Technical University of Munich
TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology

TUM

Making and Influence of Political Controversy: A Case Study of the Immigration Issue in the UK and Germany

Soyeon Jin

Complete reprint of the dissertation approved by the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology

of the Technical University of Munich for the award of the

Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. Phil).

Chair: Prof. Dr. Stefan Wurster

Examiners:

1.   Prof. Dr. Ioannis Theocharis
2.   Prof. Dr. Katrin Paula

The dissertation was submitted to the Technical University of Munich on 20 February 2024 and

accepted by the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology on 16 March 2024.

Abstract

The issue of immigration often sparks political controversy, creating the impression of deep societal division; however, the opposite might be true. What does political controversy represent in this context? Building on previous works on the politicization of European integration, this dissertation clarifies that for an issue to be truly politically controversial, it necessitates the public's resonance and involvement. The definition further raises a question about the impetus of the public's participation in making political controversy and the influence of political controversy on us. This dissertation consists of three studies that address those questions. Study 1 examines the mechanism behind the making of political controversy by the public. Studies 2 and 3 focus on the influence of political controversy on natives and immigrants, respectively.

Study 1 investigates the public's role in making political controversy, introducing the 'emotional synchrony distribution' framework. This innovative approach integrates three theories–the social sharing of emotions, the spiral of silence theory, and the consensus paradox–to predict fluctuations in public discussion with the public's emotions. Additionally, this thesis employs a novel method that uses passive emotional reactions to measure the public's emotions. The analyses with the Facebook URL data reveal that political controversy arises not only when the public is polarized but also when the public shares similar emotions.

In Study 2, the research explores how political controversy influences the majority's attitudes. The main assumptions are as follows: when the immigrant issue is the focal point of political competition, political controversy will mainly signal conflicts, while when political elites reach a consensus to hold a welcoming stance, political controversy will entail consensual, welcoming messages. Study 2 compares the UK and Germany because of their similarities in immigration histories yet significant differences in their political elites' choices. The analyses with media article data and individual-level longitudinal data (British Election Study and GESIS panel) reveal that in a divided political context, political controversy heightens anti-immigrant

1

sentiments among natives. Conversely, in a consensus-driven context, political controversy merely raises the issue importance and does not necessarily increase anti-immigrant attitudes.

Study 3 argues that political controversy significantly determines immigrants' psychological integration, building on the same assumptions as Study 2. Cross-sectional data analysis with the UK and German data documents that consensus-driven political controversy enhances immigrants' psychological integration. Yet, conflict-driven political controversy does not have any significant influence on immigrants' integration.

This dissertation contributes to political communication literature by advancing theories and methods. The 'emotional synchrony distribution' framework from Study 1 offers a comprehensive understanding of public communication dynamics. It also introduces an innovative method for measuring public emotions, addressing the limitations of traditional content analysis. In addition, the findings from Study 2 highlight the need to consider political contexts in understanding political controversy, issue salience, and public attitudes toward immigrants. Study 3 fills a major gap in the field of immigration integration by investigating the influence of various media portrayals on immigrant integration. Lastly, the findings have social implications, emphasizing the crucial role of political elites and journalists in fostering social cohesion.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation umfasst drei Studien, die unser Verständnis der politischen Kontroverse um das Thema Zuwanderung verbessern sollen. Studie 1 untersucht die Mechanismen, die dem Entstehen politischer Kontroversen in der Öffentlichkeit zugrunde liegen. Die Studien 2 und 3 konzentrieren sich auf den Einfluss politischer Kontroversen auf Einheimische und Zuwanderer.

Studie 1 konzentriert sich auf die Rolle der Öffentlichkeit bei der Entstehung politischer Kontroversen und führt den theoretischen Rahmen der "emotionalen Synchronitätsverteilung" ein. Dieser innovative Ansatz integriert drei Theorien - das soziale Teilen von Emotionen, die Theorie der Schweigespirale und das Konsensparadoxon -, um Unterschiede in der öffentlichen Diskussion mit der Verteilung der Emotionen in der Öffentlichkeit vorherzusagen. Darüber hinaus wird in dieser Arbeit eine innovative Methode angewandt, die passive emotionale Reaktionen nutzt, um die Emotionen der Öffentlichkeit zu messen. Die Analysen mittels der Facebook-URLs-Daten zeigen, dass politische Kontroversen nicht nur dann entstehen, wenn die Öffentlichkeit polarisiert ist, sondern auch, wenn die Öffentlichkeit ähnliche Emotionen teilt.

In Studie 2 wird untersucht, inwiefern politische Kontroversen die Einstellungen der Mehrheit beeinflussen.Die wichtigsten Annahmen lauten wie folgt: Wenn das Zuwanderungsthema im Mittelpunkt des politischen Wettbewerbs steht, wird eine politische Kontroverse hauptsächlich Konflikte signalisieren. Wenn jedoch die politischen Eliten einen Konsens über eine einladende Haltung erreichen, werden konsensuale, einladende Botschaften folgen. Die Studie vergleicht Großbritannien und Deutschland unter Verwendung von Medienartikeldaten und Längsschnittdaten auf individueller Ebene (British Election Study und GESIS-Panel). Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass in einem gespaltenen politischen Kontext politische Kontroversen die zuwanderungsfeindlichen Einstellungen der Einheimischen verstärken. Umgekehrt erhöht eine politische Kontroverse in einem konsensorientierten Kontext lediglich die Bedeutung des Themas, aber verstärkt nicht die zuwanderungsfeindlichen Einstellungen.

Studie 3 argumentiert, dass politische Kontroversen die psychologische Integration von Zuwanderern signifikant beeinflussen, wobei die gleichen Annahmen wie in Studie 2 zugrunde gelegt werden. Eine Querschnittsanalyse mit Daten aus Großbritannien und Deutschland belegt, dass konsensorientierte politische Kontroversen die psychologische Integration von Zuwanderern verbessern. Dagegen hat konfliktgetriebene politische Kontroverse keinen signifikanten Einfluss auf die Integration von Zuwanderern.

Diese Dissertation trägt zur politischen Kommunikationsliteratur bei, indem sie Theorien und Methoden weiterentwickelt. Der theoretische Rahmen der "emotionalen Synchronitätsverteilung" aus Studie 1 bietet ein umfassendes Verständnis der Dynamik der öffentlichen Kommunikation. Die Ergebnisse von Studie 2 unterstreichen die Notwendigkeit, politische Kontexte zu berücksichtigen, um politische Kontroversen, die Bedeutung von Themen und die Einstellung der Öffentlichkeit gegenüber Zuwanderern zu verstehen. Studie 3 füllt eine große Forschungslücke im Bereich der Integration von Zuwanderern, indem sie den Einfluss verschiedener Mediendarstellungen auf die Integration von Zuwanderern untersucht. In Studie 1 wird zudem eine innovative Methode zur Messung öffentlicher Emotionen eingeführt, die die Grenzen der traditionellen Inhaltsanalyse überwindet. Schließlich haben die Ergebnisse gesellschaftliche Auswirkungen, da sie die entscheidende Rolle der politischen Eliten und der Journalisten bei der Förderung des sozialen Zusammenhalts hervorheben.

Declaration

I declare that parts of the results of this dissertation have been submitted for publication to the European Journal of Political Research and it's under the second round of review.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude for my supervisor, Professor Yannis Theocharis. He patiently supervised my dissertation from the very beginning when it was merely a two-page plan, guided me through the intricacies of academia, and even extended his support to my personal difficulties–I will forever appreciate him for picking me up from the hospital after two consecutive surgeries. I would like to extend my thanks to his son, Leonidas Theocharis, for lifting my spirits when I found myself zoning out in front of my monitor by making unexpected appearances in my office.

I am also grateful for the support of my second supervisor Professor Katrin Paula, who has provided me with guidance and expertise since I first took her class during my master's in 2017. Furthermore, I want to thank Dr. Stefanie Walter for her unwavering support and for encouraging me to apply for international conferences throughout the years. Her consistent passion for research and contributions has been a great inspiration to me. Also, I really appreciate the support and encouragement from my mentor, Dr. Ai Miyamoto, who has given me courage to pursue my dream in a foreign country.

I also want to thank all the people who made my life so rich during my doctoral candidacy. Especially, Dr. Victoria Hoel and her cat Winston, who helped me survive depressing pandemic with her bright smile and great food, Nina Altmaier, with whom I can share my pessimistic views, yet a person who makes me crack up, Carolina Brändle and her family, who saved me when I moved to a new city during the peak of pandemic, Soojin Kim, my dear Korean friend, who cures my homesickness. Also, I owe so much to Dr. Shota Gelovani, a former colleague and a friend, who always offered me generous help throughout my doctoral candidacy. I also express my love to my friends and Shaki the cat in Korea, who make me feel like I am at home whenever we share moments with. Real friendship knows no distance.

Last but not least, I thank my parents and family for their consistent support. Especially to my late grandmother, Youngnam Kim. Thank you for believing in me.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

When the issue of immigration is controversial, it may create the impression that society is deeply divided over the topic. However, the reality might be the opposite. For instance, around the so-called 2015 refugee crisis, the immigrant issue was politically salient in Germany due to concerns such as the fiscal burden or worries that the newcomers would engage in criminal activity (Landmann et al., 2019). Accordingly, immigration was named the most important issue facing the country every year from 2016 to 2019 (European Commission, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). However, general German public attitudes toward immigrants improved from 2014 to 2017 in both the former West and East Germany (Talò, 2017). The United Kingdom (UK) exhibited a similar phenomenon: although fears of immigrants largely drove the result of the 2016 EU "Brexit" referendum (Clarke et al., 2017; Ford & Goodwin, 2017), anti-immigrant sentiments in the country decreased shortly afterward (Schwartz et al., 2021) and positive feelings have consistently increased since that time (Ipsos, 2017).

What accounts for this discrepancy? What does controversy signify in this context? And, perhaps most crucially, how do such impressions influence our attitudes towards the issue in question? In this study, I investigate the nature of 'political controversy.' The term 'controversy' connotes a lack of consensus and conflicts, yet a mere disagreement does not suffice to be a controversy – that requires active discussions, bickering, or even an altercation. However, conflicts among key decision-makers, such as experts and politicians, are insufficient for an issue to truly be politically controversial. For instance, the intense debates among scientists striving for a scientific consensus constitute a sort of controversy, yet it is fundamentally different from the controversies surrounding immigration because the debates remain largely contained among experts. In the meantime, if the public is heavily invested, scientific facts can become politically controversial as well. For ex-

ample, in the US, anthropogenic climate change has long been a subject of debate among climate scientists, yet it gained the status of a political controversy only after politicians made it a focal point of political competition; the public then became divided along ideological lines (Tesler, 2018).

Likewise, political elites regularly hold meetings on policies, yet not all topics they discuss in parliament or government are regarded as controversial. Although there is general agreement that European integration is politically controversial, this is not because the issue is inherently controversial. For a long time, European integration was a contentious subject only within expert circles such as trade unions and policymakers; the general public paid little attention to the issue (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This trend changed when political parties began strategically using the issue to garner voters' support, which triggered extensive mass media coverage (De Wilde & Trenz, 2012; Hooghe & Marks, 2009).

I identify three main actors involved in political controversy – political elites, mass media, and the public. Political controversy can thus be defined as an issue of great significance for both political elites and the public, as well as the information environment that facilitates it. Based on this definition, I aim to expand our understanding of political controversy. Study 1 delves into the mechanism behind the making of political controversy by the public. Study 2 investigates the influence of political controversy on natives' immigration attitudes while Study 3 focuses on its influence on immigrants' psychological integration. Studies 2 and 3 both build their hypothesis based on the assumption that competition among political elites can determine the influence of political controversy.

1.1   Study 1

What triggers political controversy? Traditionally, the mass media (Pfetsch, 2008; Risse, 2015a; Statham & Trenz, 2015; Trenz & Eder, 2004) and political elites are the main actors in the process of the making political controversy (B. C. Cohen, 1963; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). However, technological developments, particularly social media's universal accessibility, have made the media environment more nuanced by expanding the public's power in making political controversies. For instance, when the public intensively discusses immigration online, e.g., on Twitter (now known as X), the issue becomes prominent and is highlighted as "trending" on the platform. This signals public interest to journalists, who then cover the issue in the legacy media, subsequently influencing political elites' decisions. Previous work on making political controversy has documented the growing

public's role as a main actor in this process (e.g., Sayre et al., 2010). However, research in this area has often concentrated on the relationships between the legacy media or political elites and the public; the dynamic within the public arena has been understudied.

To fill this research gap, I investigate the mechanism behind the public's making of political controversy. Study 1 introduces a new framework based on previous work on three aspects of communication dynamics. The first aspect is emotional synchrony and social sharing of emotions (Rimé, 2009), which document that people's emotional experiences motivate them to share their emotions. This sharing of emotions elicits similar emotions among others, thereby leading more people to share them, creating a sort of reciprocal feedback loop that makes people feel safe to express their emotions. The second aspect is in a similar vein yet with a different focus: Noelle-Neumann's (1973) spiral of silence theory posits that when people think their opinions are in the minority of the group, they fear being isolated and thus remain silent. Third, according to the consensus paradox (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014), when one opinion is dominant–when people reach a consensus–the discussion declines. This could be because once a consensus is reached, it may hinder learning effects and contemplation due to the lack of diversity and peoples' fears about diverging from the consensus.

These studies shed important light on communication dynamics, yet they focus solely on either the increase or decrease in public discussion. Consequently, the dynamic fluctuations of public discussion are challenging to explain using these frameworks. I introduce a comprehensive novel framework, which I call 'emotional synchrony distribution,' that encompasses these theories. Since individuals are motivated to express their opinions in an environment they perceive to be safe (Noelle-Neumann, 1993; Rimé, 2009) or when they believe related discussions are ongoing (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014), I propose that we can predict the increase and decrease in public discussion by measuring those feelings. I measure the level of feeling safe by looking at the distribution of emotions (agreement, polarization, or diversity) because these affect our everyday decisions (Damásio, 1994; Gray, 1990) and motivate participation in online discussions (e.g., Ziegele et al., 2018).

In my framework, agreement indicates a state with one dominant emotion in which the public shares similar reactions to the issue in general. Polarization means that people are emotionally divided over the issue: the existence of two opposite emotions. In a state of diversity, there are a substantial number of people without strong emotional engagement. These individuals can exist along with either agreement or polarization. Building on the work by Rimé (2009), I hypothesize that agreement and polarization motivate people to actively participate in online discussions by giving them a feeling that

11

their expressions will be supported. I also predict that diversity with the agreement will be associated with an increase in online discussion because the agreement has a motivating power. Yet, diversity with polarization is predicted to be linked to a decrease in online discussion because individuals do not feel safe expressing neutral opinions in a polarized environment (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). Moreover, I expect the continuation of agreement to be associated with a decrease in public discussion, as the consensus paradox posits (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014).

Study 1 examines the UK public's discussion of immigration from 2017 to 2019 due to the issue's political salience during that period. Facebook URL data set (Messing et al., 2020) provides a rare opportunity to test my emotional synchrony distribution framework. To identify the immigration-related URLs from this data set, I first apply keyword dictionary methods to identify URLs including keywords related to immigration and then employ the Distilroberta-base model, developed from Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (Devlin et al., 2018; Sanh et al., 2019), to confirm they are related to immigration.

This study analyzes the distribution of people's emotions using the Facebook emoji buttons. Passive reactions, e.g., sharing and emoji buttons, require relatively less cognitive effort than commenting, so people find it easier to do it than to write their own story (Jost et al., 2020). Using a passive way of expressing emotions thus can reflect the mood of people without strong emotional engagement, i.e., those with moderate, neutral emotional attitudes, while overcoming the limitation of content analysis, which can only reflect people with strong emotional engagement. Inspired by Badami et al.'s (2017) work on measuring polarization in movie ratings, I measure the level of emotional synchrony distribution by looking only at the distribution of emojis without analyzing the sentiment of the text of posts and comments.

The analyses reveal that the public participates in online discussions, thereby making an issue politically controversial, when individuals feel that at least some other people share the same reactions and agree with them. Even when there is a group with different points of view (polarized), the feeling of being supported by their group can motivate them. However, individuals with neutral or less emotional engagement barely contribute to the public discussion. Lastly, when similar emotions continue, discussion decreases.

In short, political controversy arises not only due to polarization but also because there is one dominant emotion that people resonate with and feel comfortable sharing their views. Yet when the consensus is achieved, the discussion might stall. This insight could shed light on why German citizens during the 2015 refugee crisis have extensively discussed the immigration issue even when they are not necessarily becoming more hostile toward immi-

grants. They engage in the discussion because they strive to find a common ground. This observation also suggests another question: If the dominant emotion is animosity toward immigrants, is consensus necessarily superior to polarization? I investigate this question in the last chapter.

1.2   Study 2

I next explore how political controversy shapes the attitudes of the majority. With the heightened political salience of the immigration issue, heated debates among decision-makers persist, for example, about how many immigrants to accept and how to allocate the budget for immigrant integration. Simultaneously, the public actively engages in decision-making through online discussions, protests, or supporting the political parties leading the discourse. In response, even individuals without a particular interest in the issue are exposed to uncertainty and become aware of its political salience. Against this background, Study 2 questions whether political controversy only shapes issue awareness or whether this awareness extends beyond mere awareness.

Awareness that a certain issue is important determines various voting-related behaviors – what voter behavior scholars call 'public issue salience' (see Dennison, 2019). For instance, if a voter considers language proficiency tests that are administered as part of the naturalization application process an important topic, she searches for relevant information, contemplates the issue, and engages in discussions. Furthermore, such awareness can affect preferences. Previous work has concluded that awareness that the immigration issue is important leads to hostility toward immigrants (e.g., Van Klingeren et al., 2015) because immigration attitudes are largely determined by threat perceptions (Blumer, 1958). Prior research has, therefore, assumed that political controversy significantly heightens anti-immigrant attitudes by making it a prominent topic of discussion among political elites as well as the public. However, the empirical findings are inconclusive. While political controversy universally increases awareness that immigration is important, it sometimes has an insignificant influence on anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Morales et al., 2015).

I attribute these contradictory findings to a failure to adequately consider the broader political contexts. Political elites exert a powerful influence on public perceptions (e.g., Zaller, 1992). Thus, political competition may change the influence of political controversy, yet it is understudied. I argue that when an issue (in this case, immigration) becomes the focal point of political competition, it will increase general awareness that the issue is

important, but the importance also signals conflicts, thus heightening the threat perception and anti-immigrant attitudes. However, when political elites reach a consensus on the issue, this will dampen the controversy; its influence will be limited to raising awareness of the issue, and immigration attitudes will remain stable as a result.

Study 2 tests this assumption by comparing the UK and Germany. Despite their similar immigration histories, their political elites' reactions to the 2015 refugee crisis and free movement have been vastly different. The UK's major political parties remain polarized over the issue, while German political elites reached a consensus from an early stage of the 2015 refugee crisis to welcome refugees. The major differences in the absence or existence of political agreement provide a valuable opportunity to study the heterogeneous effects of political controversy in different political landscapes.

I employ media data from right- and left-leaning broadsheets (The Times, including The Sunday Times, The Guardian, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)) and tabloids (The Sun and BILD) as well as individual-level longitudinal data, British Election Study (BES) (Fieldhouse et al., 2020) and Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences' GESIS panel data (GESIS, 2021) for each country. I matched the newspaper report date to the day that respondents participated in the survey to capture the dynamic fluctuations of political controversy and its influence.

The various analyses of the individual-level panel data, such as fixed effects, substantiate my hypotheses. In a divided political context (the UK), political controversy heightens anti-immigrant attitudes among native-born citizens irrelevant to their party affiliations. Yet, where political elites reach a consensus to welcome immigrants (Germany), political controversy merely increases issue awareness and does not exert significant influence on natives' attitudes toward immigration. This pattern partially explains why attitudes in Germany have consistently improved despite the ongoing political controversy. My findings also offer insights into the UK's post-Brexit scenario, where, despite strong polarization, immigration attitudes improved following the 2016 referendum. The referendum's resolution, through a consensus vote, could have played a role in this positive shift. The findings suggest the need to revisit the implications of issue importance awareness and further question how the politicization of an issue changes the information environment individuals are surrounded by.

1.3   Study 3

Study 3 investigates how political controversy shapes immigrants' psychological integration. Immigrants gauge the possibility of integrating into society based on their interactions with natives. Thus, experiences of discrimination or a hostile environment can significantly discourage them from integration (J. W. Berry, 2005; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). However, some studies have observed that although natives are generally positive toward immigrants, immigrants perceive that society does not welcome them. I argue that this is because immigrants estimate the level of hospitality largely via the media (Kim, 1988; Kline & Liu, 2005; W. N. Lee & Tse, 1994; Mutz & Goldman, 2010; Yoon et al., 2011). The media's influence on immigrants has been largely overlooked (Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019); previous studies on the topic often focus on negative portrayals rather than examining the influence of various media coverage. I seek to fill this gap by investigating how political controversy influences immigrants. Similarly to the assumptions for Study 2, Study 3 hypothesizes that in polarized contexts, political controversy will signal hostile attitudes toward immigrants and will discourage them from making efforts to integrate into the host society. However, when politicians reach a consensus, political controversy will not weaken their motivation to integrate.

I conduct a comparative analysis of the UK and Germany to investigate these assumptions in Study 3. I utilize the same media outlets and individual-level survey data employed in Study 2 but during different time periods. I find that political controversy has no significant influence on immigrants' psychological integration in the UK, while in Germany, it is positively associated with integration. To summarize, political controversy in a country in which political elites hold a consensual welcoming stance has a positive influence on immigrants' psychological integration. The absence of an effect in the UK prompts inquiry into the extent to which political controversy affects immigrant integration and whether we should perceive media consumption as a cause or a consequence of immigrant integration.

1.4   Summary

This thesis contributes significantly to the academic literature on political communication by advancing theories and methods. It focuses on the under-researched subjects, the public dynamic in the public sphere (Study 1) and the influence of political controversy on immigrants (Study 3), which are highly politically and socially relevant. Moreover, it introduces a novel

framework called 'emotional synchrony distribution' that enhances our understanding of public communication dynamics (Study 1). Also, it identifies political contexts as a determinant of the influence of political controversy (Study 2, 3), which has been previously unrecognized. Lastly, this research advances methodological approaches by introducing an innovative method for measuring public emotions, particularly in terms of polarization (Study 1). This method overcomes the limitations associated with traditional content analysis techniques.

This thesis also bears several societal implications, particularly for political elites and journalists. The findings from Study 1 suggest that controversy in the public sphere does not necessarily indicate social division and could be caused by people's strong emotional engagement. In this sense, controversy can be viewed as a necessary step toward reaching a consensus. In addition, while intense disputes on social media may create an impression of widespread societal division, a significant number of people with a moderate stance may be hesitant to express their views and remain invisible. Exploring alternative ways to capture the opinions of these moderate, neutral individuals can inform political decisions that resonate with a broader audience. Moreover, Studies 2 and 3 underscore the crucial role of political elites in fostering social cohesion for both the majority and minority. These findings suggest that political elites' responsibility extends beyond obtaining political power to actively create harmony across political parties. It also raises questions about how journalists should report on political competition.

The rest of the dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 discusses the definition of political controversy, drawing insights from prior work on the politicization of European integration. It then assesses previous research on the making of political controversy and research gaps in the public arena. Then, it explores previous works on the influence of political controversy on perceptions. Subsequently, the determinants of the majority's perceptions (immigration attitudes) and the minority's perceptions (psychological integration) are discussed, highlighting gaps in the existing research. Chapter 3 elucidates the rationale for selecting the UK and Germany as case studies. Chapter 4 outlines the study's theoretical framework to address the research gaps. Chapters 5 and 6 describe the empirical studies (Chapter 6 covers both Studies 2 and 3 because they share the same data sources). Chapter 7 discusses the findings, limitations, and implications.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 The politicization of Europe and political controversy

We generally agree that the issue of immigration is a politically controversial matter, yet the exact nature of this controversy remains a subject of debate. Scholars use the term 'controversy' to indicate various things: a state where a consensus in scientific fact is absent (Vraga & Bode, 2020), an issue that is difficult to talk about (Lusk & Weinberg, 1994), or polarization (Yarchi et al., 2021). Those are all valid points; however, we find that these explanations alone cannot fully capture the complexities of the controversies surrounding the issue of immigration. Therefore, we must consider additional elements to accurately define political controversy. The history and process of politicizing European integration offer insights into understanding political controversy.

During the initial stages of the debates, European integration was not a political issue for the public; instead, it remained superficial and held low salience, and it was regarded to exist apart from the fundamental conflicts of structured political competitions. Yet now, European integration situates itself as the core political issue (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). In order to understand the mechanism by which the politicization of European integration occurs, two approaches appear: Post-functionalist and democratic functionalist. A post-functionalist perspective on European integration takes a pessimistic view. They posit that political parties strategically utilize European integration as a means to gain an advantage in political competitions, emphasizing an issue of 'us' and 'others.' By promoting the cultural threat posed by immigrants and employing anti-multiculturalism, they appeal to those who have economically suffered from globalization (Fligstein, 2008; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Kriesi et al., 2008). Following that, the issue of European

integration became an issue of identity rather than a redistribution of resources. In line with that, politicization has been regarded as a collective process of social categorization as well (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al., 2019; Zaal et al., 2017).

However, democratic functionalists (Statham & Trenz, 2015) highlight the post-functionalists' oversight of mass-mediated public debates despite their emphasis on the public's involvement. A democratic functionalist perspective argues that discursive debates among individual citizens in the public sphere yield the politicization of European integration. Drawing from Habermas's (1991) theory of public discourse and the public sphere, they suggest that the politicization of European integration leads to deliberate decision-making for the general interests and the public good, thus, politicization can contribute to democracy promotion. In the process, the mass media plays a crucial role as a democratizing tool since the mass media enables communication between the public and political elites (Pfetsch, 2008; Risse, 2015a; Statham & Trenz, 2015; Trenz & Eder, 2004).

Incorporating previous works, the characteristics of politicization could be summarized in the following way. The core is contentiousness in the decision-making process (Hooghe & Marks, 2006; Palonen, 2003; Risse, 2015b; Schmitter, 1969). At the same time, the public is deeply interested in the decision-making process – the public is highly conscious of the political situation, which is often facilitated by the mass media. Also, the public actively mobilizes in accordance with their conflicting political preferences (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Risse, 2015b; Schmitter, 1969; Zürn et al., 2012). Consequently, the influence of experts in the decision-making process diminishes, while party politicians, the mass media, and the public wield greater power, which De Wilde (2011) summarizes as the state where institutions, decision-making processes, and issues are *politicized*.

Following previous works, I use the term political controversy surrounding the immigration issue to subsume the condition wherein the immigrant issue becomes the focal point of political contestation and resonates with the public greatly, as well as the information environment that acts as both a cause and consequence of this contestation. I concentrate on the main three actors in the making of political controversy: political elites, the mass media, and the public. The following sections discuss the making of political controversy by those three actors and the influence of political controversy.

2.2 Making of controversy by the media

The mass media is essential in the making of political controversy. The mere existence of political contentiousness does not politicize the issue – political contentiousness should be visible, thereby meaningful for the public (W. L. Bennett & Entman, 2000; Norris, 2023; Statham & Trenz, 2012). The media provides information about political elites and the issue to the public while also making public opinion accessible to the political elites. This section elucidates the mechanism and the process by which the media creates political controversy with the agenda-setting theory and scholarly works developed around this theory.

2.2.1 Power of the media and agenda-setting

The power of the media, deciding *what to think about* and hence deciding *what is controversial right now* for the public, is referred to as agenda-setting (B. C. Cohen, 1963; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By devoting varying attention to different issues, the media can alter people's perceptions of the relative importance and relevance of problems. For instance, the media coverage of foreign policy raises the public's awareness of the nation's foreign affairs (Soroka, 2003). Across European countries, the more the media covers the issue of immigration, the more likely people think it is an urgent issue to address (McLaren et al., 2018; Van Klingeren et al., 2015). Traditionally, the agenda-setting process follows a three-stage sequence; the media sets the agendas (media agenda) that are of public concern (public agenda), which in turn can influence the policy agenda that is pursued by political elites (Rogers, 2004)[1]. The media decides what is controversial also for people who do not directly consume the media because people could be exposed to the issue indirectly, e.g., through interpersonal communication or social media (Feezell, 2018; Hutchings, 2001; Noelle-Neumann, 1973; Peter, 2004; Schlueter & Davidov, 2013; Zucker, 1978). It is the same as when a person goes into a room with a lit candle and can smell it without seeing it directly; the media creates an (information) environment where people are embraced by the topic that the media reports in a consonant manner. The emergence of social media further reinforces the media's role as an information environment. Though the extent may vary due to different platform structures, social media users are often unintentionally exposed to the news

---

[1]The sequence can undergo changes. For instance, the president's speech can lead to media coverage, altering the sequence. It is discussed later in the chapter with intermedia agenda-setting theory (Atwater et al., 1987) and hybrid news cycle (Chadwick, 2010).

while 'doing other things' online (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016), which leads to unconscious learning of political issues (Bode, 2016; Feezell, 2018; Nanz & Matthes, 2020).

For an issue to be a political controversy, it should be a salient topic of discussion in the media, namely, media salience. The level of salience can be gauged by focusing on three dimensions: attention, prominence, and valence (Kiousis, 2004). Attention indicates the sheer volume of coverage. The rank order of the amount of media coverage has a high correlation with the public's rank order of the important issues (e.g., Weaver, 1991), which Dearing et al. (1996) named public agenda, or issue salience (Dearing et al., 1996; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Prominence means relative placement and position within a media. If an issue appears on the newspaper's front page, the issue is prominent; thus, the level of media salience increases. thus, the level of media salience increases. Valence indicates the affective element of the media, in other words, emotional appeals. The affective element of news has been tied to media salience as second-level agenda-setting theory argues that the media can make not only the objects but also object 'attributes' salient (e.g., Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998). Embracing these accounts, this study focuses on the state in which actors–the media, political elites, and the public–discuss a political issue extensively to understand the making of political controversy.

2.2.2 Main influencers of agenda-setting

To comprehend how the media decides which news to cover, it is essential to understand the interactions among main influencers shaping the media's agenda-setting. Journalists determine whether or not to set the agenda, i.e., to publish the news in the media, based on its newsworthiness. The standards for such judgment of newsworthiness are called news factors (newsworthiness theory or news value theory (Galtung & Ruge, 1965)). Those news characteristics vary by scholars, but commonly defined factors are relevance, cultural/political proximity, frequency/continuity, damage, conflict, negativism, controversy, illustration of emotions, and unexpectedness (see Eilders, 2006).

There are various influencers in the process of agenda-setting, so agenda-setting theory developed into intermedia agenda-setting theory to reflect various influencers (Atwater et al., 1987). Main influencers of media agenda-setting are those that possess one or more of these news factors: political elites – president, routine public relations (PR) activities, and political campaigns – other media, journalistic norms and traditions, external events, and media audience (Weaver & Choi, 2017; Weaver et al., 2004). Those actors

and news factors are closely intertwined, and they influence each other in a sequential fashion in the process of agenda-setting. To give an example, a natural disaster may be inherently newsworthy, but when a prominent political figure visits the site, it increases the likelihood that the media will cover the story.

However, as the internet evolves, the relationships between various actors have become even more complicated (Chadwick, 2010). For instance, before the emergence of online web blogs and social media, political elites set the agenda through formal measures such as legislative action or policy. Now, political elites can affect the media's news selection using less formalized ways, such as by expressing their opinions and priorities on social media platforms (Conway et al., 2015; Lewandowsky et al., 2020; Shapiro & Hemphill, 2017). In addition, the influence of the media audience on agenda-setting has grown in the evolving media landscape, as they now have ubiquitous platforms, particularly social media, to express their opinions. Political elites and the audience's influence in the making of controversy are discussed in the following chapters.

2.3   Making of controversy by political elites

Political elites are the main influencers of agenda-setting as well as the politicization of the issue. This section illustrates the mechanism by which they set the agenda and politicize the issue, which consequently shapes the public's perception of reality and opinion.

2.3.1   Power of political elites and agenda-setting

Political elites are one of the key actors in the making of the political controversy (McCombs, 2004; Weaver et al., 2004). The media extensively covers their political campaigns, speeches, policies, and various activities. Particularly, to win the election or to influence public opinion, politicians invest substantial funds in political advertisements, which, in turn, receive media coverage (Roberts & McCombs, 1994). Originally, the opportunities for political elites to be featured in the media were predominantly tied to formal political activities. However, with the widespread accessibility of the internet, these opportunities have diversified, leading to complex relationships between the media and political elites. For instance, in Switzerland, the analysis of the agendas of the traditional media, political parties' social media, and politicians' social media demonstrates that those three actors influence each other's agenda at a similar level (Gilardi et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, merely making the issue visible to the public does not suffice to politicize it. The politicization of the issue requires political elites to signal that it is a focal point of political competition to the public. In the case of European integration, contestation among political elites arises across various dimensions, largely over economic dimensions as well as cultural and new political dimensions (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Political parties that are traditionally divided by left or right ideology over economic issues are again divided over the scope and the level of supranational institutions in the EU's involvement in economic policies, e.g., single market policy. At the same time, the cultural and new political dimensions, particularly concerning national identity, significantly divide the political parties. In response to phenomena like Euroclash or Euroscepticism, nationalist and traditionalist conservative parties strategically leverage national identity arguments, emphasizing the protection of national sovereignty as a means to garner political power (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Statham & Trenz, 2015). Radical far-right parties have emerged against this background, exploiting cultural threats associated with foreign culture, foreign elites, and immigrants to appeal to voters and gain visibility. Those narratives are especially popular among those susceptible to the impacts of globalization and the Europeanization of the market (Fligstein, 2008; Kriesi et al., 2008). Consequently, European integration and immigration issues have gained a status as a political controversy.

2.3.2 Political elites and public opinion

The politicization of the issue significantly affects public opinion related to the issue. As laypersons cannot experience most of the political events themselves, elite voices are powerful drivers of political understanding and are essential to shaping public opinion (Edelman, 1985; Zaller, 1992). Elites' interpretations of events shape the public's perception of reality and provide grounds for their political decisions (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Political elites persuade the public not only through their direct messages but also by 'owning' or 'labeling' the issue, namely issue ownership (Downs, 1957; Petrocik, 1996). For instance, the Republican party in the United States owns the position of an opponent of government intervention, so voters who are against government intervention consistently support the Republican party in upcoming elections. Similarly, in the case of European integration, voters, whose main concern is the immigration issue, support the far-right party since the party is built on skepticism towards immigrants. In short, a political party's issue ownership and labeling provides voters a mental shortcut to make a voting decision (Downs, 1957; W. E. Miller et al., 1996).

The effect of issue ownership is moderated by the salience of the issue. Issue ownership has a significant influence on voting decisions only for the voters who perceive that the issue is salient (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008).

There are largely two major perspectives on voters' information processing. One camp views voters as rational choice makers (Edlin et al., 2007), akin to a banker making an investment. The other camp suggests that voters are more like sports fans, supporting a political party because the party resonates deeply with their identities (Mason, 2018; P. R. Miller & Conover, 2015). When the latter case increases, once voters decide to support a certain party, they could be persuaded by the political party itself rather than the issue position the party represents.

Such alignment with elite cues is prominent in a particularly polarized society, where political identity significantly defines their identity, such as the United States (e.g., Tesler, 2018). However, while there have been some worries about the surge of identity politics in Europe (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), the studies on identity politics in Europe are often limited to far-right populist parties, so traditional established parties' cue and alignment are understudied (Noury & Roland, 2020).

Against this backdrop, I raise the question of how competition among political elites moderates the media's effects on the public. As an issue evolves into a pivotal point of political competition, the public is likely to be exposed to the floods of portrayal of political competition rather than being exposed to a simple piece of information. This question is explored in Studies 2 and 3.

2.4   Making of controversy by the public

The public is a key component of politicization. The public affects political elites' decision-making through the expression of their opinion, such as through surveys and public debates (Risse, 2015b). For instance, if a public poll from an institution, such as the Eurobarometer, reveals that half of the public strongly opposes a supranational trade union while the other half supports it, policymakers may find it challenging to pursue the establishment of such a union. In short, the issue of a supranational trade union becomes politically controversial. A similar dynamic occurs when citizens' opinions reach political elites through public debates, which is an increasingly common scenario. This section explores how public debates contribute to the making of political controversy and examines the motivations driving the public to actively participate in these political debates.

2.4.1 Power of the public sphere and agenda-setting

The public sphere is where the public comes together to articulate specific interests, concerns, and expectations. In doing so, it serves as a crucial place to inform citizens about political proceedings, leading to critical assessments of politics and democratic public discourse (Habermas, 1991, 2006). Originally, Habermas's (1991) notion of the public sphere was limited to physical places such as parliament or coffee houses, but the advancement of technology has transformed the scope of the public sphere. Now, the public sphere on the internet is not confined to the local territory and expands beyond borders.

As a result, public discussions bear crucial political ramifications more than ever, and one of them is agenda-setting both for the media and political elites. The process is as follows: as individuals engage in intense discussions within the public sphere, they elevate the issue's salience and set it as a public agenda. Consequently, they make it controversial. This, in turn, signals the primary interests resonating with the public to journalists, prompting the media coverage, thereby influencing decision-making by political institutions and elites. The cycle of the making of controversy by the public is prominent when we follow social media data and media coverage. Trending topics from Twitter and the most shared stories on Facebook (Groshek & Groshek, 2013), the volume of YouTube videos (Sayre et al., 2010), and Tweets (Barberá et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2014) are closely related to and affect the media's topic of coverage. Subsequently, engaging in online discussions through posting, commenting, and sharing became an important mode of political participation, being on par with other traditional forms of engagement, such as attending party meetings (Theocharis, 2015; Theocharis et al., 2021).

2.4.2 Motivations of the online public discussion

Given the significance of public debates, scholars have focused on the mechanism by which people are motivated to participate in online political discussions. Firstly, the characteristics of contents–e.g., online blog posts and social media posts–can provide an explanation. The aforementioned newsworthiness theory or news value theory (Galtung & Ruge, 1965) was originally developed to explain journalists' activities, yet they explain the laypersons' everyday life choices, such as interpersonal communication patterns (Eilders, 2006; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006), online discussion behavior such as clicking, sharing as well (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015; Ziegele & Quiring, 2013). Much like journalists choose which topics to cover depending on news value, the audience selects

which content to pay attention to and participate in the discussion. In the meantime, with the expanding accessibility for individuals to express their opinions, user interactions are becoming an important determinant of participation. Some works looked into user comments dynamics on news articles, applying the above-mentioned news value theory or newsworthiness theory, and showed that the user comments' motivating power can be explained with those theories as well (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012; P. Weber, 2014; Ziegele et al., 2014; Ziegele et al., 2018).

Against this background, this thesis attempts to construct a comprehensive theoretical framework that captures the influence of both content characteristics and user interactions on public debate participation. Specifically, the study investigates how individuals react to the given information, perceive 'what others are thinking about it,' and subsequently engage in public debate based on these perceptions. The sense of belonging to either the majority or minority plays a significant role in conversation dynamics. For instance, when a person reads a newspaper article that evokes upset feelings and observes others expressing anger in the comment section, she might contribute to the discussion by expressing anger as well. On the other hand, if angry comments are dominant in the comment section, she might not see the point of contributing to the discussion and remain silent. Conversely, if the prevailing sentiment in the comment section is happiness, she might feel reluctant to express anger. This study draws on established communication theories by Friberg-Fernros and Schaffer (2014), Noelle-Neumann (1993), and Rimé (2009) to provide a detailed explanation of these dynamics.

When people perceive their opinions as consistent with the majority, they are inclined to share them. The work by Rimé (2009) on the social sharing of emotions documents that when individuals experience emotions, they feel the urge to share their emotions with others. Their expressions, in turn, encourage people with similar views to participate in the discussion, creating a sort of feedback loop. One might argue that emotions are distinct from rational discourse, yet emotions and the sharing of emotions have always been pivotal in political participation. For instance, during the 15M movement in Spain, collective emotions and social sharing of emotions extensively affected the activity and information cascades (Álvarez et al., 2015).

The spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1993) is similar to the work by Rimé (2009), yet it focuses on the lack of similar emotions and disagreement. According to it, when people think their opinion does not fall under the majority's opinion, they fear being isolated, so they remain silent. The meta-analysis by Matthes et al. (2018) presented that the spiral of silence theory is applicable to the social media environment as well. To give an example, people are afraid of being "unfriended" by clicking likes on

content that is incongruent with their social media friend's opinions.

In the meantime, collective emotions and sharings do not exhibit exponential growth. Once they reach a certain threshold, they tend to decline. 'Consensus paradox' theory by Friberg-Fernros and Schaffer (2014) can provide an explanation. Reaching a consensus through rational debates is a core value in deliberate democracy (e.g., Habermas, 1975, 1991). However, ironically, consensus has a possibility of discouraging further discussions. Friberg-Fernros and Schaffer (2014) explain three cognitive and sociopsychological mechanisms behind it. First, heterogeneous opinions have potential learning effects by providing new and diverse perspectives compared to homogeneous opinions so consensus can stall learning. Second, an absence of opposition and challenges provides little reason to contemplate it, making the argument less salient and being forgotten. Lastly, having reached a consensus, the fear of being different leads people to conform to the argument. Consequently, the achievement of consensus can lead to a stagnation in the deliberative process.

Building on these findings, this thesis proposes a novel theoretical framework that builds on the explanations provided by the previous works. Previous works, while insightful, can be fragmentary, as they focus on either the increase or decrease of public discussion rather than the entire process of ebbs and flows in public discourse. Therefore, I developed a comprehensive framework, termed 'emotional synchrony distribution,' which reflects the dynamic fluctuations of public discussion and their impetus. It is elaborated on Chapter 4.1.

2.5 Influence of controversy

The scope of the influence of political controversy on perceptions could be broadly summarized with two points: salience and preferences. As mentioned above, the intense debates around a controversial issue, for example, immigration, increase the issue's salience and perceived importance among the public (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Such perceived importance is labeled as 'public issue salience' by voting behavior scholars. In essence, public issue salience indicates the significance that voters attribute to issues when making political decisions (for a comprehensive review, see Dennison, 2019). For example, a voter whose top priorities is inflation is likely to vote for the party that she considers the most competent in economic issues. The importance of the issue determines various voting-related behaviors such as political candidate evaluation or support for a policy (Wlezien, 2005) as well as prompts voters to regularly contemplate

the issue and to seek out relevant information, further shaping voting and other political choices (J. M. Miller et al., 2016).

In addition, public issue salience induced by political controversy could affect preferences. Controversies can facilitate judgment about an issue without a specific tone or framing. The exposure to the information can activate pre-existing knowledge, which is then used to make a judgment about the issue (priming theory, Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). For instance, priming national identity exacerbates affective polarization toward undocumented immigrants (Wojcieszak & Garrett, 2018), and racial priming in political advertisements changes candidate preferences (Valentino et al., 2002). Furthermore, as the issue becomes the focal point of political competition, the public tends to interpret related information not objectively but rather through the lens of ideological divisions or identity-driven perspectives (De Wilde & Trenz, 2012; Hooghe & Marks, 2009, 2012). The public aligns its opinion following the elite cues (e.g., climate change, Tesler, 2018) or interprets information based on their in-group norms (e.g., racial identity, White et al., 2014). Even framing, one of the most prominent media effects, has insignificant effects on attitudes when the issue is politically contested (Bechtel et al., 2015; Lecheler et al., 2009; Peterson & Simonovits, 2017). As a result, political controversies and encompassing public issue salience could lead the attitudes towards the issue to be non-neutral and polarized (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; Moon, 2013).

In spite of the importance of political controversy, there are still two research gaps to be addressed. First, empirical evidence found that the influence of political controversy on preferences is heterogeneous, yet factors determining its heterogeneity are largely unknown. Because of the close relationship between salience and preferences, previous research has employed them interchangeably and concluded that political controversy around the immigration issue and perceived salience among the public raises hostility towards immigrants (Czymara & Dochow, 2018; Dunaway et al., 2011; McLaren et al., 2018; Van Klingeren et al., 2015). However, some researchers have observed that political controversy might have less influence on hostile attitudes toward immigrants than is widely assumed (Castanho Silva, 2018; Jungkunz et al., 2019; Morales et al., 2015; Schwartz et al., 2021). Even controversies ignited by the violence committed by immigrants or members of an ethnic minority group did not worsen immigrants' attitudes (Czymara & Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Jungkunz et al., 2019; Larsen et al., 2020). This thesis argues that such inconsistent findings are rooted in differences in political contexts: the meaning and impact of salience depend on the political competition surrounding the issue. After delineating the determinants of immigration attitudes in Chapter 2.6, the reasoning behind this claim is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.2.

The second research gap is that there is a lack of study about the influence of political controversy on minorities. Previous research on the influence of political controversy has been limited to a social majority, neglecting social minority groups, i.e., ethnic minorities who are directly involved in the issue (Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019) and when they do, they are limited to negative representations even though the immigration issue is a multifaceted phenomenon; political controversy surrounding immigration issue encompasses various aspects of the issue, from the government spending to the benefits of immigration. In order to address this gap, this study goes beyond focusing solely on the influence of negative representations and explores the influence of political controversy. Moreover, the way in which immigrants gauge the inclusivity of the host society still needs a lot of investigation. This thesis elaborates on the determinants of immigrant integration and how political controversy has the potential to be a major determinant in Chapter 2.7. Then, in Chapter 4.3, the theoretical framework for the link between immigrant integration and political controversy is discussed.

2.6 Determinants of attitudes towards immigrants

This chapter is dedicated to explaining how political controversy shapes immigration attitudes. Basic models–political economy and sociopsychological models–present that the cause of anti-immigrant attitudes arises from threat perceptions. Prior research has linked such threat perception to the awareness of issue importance, i.e., public issue salience, and further assumed that public issue salience also affects preferences. However, this chapter points out that the efforts to link them encountered inconclusive results and addresses a research gap to fill in.

2.6.1 Political economy and sociopsychological models

Xenophobic, hostile, and negative immigration attitudes have roots in group conflicts or perceived threats; the threats are not necessarily based on objective facts but may originate from incorrect perceptions, stereotypes, and biases (Blumer, 1958; Quillian, 1995). Through a systematic literature review of immigration attitudes in over 20 countries, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) have summarized the origin of such threats by defining the political economy model and the sociopsychological model. The first model argues that increased competition in the labor market and redistribution due to

the globalization of labor and trade are the root causes of hostility against immigrants. In this perspective, low-skilled people are more hostile towards immigrants as they intensify competition for limited resources (e.g., jobs).

However, the validity of the political economy model is questioned. Foremost, immigration mainly occurs due to geographical differences in the supply of and demand for labor (Neoclassical economics model Todaro & Maruszko, 1987). In other words, wage differentials between countries lead people in low-wage and labor-surplus countries to migrate to high-wage and labor-scarce countries so that natives increasingly have high-skilled, high-wage jobs while immigrants take low-skilled, low-wage jobs. Economic theories after neoclassical theories also posit that immigrants position themselves in the jobs that natives are reluctant to have (e.g., segmented market theory, world systems theory; for a comprehensive review, see Massey, 1999). Indeed, many empirical studies observed that political-economic threats are not significantly deterministic of immigration attitudes (e.g., Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007).

On the other hand, the second model, the sociopsychological model, focuses on sociotropic concerns due to immigrants' cultural impacts. In this perspective, natives feel threatened as they perceive immigrants as not conforming to their way of life. The standards to define what is natives' way of life vary from person to person. The standards can be based on ascribed criteria (e.g., race, religion) or acquired criteria (e.g., language, education), and the more stringent the standards are, the stronger the anti-immigrant sentiments (E. G. Green, 2009). Building on this model, empirical studies reveal that ethnocentric attitudes (e.g., Kinder & Kam, 2010), nationalism (e.g., de Figueiredo Jr & Elkins, 2003), and group-specific stereotypes (Sherkat & Lehman, 2018) are influential in developing anti-immigrant attitudes.

In a similar vein, civil norms, which encompass a broad range of standards related to law-abiding (e.g., Hartman et al., 2014), gender equality (e.g., Choi et al., 2022), and other social behaviors, often serve as a basis for social judgment and evaluation. However, as previously mentioned, perceptions about immigrants' observation of norms could be based on misperceptions. The field experiments by Choi et al. (2022) documented that despite the fact that many migrants in Germany share similar levels of gender equality attitudes, many natives believe that migrants are more traditional and patriarchal, thereby fearing that migrants will have a negative influence on women's rights.

The psychological mechanism linking threats and anti-immigrant attitudes is anxiety. Anxiety is a negative emotional state characterized by feelings of apprehension and nervousness, often in response to perceived threats or danger (Eysenck et al., 2007), and such feelings of losing control aggra-

29

vate stress (Glass et al., 1973). While anxiety motivates individuals to look for information (MacKuen et al., 2010), it also makes individuals susceptible to misinformation or conspiracy theories, as individuals desire to fulfill their epistemic needs (Swami & Coles, 2010; Weeks, 2015). Given that, the floods of misinformation accusing migrants of violating COVID-19 prevention measures during COVID-19 (Butcher & Neidhardt, 2020) would not be a coincidence.

To summarize, various threats that are rooted in anxiety explain anti-immigrant attitudes and such threats are particularly prominent when natives perceive socio-cultural threats due to immigrants' (perceived) way of life. Concluding their systematic literature review, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) emphasized the role of the mass media and further pointed out that despite its importance, studies on the influence of the information environment have been rare. In order to address this limitation, this thesis discusses political controversy, which acts as an information environment, in determining immigration attitudes.

2.6.2 The media, political controversy and attitudes towards immigrants

Past studies have assumed that political controversy surrounding the immigration issue increases the hatred towards immigrants based on agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the fact that anti-immigrant sentiments originate from threat perceptions (e.g., Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014), and empirical evidence of the close relationship between salience and preferences (Wlezien, 2005). The media's agenda-setting (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), in other words, intensive coverage of an issue in a short period of time, creates an information environment where the issue is at the core of political competition and the major problem in society. In the meantime, a perception that a certain issue is a problem can affect preferences. Wlezien (2005) analyzed US citizens' public issue salience, i.e., answers to the "What is the most important problem (MIP)" question[2]. His analysis found that the MIP question and the public preference for policy (whether or not to increase government spending) are closely related and concluded that the meaning of public issue salience expands from the degree of importance to the problem status. As threat perceptions are the strong determinants of immigration attitudes, prior research has built on these findings, using public issue salience (MIP or

---

[2]The most important 'problem' and the most important 'issue' items measure the same concepts (Jennings & Wlezien, 2011)

concerns about immigration) as a proxy for anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Van Klingeren et al., 2015). Indeed, several studies concluded that political controversy heightens anti-immigrant attitudes after observing that political controversy increases the perceived importance of the issue (Dunaway et al., 2011; McLaren et al., 2018; Van Klingeren et al., 2015) and concerns about immigration (Czymara & Dochow, 2018).

Yet some researchers have suggested that political controversy may have less influence on anti-immigrant sentiments than widely assumed. Morales et al. (2015) observed that media coverage of immigrants did not significantly affect people's attitudes in several European countries. Even the events in which immigrants or members of an ethnic minority group perpetrated violence–such as the 2015 Paris attack (Castanho Silva, 2018; Jungkunz et al., 2019), the 2015–2016 New Year's Eve assaults in Cologne (Czymara & Schmidt-Catran, 2017), the 2016 Berlin Christmas market attack (Larsen et al., 2020)–or the political event mainly driven by anti-immigrant attitudes, Brexit (the British exit from the European Union) (Schwartz et al., 2021), did not affect attitudes toward immigration.

I argue that these inconsistent results are due to the employment of public issue salience as a measure of anti-immigrant attitudes without consideration of the political context. In Chapter 4.2, I discuss how public issue salience can differ from immigration attitudes based on the political landscape.

2.7 Determinants of immigrant integration

This chapter explains the determinants of immigrant integration within the framework of social identity theory and ethnic boundaries theory. Social identity theory provides a framework for understanding immigrants' psychological integration, and ethnic boundaries theory explains how interethnic interactions determine integration. Lastly, the research gap in the determinant of immigrant integration is pointed out.

2.7.1 social identity, national identity, and ethnic identity

Social identity theory posits that individuals form their identities based on the social groups they (believe to) belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In essence, social groups serve as the foundation upon which individuals construct their identity. People strive to achieve, maintain, or reinforce a positive social identity for their self-esteem. They often achieve positive identity through comparisons between their own in-group and relevant out-groups

(Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tajfel, 1981). When an individual finds social identity unsatisfactory, the individual leaves the social group and joins other social groups that one regards as positive. This process of social categorization and identification determines intragroup and intergroup relations, making social identity critical in understanding intergroup attitudes (Ellemers et al., 2002).

With this in mind, studies about multiculturism have focused on the concepts of ethnic and national identity. Ethnic identity is an aspect of social identity, referring to an individual's sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group, heritage, and culture (J. W. Berry, 2005; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001) and should be understood as a result of an individual's self-identification and outsiders' ethnic designation (Nagel, 1994). On the other hand, national identity refers to the immigrant's identification, belonging, and attitudes toward the new society (J. W. Berry, 2005; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). Immigrants tend to have a lower national identity than natives (Phinney et al., 2006; Staerklé et al., 2010), and their level of identification with their ethnic groups is higher than that with the host country (Elkins & Sides, 2007; Froehlich et al., 2019). For instance, among youth with migrant backgrounds in Germany, ethnic identity is more endorsed than national identity (Froehlich et al., 2019).

National identity is an indicator of immigrants' psychological integration level into the host society, but it also significantly determines various aspects of immigrants' lives. The strong national identity of immigrants has a positive influence on labor market outcomes (Nekby & Rodin, 2007), home-ownership (Constant et al., 2009), and educational achievements (Altschul et al., 2006). Similar to national identity, ethnic identity has a positive relationship with career decision-making self-efficacy (Gushue, 2006), mental health, and academic success (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007), while also helping reduce immigrant adolescents' depression (Yasui et al., 2004).

Meanwhile, ethnic identity and national identity are not incompatible. Rather, they develop independently (J. W. Berry, 2005; Citrin & Sears, 2009; Phinney et al., 2001). J. W. Berry (2001) elaborated on the acculturation strategies accounting for both two dimensions (Figure 2.1 (A)). There are four different acculturation strategies pursued by immigrants, depending on the level of desire to maintain one's ethnic culture while hoping to be included in the host society's culture: assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation/segregation.

Integration refers to immigrants who strongly identify with both cultures, while assimilation means immigrants who identify mainly with the host culture. Marginalized individuals are those who identify strongly with the cul-

	Assimilation	Integration
	Marginalization	Separation

National identity (+/−), Ethnic identity (−/+)

	Melting pot	Multiculturalism
	Exclusion	Segragtion

(A) Strategies of ethnocultural groups   (B) Strategies of larger society
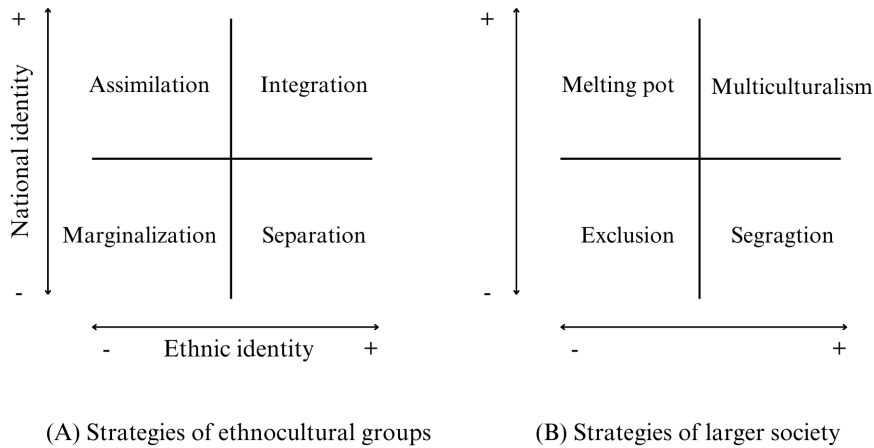
Figure 2.1: Berry's two dimensional model.

ture of origin and not with the host culture. Korean migrants in LA who reside in Koreatown and interact only with Koreans are an example. Lastly, the separation/segregation strategy represents the immigrants who do not have strong identification with either the culture of origin or the host culture. The society's interethnic relations evolve depending on which strategies the society treats as ideal as well as what immigrants prefer (Figure 2.1 (B)): Melting pot, multiculturalism, exclusion, segregation.

Previously, the dominant view held that maintaining only national identity while disregarding ethnic identity was the best acculturation strategy, namely assimilation (Gordon, 1964; Matute-Bianchi, 1986). Yet, empirical studies provide evidence that maintaining a similar level of national identity and ethnic identity yields the best results in terms of psychological and sociocultural adaptation (J. W. Berry, 2005), life satisfaction (J. W. Berry & Hou, 2016; S. Lee, 2020), political interest (Fischer-Neumann, 2014) (also, see meta-analysis by Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Incompatibility of ethnic and national identity differs depending on the immigrants' ethnic group and the level of openness and inclusivity of the host society (Alba, 2005; Ersanilli & Saharso, 2011; Schulz & Leszczensky, 2016). Ethnic boundaries theory explains the mechanism in detail.

2.7.2 Ethnic boundaries and integration

Ethnic boundaries present a categorical and behavioral dimension based on which individuals divide social groups between "us" and "them" (Wimmer, 2008). These boundaries should be understood as a social medium through which people associate and reinforce the in-group member's self-identification and the outsider's confirmation of group distinctions (Sanders, 2002). In addition, these boundaries shift reactively to changes in the social environment, so they are not clearly determined (Alba, 2005; Chai, 2005; Wimmer, 2008). To borrow the words of Alba (2005), those boundaries could be bright, blurred, or contested. To illustrate, being a European catholic made a clear, bright boundary between 'American' and 'immigrants' in the late 17th century, providing a source for xenophobic feelings against European descendants (Higham, 2002). However, since the 20th century, European Catholicism has been accepted as a mainstream culture–the ethnic boundary is blurred–while being a Mexican catholic still demarcates the boundary between mainstream and immigrant culture, the ethnic boundary between Mexican Catholicism and mainstream being fuzzy.

Such boundaries could be categorized into symbolic boundaries and social boundaries (Lamont, 1992; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Symbolic boundaries indicate conceptual distinctions made by the interaction of social actors so that they reflect dynamic dimensions of social relations, such as natives' perception of Muslims. On the other hand, social boundaries refer to institutionalized, objective boundaries with clear distinction, such as citizenship. Symbolic boundaries may not be as clear as social boundaries, yet they also have constraining effects when the members of the society widely agree upon them, so they should be considered equally real.

Ethnic boundaries significantly determine immigrants' psychological integration. The four main determinants set by ethnic boundaries could be summarized as sociostructural conditions, perceived discrimination, identity undermining, and in-group norms (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). First, sociostructural conditions, such as criteria for naturalization, influence perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability of ethnic boundaries. Second, discrimination experiences lead immigrants to identify more with one's ethnic group and identify less with the host country's national identity. Experiences of discrimination contribute to a sense of exclusion from the host society, thereby hindering the development of their national identity (J. W. Berry, 2005; Huynh et al., 2011; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009; Molina et al., 2015; Skrobanek, 2009). Third, perceiving one's identity undermined signals to immigrants that their ethnic identity and national identity are incompatible, resulting in a decrease in national identity. For instance, exclusive policies,

such as a headscarf ban, undermine immigrants' identity and discourage their motivation to integrate (Abdelgadir & Fouka, 2020; Fouka, 2020; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012). Lastly, in-group norms that emphasize maintaining high levels of ethnic identity may contribute to a lower sense of national identity. In short, the interactions with out-group and co-ethnic groups through interpersonal encounters or parasocial contact determine immigrants.

Despite immigrants frequently recognizing the significance of ethnic boundaries, i.e., the inclusivity of the host society, as a critical factor (J. W. Berry, 2005; Huynh et al., 2011; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009; Molina et al., 2015; Skrobanek, 2009), previous attempts to establish evidence for the connection between ethnic boundaries shaped by natives' hostile attitudes and immigrants' national identity have often failed to find a conclusive link. Empirical analyses with survey data presented that the xenophobic attitudes of natives (Hadjar & Backes, 2013), the stringency of natives' criteria for accepting immigrants based on their language skills (Beier & Kroneberg, 2013) or religious affiliation (Trittler, 2019), does not have any significant influence on immigrants' subjective well-being or perceived discrimination. This thesis posits that the absence of a relationship between natives' attitudes and immigrants' national identity could be attributed to immigrants forming their perceptions of native attitudes through media-mediated political controversy, a facet that can not be captured within the survey.

The lion's share of previous studies on the issue of immigration and media effects focused on media coverage itself or the media's effects on natives' immigration attitudes, so studies about media efforts on immigrants' perception are rare (Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019). This thesis argues that political controversy could help fill this research gap. The theoretical framework is elucidated in the Chapter 4.3.

2.8   Summary

The literature review chapter summarizes the previous works, providing a basis for this thesis's theoretical background. I begin by explaining what political controversy represents. In this thesis, the concept of political controversy is defined based on the works on the politicization of European integration. Fundamentally, political controversy refers to the situation in which an issue lacks an agreement, leading to ongoing active political debates with significant engagement and investment from both political elites and the public. However, political controversy is indistinguishable from the information environment, which facilitates the link between political elites and the public, so the definition of political controversy always encompasses

the media environment. Throughout this thesis, I focus on those main actors, the public, political elites, and the mass media, and their role in the making of the political controversy surrounding immigrants and their influence on the public–both natives and immigrants–perception.

The discussion of the making of controversy starts with the traditional actors of the media's agenda-setting, the media and political elites. Traditionally, the mass media and political elites have been the major influencers in determining 'what the important issue is' for the public, and they affect the public's preferences accordingly (e.g., B. C. Cohen, 1963). However, the influence of the public in the process of agenda-setting has grown with the development of technology, particularly through participation in online political discussions. Yet its impetus has been studied in a rather fragmentary way by focusing either only on the decrease or the increase of public discussions. In order to address this gap, this thesis develops a theoretical framework named 'emotional synchrony distribution' based on previous works on communication dynamics (Chapter 4.1).

After delineating the making of controversy by various actors, this thesis proceeds to probe the influence of political controversy. It is widely known that political controversy has a significant influence on both salience and preferences, yet there are still two research gaps. First, previous studies have observed that the influence of political controversy can be more limited than previously assumed (e.g., Morales et al., 2015), but still, the factors determining the heterogeneous effects of political controversy are understudied. This thesis assumes that political contexts can address research gaps. Political elites shape public opinions through their interpretation of current events, owning the issue (Downs, 1957; Petrocik, 1996), strategically placing certain topics at the forefront of political competition (Mason, 2018; P. R. Miller & Conover, 2015), and ideology (e.g., Achen & Bartels, 2017). However, their influence can be moderated by issue salience, from which I expect that politicization of the issue can moderate the influence of political elites as well. I delve into this assumption in Chapter 4.2.

Second, the effects of political controversy on immigrant integration have been rarely explored. Existing studies about media effects on immigrants, if any, predominantly focus on the consequences of negative portrayals rather than examining the effects of diverse media portrayals. Moreover, prior efforts to establish a link between natives' immigration attitudes and immigrants' psychological integration have failed, raising a question about ways the immigrants perceive ethnic boundaries. This thesis argues that exploring the influence of political controversy can fill the gap. Political controversy includes various discussion topics, and the media portrayal of political competition surrounding the issue of immigrants could be a major way immigrants

gauge natives' attitudes. Chapter 4.3 explains this rationale in detail.

Chapter 3

Case study

3.1 The UK, Germany and the issue of immigration

I selected the issue of immigration as a case study for the dissertation. The issue of immigration is the focal point of contentiousness in the politicization of European integration. The creation of the European Union and the political, economic, and cultural cooperation between countries brought the question of whether transnational identity as a 'European' is possible (e.g., Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993). Along with the discussion of transnational identity, the discussion about border, nationalism, and national identity flourished as well, which led post-functionalists to perceive the politicization of the EU as a birth of identity politics (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). In their perspective, EU politicization is driven by people who are struggling with adapting to the globalization of the market ('losers') and prefer domestic national politics to survive (Fligstein, 2008; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Kriesi et al., 2008). Against this background, far-right parties put emphasis on the cultural threat posed by immigrants and facilitated anti-multiculturalism as a tool for garnering public support (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). In the meantime, the 2015 refugee crisis–the sudden increase of refugees from Syrians, Iraqis, Libyans, Afghans, and Eritreans due to interwar and other difficulties in 2015–created a political momentum for the issue of transnational identity and multiculturalism to reappear. Since then, the issue of immigration has been one of the most politically salient and controversial issues across European countries (Dennison & Geddes, 2019).

Among European countries, I focus on two Western European countries that have been key sites of debates and discussions around the 2015 refugee crisis: the United Kingdom and Germany. The two countries share similar-

ities in mature democracies, GDP, and, particularly, long histories of immigration. The two countries have been historically the country of immigrants' destinations thanks to their advanced economies and democratic systems. As a result, they have a similar level of immigration population (12.4% for the UK in 2014 and 12.8% for Germany in 2014 (OECD, 2023)). Moreover, due to their history of colonial conquest, slavery, and the Holocaust, the UK and Germany have been at the center of public discourse about racism, particularly anti-black racism in the UK and anti-Semitism in Germany (MacMaster, 2017).

However, the two countries parted different ways in recent years; the main political parties reacted very differently. The major political parties in the UK were divided over the immigration issue. On the contrary, major political parties in Germany reached a consensus at the early stage of the refugee crisis. In order to understand their deviation, their recent political events should be contextualized.

Before explaining their deviation, it is necessary to elucidate the meaning of major political parties and far-right parties. In this thesis, I define a major political party as a party encompassing a broad spectrum of policy dimensions. In contrast, the far-right party is one that develops on the anti-immigrant policy. Far-right parties can be characterized by authoritarianism, radicalism, extremism, and nationalism (Golder, 2016). Yet it's worth noting that some major political parties (like Trump's Republican party in the US) may have those characteristics. Also, the number of seats in the parliament cannot provide a standard to distinguish far-right parties from major political parties since far-right parties are growing all over Europe (Halikiopoulou & Vlandas, 2019). In light of this, I rely on the policy spectrum to define major political parties and far-right parties. According to this perspective, the major political parties are as follows: in the UK, the Conservative Party and the Labour Party; and in Germany, the conservative parties (Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) and Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), hereafter referred to as CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). The far-right party in the UK is the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), and in Germany, it is the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD).

In the UK, the issue of European integration has been one of the major sources of party competition in recent history. The pivotal point was the 2004 enlargement of the EU, an event when an additional ten countries[1] joined the EU, driving a notable rise of Euroscepticism in the UK (Evans

---

[1]Those countries are Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

& Mellon, 2019). Most existing EU countries imposed transitional controls on immigration, whereas the UK maintained the open border, leading to a major migration flow surge. Taking advantage of the momentum, UKIP facilitated Euroscepticism and gained 15.6% of votes in the 2004 European Parliament election.

Furthermore, the UK economy was especially harshly hit by the 2007-2008 financial crisis, increasing overall anxiety in society (Kromczyk et al., 2021). Immigration, which had already been a major concern among British citizens in the 2000s (Evans & Mellon, 2019), continued to be a major issue in the 2010s as well (Blinder & Richards, 2020; European Commission, 2015). In response, UKIP became the most successful party in the 2014 European Parliament election. The 2010-2015 Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition agreement and Conservative party after 2015 aimed for a 'hostile environment' for 'unwanted' immigrants, and their policies included several restrictive measures such as a cap on non-EU migration and a crackdown on sham international marriages, resulting in strong criticisms from opposition parties (Alan, 2015; Geddes & Peter, 2016a). The United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on whether to exit the European Union (Brexit) was primarily motivated by concerns regarding immigrants (Clarke et al., 2017; Ford & Goodwin, 2017). As previously mentioned, people who especially resonated with the threat created by immigrants comprised a significant portion of turnouts (Goodwin & Heath, 2016).

On the contrary, the immigrant integration issue is relatively new to Germany. Germany maintained the mantra 'Germany is not an immigration country (Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland)' until 1990 despite its significant number of foreign population (e.g., Turkish guest workers, Aussiedler (ethnic German)). German reunification and the encompassing idea of 'incomplete country' transformed the policy, allowing for a large influx of immigrants (S. Green, 2004). However, several peaks of asylum applicants in the 1990s led to the rise of threat perceptions as well as ethnic violence (Geddes & Peter, 2016b). In Germany, Euroscepticism had remained on the fringe, with the failure of radical right parties –the Republicans, the German People's Union (DVU), and the National Democrats (NPD) (Lees, 2008)–due to the stigmatization of National Socialism by political elites (Art, 2011). Also, Germany fared relatively well during the 2007-2008 financial crisis, maintaining a robust economy.

The political landscape shifted in 2013 by the foundation of AfD. Started by former conservative party (CSU) members, AfD distanced itself from National Socialism and extreme ideology at that time[2], focusing on Euroscep-

---

[2]However, over the years, the ideology of AfD has increasingly radicalized to the extent

ticism and foreign policy. They achieved successful results for a newly built political party in the 2013 federal election, the 2014 European Parliament election, and three (eastern) state parliamentary elections in 2014(Arzhiamer, 2015).

Moreover, the influx of refugees into Europe in 2015 presented significant challenges for Germany, which was at the forefront of the crisis. At that time, the German government was led by a coalition between the two biggest parties across different political ideologies: the conservative party CDU/CSU and the liberal party SPD. The conservative party deviated from its traditional stance and agreed to take a welcoming stance towards refugees (Fabian Engler & Zohlnhöfer, 2019; Mader & Schoen, 2019).

The German government planned to allow Syrian refugees stranded in Hungary to apply for asylum in Germany, regardless of where they entered the EU. This original plan was against the Dublin system, which required refugees to seek asylum in the first EU country they entered. The overturning of the Dublin system was criticized internally, so border control was re-introduced (Geddes & Peter, 2016b). Despite domestic debates, Germany emerged as a leading force in the EU's relocation discussions, taking a leadership role in Europe's response to the refugee crisis (Geddes & Peter, 2016b).

While the government's decision definitely signaled a message of solidarity, political disputes and the increase in the immigrant population elevated economic, cultural, and security threats, giving momentum to AfD. AfD emphasized the 2015 refugee crisis and crimes committed by people with migrant backgrounds (e.g., the 2015–16 New Year's Eve Cologne assault) in their political campaigns to gain visibility and support (Lees, 2018). They particularly gained a significant number of votes from Eastern Germany in the 2017 federal election, which could be attributed to strong nativism in the region (Arzheimer, 2023).

The political decisions resulted in several different consequences. Foremost, as the UK closed its border to immigrants, it accepted fewer immigrants, with 33,300 people applying for asylum status for the first time in 2017, while 198,300 people applied in Germany (Eurostat, 2018). The public reactions differed in the two countries as well. To give an example, people tend to prefer culturally proximate immigrants over culturally distinct immigrants because cultural threats are one of the key determinants of immigration attitudes (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014), so most Europeans prefer immigrants from the EU to immigrants outside of the EU (Dennison, 2019;

---

that the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) classified the Youth AfD group as a confirmed extremist organization and civil society called for a ban on the party (Lau et al., 2024).

Ford, 2011). Indeed, German citizens prefer migrants from the EU over migrants from non-EU countries (Dennison & Geddes, 2019). However, the UK public presented high levels of antipathy towards both non-EU immigrants and EU immigrants throughout the late 2010s (Dennison & Geddes, 2019), which could have originated from elites' lack of consensus and deep-rooted Euroscepticism.

The media coverage of the immigration issue in the two countries also followed different paths. First, the language they used was distinct. In the UK, the term 'migrant' was primarily used in discussions, whereas in Germany, 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' was the most common (M. Berry et al., 2015). This could be attributed to the fact that in the UK, the free movement of EU nationals is centered on the discourse beyond the issue of refugees. On the other hand, in Germany, the 2015 refugee crisis was the main catalyst of political controversy.

A comprehensive analysis by Jost et al. (2022) of three national newspapers in each country reveals the proximity and relevance of the issue made the immigration issue more 'newsworthy (Eilders, 2006)' in Germany. Hence, the German media reported the issue of immigration more extensively than the UK. Nonetheless, as German political elites reached a consensus at the early stage of the refugee crisis, German news coverage mainly mirrored the political elites' consensual views, whereas British news media's report aligned with their editorial lines and was more negative and polarized (M. Berry et al., 2015). Particularly, British right-wing media was aggressive towards refugees (M. Berry et al., 2015).

Lastly, the two countries have different experiences in terms of political events related to immigration. The UK witnessed a significant event, Brexit, while Germany did not have a comparable political event or resolution of conflicts during the same period. Despite its inherent anti-immigrant sentiments, Brexit served to alleviate tensions (Schwartz et al., 2021). The British named immigration as the most important problem in 2015 (Blinder & Richards, 2020; European Commission, 2015), but health and social security, housing, and inflation took its place the following year after the referendum. In Germany, immigration remained the most important problem facing the country until 2019 (European Commission, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). Simultaneously, some traditional conservative party (CDU/CSU) supporters shifted to support AfD during those periods (Mader & Schoen, 2019).

For these reasons, this thesis expects similarities and differences between the UK and Germany regarding the immigration issue to allow observing dynamic peaks and valleys in the level of controversy and subsequent changes in public attitudes. I set the UK as a case for the country in which major political parties are divided over the issue of immigration and Germany as a

case for a country in which major political parties share a similar welcoming stance on the issue of immigration.

Chapter 4

Theoretical framework

4.1 Emotions and the public's making of controversy

The public is dedicated significantly to making political controversy by actively participating in political discussions. Their importance is even more pronounced in the era of digital media as their discussion now reaches political elites and the mass media more frequently than before (e.g., Groshek & Groshek, 2013), exercising power on par with traditional forms of political participation (e.g., Theocharis et al., 2021).

People's perception of their surroundings can explain the public's motivation to participate in the public discussion. Previous works have shown that how people perceive their surroundings' reactions affects people's intention to participate in political discussion in a significant way. Whether they perceive their opinions to fall into the minority category (the spiral of silence theory, Noelle-Neumann, 1993), feel that others will support their opinions (Rimé, 2009), or their opinion is worth mentioning for the development of discussion (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014) all play significant roles. Despite their importance in explaining the dynamic fluctuations of public debates, those theories explain only one direction–the increase or decrease of public debates. In an attempt to subsume those theories and provide a comprehensive understanding of the public debate dynamics, I develop a new theoretical framework named 'emotional synchrony distribution.' Focusing on the role of emotions, I argue that the level of the same emotions or the lack of them can affect one's motivation to participate in political discussion. In my framework, I distinguish the level of shared emotions into three levels: agreement, polarization, and diversity.

Emotions affect our lives in every aspect. They determine our decision-

making (Damásio, 1994), behavior (Gray, 1990), as well as our political activities (Webster & Albertson, 2022), and even unconsciously (Zajonc, 1980, 1984). Emotions are also pivotal in shaping public discourse within the public sphere. Online content with emotional appeals, whether it is negative (Bednarek, 2016; Diakopoulos & Naaman, 2011; Ziegele et al., 2018) or positive (Gerbaudo et al., 2019), is shared more frequently (Dang-Xuan et al., 2013; Weismueller et al., 2022) and swifter (Stefan & Linh, 2013).

However, in order to fully understand the mechanism by which emotions influence online political discussions, it's crucial to consider factors beyond the emotional appeal of the content. Recognizing the social nature of emotional sharing could provide an important insight into the role of emotions in political discourse.

Emotions do not exist in isolation; rather, they are embedded within a social context. Early on, Durkheim (1912) emphasized the importance of collective gatherings such as social ritual, and collective actions in those gatherings, such as chanting slogans or marching in the protest. In those gatherings, mutual expressions of emotions among participants take place, thereby creating a sense of belongingness and togetherness, i.e., collective emotional effervescence.

Emotional expression and evaluation operate in a reciprocal manner or through a feedback loop, wherein individuals consistently assess the emotions of others, evaluating the degree of emotional synchrony within the group and subsequently determining whether to openly display their own emotions (Rimé, 2009). The phenomenon of emotional sharing is universal. Individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those of different genders, educational levels, and cultural backgrounds, engage in emotional sharing at similar levels (Rimé, 2009). These collective experiences enhance the feeling of belongingness and self-esteem that motivate the public to participate in pro-social behaviors (Álvarez et al., 2015; Páez et al., 2015; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009).

The feeling of collective emotional effervescence or emotional synchrony persists even after the dissolution of spatial gathering. Moreover, they could occur beyond physical space on social media. Even when individuals are not in the same physical space, their sharing of emotions on social media fosters a high level of emotional synchrony–expressed by the exponential growth of likes and comments–thereby establishing the foundation for collective actions (Garcia & Rimé, 2019; Gerbaudo, 2016). Gerbaudo (2016) described such reciprocal emotional interactions among social media users as 'contagious.'

The specific emotions or emotional valence is of no significance in the social sharing of emotions (Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009). For instance, during the 2011 Egyptian revolution and Spanish Indignados movements, positive

emotions – collective hope and enthusiasm – reached emotional synchrony and motivated collective actions (Gerbaudo, 2016), while after the 2015 Paris terrorist attack, negative emotions, such as anger, sadness, anxiety did (Garcia & Rimé, 2019).

Building on them, I hypothesize that the feeling of emotional synchrony increases online public discussion. As the works mentioned above postulate, I propose that emotional synchrony creates an environment where people can freely share their emotions, which motivates further discussion, thus creating a feedback loop of emotions. This thesis categorizes such emotional synchrony as 'agreement,' irrelevant to the valence. An agreement state is characterized by the dominance of one sort of emotional synchrony.

Hypothesis H1 *Emotional agreement is associated with heightened political discussion.*

However, it is important to note that sharing emotions based on emotional synchrony does not follow an exponential or continuous growth pattern but instead reaches a threshold beyond which they cease to increase. Rimé (2009) attributed this stagnation to a sense of ennui stemming from the endurance of the same emotions. I further elaborate on the stagnation of discussion with the theory by Friberg-Fernros and Schaffer (2014), 'consensus paradox.' Once homogeneous opinions have been reached, the deliberation process stalls and the public forgets about the issue and then conforms to the existing consensus. Consequently, the discussion decreases.

Hypothesis H2 *Continuation of emotional agreement is associated with a decrease in political discussion.*

In the meantime, a lack of emotional synchrony could exist. This thesis classifies such an absence of dominant emotions into two categories: polarization and diversity. In political science, polarization connotes various manifestations, such as ideological consistency, ideological divergence, perceived polarization, and affective polarization (Lelkes, 2016). This thesis employs the term polarization based on a core feature of affective polarization, characterized by a divergence between two groups. In other words, polarization describes the existence of two emotional synchronies, albeit in opposing directions.

I posit that polarization increases political discussion. Since individuals on each side of a high level of emotional synchrony experience collective emotions with their respective groups, they feel more at ease when sharing their emotions within a group. Furthermore, the presence of another group with opposing emotions can further encourage emotional expressions.

The existence of collective emotions and emotional synchrony could result in in-group identification (with people sharing the same emotions). Group identification establishes clear boundaries between in-group and out-group, fostering in-group favoritism and out-group hostility (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It serves as a foundation for collective actions for the in-group (Kelly, 1993; Van Zomeren et al., 2008) while potentially inciting offensive action against the out-group (Mackie et al., 2000). Furthermore, the coexistence of two emotional synchronies but with different directions can exaggerate the level of polarity among the public. People who are strongly engaged with the topic have a tendency to share content at higher rates, thereby amplifying the perceived polarization level among users (Arugute et al., 2023). Building on these premises, I hypothesize that emotional synchrony at each side motivates its members to express their emotions while simultaneously prompting the out-group, with its opposite emotional synchrony, to defend their own group, thus creating another sort of feedback loop.

Hypothesis H3 *Emotional polarization is associated with heightened political discussion.*

Lastly, there is a state where emotional synchrony distribution reaches diversity. In this thesis, diversity refers to a state that lacks a dominant emotional synchrony. Both diversity and polarization indicate an absence of one dominant solid emotional synchrony. However, a significant difference between polarization and diversity lies in whether individuals who are emotionally unengaged—neutral, moderate, or indecisive about the issue—exist or not. One might argue that indifference to the issue is also a form of agreement, where a group of individuals shares similar levels of emotional engagement, albeit at a low intensity. Yet, I emphasize that emotional disengagement differs from agreement because it lacks the motivating power for people to participate in political discussion.

Diversity can be further distinguished into two different states depending on the existence of divergence: 'diversity with agreement' and 'diversity with polarization.' Diversity with agreement refers to the coexistence of one emotional synchrony, i.e., agreement, along with people with a low level of emotional engagement. I expect that diversity along with the agreement will increase political discussion because the agreement state has a motivating power.

Hypothesis H4 *Emotional diversity with agreement is associated with heightened political discussion.*

On the other hand, emotional diversity with polarization indicates a state in which two strong emotional synchronies with different directions exist

alongside individuals with a low level of emotional engagement. Drawing from the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1973), I hypothesize that individuals with low engagement will hesitate to express their opinions in a polarized environment because their opinions can be attacked by both sides.

Hypothesis H5 *Emotional diversity with polarization is associated with a decrease in political discussion.*

Because of their tendency to remain silent, their presence has been overlooked in previous studies. For instance, the work of Walsh (2021) documented that during the 2019 Canadian federal election, which spurred the active discussion about nativism and migration, content analysis of Tweets revealed a strong polarization; 42.8% of Tweets related to the topic were negative, 39.8% were positive, and only 17.4% were neutral. While this work indicates a high level of polarization among Canadians, I suggest a new perspective on this finding. I propose that the small number of neutral tweets in his study originated not from the small number of people with neutral attitudes but due to the feeling of uneasiness about expressing a given polarized environment for them. In social media, there is a tendency for a few active users to dominate the discourse (Wolf et al., 2022). That means people with strong anti-immigrant sentiments are overrepresented on social media due to their hyperactive activities (Menshikova & van Tubergen, 2022; Serrano et al., 2019; Walsh, 2021). Focusing only on active forms of public discussion (writing posts, comments, or tweets) could oversee the existence of people without strong engagement. To include the existence of people with moderate views, I employ passive forms of emotional expressions and emotional buttons on Facebook in this study.

4.2 Controversy's influence on the majority's perception

Political controversy can affect salience and preferences, and its influence has been widely examined in the field of media effects and public opinion. However, previous researchers observed contradicting results when they tested the relationship between political controversy and natives' preferences for immigrants. Against this background, this thesis suggests a revisit to the similarities and differences between public issue salience and public preferences. This thesis argues that the heterogeneous effects of political controversy originate from the differences in political landscapes.

Due to the substantial impact of perceived issue importance on voting-related behaviors, public issue salience–often represented by the question,

what is the most important problem facing a country (MIP) or concerns about an issue–has been employed as a proxy for preferences (e.g., McLaren et al., 2018). However, some empirical evidence suggests that its relationship with public preferences might be more limited than previously thought. Jennings and Wlezien (2015) showed that voters' preferences and public issue salience related to government spending are distinct concepts, comparing the UK and the USA using longitudinal data. In line with their work, Hatton (2021) identified a low correlation between public issue salience and anti-immigrant attitudes using survey data from multiple European countries from 2004 to 2016. He also found that the characteristics of public issue salience and anti-immigrant attitudes are the opposite: being young and male are related to public issue salience, while being older and female are linked to anti-immigrant attitudes. In addition, a review by Dennison (2019) presented that public issue salience is volatile and easily affected by real-world cues such as protests and policy. On the other hand, immigration attitudes are stable (Kustov et al., 2021) and remain unaffected by fluctuations in media salience (Gavin, 2018). In short, public issue salience and public preferences are closely related, yet public issue salience might be more context-dependent, and preferences could be more stable.

In response to these findings, this thesis questions the political context in which public issue salience is closely related to public preferences. Political parties are key agenda-setters for the public (Carmines & Stimson, 1986) as well as their opinions (Zaller, 1992). Political parties influence the public not only by addressing their policy positions or directing the public positions but also by priming issues as an issue of contestation. Laypersons are often inattentive and ill-informed about political issues (S. E. Bennett, 1995; Sniderman et al., 1991) yet the political and information environment created by political parties could signal the importance and thus problematic status of the issue. For instance, Hopkins (2011) presented that contextual factors, e.g., immigration population, can induce the perception that immigration is a problem, particularly when the issue is nationally debated by political elites.

In light of this, this thesis hypothesizes that political competition around the issue of immigration and a signal of contestation determine the political controversy's influence on preferences. The expectations are as follows; when political elites are largely divided over the issue of immigration and treat it as a focal point of competition, the public's perception of the issue importance, i.e., public issue salience, increases. Simultaneously, political controversy connotes negativity, thereby influencing preferences related to immigration. On the other hand, when major political parties reach a consensus, political controversy primarily signals the importance, not the problem status of the

issue. Additionally, political controversy will signal a consensus and positive stance to the public. To test this assumption, the following hypotheses are deduced. This thesis focuses on major political parties because they exercise great influence on shaping the media's agenda-setting and public opinion.

Hypothesis H6 *When major political parties are divided over the issue of immigration, political controversy makes natives think immigration is important, yet they are less inclined to prefer immigration.*

Hypothesis H7 *When major political parties share a similar welcoming stance on the issue of immigration, political controversy makes natives think immigration is important and more inclined to prefer immigration.*

In the meantime, political elite cues can be confounded with political controversy. When the issue is politically salient and divisive, people tend to align their attitudes with their supporting party's positions (Achen & Bartels, 2017; Huddy, 2018). The controversy surrounding anthropogenic climate change provides a clear example of elite cues. In the 1990s, Republicans in the US believed in anthropogenic climate change more than Democrats. However, when the issue became a pivotal point of political competition dividing the Republican and Democratic parties, Republicans increasingly rejected the notion of human-caused climate change, following Republican politicians' position (Tesler, 2018). Given that, in the divisive political context, supporters of parties with restrictive immigration policies are likely to reinforce their negative attitudes towards immigrants to support their party. Conversely, supporters of parties advocating for more inclusive immigration policies can be more favorable towards immigrants. In order to figure out the origin of changes–whether they are due to political controversy's signal of conflicts or due to elite cues–this study seeks to answer the following research question.

Research Question 1. Does political controversy change preferences because it represents conflicts and disagreement? Or is it because people adjust their preferences to align with their parties?

4.3 Controversy's influence on minority's perception

Immigrants' psychological integration largely depends on their perceived level of natives' welcomeness towards immigrants (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012).

For instance, when they perceive that they have a possibility of being accepted, their sense of belongingness and curiosity about the new host country's history and culture–essentially, their national identity–increases.

The boundaries that delineate who are "us" and "immigrants" are named ethnic boundaries (Wimmer, 2008). Ethnic boundaries can be defined by various standards. For instance, in a society where language proficiency significantly defines ethnic boundaries, immigrants must attain a very high level of proficiency in the host country's language to be accepted as part of the 'us' group. However, natives and immigrants can have different perceptions about it. Several empirical studies have found that natives' hostile attitudes can not predict the psychological integration of immigrants (Beier & Kroneberg, 2013; Hadjar & Backes, 2013; Trittler, 2019). In other words, despite natives having inclusive attitudes–relatively low standards of ethnic boundaries–immigrants can feel they are not being welcomed and that ethnic boundaries are too difficult to cross.

I argue that such discrepancy originates because immigrants often form their perception of ethnic boundaries, namely the level of inclusivity of society, through media consumption. Mass media is a major means of contacting out-groups (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). Particularly, immigrants learn about destination countries through the media (Kim, 1988; Kline & Liu, 2005; W. N. Lee & Tse, 1994; Yoon et al., 2011). Given that, this thesis expects immigrants to assess the level of ethnic boundaries primarily through the media rather than through direct observation of natives' attitudes. Furthermore, I suggest that political controversy can represent the media coverage that immigrants rely on to gauge natives' attitudes.

Beier and Kroneberg (2013) built their work on a similar assumption. In their study, they focused on a lack of agreement over the issue of immigration and the controversy it creates. They named such a state as 'ethnic boundaries contestedness' and argued that ethnic boundaries contestedness exercises more influence on immigrants' psychological well-being than natives' hostile attitudes (ethnic boundaries strength). This is because, given a lack of agreement, the public engages in the discussion in order to reach a consensus, thus consequently making the issue politically salient. On the other hand, when natives consonantly have welcoming attitudes or hostile attitudes towards immigrants, there is no need for debates surrounding the issue, so that issue salience wanes. They employed survey data from 13 European countries, concentrating on how strict natives' criteria for accepting immigrants based on language skills were to assess their hypothesis[1]. In their

---

[1]The item they used asked natives how important they think language proficiency of immigrants in deciding whether immigrants are allowed to enter and live in their country.

analysis, they measured ethnic boundaries contestedness, a lack of agreement over the language requirements for immigrants, by the level of dispersion in the answer. They calculated the median absolute deviation from the median (MAD) for it. For ethnic boundaries strength, i.e., the level of stringency of natives' criteria for allowing immigrants to come to and live in their country, they calculated the median of the answer. In their analyses, they observed that ethnic boundaries strength did not have any significant influence on immigrants' psychological well-being, while ethnic boundaries contestedness significantly hindered it.

To test the tenability of their arguments and measures, they investigated events in Sweden during the survey fieldwork period. Swedish citizens exhibited highly welcoming attitudes towards immigrants (low ethnic boundaries strength), yet the public opinions were heavily contested (ethnic boundaries were highly contested). They pointed out that the discrepancy between strength and contestedness was substantial because, during their data collection period, public debates regarding Swedish as a principal language were active, subsequently making the multicultural and immigration issues politically salient. Although native Swedish welcomed immigrants, they had disputes over the issue of the principal language, which created political controversy, which immigrants interpreted as hostility towards them.

Building on the work by Beier and Kroneberg (2013), I argue that political controversy, which can be summarized as a highly mediatized contentious political issue, acts as a proxy of natives' attitudes and has a significant influence on immigrants' psychological integration. Previous researchers studying media coverage and immigrant integration have observed that negative reports, negative representation of immigrants, or xenophobic remarks increase perceived discrimination among immigrants and bring identity threats to immigrants (Flores, 2017; Fujioka, 2005; Haynes et al., 2016; Heeren & Zick, 2014; Pérez, 2015; Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019). For instance, the introduction of anti-immigrant policy and encompassing increase of anti-immigrant tweets yielded immigrants' active writing of positive tweets about migration (Flores, 2017) as well as framing immigrants with the negative term 'illegal aliens' motivated immigrants to support pro-immigration policy more (Haynes et al., 2016). In addition, when German-Muslims experienced negative media reports about Muslims, they showed a tendency to keep themselves low-profile, even avoiding interaction with non-Muslims (Heeren & Zick, 2014).

Nevertheless, previous studies cannot address the influence of political controversy because political controversy can subsume both positive and negative aspects of immigration. The causes of political controversy around the issue of immigration range greatly, such as ethnic crime (Vergeer et al.,

2000), terrorist attacks (Legewie, 2013), violence against immigrants (Brosius & Esser, 2013; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004) and anti-immigrant policy (Flores, 2017) so that more comprehensive coverage of immigration should be considered. Indeed, the analysis by Alanya et al. (2015) documented that, irrelevant to the tone or framing of the media, local media consumption itself heightened discrimination perception. In addition, the interview work by Baugut (2020) showed that Jews living in present Germany perceive most media reports about Jews (e.g., Holocaust memorials) can increase hostility against Jews, although the media intention may have been innocent.

Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 4.2, I assume that political controversy has heterogeneous effects depending on the level of political contentiousness among political elites. I hypothesize that a lack of agreement around the issue of immigration and ensuing political debates signal conflicts and problems. Consequently, they increase the perception among immigrants that they are not being welcomed in a host society. On the contrary, when political elites reach a consensus on a welcoming stance, controversy signals agreement and consensus so that it does not deter immigrants' psychological integration. From these assumptions, I deduce the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis H8 *Political controversy hinders the psychological integration of immigrants when major political parties are divided over the issue of immigration.*

Hypothesis H9 *Political controversy enhances the psychological integration of immigrants when major political parties share a similar welcoming stance on the issue of immigration.*

Chapter 5

Study 1

The first part of the empirical analysis aims to elaborate on the process of the public's making of controversy by focusing on the motivation to participate in online public discussion. I introduce a novel framework, 'emotional synchrony distribution.' This framework subsumes several communication theories, emotional synchrony (Rimé, 2009), the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1993), and the consensus paradox (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014) to predict the increase and decrease of public debates. Based on those works, I argue that the different levels of emotional synchrony–feeling safe to express emotions–can explain the dynamic fluctuations of online public discussion. In the framework, I categorize the online public discussion into three categories: agreement, polarization, and diversity (with agreement and polarization).

The premise of an agreement is emotional synchrony and active social sharing of emotions (Rimé, 2009). It indicates a state in which one emotion is dominant, i.e., people share similar reactions to the issue so that people feel safe to share their opinions and thus participate actively in the political discussion. From that, I deduce hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 *Emotional agreement is associated with heightened political discussion.*

However, the continuation of agreement can stall the discussion because a feeling of having consensus has the potential to impede learning, hinder contemplation, and instill a fear of divergence (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014). From that, I set hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 *Continuation of emotional agreement is associated with a decrease in political discussion.*

Polarization is a state with two agreements (two emotional synchronies) but with different directions. Since there are two strong emotional effervescence, it is expected to boost further discussions.

Hypothesis 3 *Emotional polarization is associated with heightened political discussion.*

In the meantime, there could be people without strong emotional engagement. When their number is substantial, I categorize it as 'diversity.' Yet, when there is a coexistence of people with neutral emotion and one strong emotional effervescence, I categorize it as 'diversity with agreement.' Since people with strong emotional effervescence are highly active in the discussion, I deduce hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4 *Emotional diversity with agreement is associated with heightened political discussion.*

On the contrary, when an individual is not deeply engaged with the issue, yet her surroundings are polarized, she might feel uncomfortable expressing her opinion due to the fear of isolation, as the spiral of silence theory posits (Noelle-Neumann, 1993).

Hypothesis 5 *Emotional diversity with polarization is associated with a decrease in political discussion.*

I chose the immigration issue in the UK between January 2017 and August 2019 because of the prominent political event related to the issue (Brexit) and the controversies surrounding it. I employ the social media data provided by the cooperation between Facebook and Social Science One. The dataset comprises URLs that are shared more than 100 times on Facebook. In order to identify URLs related to the immigration issue, first, I use the keyword batch to sort out URLs containing the keywords and apply the Distilroberta-base model (Sanh et al., 2019) to ascertain the actual relevance of the identified URLs to the subject of immigration. I measure the public discussion with the number of comments and shares. Emotional synchrony distribution is calculated with the emotional reaction buttons. Previous works often measured public emotions with content analysis (e.g., sentiment analysis), yet content analysis has a limitation in that it can only reflect the people who are highly emotionally engaged, so it can overlook people who are less invested, thus hesitant to express direct emotions directly. Instead, I use a passive form of participation, emotional reaction buttons, and its distribution to include people without strong emotional engagement. Emotional synchrony distribu-

tion is measured following the work by Badami et al. (2017), which detected polarization in movie ratings by the distribution of it. Then, each emotional synchrony distribution predicts public discussion using the standard linear regression analysis to test hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5. I performed the analysis with clustered standard error to account for the possible correlation between the same URLs. I test hypothesis 2 by tracking each category's changes in the public discussion.

The findings support hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and do not support hypotheses 4 and 5. Both agreement and polarization are associated with heightened political discussion (hypotheses 1 and 3 are supported), and the continuation of agreement is associated with a decrease in political discussion (hypothesis 2 is supported). Diversity with agreement is associated with the decreases in political discussion and diversity with polarization is not associated with political discussion (but hypothesis 5 increases political discussion when the dependent variable is shares).

I performed several robustness checks to address the possible correlation between URLs with three approaches. The first approach conducts a multilevel analysis to account for the same URLs being repeated multiple times. The second approach performs a standard linear regression with the frequency of occurrence in the dataset as a control, and the last attempt performs a standard linear regression only in the first months, in which a URL has reached the threshold of being shared more than 100 times. They generally yielded the same results with the main analysis.

5.1 Data

I used the Facebook privacy-protected full URLs data set (Messing et al., 2020). The dataset of 68 million URLs was made available for researchers by the cooperation between Facebook and Social Science One. The dataset includes URLs that have been shared (as an original post or reshare) more than 100 times since January 2017 with a public or "share to friends" privacy setting. The data provides basic information about URLs (e.g., title) and user engagement metrics for each URL (e.g., the number of likes) at an aggregated level. The engagement was aggregated by age and gender[1]. Data providers added noises to aggregated user metrics to prevent the tracking of a single user's each action as well as actions at an aggregated level.

---

[1]Age is grouped in 7 categories: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+, NULL. Gender is grouped into three categories: male, female, and other. They are calculated based on users' profiles.

I limited my analysis to the period between January 2017 and August 2019 as Facebook stopped collecting original URLs from August 2019. In the meantime, the identification of URLs reaching the threshold of 100 times was performed at a URL level, not at a Facebook post level, so that only the first time a URL was shared on Facebook was accessible. Also, the first month a URL reached the threshold does not always correspond to the first time a URL was shared on Facebook. For instance, a URL shared for the first time in May 2015 could be popular and shared more than 100 times for the first time in August 2018. Moreover, URLs that reached the threshold at one point were always included in the subsequent months so that URLs appear in a dataset multiple times. These characteristics make time-series analysis challenging, so I employed cross-sectional data analysis, considered a URL in a distinct month as a separate URL, and aggregated user engagement at a monthly level. Table 5.1 shows that even for the same URL, emotional synchrony can change over time.

Table 5.1: Data example.

ID	New ID	First Post Time	Shares	Comments	Emotional synchrony	Year-month
ID102	ID102-2017-04	2017-01-25	70200	9000	Agreement	2017-04
ID102	ID102-2017-05	2017-01-25	100	50	Polarization	2017-05
ID102	ID102-2017-06	2017-01-25	50	-3500	Polarization	2017-06

Note. User engagement metrics (e.g., shares and comments) are aggregated as the sum of their values within a given month (year-month). New ID is created to distinguish occurrence of same URLs in multiple months.

I identified the immigration-related URLs with computer-assisted text analysis. First, I used keywords to identify URLs that include keywords in their titles or blurbs. The first batch of keywords was developed based

on the works of previous researchers (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Czymara & Dochow, 2018). The batch of keywords was then expanded by the software R's package rKeywords (Palicki, 2022)[2]. With the expanded keywords (Appendix A.1), I identified 68,135 original URLs.

However, the keyword method has a limitation in that it cannot take into account the contextual differences and can include URLs irrelevant to immigration (e.g., 'visa' credit card, server 'migration'). I further performed the Distilroberta-base model (Sanh et al., 2019) to identify the URLs un-related to immigration and delete them from my data. The Distilroberta-base model is a distilled version of Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT), a transformative language model developed by Google, which significantly enhanced natural language processing (NLP) by introducing bidirectional training for Transformers (Devlin et al., 2018). For fine-tuning, two student assistants and I manually coded whether URLs were immigration-related or not with the randomly extracted 1,990 URLs. We achieved an agreement rate of 83%. When there was a disagreement, it was coded again following the majority rule. With a manually coded sample, I fine-tuned the model and classified the rest of the data (accuracy: 95.55%). At last, the original 33,458 URLs from 2,135 domains dealing with immigration were acquired. As mentioned above, since URLs reappear in the data several times in subsequent months, my final data comprises 540,338 rows of immigration-related URLs.

5.2 Operationalization

I measured the **public discussion** by counting the number of comments and shares[3]. Commenting and sharing are some of the most common forms of participation in online discussion. However, I separated comments and shares because of the following characteristics.

On social media, individuals mainly participate in the discussion not by posting their own stories but rather by reacting to somebody else's posts. Common reactions are 'comments' and 'shares,' also called click speech (Pang et al., 2016). Yet, reacting through commenting on a post requires cognitive efforts and time much more than sharing (Jost et al., 2020). Given that,

---

[2]The package rKeywords is a tool developed to enhance keywords. When a user provides a batch of keywords and a sample text related to the topic of interest, it expands keywords by incorporating domain-relevant keywords obtained from a sample text. I employed useNews data (Haim & Puschmann, 2020) as the sample text.

[3]I did not employ 'likes' as it could connote exclusively positive reactions to the post (Park & Kaye, 2021).

I regard commenting as an active forms of participation and sharing as a passive forms of participation. On average, one URL receives 36.66 active forms of participation, i.e., comments ($SD = 411.25$), and 39.18 passive forms of participation, i.e., shares ($SD = 534.6$).

I measured the **emotional synchrony distribution** using the method inspired by Badami et al. (2017) to detect the polarization level in IMDB movie ratings. Instead of relying on sentiment or incivility in the content to measure polarization, their method focused on the 'distribution' of movie ratings. They created histograms of movie ratings and identified polarization based on the shape of the histogram. In IMDB movie ratings, users can rate movies on a scale from 0 to 10. When the audience generally dislikes or likes the movie, the histogram of movie ratings takes a J-shaped form (left-skewed or right-skewed) since movie ratings are concentrated on either 0 or 10 (Figure 5.1 (a) and (b)). In cases where half of the audience strongly dislike the movie while others like it, i.e., polarized, the movie ratings histogram exhibits a U-shape, with two peaks at opposite sides (Figure 5.1 (c)). Alternatively, if the audience reactions are mixed, the movie ratings histogram appears flat-shaped (Figure 5.1 (d)). Based on this idea, they built the histograms of movie ratings and manually determined whether the audience reactions were polarized or not. Then, they extracted several features of each movie's rating, such as the best number of Gaussian distributions or the distance between two peaks, to make a polarization detector and create a classifier.

Inspired by their method, I made the distribution of emotional reaction buttons and manually categorized their distributions into agreement, polarization, and diversity (with agreement and with polarization). Then, I created features (e.g., the difference in the number of emotional reactions) to create a classifier using Random Forest supervised machine learning.

Specifically, I used the emotional buttons: love, wow, haha, sad, angry[4]. I divided them into three groups. Love and haha were combined together because of their positive connotations. Wow was assigned to a distinct group on its own due to its ambiguous emotional valence. Sad and angry were grouped into a single category due to their negative connotations. However, I did not treat sad and angry as the same sort of emotion. They have several differences in various factors, such as influence on causal judgment (Keltner et al., 1993), cognitive appraisal dimensions (e.g., situational control, Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), or political consequences (C. Weber, 2013). I labeled each group as the first (love and haha), the second (wow), and the third group (sad and angry). The first and the third groups indicate strong emotions,

---

[4]Facebook added emotional reaction buttons, such as love, haha, wow, sad, and angry, in February 2016 (Facebook, 2021).
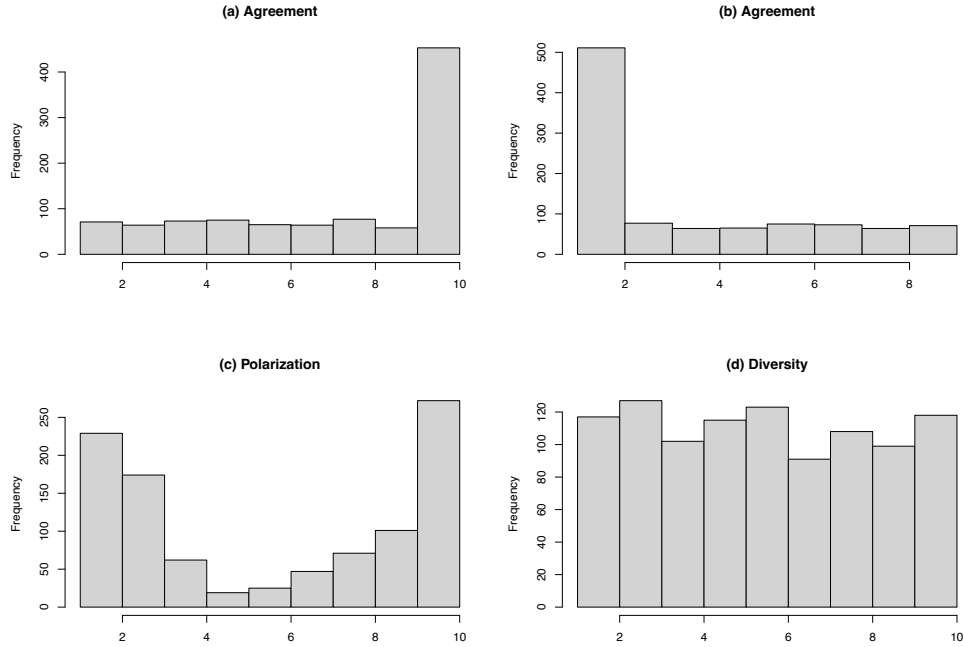
Figure 5.1: Example of movie ratings distributions based on Badami et al. (2017)'s paper

while the second group represents weak emotions – moderate, neutral, or undecided.

Following the method by Badami et al. (2017), I made bar graphs to see the distribution of each group and identified the emotional synchrony distribution visually (Figure 5.2 illustrates an example). Since the first group consists of two emotions (love and haha), their bar graphs were built with the sum of the two emotions' frequency divided by 2. When the bar graph had either the first or third group as the highest, I interpreted it as the dominance of one emotional synchrony and categorized it as 'agreement (Figure 5.2 (a), (b)).' When the first and the third group had the highest values while the second group (wow) was significantly lower than them, I regarded it as signifying two emotional synchronies with the opposite direction and labeled it 'polarization (Figure 5.2 (c), (d)).' Furthermore, when the second group exhibited a significantly high level or was similar to either one of the other two groups, it was identified as 'diversity with agreement (Figure 5.2 (e)).' Yet, when both the first and third groups were at a level similar or even at the same level as diversity, I identified it as 'diversity with polarization
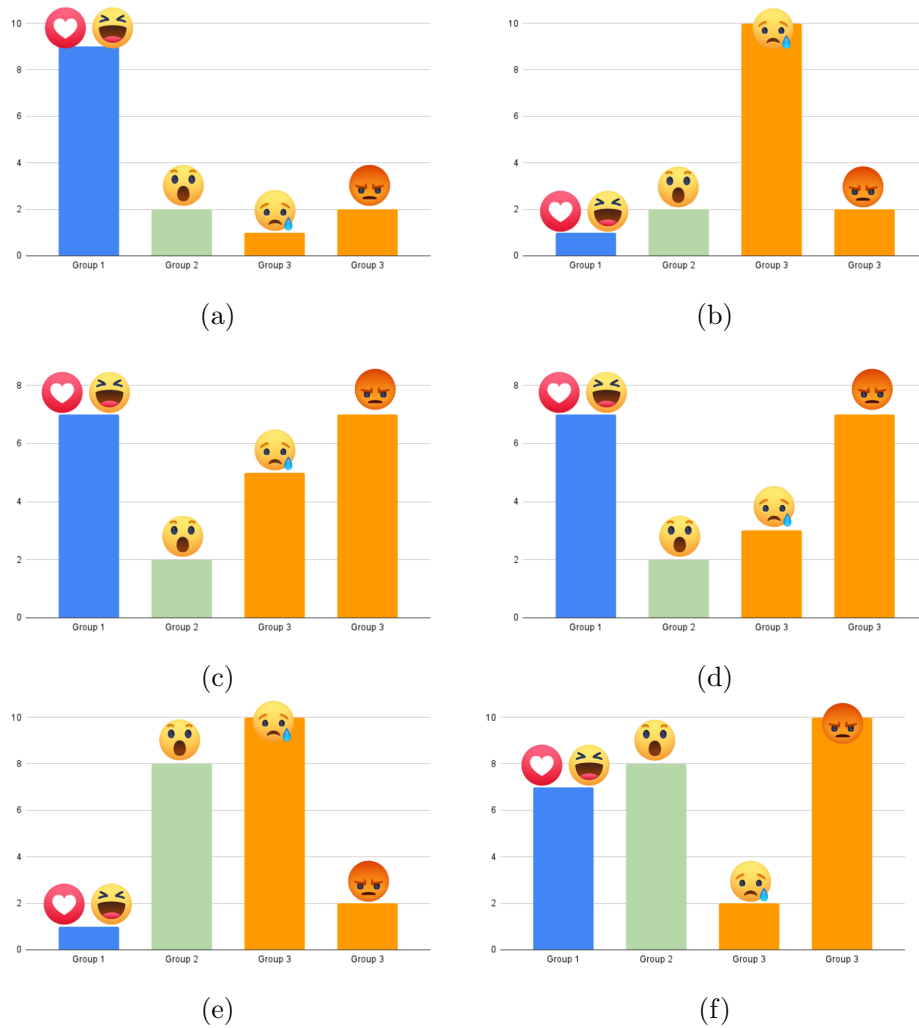
Figure 5.2: Bar graphs of emotional synchrony's distribution.

Note. (a), (b): agreement. (c), (d): polarization. (e): diversity with agreement. (f): diversity with polarization.

(Figure 5.2 (f)).' I visually analyzed 1,796 URLs. I created predictors that signal the differences in the heights between groups (Appendix A.2). Then, I employed manually identified URLs and predictors to create a Random Forest supervised classifier (Breiman, 2001). With it, I classified the remaining data (accuracy = 0.89).

5.3 Methods

The main hypotheses predict the public's participation in online discussion through different distributions of emotional synchrony. I conducted the standard linear regression in which active and passive participation in discussion (comments and likes) were employed as dependent variables separately. Predictor variables were emotional synchrony distribution (agreement, polarization, diversity with agreement, and diversity with polarization). If hypotheses hold, agreement, polarization, and diversity with agreement will have positive associations with online public discussion, but diversity with polarization won't. Standard errors were clustered to address the correlation among observations (URLs) due to repeated occurrence.

I further controlled other user report variables, the sum of unique users who report posts for containing fake news or hate speech because false news tends to be shared more and faster than true news (Vosoughi et al., 2018), and uncivil comments have the power to induce the active participation in the political discussion (Chen & Lu, 2017).

Hypothesis 2 posits that the continuation of agreement has a negative association with online public discussion. I tracked how the continuation of each distribution yields changes with visualization.

5.4 Results

First, I present the distribution of emotional synchrony over months (Figure 5.3). As previously mentioned, the same URLs appear in the dataset multiple times, so the number of URLs accumulates over the months. Diversity with polarization was most commonly observed (42%), followed by diversity with agreement (24%), polarization (21%), and agreement (14%). This observation documents that there is a substantial number of people with moderate and neutral attitudes toward immigrants and they have been underrepresented in the content analysis.
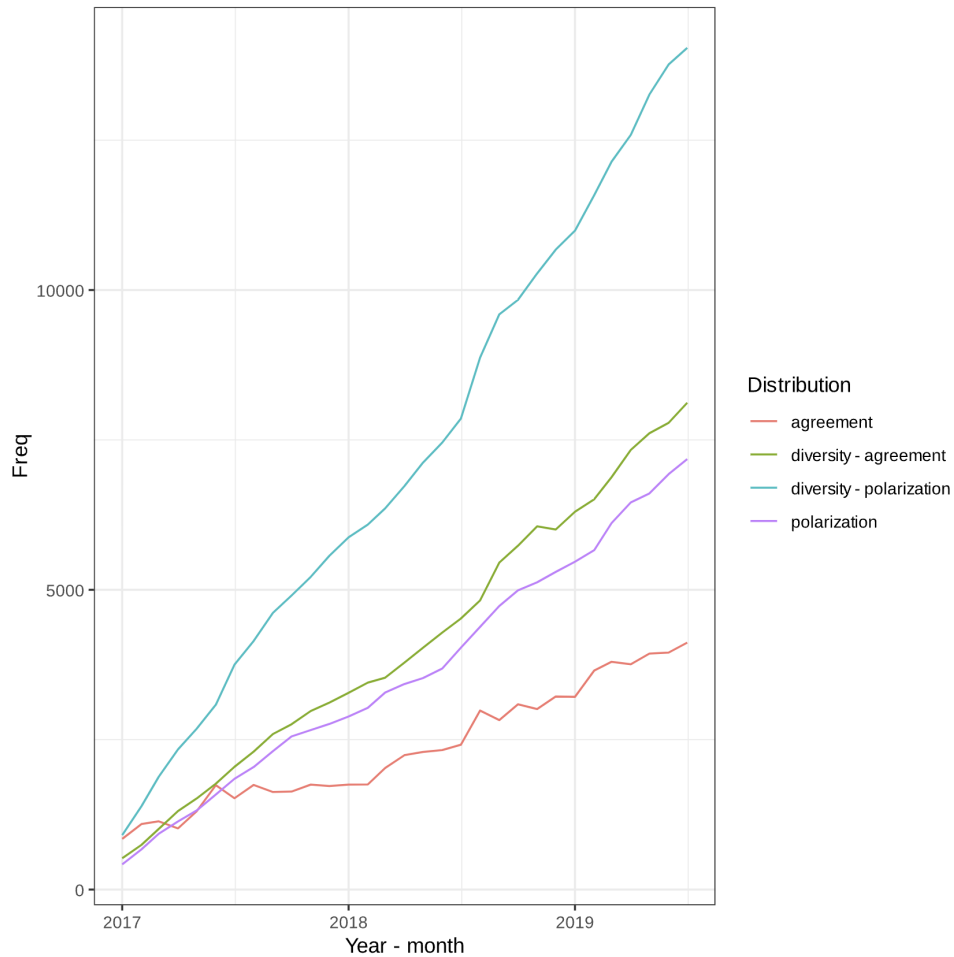
Figure 5.3: Emotional synchrony distribution over months

Then, I examined the public discussions visually (Figure 5.4) and observed two peaks around May-June 2017 and January-February 2019. The peak observed in 2017 could be attributed to the Islamist terrorist attack at the Manchester arena, while the peak in 2019 could be linked to the Brexit negotiations, a significant event marked by the most substantial parliamentary defeat experienced by a Prime Minister in modern British history.
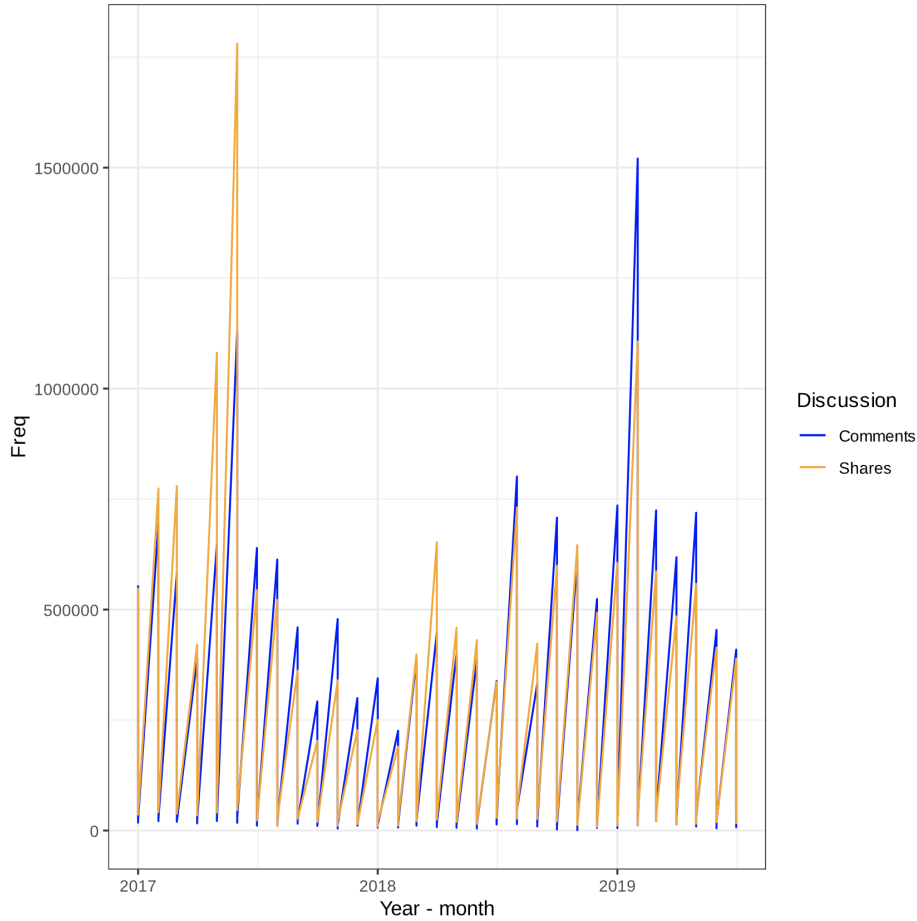
Figure 5.4: Public discussion over months

Figure 5.5 presents an example of changes in the number of comments, shares, and emotional synchrony distribution. The URL contains the text 'UK Labor leader supports the 'rights' of ISIS Jihadists to Invade Britain.' This URL was popularly shared over the years. Throughout the years, public reactions have changed dynamically. I examined the distribution of emotional reaction buttons in March 2017 and April 2017 to observe changes in emotional reactions. In March 2017, the public had a consensual reaction towards the URL; the majority of people reacted with sorry and anger. In April 2017, people got polarized. Approximately half of the public reacted positively (mainly loves) to the news, while the other half reacted negatively (sorry and anger). The URL reached agreement states twice more (December 2017 and May 2018), and both times, people showed negative emotions

consonantly (sorry and anger).
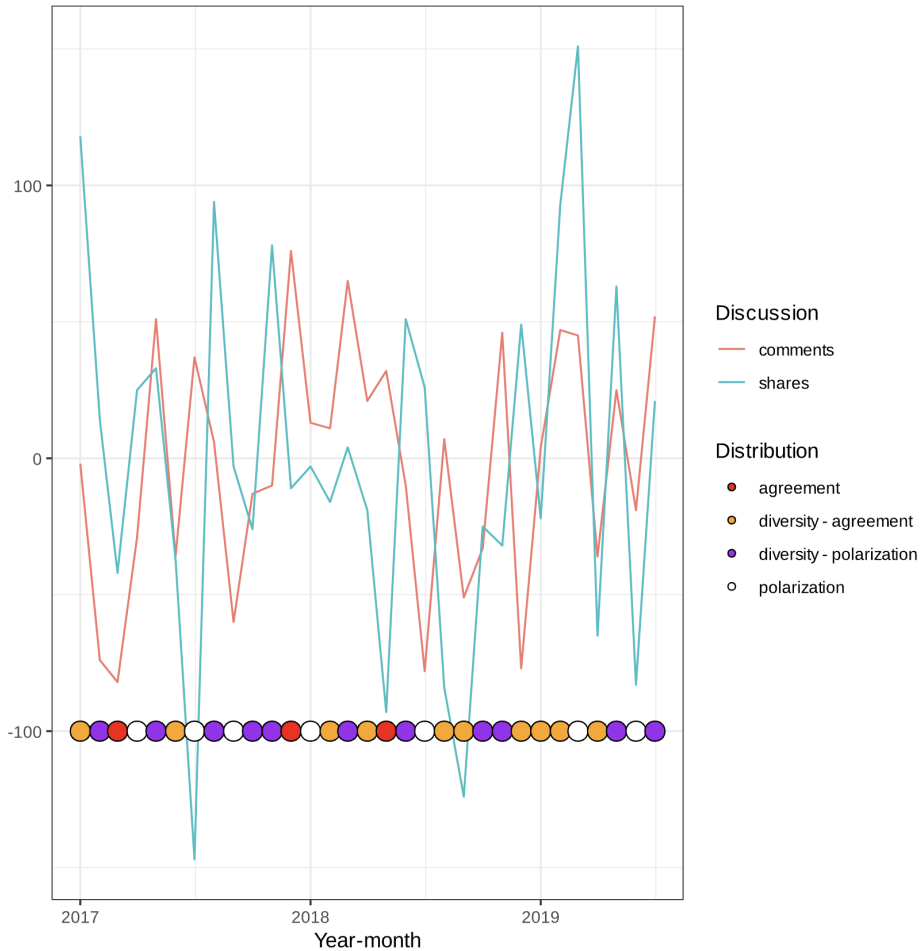
Figure 5.5: An example to show how the number of comments, shares, and emotional synchrony evolve over months. The URL title was "UK Labor leader supports the 'rights' of ISIS Jihadists to Invade Britain."

For hypothesis testing, a standard linear regression analysis with clustered standard error was conducted. It tested how each emotional synchrony distribution affects the public's participation in online political discussions. Model 1 had the active forms of participation, comments, as a dependent variable, and model 2 had the passive forms of participation, shares, as a dependent variable. Because of the variable structure (categorical variable), all hypotheses were examined in a comparative manner, using polarization as a reference point. Table 5.2 presents the results.

Hypothesis 1 posits agreement, hypothesis 3 posits polarization, and lastly, hypothesis 4 suggests diversity with agreement is associated with heightened political controversy. As expected with hypothesis 1, compared to the polarization state of emotional synchrony distribution, the agreement state was significantly and positively associated with the public's participation in online political discussion. Yet, since the result was interpreted in a comparative term, it's important to note that it does not indicate that polarization is associated with decreasing political discussions. In the meantime, contrary to hypothesis 4, diversity with agreement decreased political discussion. Hypothesis 5 set that diversity with polarization is associated with a decrease in political discussion, but the analysis revealed the opposite trends; it increased political discussion for shares and did not have any significant relationship with comments. Since diversities decreased or did not have any association with the public discussion compared to polarization, it implies that when people without strong emotional engagement increase, the political discourse might flatten out, in which case, the issue could be neglected by the media and policymakers.

Table 5.2: Standard linear regression

Dependent variable	Model 1 Comments	Model 2 Shares
Constant	4.57***	6.74***
	(0.60)	(0.35)
Emotional synchrony		
Agreement	231.42***	228.04***
(baseline = polarization)	(4.39)	(5.47)
Diversity with agreement	-2.8***	-1.71***
	(0.26)	(0.38)
Diversity with polarization	0.53	2.50
	(0.30)	(0.36)
User report: false news	0.76*	0.62***
	(0.30)	(0.12)
User report: hate speech	1.80	1.00**
	(1.03)	(0.33)
Adjusted R^2	0.04	0.02
N	530,687	530,687

Note. Clustered standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

As a robustness check for the independence of observations (URLs), I

further performed three additional analyses. First, I performed a multilevel analysis. Second, a standard linear regression was conducted, with the frequency of appearances in the dataset as a covariate. Lastly, a standard linear regression was conducted using the data that included only the first month of each URL's appearance. All three analyses yielded the same significance and direction of coefficients. The robustness check results are available in the appendix section.

Hypothesis 2 questions the effect of continuation of agreement and posits that continuation has decreasing effects (Figure 5.6). I tracked the dynamic changes in public discussion over time, along with changes in emotional synchrony distribution. I compared the cases where agreement was followed by either agreement, polarization, or diversity. Since most URLs reached their peak of the number of shares and comments in the first month they were shared, their number of shares and comments declined in the subsequent months. The analysis reveals that public discussion represented by comments and shares decreased over time, irrelevant to the emotional synchrony distribution, yet the decrease was particularly prominent when the agreement was followed by agreement compared to cases where the agreement was followed by polarization or diversity. The number of public discussions decreased by three digits when it was followed by agreement, while polarization and diversity decreased public discussions only by two digits, so hypothesis 2 is descriptively supported.

5.5   Summary

This thesis introduces the novel framework, the framework of emotional synchrony distribution, to suggest a new perspective on the making of political controversy by the public. The framework subsumes various communication theories to predict the dynamics of the public discussion. In addition, departing from prior approaches, which predominantly rely on content analysis of texts, I suggest a novel method by using emotional reactions to social media posts. I analyze the relative size of emotions and measure the distribution of them to diagnose the public's reactions to the issue.

First of all, the findings suggest that people participate in political discussions when they feel safe to express their opinions. From the result that agreement is strongly associated with political participation more than polarization (Hypothesis 1 is supported), I conclude that participation in political discussion is likely to take place in environments where one emotion is dominant. In the meantime, the test with hypothesis 2 documents that the continuation of one dominant emotion can have decreasing effects on the
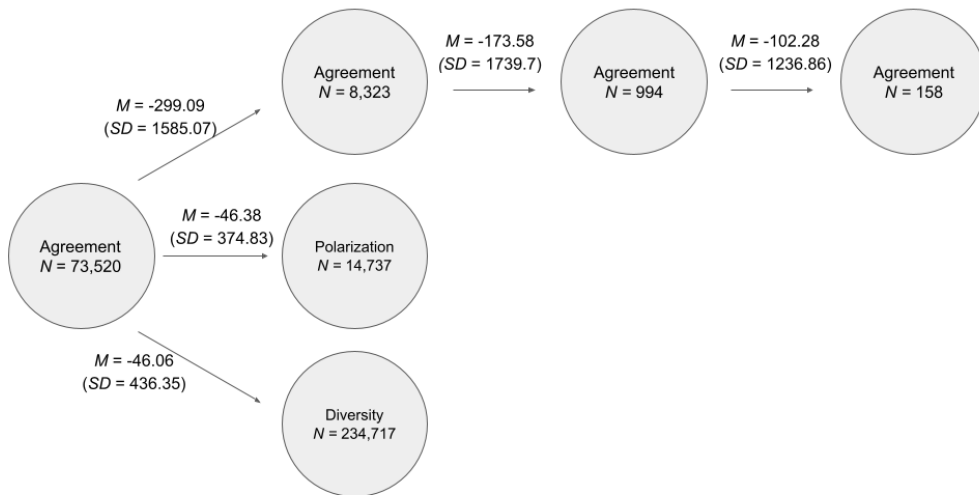
(a) Comments over time
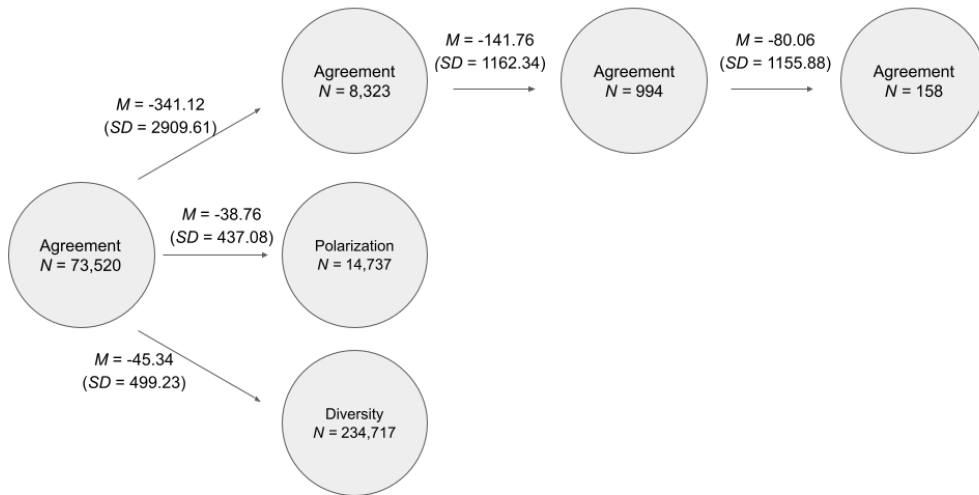
(b) Shares over time

Figure 5.6: Hypothesis 2 testing.

political discussion as the consensus paradox (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014) posits.

Because of the limitation of variable structure (categorical variable), it was not possible to observe the direct influence of polarization on the public discussion, yet hypothesis 2 testing implies that polarization has minuscule decreasing effects and also might work as a strong impetus for the discussion. This means that even when there is a substantial number of people with opposite opinions if there is a group of individuals sharing similar emotions with him/herself, the group could serve as a motivating factor for public discussion. From a different perspective, the existence of an out-group might motivate the people to defend their in-group's views.

A noteworthy finding is that people without strong emotional engagement rarely contribute to political discussion. This means that people with neutral attitudes can remain silent when they witness people with high engagement express their opinions. This happens regardless of whether the public is polarized or has consensual attitudes towards the issue (Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 are not supported). While this thesis can not directly test whether these silencing effects originate from the feeling of being a minority (i.e., the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1993)), it suggests that we should aim to find a measure to reflect people with moderate attitudes' views.

The results support the tenability of the 'emotional synchrony distribution' framework and new methods for its measurement. The results provide a new perspective on the public's motivation to participate in political discussion. It also proves that analyzing the relative size of emotions, i.e., their distribution, can be an effective and time-efficient method substituting content analysis.

Not only does this chapter contribute to the study of political communication by introducing a new perspective for interpreting political controversy, but it also further suggests a revisit to the implication of polarization in democracy. In this thesis, agreement, polarization, and diversity are representations of the relative distribution of emotions, so normative judgments of them are absent. The analyses demonstrate that the continuation of agreement could stall the development of further discussion, while polarization might help rational discourse through active discussions, suggesting a revisit to agreement and polarization in society. However, in deliberative democracy, agreement has often been treated as a goal (e.g., Habermas, 1991) and polarization as a hindrance. The implications of the results will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion chapter.

Chapter 6

Study 2-3

This chapter is dedicated to the empirical testing of Studies 2 and 3. Both Studies 2 and 3 examine the heterogeneous effects of political controversy on public perceptions contingent upon political contexts. Study 2 focuses on the influence of political controversy on natives' preferences and study 3 delves into immigrant integration. Both studies posit that the influence of political controversy is heterogeneous depending on the level of consensus among political elites, whether they are polarized or not over the issue.

Study 2 probes the influence of political controversy on natives' preferences for immigrants. It presumes that when political elites are polarized over the immigrant issue and set it as a central point of political rivalry, political controversy signals conflicts. Consequently, political controversy increases the perceived importance of the issue, i.e., public issue salience, as well as exacerbates hostility towards immigrants among natives. On the other hand, when political elites agree on the issue and hold a consensual positive political stance, political controversy heightens public issue salience yet signals positive messages, improving preferences for immigrants among natives.

Hypothesis 6 *When major political parties are divided over the issue of immigration, political controversy makes natives think immigration is important, yet they are less inclined to prefer immigration.*

Hypothesis 7 *When major political parties share a similar welcoming stance on the issue of immigration, political controversy makes natives think immigration is important and more inclined to prefer immigration.*

Furthermore, I endeavor to disentangle the effects of political elite cues from those of political controversy. If political elite cues are the main de-

terminant of preferences for immigrants, attitudes towards immigrants will deteriorate only among people who support the political parties advocating restrictive stances on immigrants.

Research Question 1. Does political controversy change preferences because it represents conflicts and disagreement? Or is it because people adjust their preferences to align with their parties?

Study 3 examines the effects of political controversy on immigrants' psychological integration. Based on the abovementioned assumption that the level of consensus among political elites and the signal of conflicts determine the effects of political controversy, the hypotheses posit that in a divided country, political controversy impedes immigrants' psychological integration, whereas, in a consensual country, it enhances immigrants' psychological integration.

Hypothesis 8 *Political controversy hinders the psychological integration of immigrants when major political parties are divided over the issue of immigration.*

Hypothesis 9 *Political controversy enhances the psychological integration of immigrants when major political parties share a similar welcoming stance on the issue of immigration.*

This thesis conducts a comparative analysis between the UK and Germany. I choose the UK as a country in which political elites are polarized and Germany as a country that has a consensus among political elites. The number of newspaper articles covering the immigrant issue is chosen as a proxy for political controversy. To measure individual-level perceptions, individual-level longitudinal data, the British Election Study (BES) (Fieldhouse et al., 2020) and the Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences' GESIS panel data (GESIS, 2021) are employed. In Study 2, preferences for immigrants are represented by anti-immigrant attitudes and in Study 3, immigrants' psychological integration is proxied by national identity.

Results reveal that in Study 2, hypothesis 6 is supported and hypothesis 7 is partially supported. When political elites are polarized over the immigrant issue, political controversy not only increases the perceived importance of the matter, i.e., its salience, but also significantly worsens immigration attitudes among natives. On the contrary, when political elites are not divided over the issue, political controversy merely heightens public issue salience without exerting a significant influence on preferences. Also, analyses for re-

search question 1 provide additional evidence for the significant influence of political controversy. Political controversy elicited by the conflicts between political parties significantly heightens anti-immigrant attitudes irrelevant to the party affiliation of individuals. It suggests that political elites' consensus levels are more deterministic in preferences for immigrants than political elite cues.

In Study 3, political controversy in a divided political context does not exert any significant influence on perceptions of immigrants. Thus, hypothesis 8 is not supported. Conversely, in a consensual political environment, it enhances immigrants' psychological integration. Hypothesis 9 is supported. The implications for political elites and future research on political controversy and perceptions are discussed in Chapter 7.

6.1 Data

For Studies 2 and 3, the influence of political controversy on the perception of natives and immigrants has been investigated, respectively. Specifically, in Study 2, perception indicates natives' preferences for immigrants, and in Study 3, it refers to immigrants' psychological integration. I compared the UK and Germany because of the similarities in their immigration histories, yet the different paths in political elites' stances on the immigration issue. I employed media article data as a measure of political controversy and individual-level longitudinal survey data for the perception of natives and immigrants. For the UK, I used the British Election Study (BES) (Fieldhouse et al., 2020), and for Germany, the Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences' GESIS panel data (GESIS, 2021).

Both Studies 2 and 3 require the measure of political controversy. Since the mass media is a major measure of acknowledging political controversy for the public, I employed the volume of newspaper articles to represent political controversy. I used both quality paper and tabloid paper across left and right-leaning ideologies to reflect the dynamic media environment, following the work by Van Klingeren et al. (2015). As for the quality papers, for the UK, The Times, including Sunday Times (the center-right), and The Guardian (the center-left) were chosen, and for Germany, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) (the center-right) and Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) (the center-left) were chosen. The Sun and BILD were employed for tabloids, respectively. In order to reflect the political controversy's dynamic fluctuations, I matched the media article data's published date to the individual's interview date. Taking into account variable availability, I restricted the timeframe to February 2014 to June 2017 for Study 2 and March 2019 for

Study 3 in the UK. As for Germany, I selected the period from February 2019 to August 2019 for Study 2 and from April 2017 to June 2017 for Study 3.

I downloaded the immigration-related articles via LexisNexis, Factiva, and FAZ's website (FAZ.net) using keywords. I developed the keywords batch based on the previous studies that studied the influence of controversies on immigration attitudes (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Czymara & Dochow, 2018) to avoid being subjective in terms of choosing keywords. The keywords batch covers a wide range of topics related to immigrants, such as sham marriages and terrorist attacks, to reflect the media's characteristics as an environment (Appendix A.4). In the keywords batch, I did not include the terms that indicate the country such as "the United Kingdom" or "Germany" to avoid limiting the articles to domestic events. In the globalized world, public opinion and perceptions are influenced by events abroad as well (Ferrín et al., 2020; Legewie, 2013; Schüller, 2016). For instance, September 11 attacks in the United States have increased Germans' negative attitudes towards immigration (Schüller, 2016).

I downloaded articles when they included my keywords in their headlines because headlines are the most prominent informative feature of newspaper articles. Most of the articles are written in an inverted pyramid way, which means that the core messages and information situate themselves at the top of the articles, and supporting information follows them (Kiousis, 2004). Additionally, since most people are entry-point readers and their reading is primarily confined to headlines (Holsanova et al., 2006), headlines significantly influence how individuals retain information from articles (Ecker et al., 2014).

As a first step, I downloaded the articles that included the keywords in their headlines, and as a second step, I manually deleted the articles which are not related to the issue of immigration (e.g., the migration of the internet server) with two student assistants. At last, for Study 2, I obtained 5,264 articles for the UK and 1,086 articles for Germany. For Study 3, 268 articles for the UK and 642 articles for Germany were obtained. The substantial differences in the number of related articles are due to the different time periods. For Study 2, I used 9 waves from BES but used only 3 waves from GESIS panel because of the limitation in survey data items. Moreover, I used one wave for Study 3 for both the UK and Germany, but the UK's one wave was performed only for one month (March 2019), and Germany's one wave was fielded for three months.

Individual natives' and immigrants' perceptions were studied by using individual-level survey data. For the UK, I used the BES internet panel data. BES panel survey began in February 2014 with 30,000 participants

from England, Scotland, and Wales [1] every wave. The survey work has been conducted three times a year. Among them, I used 9 waves for Study 2 which were conducted between February 2014 and June 2017 as they included the items related to my research questions: waves 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13[2]. For Study 3, I used wave 15 which was conducted in March 2019.

For Germany, I used GESIS panel data. GESIS panel data is a probability-based mixed-mode panel that started in February 2014 with 4,900 panelists. It collects data every three months and has approximately 5,200 panelists (April 2023). Among them, I used wave ga, gb, and gc for Study 2 and eb for Study 3 based on the survey item availability. Wave ga-gc were fielded in 2019 and eb in 2017[3]. GESIS panel respondents could choose to participate either online or offline. Respondents who participated offline via mail were excluded from the analysis since their exact participation date and time were not available.

6.2   Operationalization

First of all, in order to distinguish the influence of political controversy on natives and immigrants, operationalization of migration status was necessary. I measured **migration status** by ethnicity for the UK data and the country of their parents' origin for Germany. In the UK data, participants who answered that their ethnicity is 'white British' were categorized as natives and other ethnicities (e.g., 'white and Asian,' 'any other white background,' 'Black') as the people with a migrant background. 90% of participants were categorized as natives, and the remaining 10% were immigrants. Among German participants in the GESIS panel, respondents whose parents were both born in Germany were categorized as natives, and when at least one of the parents was born outside of Germany, they were labeled as immigrants. Between 76%-83% of participants were natives [4] in the sample. Study 2 data includes only natives, and Study 3 data includes only immigrants in its analyses.

After figuring out the migration status, I moved on to operationalize

---

[1]North Ireland residents are not included in the data because of its political system, which is different from that of other regions.

[2]The fieldwork periods are as follows; February-March 2014 for wave 1, May-June 2014 for wave 2, September-October for wave 3, March 2015 for wave 4, April-May 2016 for wave 7, May-June 2017 for wave 8, November-December 2016 for wave 10, April-May 2017 for wave 11, June 2017 for wave 13.

[3]Wave ga was conducted from February to April 2019, gb was from April to June 2019, and gc was from June to August 2019. Wave eb was conducted between April and June.

[4]The percentage of natives was the highest in the wave eb, with 85%.

the main independent variable for both Studies 2 and 3, political contro-
versy. **The political controversy** was operationalized by the number of
immigrant-related articles following the previous work on media salience by
Kiousis (2004). The number of published news articles was aggregated by 7
days and was matched to the individual survey interview date. This means
that the survey interview date and the last day of aggregated newspaper
articles were matched. Following the findings of Roberts et al. (2002), who
found that a 7-day time lag between media exposure and survey administra-
tion resulted in stronger agenda-setting effects than 1-6 days, I chose to use
a 7-day lag for this Study.

Study 2 hypothesizes that political controversy has a significant influ-
ence not only on public issue salience but also on preferences for immigrants
(hypothesis 6, 7). If political elites are divided over the issue, political con-
troversy will deteriorate immigration attitudes (hypothesis 6). If political
elites agree to hold a consensual stance, political controversy will improve
immigration attitudes (hypothesis 7). In order to do hypothesis testing, I
needed to measure my main dependent variables, **public issue salience**
and **public preferences**. Following previous works on public issue salience
(Jennings & Wlezien, 2011, 2015; Wlezien, 2005), I measured public issue
salience with the items asking the level of perceived importance of the im-
migration issue. In the UK data, the item asked what the most important
issue facing the country is[5]. When the respondents answered that it was
immigration or racial tension, they were given 1, and the rest of the answers
were given 0 to make a binary item (20% of respondents answered that the
immigration issue was the most important issue). For Germany, the item
asked the respondents to rate the level of importance: "How important do
you think immigration is for Germany?[6]"(10 = very important, 0 = Not
important at all, $M = 7.35$, $SD = 2.29$).

The level of public preference for immigrants was measured by the mea-
sure of anti-immigrant attitudes, which asked participants to rate the per-
ceived impact of immigrants on the country. In the UK data, I used the items
"Do you think immigration is good or bad for Britain's economy?" and "Do
you think that immigration undermines or enriches Britain's cultural life?
(7 = Bad for economy/cultural life, 1 = Good for economy/cultural life)."

---

[5]Most important *issue* and *problem* indicates the same concept (Jennings & Wlezien,
2011).

[6]The exact wording was as follows: Politik und Gesellschaft stehen heutzutage vor ver-
schiedenen Herausforderungen, die nicht allen Menschen gleich wichtig sind. Wie wichtig
ist Ihrer Meinung nach das Thema Einwanderung für Deutschland? (Politics and society
today face various challenges that are not equally important to all people. How important
do you think immigration is for Germany?)

The mean of two items was used for public preferences ($M = 4.27$, $SD =1$ .84). For Germany, the item asked, "immigration makes Germany a better or worse place to live[7] (10 = worse, 0 = better) ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 2.43$)."

The analysis controlled for **party preferences** with the UK data to disentangle the effects of political contestation from elite cues (research question 1). I used only the UK data for research question 1 because, in Germany, both conservative and liberal parties supported the inclusive immigration policy that there were no divided elite competition cues. I used the voting decision for the general elections in 2010 (wave 1) and 2017 (wave 13)[8]. I created a categorical variable to account for party affiliations. The people who voted for the Conservative Party and Labour Party were given categories, having the rest of the respondents as a baseline.

Study 3 hypothesizes that political controversy hinders immigrant integration if political elites lack a consensus (hypothesis 8). On the contrary, if they hold a consensual welcoming stance, political controversy helps immigrant integration (hypothesis 9). Immigrant integration was represented by national identity, so in Study 3, immigrants' **national identity** was the main dependent variable. I measured the affective component of national identity, the extent to which individuals feel pride in being a member of society (Phinney, 1992). The questions were "I feel proud to be British" for the UK (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree, Immigrants' $M = 3.12$, SD =1.21, Natives' $M = 3.45$, SD =1.16) and "I am proud to be a German." and "To be a German is an important part of my personality." for Germany[9] (4 = agree, 1 = disagree, Immigrants' $M = 2.89$, SD =0.83, Natives' $M =$ 2.95, SD =0.80).

For Study 2, I performed the longitudinal data analyses so only time-varying variables were controlled since time-constant variables were automatically controlled within the individual levels. I controlled political interest, interest in the general election, subjective assessments of household finances, subjective assessments of the country's economic situation, political ideology, news information sources (TV, newspaper, radio, and the internet), and household income for the UK. For Germany, I controlled satisfaction with the federal government and general satisfaction with the EU.

For Study 3, only cross-sectional data analysis was performed so that basic demographics were also included in the analysis. The control variables for the UK were political interest, left-right ideology, household income, mar-

---

[7]The exact wording was: Wird Deutschland durch Einwanderer zu einem schlechteren oder besseren Ort zum Leben?

[8]The waves were chosen based on variable availability.

[9]"Ich bin stolz, Deutscher zu sein." and "Deutsch zu sein macht einen bedeutenden Teil meiner Persönlichkeit aus."

ried status (married or not), religion, work status (employed or unemployed), gender (female or male), news information sources (TV, newspaper, radio, and the internet). They were measured at the wave in which national identity was measured. For Germany, control variables were political interest, frequency of following news about political events, left-right ideology, frequency of using social media (Facebook and Twitter), age at the point of survey participation, education level, and gender (female or male).

6.3 Methods

For Study 2 hypothesis testing, longitudinal analyses were performed. Since the UK's public issue salience variable was a binary variable (the most important problem the UK is facing is immigration or not), I performed a Conditional Maximum Likelihood (CML) (Andreß et al., 2013). The rest of the dependent variables were continuous variables so I employed fixed effects for the rest of the models. For research question 1, I performed a cross-sectional data analysis, standard linear regression for each wave, wave 1 and wave 13. In order to see whether the force that changes the preferences is due to the political elite's cues or political controversy, I employed an interaction term between political controversy and party affiliation. In the case of Study 3 (hypothesis 8, 9), I conducted the standard linear regression for both hypotheses. All analyses were weighted, following the survey data provider's suggestion.

6.4 Results: Study 2

Study 2 argues that political controversy increases public issue salience in general yet has heterogeneous effects on immigration attitudes based on political elites' consensus level. Before presenting the results for Study 2, I examined the trends of public issue salience and preferences for each country. First, I checked the heterogeneity of public issue salience and preferences over time using graphs. In the UK (figure 6.1), where major political elites are divided over the issue of immigration, there were dynamic changes during nine waves. Political controversy and public issue salience reached their peaks around wave 8 (2016) because of the referendum in which a decision to remain or to leave the European Union was made. Public preferences, which are proxied by anti-immigrant attitudes, followed similar trends with public issue salience. Public issue salience and anti-immigrant attitudes declined after the referendum. Schwartz et al. (2021) made the same observation; the

relief of tensions after the decision could explain the decline in anti-immigrant attitudes.
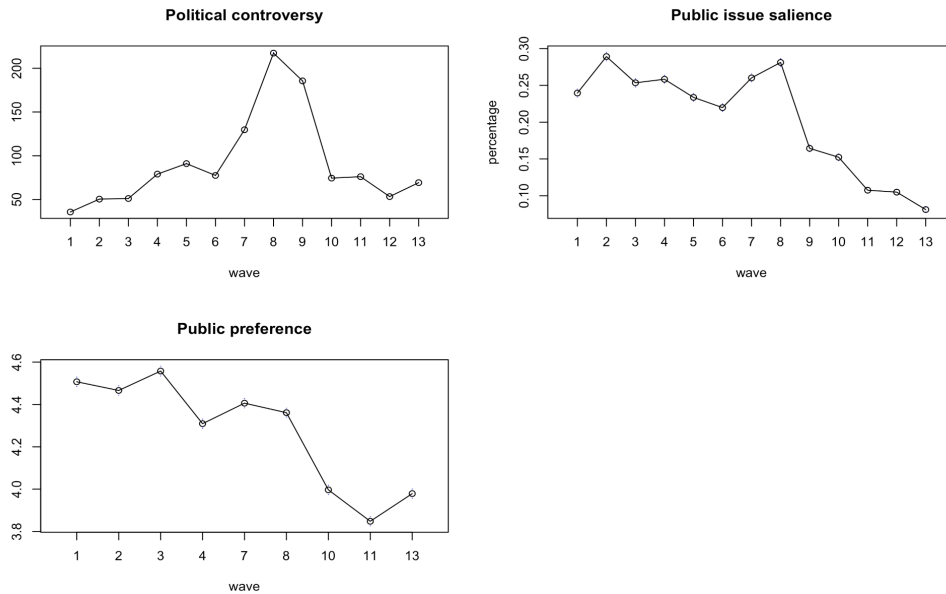
Figure 6.1: Heterogeneity across years in the UK

Figure 6.2 presents the heterogeneity in Germany, the case in which political elites agree on a welcoming stance towards immigrants. Since there were only three waves, the changes were not evident, but it showed that political controversy and public issue salience both consistently declined. Still, public issue salience was consistently high over three waves (above 7). This could be because of the lack of political events which have the potential to relieve tensions. Certainly, immigration has been named the most important issue among Germans for many years (European Commission, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). Public preference has been relatively stable. In short, according to descriptive analyses, political controversy and public issue salience are closely related, while the relationship between political controversy and public preference is uncertain.
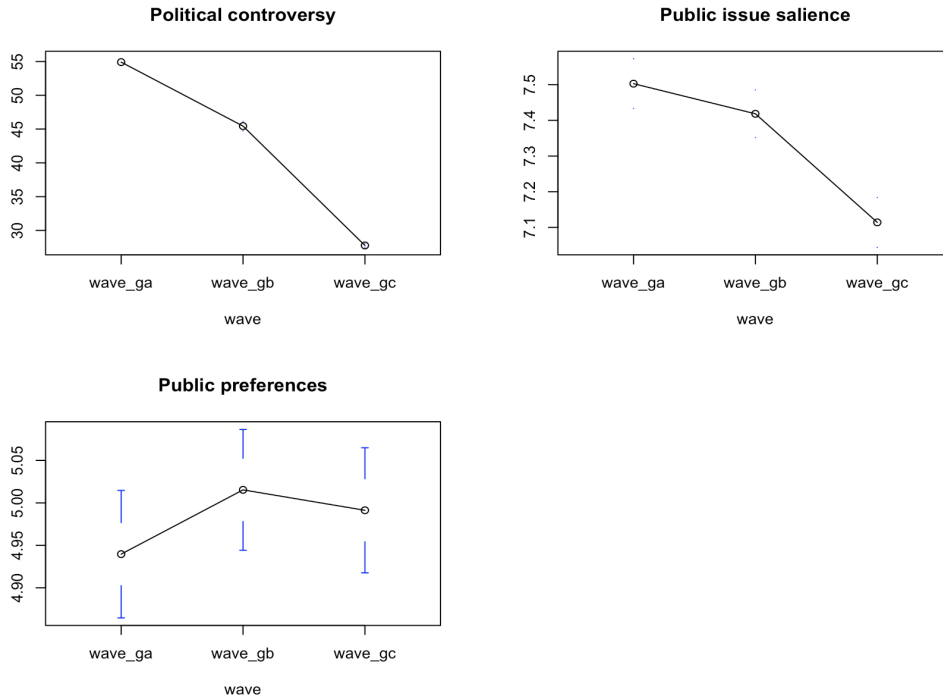
Figure 6.2: Heterogeneity across years in Germany

Note. Wage ga: Feburary-April 2019, wave gb: April-June 2019, wave gc: June-August 2019

I moved on to hypothesis testing after the descriptive analysis. If hypothesis 6 holds, political controversy due to the lack of consensus will raise the public issue salience while making the public prefer immigration less. Table 6.1 presents the results of the analyses, where political controversy was the main predictor and public issue salience was the dependent variable. Consistent with previous studies, political controversy heightened the salience of the immigration issue among the public. Table 6.2 shows the hypothesis testing for the relationship between political controversy and public preferences. Political controversy had a significant influence on public preference, leading to heightened anti-immigrant attitudes. Based on the analysis, it can be inferred that when the issue of immigration is a focal point of political competition that major political elites are divided over the issue, public issue salience increases as well, and public attitudes towards immigrants shift in a direction that is more negative towards immigrants. In short, hypothesis 6 was supported.

Table 6.1: Study 2: Hypothesis 6 testing.

	OR public issue salience	95% CI
Political controversy	1.043***	[1.037, 1.05]
UK economic concerns	2.325***	[2.087, 2.589]
Interest in election	0.76**	[0.638, 0.896]
Household income	0.964	[0.901, 1.031]
Information source: Internet	0.953	[0.865, 1.048]
Information source: Newspaper	1.077	[0.968, 1.198]
Information source: Radio	1.044	[0.928, 1.175]
Information source: TV	1.00	[0.872, 1.053]
Political ideology (Left = 0, Right = 10)	1.048	[1.000, 1.122]
Political interest	1.132**	[1.051, 1.220]
Log-likelihood	-1031.835	
Total observations	365,308	

Note 1: The dependent variable is in a binary form (An answer to the question "What is the most important problem the country is facing?". Immigration=1, Others=0).

Note 2: *p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

I proceeded to test hypothesis 7. Table 6.3 presents the test of hypothesis 7, which posits that the influence of political controversy in a generally welcoming environment for immigrants increases issue importance awareness and increases preferences for immigrants. However, in my analysis, political controversy had a significant influence only on public issue salience and did not have an influence on preference. Hypothesis 7 is partially supported.

While hypothesis 6 and hypothesis 7 were (partially) supported, the observed changes in preferences could be due to the alignment with elite cues, not the political controversy's signaling of conflicts. In order to probe this question, I examined the influence of political controversy based on party affiliation with the UK data. If elite cues are the primary driver of changes in preferences, the Conservative Party supporters and the Labour Party supporters will exhibit distinct trends because they adopted different stances

Table 6.2: Study 2: Hypothesis 6 testing.

	Dependent variable Anti-immigrant attitudes
Political controversy	0.005***
	(0.001)
UK economic concerns	0.159***
	(0.011)
Interest in election	-0.049*
	(0.022)
Household income	-0.002
	(0.008)
Political ideology	0.043***
(Left = 0, Right = 10)	(0.009)
Political interest	-0.028**
	(0.010)
Information source:	-0.004
Internet	(0.012)
Information source:	0.001
Newspaper	(0.013)
Information source:	-0.009
Radio	(0.014)
Information source:	-0.014
TV	(0.012)
Number of individuals	34,563
Total observations	365,308
R2	0.062
Adjusted R2	-3.154
F Statistic	51.871*** (df = 10; 7802)

Note 1: Public preference is proxied by anti-immigrant attitudes (higher the number, higher the respondents answered immigration is bad for economy/cultural life).

Note 2: *p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

Table 6.3: Study 2: Hypothesis 7 testing.

	Dependent variable	
	Public issue salience	Anti-immigrant attitudes
	(1)	(2)
Political controversy	0.007***	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Satisfaction with the federal government	0.023	-0.090***
	(0.018)	(0.013)
General EU satisfaction	0.063***	-0.063***
	(0.019)	(0.013)
Observations	9,130	9,098
R2	0.012	0.018
Adjusted R2	-0.738	-0.729
F Statistic	7.465*** (df = 6; 3824)	11.618*** (df = 6; 3809)

Note : Public preference is proxied by anti-immigrant attitudes (higher the number, higher the respondents answered immigration makes Germany a worse place to live.

Note: *p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

83

towards immigrants. Conservative Party supporters will perceive immigration as a problematic and negative issue, whereas Labour Party supporters will reinforce their positive attitudes towards immigrants. On the other hand, if the signal of conflicts from political controversy is the primary driver of changes, both Conservative and Labour Party supporters will exhibit the same direction of changes, becoming more hostile towards immigrants.

Table 6.4 provides evidence for the significant influence of political controversy, more than elite cues[10]. Model (1) presented that Labour Party supporters had much more significantly positive attitudes towards immigrants than the Conservative Party supporters, which was consistent with traditional political ideology positions. However, when political controversy increased, both the Conservative and Labour Party supporters' preferences towards immigrants worsened. This indicated that even when political controversy was salient because of two political parties' different stances towards immigrants, voters were more influenced by the signal of conflicts and problems than elite cues. I further conducted the analysis with political ideology (model 2) to test my assumption. As expected, the more a person leans towards the political right, the more likely the person is against immigrants, but when political controversy occurs, reverse effects appear. In short, when the issue is pivotal in political competition and elites are divided, the right-leaning person is more likely to alleviate anti-immigrant attitudes.

Table 6.4: Research question 1 testing (wave 1).

	Dependent variable:	
	Anti-immigrant attitudes	
	Model (1)	Model (2)
Political controversy	-0.024	0.065**
	(0.014)	(0.021)
Conservative	-1.106	
(baseline = other party supporters)	(0.684)	
Labour	-3.754***	
	(0.796)	

Continued on next page

_____

[10]The table shows only the results of wave 1. Wave 13 results are included in the appendix. Analysis with wave 13 had different significance levels for main variables but the directions were the same with wave 1.

Table 6.4: Research question 1 testing (wave 1). (Continued)

| | *Dependent variable:* | |
	Anti-immigrant attitudes	
Political ideology		0.640***
(Left = 0, Right = 10)		(0.135)
UK economic concerns	-0.332***	-0.294***
	(0.029)	(0.031)
Political attention	-0.132***	-0.138***
	(0.012)	(0.013)
Marital status	0.423***	0.310***
(Married = 1, Not married = 0)	(0.065)	(0.066)
Christian	0.429***	0.280***
(base = no religion)	(0.060)	(0.063)
Other religion	0.055	-0.418**
	(0.153)	(0.160)
Unemployed	0.126	0.056
(Unemployed = 1, Employed = 0)	(0.140)	(0.135)
Household income	-0.075***	-0.065***
	(0.009)	(0.009)
Political controversy $\times Conservative$	0.053**	
	(0.019)	
Political controversy $\times Labour$	0.093***	
	(0.022)	
Political controversy $\times Political ideology$		-0.010**
		(0.004)
Constant	7.158***	2.777***
	(0.508)	(0.773)
Observations	2,950	2,764
R2	0.190	0.190
Adjusted R2	0.187	0.187

Table 6.4: Research question 1 testing (wave 1). (Continued)

| | Dependent variable: | |
	Anti-immigrant attitudes	
Residual Std. Error	1.361 (df = 2937)	1.378 (df = 2753)
F Statistic	57.347*** (df = 12; 2937)	49.852*** (df = 10; 2753)

Note 1: All variables are from wave 1.
Note 2: Public preference is proxied by anti-immigrant attitudes (higher the number, higher the respondents answered immigration is bad for economy/cultural life).
Note 3: *p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

In order to understand the counter-intuitive finding in model 2, I drew the graph with it, using the interaction term between political controversy and political ideology (Figure 6.3). The graph presents that the more left-leaning a person is, the greater the influence of political controversy on public preference (anti-immigrant attitudes) and provides more evidence for the significant influence of political controversy's signaling of conflicts.

In summary, the results documented the heterogeneous effects of political controversy on public perceptions depending on political elites' level of consensus. The empirical analyses for Study 2 showed that when the main political elites exhibit polarization on the immigrant issue, political controversy implies conflicts and disagreement, resulting in a decrease in preferences for immigrants (Hypothesis 6 is supported). On the other hand, when the main political elites adopt consensual and welcoming attitudes towards immigrants, it merely increases salience and does not impact preferences (Hypothesis 7 is partially supported). Moreover, analyses controlling for party affiliation showed that the changes in preferences are mainly due to political controversy itself, not political elite cues and party alignment accordingly, providing evidence for the importance of political controversy.
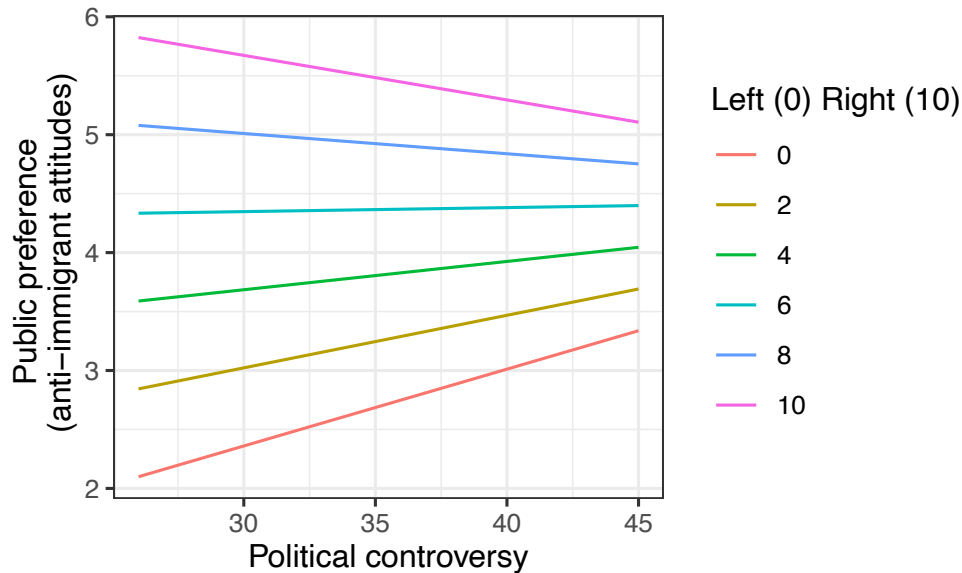
Figure 6.3: Research question 1 testing with interaction term (model 2)

6.5 Results: Study 3

Study 3 questions the influence of political controversy on immigrants' psychological integration and national identity. Its main argument is that immigrants assess the ethnic boundaries (the level of natives' hospitality in accepting immigrants) through political controversy so that their psychological integration is determined by political controversy. The influence of political controversy is expected to be heterogeneous depending on the political climate (hypotheses 8 and 9). The main assumption is that in an environment where the immigration issue is the focal point of political contestation, it hinders immigrants' psychological integration (hypothesis 8). On the contrary, when political elites have a consonant welcoming stance towards immigrants, political controversy enhances immigrants' psychological integration. Hypothesis tests were conducted with one wave of data for each country because of data limitations. Contrary to the expectation, political controversy in a divided political environment did not have any significant influence on the national identity of immigrants (table 6.5), so hypothesis 8 was rejected. Being political right and being religious had positive and significant effects on national identity. A noteworthy finding is that reading newspapers and TV had significantly positive effects on national identity. This could be

due to the selection effects (Trebbe, 2007; Weiß & Trebbe, 2001)– having the ability to consume host countries' media represents the immigrants' language ability as well as an understanding of the host country's political and socio-economic background.

Table 6.5: Study 3 Hypothesis 8 testing (UK)

	Dependent variable:
	National identity
Political controversy	0.002
	(0.002)
Household income	-0.002
	(0.009)
Political ideology	0.00003**
(Left = 0, Right = 10)	(0.00001)
Political interest	-0.007
	(0.015)
Information source:	-0.031
Internet	(0.024)
Information source:	0.051
Newspaper	(0.027)
Information source:	0.015
Radio	(0.026)
Information source:	0.074**
TV	(0.025)
Married	-0.011
(Married = 1, Not married = 0)	(0.069)
Christian	0.589***
(base = no religion)	(0.069)
Other religion	0.558***
	(0.086)
Unemployed	0.033
(Unemployed = 1, Employed = 0)	(0.038)
Age	-0.002
	(0.002)
Female	-0.094
(base = male)	(0.063)
Constant	2.522***
	(0.249)
Observations	1,472

R2	0.080
Adjusted R2	0.071
Residual Std. Error	1.310 (df = 1457)
F Statistic	9.023*** (df = 14; 1457)

Note 1:	All variables are from wave 15 (2019).
Note 2:	*p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

I further conducted an analysis for hypothesis 9 to see how political controversy from a welcoming political environment affects immigrants' national identity (table 6.6). As expected in hypothesis 9, when major political elites consonantly shared welcoming attitudes, political controversy had a positive association with immigrants' national identity. Thus, hypothesis 9 was supported. Also, being politically right increased national identity. On the other hand, having a higher education decreased national identity. The negative effects of higher education could be explained by the 'integration paradox,' which indicates the case in which immigrants with higher socio-economic status perceive more discrimination and are less motivated to integrate (Verkuyten, 2016).

Table 6.6: Study 3 Hypothesis 9 testing (Germany)

	Dependent variable:
	National identity
Political controversy	0.008***
	(0.002)
Interest in politics	-0.016
	(0.060)
Political news consumption	0.044
	(0.047)
Political ideology	0.120***
	(0.024)
Facebook use	0.027
	(0.041)
Twitter use	-0.124
	(0.069)
Age	0.003
	(0.004)
Education	-0.267**
	(0.088)
Female	0.141

(base = male)	(0.094)
Constant	2.242***
	(0.394)
Observations	362
R2	0.133
Adjusted R2	0.111
Residual Std. Error	18,741.870 (df = 352)
F Statistic	6.010*** (df = 9; 352)

Note 1: All variables are from wave eb (2017).
Note 2:   *p <0.05; **p <0.01; ***p <0.001

To conclude, analyses from Study 3 resulted in similar findings from Study 2. In a conflicted political environment, political controversy does not have any influence on immigrants' psychological integration (Hypothesis 8 is not supported) yet in a consensual environment, it enhances immigrants' psychological integration (Hypothesis 9 is supported).

6.6   Summary

This chapter of the thesis is dedicated to exploring the influence of political controversy on both the majority and minority of society. Study 2 concentrates on the majority—natives—and aims to uncover the determinants of the heterogeneous effects of political controversy on preferences. Study 3 proposes that political controversy significantly affects the psychological integration of social minority, immigrants. They build on the assumption that conflicts or consensus among political elites determine these heterogeneous effects. The analyses using media article data and individual-level survey data provide support for the assumptions of Studies 2 and 3. The political controversy arising from conflicts between political elites raises issue awareness as well as heightens hostile attitudes towards immigrants (Hypothesis 6 is supported), while it does not affect immigrants' psychological integration (Hypothesis 8 is not supported). On the contrary, in a country with welcoming political elites, political controversy merely raises issue awareness and does not affect natives' attitudes towards immigrants yet it helps immigrants' psychological integration (Hypothesis 7 is partially supported, and hypothesis 9 is supported). Moreover, political controversy's signals are more influential than elite cues (Research question 1).

The findings of this chapter address several research gaps. Prior works on the influence of political controversy have observed inconclusive results, with some studies reporting detrimental effects on immigration attitudes while

others did not. The analyses, comparing two different political contexts, indicate that the lack of conclusive findings in previous findings may stem from their oversight of different political elites' stances. Moreover, the results highlight that political controversy exerts a more potent influence than elite cues, suggesting the need for further discussion and theoretical development to better comprehend the role of political controversy.

In addition, analyses of immigrants find a new determinant of immigrants' psychological integration: political controversy. Previous works on the topic of media effects on immigrant integration have been rare and even when available, it has predominantly concentrated on the negative portrayal of immigrants rather than comprehensively examining media representations. Exploring political controversy addresses this limitation as political controversy covers a wide range of issues related to the immigration issue.

The observations further question how political controversy transforms the information environment to which we are exposed. In addition, it also raises another question of whether media consumption is a cause or consequence of immigrants' integration and how to perform empirical analyses in the future. The discussion and suggestions for future research and social implications are presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The 2015 refugee crisis and the 2016 UK referendum that resulted in Brexit created uncertainty in Germany and the UK, causing long-lasting controversies around immigration. While there is general agreement that this issue is politically controversial, the process of making it and its ramifications remain rather obscure. Building on the prior works on the politicization of European integration, this thesis focuses on the main actors who create political controversy–political elites, the mass media, and the public–to address these gaps in three studies. Study 1 explores the role of the public in the making of political controversy. Study 2 examines the influence of political controversy on natives' immigration attitudes and Study 3 concentrates on its effects on immigrants' psychological integration. Studies 2 and 3 posit that political contexts determine heterogeneous effects of political controversy.

7.1 Study 1

While several studies have examined how political elites and the mass media contribute to the making of political controversy, the public's role, particularly within the public sphere, has been largely overlooked despite its growing importance in political decision-making. To address this gap, in Study 1, I introduce a novel framework–emotional synchrony distribution–to capture the dynamic interactions among users, which can predict the making of controversy in the public sphere. This framework subsumes three communication theories–social sharing of emotions (Rimé, 2009), the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1973), and the consensus paradox (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014)–to predict the ebbs and flows of participation in political discussion. Its main premise is that people are motivated to express their opinions if they believe they are in a safe and supportive environment (Noelle-Neumann,

1973; Rimé, 2009) or perceive that the discussion is ongoing (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014). The new framework categorizes the emotional synchrony distribution, i.e., the level of feeling safe to participate, into three categories: agreement, polarization, and diversity (with agreement or polarization). In the framework, agreement indicates a state in which people have general consensual reactions. Polarization is a state characterized by two consensus with opposite directions. Diversity refers to a state that lacks general consensus, yet it can entail agreement or polarization. Agreement, polarization, and diversity with agreement are expected to increase participation because they provide a safe environment to express opinions. Diversity with polarization is expected to decrease public discussion because witnessing people with strong views arguing with each other over the issue is likely to make people without strong feelings feel uncomfortable participating. The framework also argues that continuation of agreement (a general consensus) will lead to a decrease in participation over time, as individuals resonate less with the necessity to engage in the discussion.

Study 1 utilizes the Facebook URL dataset (Messing et al., 2020) and focuses on the UK as a case study. First, to identify URLs related to immigration, I employed the keyword batch to filter out URLs containing specific keywords. Subsequently, I applied the Distilroberta-base model (Sanh et al., 2019) to determine whether these URLs are genuinely associated with immigration. Second, I measured the level of public discussion with the number of comments and shares. Lastly, I categorized emotional synchrony distribution with the emotional reaction buttons, a method inspired by Badami et al. (2017), who measured the polarization level in movie ratings by distribution. Assessing passive emotional reactions to the posts allows the capture of engagements by people with moderate attitudes. Then, each category of emotional synchrony distribution predicts the development of public discussion using a standard linear regression.

The findings suggest that the public is likely to engage in the public discussion about the immigration issue and subsequently makes it politically controversial when she perceives its surroundings as safe to express their opinions. To put it differently, the public's motivation to participate in political discussions could be due to emotional communion: when individuals feel they share similar opinions with others (and their opinions receive positive feedback), they are motivated to participate in a political discussion. This motivation could be especially strong if there is less polarization and more agreement. Yet, continued agreement could decrease political discussion. Also, this thesis's new method using emotional buttons reveals that the number of moderate people could be substantial. However, they have been underrepresented in past studies that rely solely on content analysis

to capture public opinions due to their tendency to remain passive. Overall, Study 1's findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to understanding how user interactions affect participation in online discussion and to representing people with moderate views.

The results of Study 1 support the utility of the framework of emotional synchrony distribution. It effectively predicts the dynamic flows of online public discussion. Moreover, Study 1 introduces a novel way of measuring public reactions to a political event without conducting a content analysis, which only gauges the responses of people who are highly emotionally engaged. Future research can benefit theoretically and methodologically using this framework and method.

I suggest a new perspective on polarization; it can be viewed not only as a division but also as an emotional effervescence that gets people interested in politics. While political controversy and contentious debates might seem equivalent to conflicts, they could facilitate consensus. I therefore propose revisiting contemporary conceptions of polarization. Polarization has been treated as a state to overcome. Yet, its role as a catalyst for political discussion that allows diverse perspectives implies that polarization might not be inherently different from disagreement. Disagreement is essential for democratic societies with diverse perspectives: it allows individuals to contemplate and tolerate different opinions (Nir, 2017).

I further question whether polarization weakens democracy more than agreement does. While reaching a consensus through rational discussion is a core value of deliberative democracy (J. Cohen & Rogers, 1992; Dahl, 2008; Habermas, 1991), there is room for debate over whether agreement necessarily improves the quality of political discussion and democracy; as the consensus paradox posits (Friberg-Fernros & Schaffer, 2014), agreement can stall discussion, and disagreement is crucial for rational debates (J. Cohen, 2005). In addition, an agreement to take a hostile stance against immigrants is a consensus yet problematic. In a similar vein, Kreiss and McGregor (2023) argue that social cohesion is not always normatively better than polarization, particularly when the power structure and power imbalance are considered. For instance, the Civil Rights Movement caused conflicts and disrupted the pervasive white supremacy in the US, but this does not mean it deteriorated democracy and the quality of public discussion. The opposite is true. Likewise, agreement should not automatically be deemed superior to polarization. My results establish that polarization is not inherently harmful to democracy; it might merely represent the surge of different opinions.

I also observe that people with low emotional engagement could be largely overlooked in the data when only active forms of participation are considered. Previous studies have documented that people with anti-immigrant

sentiments are overrepresented in social media (Flores, 2017; Walsh, 2021). My study further demonstrates that their overrepresentation can neglect the views of people with moderate, neutral attitudes. The difficulties associated with reflecting the opinions of those with low emotional engagement could explain the apparent contradiction between the growing positive sentiment toward immigrants and conventional perceptions that European societies are being polarized over the immigrant issue. A novel measure that captures the opinions of those with moderate, neutral attitudes could improve future studies in the field of public opinion.

7.2 Study 2

After delving into the making of political controversy, Study 2 investigates how such controversy affects the public. Previous empirical work on how political controversy shapes immigration attitudes has yielded contradictory findings. Since political controversy increases the perceived importance of an issue, i.e., public issue salience, it is assumed to affect preferences as well, yet the evidence has been inconclusive (e.g., Jungkunz et al., 2019).

Based on evidence that public issue salience and preferences are weakly correlated (Hatton, 2021; Jennings & Wlezien, 2015) and that public issue salience is context-dependent (Dennison, 2019) while preferences are rather stable (Gavin, 2018; Kustov et al., 2021), this thesis focuses on political landscapes. I assume that political contexts determine the heterogeneous influence of political controversy. Since political elites exercise great power over people's perceptions (e.g., Carmines & Stimson, 1986), I assume that political controversy in a country where immigration is the main divisive issue among political elites will increase the public issue salience while it mainly signals conflicts and can damage interethnic relationships. On the contrary, if political elites hold consistently welcoming attitudes, I expect political controversy to raise the issue salience but have positive effects. However, elite cues can induce changes in public attitudes as well (Achen & Bartels, 2017; Huddy, 2018); this thesis therefore attempts to distinguish the effects of elite cues from political controversy.

To test these assumptions, I compare two countries–the UK and Germany–with similar immigration histories but very different political elites' reactions to the issue of immigration. I employ media article data to capture political controversy and survey data (from the British Election Study and Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences' GESIS) to measure public issue salience and preferences. Individual-level longitudinal analyses reveal that, as hypothesized, the effects of political controversy on public preferences could depend

on whether it is conflict-driven or consensus-driven. If there is disagreement on immigration (the UK), political controversy is likely to increase the public issue salience as well as to have detrimental effects on natives' attitudes toward immigrants; even people who support a party with an inclusive immigration policy become more hostile toward immigrants when political controversy is driven by conflict. However, if political elites agree on the issue (Germany), the political controversy might not have any effects on immigration attitudes and merely raises public issue salience. The findings demonstrate that political controversy can be more influential than elite cues.

The results suggest that contradictory findings in previous studies on how political controversy affects immigrant attitudes could be explained by their failure to account for the political context. My findings highlight the need to develop a new theory that incorporates the role of political context in media effects and public perceptions.

Moreover, I recommend future research to explore how politicization of the issue changes the information environment individuals are exposed to. I infer from the findings that politicization transforms media coverage in a way that emphasizes the competitive aspect rather than presenting an objective portrayal of the issue. It can narrow the public attention to political competition itself. Additionally, political controversy contributes to incidental exposure, which, although raising awareness of the issue's importance, may not necessarily enhance political knowledge (Bode, 2016; Feezell, 2018; Nanz & Matthes, 2020). Expanding on these insights, future studies can explore how issue politicization influences media coverage and the information environment. This will offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between politics and public perceptions.

7.3   Study 3

Study 3 researches how political controversy affects the social minority, i.e., immigrants. Interethnic interaction is a significant factor in immigrant integration (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012), yet previous attempts to link natives' attitudes and immigrants' perceptions have often failed. I propose that this is because immigrants gauge a new host society's sociopolitical reality through the media rather than through interpersonal interactions (e.g., Mutz & Goldman, 2010). Building on Beier and Kroneberg (2013), I argue that political controversy surrounding immigrants strongly influences immigrants' perceptions of the host society's stance toward them. Research on the impact of the media on immigrants' perceptions is scarce, and even more so in the context of political controversy, so this attempt seeks to fill the major

gap in the field. As Study 2 posits, I assume that the effects of political controversy vary due to political elites' (lack of) consensus over the issue of immigration. In a politically conflicting context, political controversy creates a hostile environment that may hinder immigrants' psychological integration. In a consensual environment, it fosters positive outcomes for immigrants.

Study 3 employs the same types of empirical data as Study 2–media article data and individual-level survey data from the UK and Germany. It uses only one wave of survey data and relies on cross-sectional data analysis methods, the standard linear regression. Psychological integration is represented by national identity, and political controversy is measured with media article data. The results partially support my hypotheses. Consistent welcoming attitudes among political elites are likely to motivate immigrants to integrate, yet conflicts between political elites are likely to have insignificant effects.

The finding makes an important contribution to the field of immigrant integration by providing a new explanation for the immigrants' psychological integration. Immigrants' perceived ethnic boundaries, which is the perceived stringency of natives' criteria for allowing immigrants to live in their country, can explain immigrants' psychological integration, yet the ways in which immigrants build their perceptions still need a lot of investigation. This thesis strives to fill this gap by focusing on the aspect which has been neglected, political controversy, and finds that it provides a partial explanation.

The different results between the two political contexts call into question the extent to which mediatized political controversy or host country media outlets significantly affect immigrants' psychological integration. Since immigrants who consume the host society's media are likely to have high language proficiency and an in-depth understanding of the host society's socio-political affairs, some studies have probed whether host country media consumption is the consequence or cause of integration (Trebbe, 2007; Weiß & Trebbe, 2001). In addition, immigrants often strategically consume the host country's news media to help them assimilate (Alencar & Deuze, 2017; Reece & Palmgreen, 2000; Yang et al., 2004); media consumption may thus further their psychological integration (Giglou et al., 2019; Yoon et al., 2011). Highly integrated immigrants may, therefore, exhibit resilience to media coverage of the political controversy surrounding immigration, whereas less integrated immigrants may remain unaffected due to their limited consumption of host country media. However, the data I analyze in this study does not provide information about immigrants' media consumption habits, which significantly limits the scope of the study. Future research should consider immigrant selectivity in media consumption.

The findings from Study 2 and Study 3 underscore the significant role of political elites in interethnic relationships. Their political competition has

detrimental or harmonizing effects on interethnic relationships depending on whether they have conflicts or consensus over the issue of immigration. Based on my findings, I emphasize that the responsibility of political elites is not only to gain political power but also to foster social cohesion and enhance the psychological well-being of their citizens.

Furthermore, the negative effects of political conflicts I observed in my analyses suggest the need to reconsider the adequacy of current journalistic practices. While political elites' activities are certainly newsworthy, there may be room for improvement in how journalists portray these activities, especially in the context of political competition. Although proposing specific strategies for improvement is beyond the scope of this study, I believe future discussions on this topic can potentially enhance interethnic relationships in society.

7.4   Limitation

This study suffers from at least five additional limitations besides the limitation related to immigrants' media consumption habits. The first is related to data availability. The data employed in Study 1 is limited to aggregated monthly-level URLs, which prevents me from examining temporal trends. The data used for Studies 2 and 3 compare countries with different time frames, which limits its comparability. Second, Study 1 analyses are limited to descriptive and explorative methods so that the relationship between emotional synchrony distribution and public discussion remains obscure, calling for more investigation. Third, Study 3 builds on the assumption that immigrants gauge natives' immigration attitudes through political controversy yet the discrepancy between immigrants' perception and natives' actual immigration attitudes is not explored because of data limitation. Fourth, in Study 3, despite the fact that immigrants encompass wide a range of people–e.g., asylum seekers, refugees, first-generation–they are not distinguished in the analyses, and Study 3 assumes that political controversy has a homogeneous influence on different types of immigrants. Lastly, the measure of political controversy for Studies 2 and 3 is confined to legacy media despite social media's growing impact. Nevertheless, the work by Djerf-Pierre and Shehata (2017), 23 years of media content and public opinion data, establishes that the legacy media's influence on public agenda setting remains undiminished, which increases my confidence in the study's results.

7.5 Contribution

Despite its shortcomings, this study contributes to the research on media effects, public opinion, and political contexts. Foremost, this thesis makes a significant contribution through the development of the theoretical framework. Study 1 introduces a novel framework to understand the public's conversation dynamics, validated through empirical analyses. Study 2 addresses previous research gaps on the contradictory influence of political controversy by incorporating a new factor–political contexts. Study 3 enhances our understanding of immigrant integration by identifying a new determinant, political controversy.

Moreover, Study 1 introduces a novel method to measure public opinion, specifically polarization, through the distribution of emotional reactions. Employing passive emotional reactions overcomes the limitations of content analysis, which tends to overrepresent anti-immigrant sentiments since a significant portion of social media content is generated by individuals with strong views (e.g., Wolf et al., 2022). Analyses with this new method reveal that a significant number of people have moderate and neutral attitudes towards the immigrant issue yet have been frequently overlooked in content analysis. I believe that future research using this method will enhance our understanding of public opinion by expanding the scope of available data for analysis.

This thesis also bears several social implications. Study 1 proposes a new perspective on polarization. Polarization is widely regarded as an impediment to democratic values. However, analyses from Study 1 present that consensus is not inherently superior to polarization and it might hinder constructive discussions among the public. Studies 2 and 3 emphasize the pivotal role that political elites play in shaping interethnic relations. In a similar vein, they question the current journalistic practices that heavily prioritize political competition. Regarding the significant influence of political controversy and media coverage on social cohesion, alternative journalistic practices may benefit society as a whole.

Overall, this thesis aims to enhance understanding of political controversy. In this digital media era, individuals are constantly inundated with information and discussions. Individuals who do not actively seek out news or information, or who even avoid the news altogether, can still acquire an awareness of 'what is going on' – i.e., the most important issues and politically salient topics – via incidental exposure to news headlines on social media or interpersonal conversations. In short, individuals have become increasingly aware of politically controversial topics and thus can engage with the topic

without investing much time. In this thesis, I explore how that changes their behavior and perceptions. I offer a partial response to this question, but the evolving nature of the information landscape suggests that further research will be needed to enhance our understanding of political controversy.

Bibliography

Abdelgadir, A., & Fouka, V. (2020). Political Secularism and Muslim integration in the West: Assessing the Effects of the French Headscarf Ban. *American Political Science Review, 114*(3), 707–723. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000106

Achen, C., & Bartels, L. (2017). *Democracy for realists: Why elections do not produce responsive government.* Princeton University Press.

Alan, T. (2015, September 7). David Cameron's limp action on refugees puts Britain outside the EU. *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/07/david-camerons-limited-promise-refugees-britains-impotence-outside-eu

Alanya, A., Baysu, G., & Swyngedouw, M. (2015). Identifying city differences in perceived group discrimination among second-generation Turks and Moroccans in Belgium. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 41*(7), 1088–1110. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.965669

Alba, R. (2005). Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 28*(1), 20–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000280003

Alencar, A., & Deuze, M. (2017). News for Assimilation or Integration? Examining the functions of news in shaping acculturation experiences of immigrants in the Netherlands and Spain. *European Journal of Communication, 32*(2), 151–166. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323117689993

Altschul, I., Oyserman, D., & Bybee, D. (2006). Racial-Ethnic Identity in Mid-Adolescence: Content and change as predictors of academic achievement. *Child Development, 77*(5), 1155–1169. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00926.x

Álvarez, R., Garcia, D., Moreno, Y., & Schweitzer, F. (2015). Sentiment cascades in the 15M movement. *EPJ Data Science, 4*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1140/epjds/s13688-015-0042-4

Andreß, H.-J., Golsch, K., & Schmidt, A. W. (2013). *Applied panel data analysis for economic and social surveys.* Springer Science & Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-32914-2

Art, D. (2011). *Inside the Radical Right. The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511976254

Arugute, N., Calvo, E., & Ventura, T. (2023). Network activated frames: content sharing and perceived polarization in social media. *Journal of Communication, 73*(1), 14–24. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqac035

Arzheimer, K. (2015). The AfD: Finally a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany? *West European Politics, 38*(3), 535–556. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1004230

Arzheimer, K. (2023). The Electoral Breakthrough of the AfD and the East-West Divide in German Politics. In *Contemporary Germany and the Fourth Wave of Far-Right Politics.* Routledge.

Atwater, T., Fico, F., & Pizante, G. (1987). Reporting on the State Legislature: A Case Study of Inter-Media Agenda-Setting. *Newspaper Research Journal, 8*(2), 53–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/073953298700800206

Badami, M., Nasraoui, O., Sun, W., & Shafto, P. (2017). Detecting Polarization in Ratings: An Automated Pipeline and a Preliminary Quantification on Several Benchmark Data Sets. *2017 IEEE International Conference on Big Data (Big Data),* 2682–2690.

Barberá, P., Casas, A., Nagler, J., Egan, P. J., Bonneau, R., Jost, J. T., & Tucker, J. A. (2019). Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data. *American Political Science Review, 113*(4), 883–901. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000352

Baugut, P. (2020). Perceptions of Minority Discrimination: Perspectives of Jews Living in Germany on News Media Coverage. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 99*(2), 414–439. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020984759

Bechtel, M. M., Hainmueller, J., Hangartner, D., & Helbling, M. (2015). Reality Bites: The Limits of Framing Effects for Salient and Contested Policy Issues. *Political Science Research and Methods, 3*(3), 683–695. https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/psrm.2014.39

Bednarek, M. (2016). Investigating evaluation and news values in news items that are shared through social media. *Corpora, 11*(2), 227–257. https://doi.org/10.3366/cor.2016.0093

Beier, H., & Kroneberg, C. (2013). Language Boundaries and the Subjective Well-Being of Immigrants in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration*

Studies, 39(10), 1535–1553. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.833685

Bélanger, É., & Meguid, B. M. (2008). Issue salience, issue ownership, and issue-based vote choice. *Electoral Studies, 27*(3), 477–491. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2008.01.001

Bennett, S. E. (1995). Comparing Americans' Political Information in 1988 and 1992. *The Journal of Politics, 57*(2), 521–532. https://doi.org/10.2307/2960321

Bennett, W. L., & Entman, R. M. (2000). *Mediated Politics: Communication in the future of democracy.* Cambridge University Press.

Berry, J. W. (2001). A psychology of immigration. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*(3), 615–631. https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00231

Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29*(6), 697–712. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.013

Berry, J. W., & Hou, F. (2016). Immigrant Acculturation and Wellbeing in Canada. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne, 57*(4), 254–264. https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000064

Berry, M., Garcia-Blanco, I., & Moore, K. (2015). *Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries* (tech. rep.). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Blinder, S., & Richards, L. (2020). UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern. *Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford.*

Blumer, H. (1958). Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position. *Pacific Sociological Review, 1*(1), 3–7. https://doi.org/10.2307/1388607

Boczkowski, P. J., & Mitchelstein, E. (2012). How Users Take Advantage of Different Forms of Interactivity on Online News Sites: Clicking, E-Mailing, and Commenting. *Human Communication Research, 38*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2011.01418.x

Bode, L. (2016). Political news in the news feed: Learning politics from social media. *Mass Communication and Society, 19*(1), 24–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2015.1045149

Boomgaarden, H. G., & Vliegenthart, R. (2009). How news content influences anti-immigration attitudes: Germany, 1993–2005. *European Journal of Political Research, 48*(4), 516–542.

Breiman, L. (2001). Random forests. *Machine Learning, 45*, 5–32.

Brosius, H.-B., & Esser, F. (2013). *Eskalation durch Berichterstattung?: Massenmedien und fremdenfeindliche Gewalt.* Springer-Verlag.

Butcher, P., & Neidhardt, A.-H. (2020). Fear and Lying in the EU: Fighting disinformation on migration with alternative narratives. *Issue paper. European Policy Centre.*

Carmines, E. G., & Stimson, J. A. (1986). On the structure and sequence of issue evolution. *American Political Science Review, 80*(3), 901–920. https://doi.org/10.2307/1960544

Castanho Silva, B. (2018). The (non) impact of the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks on political attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 44*(6), 838–850. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167217752118

Chadwick, A. (2010). The political information cycle in a hybrid news system: The British prime minister and the "bullygate" affair. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 16*(1), 3–29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161210384730

Chai, S.-K. (2005). Predicting ethnic boundaries. *European Sociological Review, 21*(4), 375–391. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4621217

Chen, G. M., & Lu, S. (2017). Online Political Discourse: Exploring Differences in Effects of Civil and Uncivil Disagreement in News Website Comments. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 61*(1), 108–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2016.1273922

Choi, D. D., Poertner, M., & Sambanis, N. (2022). *Native Bias: Overcoming Discrimination Against Immigrants.* Princeton University Press.

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science, 10*(1), 103–126.

Citrin, J., & Sears, D. O. (2009). Balancing national and ethnic identities: The psychology of E Pluribus Unum. In *Measuring identity: A guide for social scientists* (pp. 145–174). Cambridge University Press.

Clarke, H. D., Goodwin, M., & Whiteley, P. (2017). Why Britain voted for Brexit: An individual-level analysis of the 2016 referendum vote. *Parliamentary Affairs, 70*(3), 439–464. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx005

Cohen, B. C. (1963). *Press and foreign policy* (Vol. 2321). Princeton university press.

Cohen, J. (2005). Deliberation and democratic legitimacy. In *Debates in contemporary political philosophy* (pp. 352–370). Routledge.

Cohen, J., & Rogers, J. (1992). Secondary associations and democratic governance. *Politics & Society, 20*(4), 393–472. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329292020004003

Constant, A. F., Roberts, R., & Zimmermann, K. F. (2009). Ethnic identity and immigrant homeownership. *Urban Studies, 46*(9), 1879–1898. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009106022

Conway, B. A., Kenski, K., & Wang, D. (2015). The Rise of Twitter in the Political Campaign: Searching for Intermedia Agenda-Setting Effects in the Presidential Primary. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 20*(4), 363–380. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12124

Czymara, C. S., & Dochow, S. (2018). Mass media and concerns about immigration in Germany in the 21st century: individual-Level evidence over 15 years. *European Sociological Review, 34*(4), 381–401.

Czymara, C. S., & Schmidt-Catran, A. W. (2017). Refugees Unwelcome? Changes in the Public Acceptance of Immigrants and Refugees in Germany in the Course of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'. *European Sociological Review, 33*(6), 735–751. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcx071

Dahl, R. A. (2008). *Democracy and its Critics.* Yale university press.

Damásio, A. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain.* Putnam.

Dang-Xuan, L., Stieglitz, S., Wladarsch, J., & Neuberger, C. (2013). An Investigation of Influentials and the Role of Sentiment in Political Communication on Twitter during Election Periods. *Information Communication and Society, 16*, 795–825. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.783608

De Wilde, P. (2011). No polity for old politics? A framework for analyzing the politicization of European integration. *Journal of European Integration, 33*(5), 559–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2010.546849

De Wilde, P., & Trenz, H.-J. (2012). Denouncing European integration: Euroscepticism as polity contestation. *European Journal of Social Theory, 15*(4), 537–554. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431011432968

Dearing, J. W., Rogers, E. M., & Rogers, E. (1996). *Agenda-setting* (Vol. 6). SAGE Publications, Inc.

de Figueiredo Jr, R. J., & Elkins, Z. (2003). Are patriots bigots? An inquiry into the vices of in-group pride. *American Journal of Political Science, 47*(1), 171–188.

Dennison, J. (2019). A Review of Public Issue Salience: Concepts, Determinants and Effects on Voting. *Political Studies Review, 17*(4), 436–446. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918819264

Dennison, J., & Geddes, A. (2019). A rising tide? The salience of immigration and the rise of anti-immigration political parties in Western Europe. *The Political Quarterly, 90*(1), 107–116. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.12620

Devlin, J., Chang, M.-W., Lee, K., & Toutanova, K. (2018). Bert: Pre-training of deep bidirectional transformers for language understanding. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1810.04805.*

Diakopoulos, N., & Naaman, M. (2011). Topicality, time, and sentiment in online news comments. In *CHI'11 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1405–1410). Association for Computing Machinery. https://doi.org/10.1145/1979742.1979782

Djerf-Pierre, M., & Shehata, A. (2017). Still an Agenda Setter: Traditional News Media and Public Opinion During the Transition From Low to High Choice Media Environments. *Journal of Communication, 67*(5), 733–757. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12327

Downs, A. (1957). An economic theory of political action in a democracy. *Journal of Political Economy, 65*(2), 135–150.

Dunaway, J., Goidel, R. K., Kirzinger, A., & Wilkinson, B. C. (2011). Rebuilding or Intruding? Media Coverage and Public Opinion on Latino Immigration in Post-Katrina Louisiana. *Social Science Quarterly, 92*(4), 917–937. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2011.00797.x

Durkheim, É. (1912). *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse [The elementary forms of the religious life]* [translated by Joseph Swain]. George Allen & Unwin.

Ecker, U. K., Lewandowsky, S., Chang, E. P., & Pillai, R. (2014). The effects of subtle misinformation in news headlines. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 20*(4), 323–335. https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000028

Edelman, M. J. (1985). *The symbolic uses of politics.* University of Illinois Press.

Edlin, A., Gelman, A., & Kaplan, N. (2007). Voting as a rational choice: Why and how people vote to improve the well-being of others. *Rationality and Society, 19*(3), 293–314. https://doi.org/10.1177/10434631070773

Eichenberg, R. C., & Dalton, R. J. (1993). Europeans and the European Community: The dynamics of public support for European integration. *International Organization, 47*(4), 507–534. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300028083

Eilders, C. (2006). News factors and news decisions. Theoretical and methodological advances in Germany. *Communications, 31*(1), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1515/COMMUN.2006.002

Elkins, Z., & Sides, J. (2007). Can Institutions Build Unity in Multiethnic States? *American Political Science Review, 101*(4), 693–708. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055407070505

Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. (2002). Self and social identity. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53*(1), 161–186.

Ersanilli, E., & Saharso, S. (2011). The Settlement Country and Ethnic Identification of Children of Turkish Immigrants in Germany, France, and

the Netherlands: What Role Do National Integration Policies Play? *International Migration Review*, *45*(4), 907–937. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2011.00872.x

European Commission, E. (2015). Standard Eurobarometer 84-Autumn 2015.

European Commission, E. (2016). Standard Eurobarometer 86–Autumn 2016.

European Commission, E. (2017). Standard Eurobarometer 88–Autumn 2017.

European Commission, E. (2018). Standard Eurobarometer 90–Autumn 2018.

European Commission, E. (2019). Standard Eurobarometer 91—Spring 2019.

Eurostat. (2018). *650 000 first-time asylum seekers registered in 2017*. Retrieved March 20, 2018, from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-euro-indicators/-/3-20032018-ap

Evans, G., & Mellon, J. (2019). Immigration, Euroscepticism, and the rise and fall of UKIP. *Party Politics*, *25*(1), 76–87.

Eysenck, M. W., Derakshan, N., Santos, R., & Calvo, M. G. (2007). Anxiety and cognitive performance: attentional control theory. *Emotion*, *7*(2), 336.

Fabian Engler, S. B.-B., & Zohlnhöfer, R. (2019). Disregarding the Voters? Electoral Competition and the Merkel Government's Public Policies, 2013–17. *German Politics*, *28*(3), 312–331. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2018.1495709

Facebook. (2021). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook_like_button

Feezell, J. T. (2018). Agenda setting through social media: The importance of incidental news exposure and social filtering in the digital era. *Political Research Quarterly*, *71*(2), 482–494.

Ferrín, M., Mancosu, M., & Cappiali, T. M. (2020). Terrorist attacks and Europeans' attitudes towards immigrants: An experimental approach. *European Journal of Political Research*, *59*(3), 491–516. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12362

Fieldhouse, E., Green, J., Evans, G., Mellon, J., Prosser, C., de Geus, R., Bailey, J., Schmitt, H., & van der Eijk, C. (2020). British Election Study Internet Panel Waves 1-20. https://www.britishelectionstudy.com/data-object/british-election-study-combined-wave-1-20-internet-panel-legacy-variables/

Fischer-Neumann, M. (2014). Immigrants' ethnic identification and political involvement in the face of discrimination: A longitudinal study of the German case. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *40*(3), 339–362. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.847362

Fligstein, N. (2008). *Euroclash: The EU, European identity, and the future of Europe*. Oxford University Press, USA. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199580859.001.0001

Flores, R. D. (2017). Do Anti-Immigrant Laws Shape Public Sentiment? A Study of Arizona's SB 1070 Using Twitter Data. *American Journal of Sociology*, *123*(2), 333–384. https://doi.org/10.1086/692983

Ford, R. (2011). Acceptable and unacceptable immigrants: How opposition to immigration in Britain is affected by migrants' region of origin. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *37*(7), 1017–1037. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2011.572423

Ford, R., & Goodwin, M. (2017). Britain after Brexit: A nation divided. *Journal of Democracy*, *28*(1), 17–30.

Fouka, V. (2020). Backlash: The unintended effects of language prohibition in US schools after World War I. *The Review of Economic Studies*, *87*(1), 204–239. https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdz024

Friberg-Fernros, H., & Schaffer, J. K. (2014). The consensus paradox: Does deliberative agreement impede rational discourse? *Political Studies*, *62*(1_suppl), 99–116. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12103

Froehlich, L., Martiny, S. E., & Deaux, K. (2019). A Longitudinal Investigation of the Ethnic and National Identities of Children With Migration Background in Germany. *Social Psychology*, *51*(2), 91–105. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000403

Fujioka, Y. (2005). Black media images as a perceived threat to African American ethnic identity: Coping responses, perceived public perception, and attitudes towards affirmative action. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *49*(4), 450–467. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15506878jobem4904_6

Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of Peace Research*, *2*(1), 64–90. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104

Garcia, D., & Rimé, B. (2019). Collective emotions and social resilience in the digital traces after a terrorist attack. *Psychological Science*, *30*(4), 617–628. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619831964

Gavin, N. T. (2018). Media definitely do matter: Brexit, immigration, climate change and beyond. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *20*(4), 827–845. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118799260

Geddes, A., & Peter, S. (2016a). CHAPTER 2- BRITAIN: THE UNEXPECTED EUROPEANISATION OF IMMIGRATION. In *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe* (pp. 22–47). SAGE Publications.

Geddes, A., & Peter, S. (2016b). CHAPTER 4- GERMANY: A COUNTRY OF IMMIGRATION AFTER ALL. In *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe* (pp. 74–100). SAGE Publications.

Gerbaudo, P. (2016). Constructing public space— rousing the Facebook crowd: Digital enthusiasm and emotional contagion in the 2011 protests in Egypt and Spain. *International Journal of Communication, 10*, 20.

Gerbaudo, P., Marogna, F., & Alzetta, C. (2019). When "positive posting" attracts voters: User engagement and emotions in the 2017 UK election campaign on Facebook. *Social Media+ Society, 5*(4), 2056305119881695. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119881695

GESIS. (2021). GESIS Panel - Standard Edition. https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13785.

Giglou, R. I., d'Haenens, L., & Van Gorp, B. (2019). Determinants of degree of integration of Turkish diaspora in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. *International Communication Gazette, 81*(3), 259–282. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048518820455

Gilardi, F., Gessler, T., Kubli, M., & Müller, S. (2022). Social media and political agenda setting. *Political Communication, 39*(1), 39–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2021.1910390

Glass, D. C., Singer, J. E., Leonard, H. S., Krantz, D., Cohen, S., & Cummings, H. (1973). Perceived control of aversive stimulation and the reduction of stress responses. *Journal of Personality, 41*(4), 577–595. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1973.tb00112.x

Golder, M. (2016). Far Right Parties in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science, 19*(1), 477–497. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042814-012441

Goodwin, M. J., & Heath, O. (2016). The 2016 referendum, Brexit and the left behind: An aggregate-level analysis of the result. *The Political Quarterly, 87*(3), 323–332. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12285

Gordon, M. M. (1964). *Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

Gottfried, J., & Shearer, E. (2016, May 26). *News use across social media platforms 2016* (Web Page). Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/

Gray, J. A. (1990). Brain systems that mediate both emotion and cognition. *Cognition & emotion, 4*(3), 269–288.

Green, E. G. (2009). Who can enter? A multilevel analysis on public support for immigration criteria across 20 European countries. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 12*(1), 41–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430208098776

Green, S. (2004). *The politics of exclusion: Institutions and immigration policy in contemporary Germany*. Manchester University Press.

Groshek, J., & Groshek, M. C. (2013). Agenda trending: Reciprocity and the predictive capacity of social networking sites in intermedia agenda setting across topics over time. *Media and Communication*, *1*(1), 15–27. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v1i1.71

Gushue, G. V. (2006). The relationship of ethnic identity, career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectations among Latino/a high school students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *68*(1), 85–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2005.03.002

Habermas, J. (1975). *Legitimation crisis* (Vol. 519). Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. MIT press.

Habermas, J. (2006). Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research. *Communication Theory*, *16*(4), 411–426. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00280.x

Hadjar, A., & Backes, S. (2013). Migration background and subjective well-being a multilevel analysis based on the European social survey. *Comparative Sociology*, *12*(5), 645–676. https://doi.org/10.1163/15691330-12341279

Haim, M., & Puschmann, C. (2020). UseNews. https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/UZCA3

Hainmueller, J., & Hiscox, M. J. (2007). Educated preferences: Explaining attitudes toward immigration in Europe. *International Organization*, *61*(2), 399–442. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818307070142

Hainmueller, J., & Hopkins, D. J. (2014). Public attitudes toward immigration. *Annual review of Political Science*, *17*, 225–249. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-102512-194818

Halikiopoulou, D., & Vlandas, T. (2019). What is new and what is nationalist about Europe's new nationalism? Explaining the rise of the far right in Europe. *Nations and Nationalism*, *25*(2), 409–434.

Hartman, T. K., Newman, B. J., & Scott Bell, C. (2014). Decoding prejudice toward Hispanics: Group cues and public reactions to threatening immigrant behavior. *Political Behavior*, *36*(1), 143–163.

Hatton, T. J. (2021). Public opinion on immigration in Europe: Preference and salience. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *66*, 101969. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101969

Haynes, C., Merolla, J., & Ramakrishnan, S. K. (2016). *Framing immigrants: News coverage, public opinion, and policy*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Heeren, J., & Zick, A. (2014). Misleading images: Results from interviews with media producers, journalists and consumers on Muslims and Islam in German media. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication, 7*(1), 46–63. https://doi.org/10.1163/18739865-00701003

Higham, J. (2002). *Strangers in the land: Patterns of American nativism, 1860-1925.* Rutgers University Press.

Holsanova, J., Rahm, H., & Holmqvist, K. (2006). Entry points and reading paths on newspaper spreads: comparing a semiotic analysis with eye-tracking measurements. *Visual Communication, 5*(1), 65–93.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2006). The neo-functionalists were (almost) right: Politicization and European integration. In *The diversity of democracy: Corporatism, social order and political conflict* (pp. 205–222). Edward Elgar Cheltenham.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British Journal of Political Science, 39*(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123408000409

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2012). Politicization. In *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union* (pp. 840–854). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199546282.013.0058

Hopkins, D. J. (2011). National Debates, Local Responses: The Origins of Local Concern about Immigration in Britain and the United States. *British Journal of Political Science, 41*(3), 499–524. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123410000414

Huddy, L. (2018). The group foundations of democratic political behavior. *Critical Review, 30*(1-2), 71–86.

Hutchings, V. L. (2001). Political Context, Issue Salience, and Selective Attentiveness: Constituent Knowledge of the Clarence Thomas Confirmation Vote. *Journal of Politics, 63*(3), 846–868. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00090

Huynh, Q.-L., Devos, T., & Smalarz, L. (2011). Perpetual foreigner in one's own land: Potential implications for identity and psychological adjustment. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 30*(2), 133–162. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2011.30.2.133

Ipsos, M. (2017). Shifting ground: 8 key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes towards immigration and Brexit. *London: Ipsos MORI.*

Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: Agenda-setting and priming in a television age.* University of Chicago Press.

Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Liebkind, K., & Solheim, E. (2009). To identify or not to identify? National disidentification as an alternative reaction to perceived ethnic discrimination. *Applied Psychology: An International*

Review, 58(1), 105–128. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2008.00384.x

Jennings, W., & Wlezien, C. (2011). Distinguishing between most important problems and issues? *Public Opinion Quarterly, 75*(3), 545–555. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfr025

Jennings, W., & Wlezien, C. (2015). Preferences, problems and representation. *Political Science Research and Methods, 3*(3), 659–681.

Jost, P., Kruschinski, S., Hasler, J., & Maurer, M. (2022). Looking Over the Channel: The Balance of Media Coverage About the "Refugee Crisis" in Germany and the UK. *Communications, 47*(2), 219–240. https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2020-0016

Jost, P., Ziegele, M., & Naab, T. K. (2020). Klicken oder tippen? Eine analyse verschiedener interventionsstrategien in unzivilen online-diskussionen auf facebook. *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft, 30*, 193–217. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41358-020-00212-9

Jungkunz, S., Helbling, M., & Schwemmer, C. (2019). Xenophobia before and after the Paris 2015 attacks: Evidence from a natural experiment. *Ethnicities, 19*(2), 271–291. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796818757264

Kelly, C. (1993). Group Identification, Intergroup Perceptions and Collective Action. *European Review of Social Psychology, 4*(1), 59–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/14792779343000022

Keltner, D., Ellsworth, P. C., & Edwards, K. (1993). Beyond simple pessimism: effects of sadness and anger on social perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*(5), 740–752.

Kim, Y. Y. (1988). *Communication and cross-cultural adaptation: An integrative theory.* Multilingual Matters.

Kinder, D. R., & Kam, C. D. (2010). *Us against them: Ethnocentric foundations of American opinion.* University of Chicago Press.

Kiousis, S. (2004). Explicating media salience: A factor analysis of New York Times issue coverage during the 2000 US presidential election. *Journal of Communication, 54*(1), 71–87. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02614.x

Kiousis, S., & McCombs, M. (2004). Agenda-setting effects and attitude strength: Political figures during the 1996 presidential election. *Communication Research, 31*(1), 36–57. doi://10.1177/0093650203260205

Kline, S. L., & Liu, F. (2005). The influence of comparative media use on acculturation, acculturative stress, and family relationships of Chinese international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29*(4), 367–390.

Koopmans, R., & Olzak, S. (2004). Discursive opportunities and the evolution of right-wing violence in Germany. *American Journal of Sociology*, *110*(1), 198–230. https://doi.org/10.1086/386271

Kreiss, D., & McGregor, S. C. (2023). A review and provocation: On polarization and platforms. *New Media & Society*, 14614448231161880. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444823116188

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2008). *West European politics in the age of globalization*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790720

Kromczyk, M., Khattab, N., & Abbas, T. (2021). The limits of tolerance: before and after Brexit and the German Refugee Crisis. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *44*(16), 170–193. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1937670

Kustov, A., Laaker, D., & Reller, C. (2021). The stability of immigration attitudes: Evidence and implications. *The Journal of Politics*, *83*(4), 1478–1494. https://doi.org/10.1086/715061

Lamont, M. (1992). *Money, