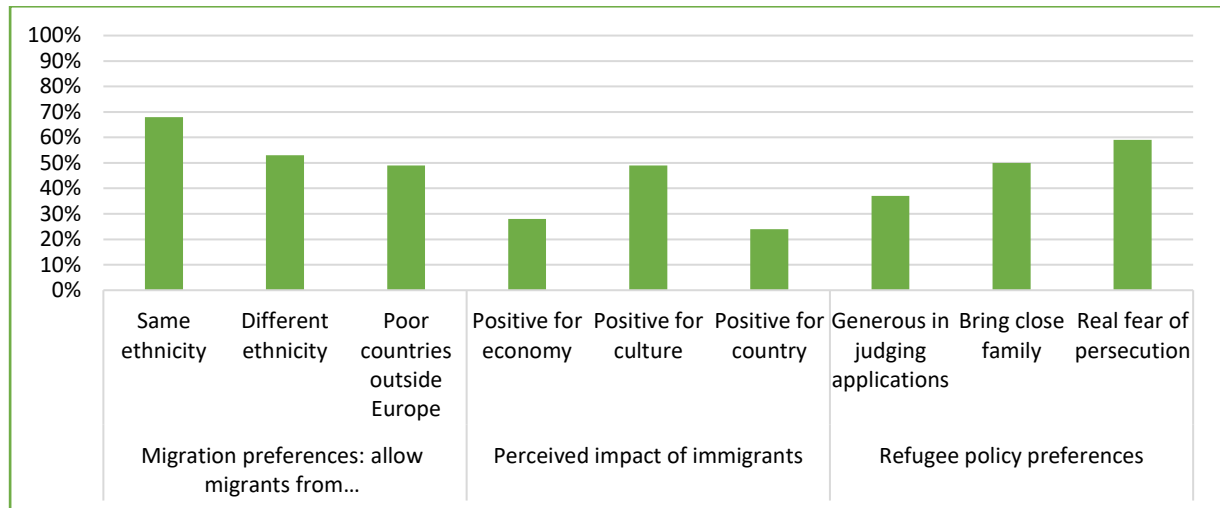
Note: Weighted data reported (dweight).
Source: European Social Survey (2016).

Figure 4.2 Individual typologies of migration attitudes

(Answering patterns of the different profiles) (Expressed in percentages)

Source: European Social Survey (2016).

The three distinct groups can be labelled as being "open", "restrictive", or "selective" about migration. First, there is a group of citizens that is **unequivocally positive about migration**: they are likely to answer positively on all the questions (green line on the figure). These respondents are in general open to migration. A second group of citizens answers **consistently negatively** on all the questions (blue line in the figure). These respondents have restrictive migration attitudes, regardless of the type of immigrant or their perceived impact. The third group is **selective about migration** (grey line): while these respondents are relatively supportive of refugees and migration in general, they do not think that immigrants have a positive impact on their society. Put differently, these respondents believe that immigrants may pose a threat to their country, while still being lenient about open border and refugee policies.

An examination of the characteristics of respondents who belong to the different clusters confirms the assumptions of group conflict theory. In comparison with the restrictive group of respondents, open respondents are more highly educated, more affluent, and they have more trust in other people. These respondents are also more likely to live in a city and have left-wing preferences. The difference between the open and the selective group of citizens can be similarly explained by these divergent characteristics, although the differences in socio-economic background, or ideology of citizens between these two types are much smaller. Finally, women are more likely to be part of the selective class, while men are more likely to be a member of the restrictive class.

Furthermore, the restrictive class of respondents displays a strong in-group versus out-group tendency, whereas the open group is in favour of more open boundaries between the host nation and immigrants. On the other hand, the selective group does make a distinction between the different survey questions (perceived impact of immigrants on society versus migration preferences in general). Also, important to observe is that all respondents, also those in the restrictive class, are more supportive of refugees. This higher support is indicated by the increased item response probabilities depicted at the right-hand side of Figure 4.2.[15]

Figure 4.3 depicts the relative size of these different groups. Here, we observe that the largest group of respondents is restrictive about migration (43% of the respondents). About 30% of the respondents belong to the selective class, leaving 27% of the respondents in the welcoming category. From a different angle, this implies that **about 70% of European citizens (in this sample)** are either consistently supportive of migration or unfavourable to it. This finding is especially important from a policy-perspective, as it makes it difficult to reconcile these two conflicting groups.

Figure 4.3 Individual distribution of class profiles

(Expressed in percentages)

Note: The scale is adjusted to better visualise the differences between respondents.
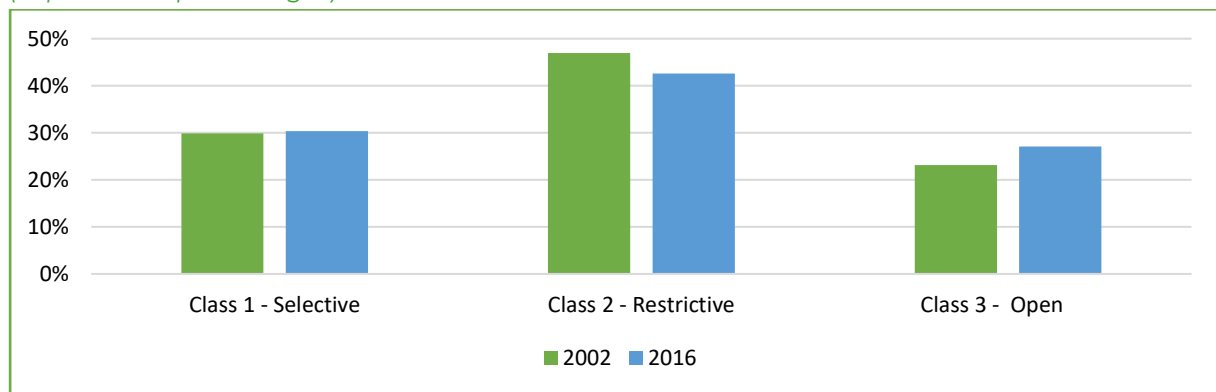*Source: European Social Survey (2016).*

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[15] . These latent class analyses corroborate the findings of earlier studies (Genge & Bartolucci, 2022; Heath & Richards, 2020) that also uncover three latent classes at the individual level, and three country-level clusters.

Figure 4.4 depicts the stability of these class profiles: to what extent can we see a similar distribution of the different groups of citizens in 2002 and in 2016? This figure mainly documents how resilient the distribution of these groups is: the restrictive group is the largest in 2002, and it remains the largest in 2016. Yet, Figure 4.4 also documents that the group which is open towards migration has increased in size (by about 4%), while the size of the restrictive group has somewhat decreased. Hence, in line with results of previous chapters, it appears that **European citizens have become more positive about** **migration, but this change is relatively limited**. **An ambivalent to outright restrictive mood remains the most prevalent in Europe**.

Figure 4.4 Change in class profiles 2002-2016

(Expressed in percentages)

Note: The scale is adjusted to better visualise the differences between respondents.
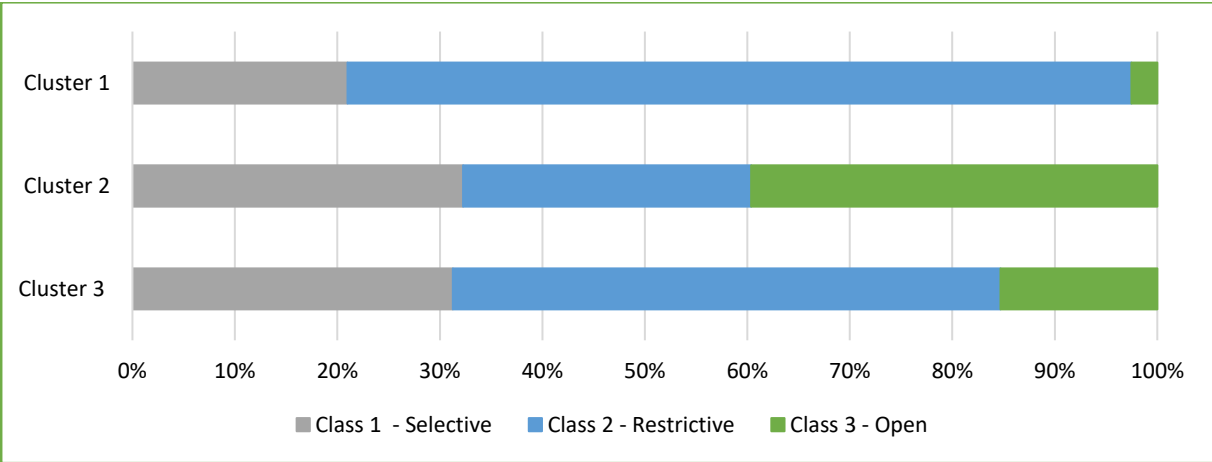Source: European Social Survey (2002,2016).

4.2   Country level typology

The latent class analyses indicate that specific individual level profiles can be discerned in Europe. In the next step, we estimate multilevel latent class models in order to investigate if specific country "clusters" are present in the data. The presence of such clusters would imply that certain individual profiles are more prevalent in some countries than in others. Based on these more detailed analyses (see Appendix "Model information on the latent class analyses"), three specific country clusters can be found. These three clusters are depicted in Figure 4.5, which summarises the percentage distribution of the different groups of citizens within these country clusters.

   In the first group of countries (Cluster 1), the great majority of citizens is negative or sceptical about migration. The other two clusters mainly differ with regards to the presence of citizens with positive attitudes: in Cluster 2, about 40% of citizens express positive views, in Cluster 3, only 15% of citizens is positive. The group of citizens that is sceptical about migration is relatively similar across these different country clusters (between 20-30% of the respondents).

Figure 4.5 Distribution of class profiles across country clusters

(Expressed in percentages)

Data: European Social Survey (2016).

Table 4.1 gives an overview of the specific countries that are present in each cluster.[16]

Table 4.1 Countries per cluster

	Countries
Cluster 1	Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia
Cluster 2	Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Cluster 3	Austria, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia

Source: European Social Survey 2016.

These different groups or "classes" of citizens are clustered in regions. In Northern and Western Europe, countries host the largest group of citizens who are generally open to migration (Cluster 2). None of the Eastern or Central European countries are part of this cluster. Instead these countries are distributed across Cluster 1 (where over 95% of citizens are selective or restrictive about migration), and Cluster 3 (over 80% of the population is at least selective about migration). These country clusters closely resemble the information presented in Section 3 of the report confirming that **clear regional cleavages exist between the different European countries.** Southern European countries, however, are less easily divided into specific regional blocks: Italy's population is more selective about migration, while Portugal and Spain boast a larger group of citizens who hold more positive attitudes towards migration.

These differences between country clusters and between countries have policy implications. For example, for governments in the Czech Republic or Hungary, it is fairly easy to adhere to their citizens' migration preferences, as almost all citizens are negative about migration. By contrast, in countries such as Belgium or Sweden, preferences are more diverse, potentially leading to political conflicts. Thus, the higher prevalence of citizens that are open about migration in these "Cluster 2" countries does not imply that there is a general consensus in these countries about immigrants or migration policy. As none of the three different groups of citizens (restrictive, selective, or open) are the majority group of the

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[16] . The cluster membership is not stable between the rounds, though the regional differences are confirmed. This result will be further explored in the research article of Goubin & Ruelens (2022).

population, we speculate that the decision-making on migration policies will remain challenging. Finally, as the group of open citizens corresponds to less than 50% of the population of "Cluster 2" countries such as France, Switzerland, or the United Kingdom, we cannot conclude that these European countries would, on average, be favourable towards migration.

5. Conclusion

Migration remains one of Europe's most pressing challenges: the EU receives over two million immigrants per year from outside the EU (Eurostat, 2022). The issue of migration is a politically salient and divisive topic, even more so after the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. The analyses of this report documented what Europeans think about migration, how these attitudes change over time, and what factors are driving these attitudes.

A first general conclusion of these analyses is that **Europeans, on average, hold rather sceptical views about migration.** While a minority of Europeans is consistently positive about the impact of immigrants on their society, and supportive of open borders, most Europeans hold lukewarm, or restrictive attitudes. In this regard, **most Europeans** tend to be consistent in how they think about immigrants and migration. These European citizens **are either unequivocally welcoming or restrictive** when asked about what they think about refugees, the consequences of migration for their country, or about open border policies. There are some differences observed, however, when zooming in on the perceived deservingness of immigrants: support for accepting refugees, or immigrants with a similar ethnic background, is on average higher. Even citizens that are unsupportive of migration in general report higher support for immigrants with a similar background. Further, analyses uncover a group of citizens who are relatively supportive of open border policies yet believe that immigrants potentially pose a threat to their country. These selective citizens represent about one third of the European population. The presence of this selective group of citizens confirms the idea that Europeans can have - to some extent - a fairly nuanced view on the migration issue. In general, however, most European citizens are ambivalent or sceptical about migration, which confirms the earlier descriptive conclusions of Goubin, Ruelens and Nicaise (2022)'s Opportunities report "Trends in attitudes towards migration in Europe".

As a second conclusion, **migration attitudes have been relatively stable in Europe**. In the aftermath of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, perceptions on the impact of immigrants on one's society became more negative, but support for migration in general did not. Hence, there is only mixed evidence for the idea of "a backlash" against immigrants in crisis times. Further**, no long-term decline in support for migration in the aftermath of the refugee crisis can be noted**. By 2018, attitudes about migration were at their pre-crisis levels, and, in some cases, even slightly more positive.

A third conclusion **is that a substantial amount of heterogeneity is present between countries in migration attitudes. Differences between European countries and regions are**, in this regard, **more sizeable than within-country changes in migration attitudes over the years**. Three distinct country profiles are found and these country clusters closely resemble the regional geography of Europe. In two EU member states, the Czech Republic and Hungary, over 70% of their citizens are outright negative about migration (Cluster 1). Several other Central-European countries (e.g., Austria, Slovenia), and Baltic countries (e.g., Estonia, Lithuania), have a slightly more welcoming atmosphere – about 50% of their populations is selective or welcoming (Cluster 2). In several of these countries (e.g., Poland), the migration mood became more negative over time. Western European and Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, are more welcoming of migration (Cluster 3). In these countries, migration attitudes are very stable over the years with about 40% of citizens being unequivocally positive about migration. Southern European countries are more challenging to classify, and this difficulty is linked to time dynamics: in Southern Europe, a clear upward trend in support for migration is observed since the 2007-2008 Great Recession (e.g., in Portugal). As the analyses demonstrate, citizens of many Southern European countries tended to have rather negative views about migration at the beginning of the time series but have become more accepting of migration over the years.

Fourth, considering this **stability of migration attitudes at the individual and country level**, it is relatively unsurprising that **mixed evidence is found regarding the association between objective country level conditions and support for migration**. While group conflict theory predicts that growing diversity at the national level should lead to less support for migration, and contact theory predicts the opposite, the analyses of this report do not find much support for either theory. Through making a distinction between average levels of diversity at the country level, changes in these diversity levels, and their association with migration attitudes, a test of both theories is provided. Yet, most results are statistically insignificant, or conflicting. For instance, a higher average number of foreign-born citizens is associated with a more negative assessment about the impact of immigrants on one's society, but a higher average inflow of foreigners led to more support for migration in general. This contradictory evidence suggests that empirical results are highly dependent on the selection of the explanatory variables, and thus are not very reliable. **It can also be speculated that the framing of objective levels of migration in the public debates, subjective beliefs, and citizens' perceptions about the size of immigrant groups, are more important for citizens' migration attitudes.** Past research on the framing of migration in national media, and how citizens inform themselves politically, highlight that these indeed affect their migration attitudes (De Coninck et al., 2019; De Coninck, Mertens & D'haenens, 2021), yet more research is necessary to link the salience and narratives on migration with public attitudes.

A fifth conclusion of this report is that the individual level drivers of migration attitudes uncovered in the analyses are consistent with the group conflict theory. Group conflict theory hypothesises that citizens who feel culturally and economically threatened by migration, will be less supportive of migration. These assumptions are in line with the results: **more well-to-do citizens, more trusting citizens, non-religious citizens and citizens who feel politically empowered, are more supportive of migration**. These differences also to a large degree account for the differences between the "open" and "restrictive" classes of citizens found in the multilevel latent class analyses.

Finally, migration attitudes relate to other political preferences. Citizens who are more positive about migration are more likely to support EU integration. They are also less likely to vote for a populist radical right party, or a political party characterised as extreme, which confirms that the transnationalist political cleavage is clearly dividing European electorates. In contrast, the analyses did not provide evidence for a link between nationalism and migration attitudes.

In summary, the analyses of this report **confirm the difficulty of political decision-making on the issue of migration**. Attitudes about migration reflect a complex belief system, that is closely connected to citizens' position in life, and the country context they live in. The results are suggestive of an **insider-outsider dynamic**. Citizens who feel part of their society, and who are economically and socially empowered, are likely to think positively about migration, whereas other citizens, who are less secure, feel threatened by the (perceived) rising diversity of their country. In the light of the stability of migration attitudes, this does imply a polarisation of migration preferences within countries, in which citizens who are positive about migration find little common ground with those who are negative, despite the existence of a more selective group of citizens. Moreover, also between European countries, these divisions are clear from the analyses: Western and Scandinavian countries are more positive than the growingly hostile Eastern and Central European countries. Divergence on the issue of migration will thus be a likely feature of European countries and citizens in the years to come.

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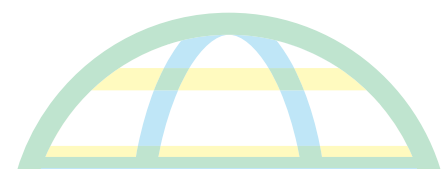
7. Appendix

Table 7.1 Overview of participating countries in the European Social Survey

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	Total
Austria	2257	2256	2405	/	/	/	1795	2010	2499	13222
Belgium	1899	1778	1798	1760	1704	1869	1769	1766	1767	16110
Bulgaria	/	/	1400	2230	2434	2260	/	/	2198	10522
Croatia	/	/	/	1484	1649	/	/	/	1810	4943
Cyprus	/	/	995	1215	1083	1116	/	/	781	5190
Czechia	1360	3026	/	2018	2386	2009	2148	2269	2398	17614
Denmark	1506	1487	1505	1610	1576	1650	1502	/	1572	12408
Estonia	/	1989	1517	1661	1793	2380	2051	2019	1904	15314
Finland	2000	2022	1896	2195	1878	2197	2087	1925	1755	17955
France	1503	1806	1986	2073	1728	1968	1917	2070	2010	17061
Germany	2919	2870	2916	2751	3031	2958	3045	2852	2358	25700
Great Britain	2052	1897	2394	2352	2422	2286	2264	1959	2204	19830
Greece	2566	2406	/	2072	2715	/	/	/	/	9759
Hungary	1685	1498	1518	1544	1561	2014	1698	1614	1661	14793
Iceland	/	579	/	/	/	752	/	880	861	3072
Ireland	2046	2286	1800	1764	2576	2628	2390	2757	2216	20463
Israel	2499	/	/	2490	2294	2508	2562	2557	/	14910
Italy	1207	/	/	/	/	960	/	2626	2745	7538
Latvia	/	/	/	1980	/	/	/	/	918	2898
Lithuania	/	/	/	/	1677	2109	2250	2122	1835	9993
Luxemburg	1552	1635	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	3187
Norway	2036	1760	1750	1549	1548	1624	1436	1545	1406	14654
Poland	2110	1716	1721	1619	1751	1898	1615	1694	1500	15624
Portugal	1511	2052	2222	2367	2150	2151	1265	1270	1055	16043
Russia	/	/	2437	2512	2595	2484	/	2430	/	12458
Slovakia	/	1512	1766	1810	1856	1847	/	/	1083	9874
Slovenia	1519	1442	1476	1286	1403	1257	1224	1307	1318	12232
Spain	1729	1663	1876	2576	1885	1889	1925	1958	1668	17169
Sweden	1999	1948	1927	1830	1497	1847	1791	1551	1539	15929
Switzerland	2040	2141	1804	1819	1506	1493	1532	1525	1542	15402

The Nether-lands	2364	1881	1889	1778	1829	1845	1919	1681	1673	16859
Turkey	/	1856	/	2416	/	/	/	/	/	4272
Ukraine	/	2031	2002	1845	1931	2178	/	/	/	9987
Total	42359	47537	43000	54606	52458	52177	40185	44387	46276	422985

Source: European Social Survey (2002-2018).
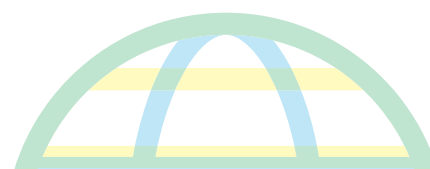
Table 7.2 Coding scheme for operationalisation of key variables

Variable	Information on coding
Dependent variables	
Perceived impact of immigrants on society	A sum-score on the basis of three original questions: To what extent do you think that migration - Is bad/is good for economy (ranging from 0: bad; to 10: good) - Undermines/enriches cultural life (ranging from 0: undermines; to 10: enriches) - Country is a worse/better place to live (ranging from 0: worse; to 10 better) The original questions were summed up and divided by 3 to keep the original 11-point scale. The scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.854.
Migration preferences	A sum-score on the basis of three original questions: To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of - the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here? - of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people? - How about people from the poorer countries outside Europe? Answering options are: (1) allow none, (2) allow a few, (3) allow some, (4) allow many. Higher values indicate more support for migration. The original questions were summed up and divided by 3 to keep the original 4-point The scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.872.
Pro-EU	Based on the question: "Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. What number on the scale best describes your position?" 0 means that unification has already gone too far, 10 means that unification should go further.
Nationalism	Based on the question: "How emotionally attached do you feel to [country]? Please choose a number from 0 to 10, where 0 means not at all emotionally attached and 10 means very emotionally attached."
Extreme voting	Extreme voting is operationalised through the PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2019), and the ParlGov databases. Voters of parties classified as being populist, radical left or radical right in the PopuList, and of parties scoring above 8, or below 2, on ParlGov's left-right economy scale (0-10 point scale), were coded as extreme voters. About 20% of voters are classified in this way. The dependent variable extreme voting is thus having voted for an extreme party (Yes = 1; No = 0). Parties not included in these datasets, but included in the

	ESS were coded following the discretion of the authors. Replication material are available upon request. The original coding scheme was replicated from Okolikj, M., Goubin, S., Stiers, D., & Hooghe, M. (2022). Trust in Political Parties and Ideological Proximity Voting in Europe: The Role of Trust in Political Parties as a Heuristic Mechanism. Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, accepted.
Populist radical right voting	Voters who casted a vote for any of the following parties in the last national parliamentary elections were coded as populist radical right voters. The original coding scheme was replicated from Goubin, S., & Hooghe, M. (2021). Do welfare concerns drive electoral support for the populist radical right? An exploratory analysis. *Acta Politica*. doi: 10.1057/s41269-021-00201-y

Country	Populist voter
Austria	Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)
Belgium	Vlaams Belang
Czechia	Úsvit přímé demokraci (Dawn Na-
Finland	Perussuomalaiset (True Finns)
France	Front National (FN)
Germany	Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)
Hungary	Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Alliance (FIDESZ-MPSZ)
Italy	Lega Nord (Northern League) (LN) Brothers of Italy (FdI)
The Neth-	Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for
Norway	Progress Party (FrP)
Poland	Law and Justice Party (PiS) Kukiz '15 (Kukiz '15)
Sweden	Swedish Democrats (SD)
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party (SVP) Ticino League (LdT)
United	United Kingdom's Independent

Sources: Rooduijn et. al. (2019) (PopuList), Holger & Manow (2019), and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk et al. 2017).

Independent variables – Individual level	
Place of residence	Based on the question: "Which phrase best describes the area where you live". 1. A big city 2. The suburbs or outskirts of a big city 3. A town or small city 4. A country village 5. A farm or home in the countryside
Income situation	Based on the question: "Which of the descriptions comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?" 1. Finding it very difficult on present income 2. Finding it difficult on present income 3. Coping on present income 4. Living comfortably on present income
Age	Age of respondent, calculated (age ranges from 14 to 123).
Gender	Respondents were coded as male (1) or female (2).
Education	Based on ES-ISCED scale. 1. ES-ISCED 0-I less than lower secondary 2. ES-ISCED II lower secondary 3. ES-ISCED III upper secondary 4. ES-ISCED IV Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed 5. ES-ISCED V-VI tertiary education completed
Religious	Based on categorisation: does the respondent belong to a particular religion or denomination? (0) No, (1) Yes.
Social class	Based on Oesch' social class typology. Respondents are divided into 5 classes: 1. Higher service class 2. Lower service class 3. Small business owners 4. Skilled workers 5. Unskilled workers
Political interest	Based on the question: "How interested would you say you are in politics - are you..." 1. Not at all interested 2. Hardly interested 3. Quite interested 4. Very interested
Voted	Based on the question: "Some people don't vote nowadays for one reason or another. Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]?" Answers are coded such that (1) is Yes, and (0) is No, or that the respondent was not eligible to vote.
Political orientation	Based on the question: "In politics people sometimes talk of "left" and "right". Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?"

| Social trust	Based on the question: "generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please tell me on a score of 0 to 10, where 0 means you can't be too careful and 10 means that most people can be trusted".
Political trust	Based on the question: "Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust." We compute a sum-score on the basis of the trust in the national parliament and politicians questions as an indicator of political trust. The original questions were added to each other and divided by 2 to keep the original 11-point scale. The scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.844.
Independent variables – Country level	
% inflow of migrants	Expressed in % of total population. Calculated as number of immigrants arriving in a given year over total population. Source: Eurostat, own calculations.
% of population foreign born	Expressed in % of total population. Source: OECD.
GDP per capita	GDP distribution per head of population, expressed in euros, controlled for PPP. Source: Eurostat.
Unemployment rate	Expressed in % of the population in the labour force. Source: Eurostat.
Right-wing government	Right-wing parties as % of total cabinet posts, weighted by days. Source: Comparative Political Dataset.
For robustness tests - Country level	
Real GDP Growth	Real GDP growth (% change from previous year). Source: Comparative Political Dataset.
Gini Coefficient of Equivalised Disposable Income	Coefficient range: 0: perfect equality, all households have the same income. 100: perfect inequality, one household possesses the entire national income. Source: Eurostat.
Communist past	0: Countries without communist past 1: Countries with communist past Note: Germany is treated as one unit, and given a code of 0, despite the communist past of East Germany. Source: Comparative Political Dataset.
Corruption	Corruption Perception Index Source: Transparency International.

Source: European Social Survey, 2002-2018.
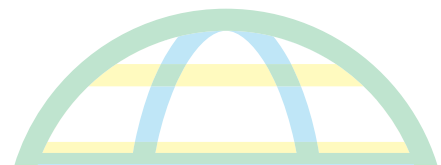
Table 7.3 Descriptive statistics individual level

| Variable	*N*	Mean / % for binary variables	SD	Min	Max
Individual level					
Perceived impact of immi-grants	383614	5.100	2.161	0	10
Migration preferences	399100	2.591	0.805	1	4
Pro-EU	295064	5.154	2.656	0	10
Authoritarianism	404590	2.315	1.189	1	6
Nationalism	90209	7.828	2.172	0	10
Extreme party vote	135680	12.05% voted for extreme party		0	1
Populist radical right vote	44400	5.92% voted for populist party		0	1
Place of residence	421843	2.887	1.228	1	5
Income situation	414366	2.046	0.876	1	4
Age[17]	421084	47.061	18.456	14	123
Gender	422653	53.3% Female		1	2
Education	420577	3.178	1.333	1	5
Religious	417830	62% Religious		0	1
Social class	374124	3.256	1.392	1	5
Political interest	421593	2.371	0.910	1	4
Voted	418759	71% Voted		0	1
Political orientation	362927	5.151	2.214	0	10
Social trust	407430	3.958	2.332	0	10
Political trust	421379	5.025	2.457	0	10

Source: European Social Survey, 2002-2018.

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[17] . The number of respondents which were either below 15, or above 100, represented less than 0.01 % of the survey sample. Hence, they were also included in the analyses (following, e.g., Abdelaaty & Steele, 2022).

Table 7.4 Descriptive statistics country level

Country level	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max
% inflow of migrants (Expressed as *N* of immigrants arriving over total population)	166	0.909	0.577	0.097	3.395
% of population foreign born (Expressed in % of total population)	166	10.860	5.175	1.10	29.500
GDP per capita	166	29867.53	15136.08	8550	69440
Unemployment rate	166	8.116	4.527	2.20	26.50
Right-wing government	166	39.309	33.329	0	100
Communist past	166	28%		0	1
For robustness tests					
Real GDP Growth	166	2.004	2.276	-7.082	8.948
Gini Coefficient of Equivalised Disposable Income	166	28.613	3.988	20.900	37.700
Corruption	166	7.099	1.609	3.500	9.700

Source: European Social Survey, 2002-2018.
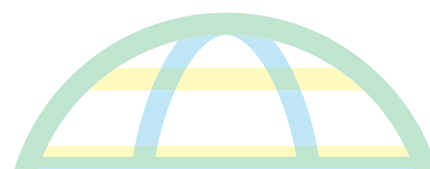
7.1   Model information on the latent class analyses

Table 7.5 Distribution of answering positively on survey questions

(Percentages reported)

Migration preferences: allow migrants from…	Same ethnicity	68%
	Different ethnicity	53%
	Poor countries outside Europe	49%
Perceived impact of immigrants	Positive for economy	28%
	Positive for culture	49%
	Positive for country	24%
Refugee policy preferences	Generous in judging applications	37%
	Bring close family	50%
	Real fear of persecution	59%

Table 7.6 Goodness of fit tests

(9 items at individual level, multilevel LCA models (no group limit – 23 countries as second level clusters))

	Log Likelihood	AIC	BIC	Entropy	Res. DF	Gsq
2-class	-193240	386560.3	386905.8	0.86	11223	47777.49
3-class	**-185206**	**370554.7**	**371168.1**	**0.83**	**11192**	**31709.92**
4-class	-182256	364716.4	365597.6	0.8	11161	25809.59
5-class	-180950	362165.3	363314.4	0.79	11130	23196.55
6-class	-180106	360539.6	361956.5	0.77	11099	21508.8

A 3-class solution was chosen on the basis of these indices.

Table 7.7 Item-response probabilities of the three different classes

(Percentages reported)

	Migration preferences: allow migrants from…			Perceived impact of immigrants			Refugee policy preferences		
	Same ethnicity	Different ethnicity	Poor countries outside Europe	Positive for economy	Positive for culture	Positive for country	Generous in judging applications	Bring close family	Real fear of prosecution
Class 1 - Selective	97%	90%	80%	16%	22%	7%	33%	51%	64%
Class 2 - Restrictive	33%	3%	6%	10%	13%	8%	17%	32%	46%
Class 3 - Open	98%	93%	92%	77%	92%	73%	69%	80%	83%

Table 7.8 Distribution of the different classes

(Percentages reported)

	%
Class 1 - Selective about migration	30%
Class 2 - Restrictive about migration	43%
Class 3 - Open about migration	27%

Table 7.9 Change in the distribution of the classes between 2002 and 2016

(Percentages reported)

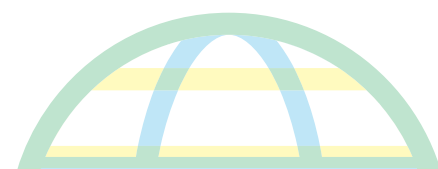|	2002	2016
Class 1 - Selective about migration	30%	30%
Class 2 - Restrictive about migration	47%	43%
Class 3 - Open about migration	23%	27%

Table 7.10 Goodness of fit with varying country clusters

(9 items at individual level, 3 classes at individual level, multilevel structure (with a set number of clusters at country level))

	Log Likelihood	AIC	BIC	En-tropy	Res. DF	Gsq
2-cluster L2	-186842	373748.8	374025.3	0.83	11231	34982.03
3-cluster L2	**-186292**	**372653.9**	**372956.3**	**0.83**	**11228**	**33881.15**
4-cluster L2	-185948	371972.7	372301	0.83	11225	33193.93
5-cluster L2	-185674	371429.6	371783.9	0.83	11222	32644.86
6-cluster L2	-185626	371340.1	371720.3	0.83	11219	32549.36
7-cluster L2	-185570	371234.8	371640.8	0.83	11216	32438
8-cluster L2	-185496	371091.2	371523.2	0.83	11213	32288.44

A 3-cluster solution was chosen on the basis of these indices.

Table 7.11 Distribution of classes across the clusters

(Percentages reported)

	Class 1 – Selective	Class 2 - Restrictive	Class 3 - Open
Cluster 1	20.976%	76.510%	2.514%
Cluster 2	32.252%	28.117%	39.631%
Cluster 3	31.247%	53.465%	15.288%

Table 7.12 Marginal prevalence of the clusters

(Percentages reported)

	%
Cluster 1	14%
Cluster 2	59%
Cluster 3	27%

opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration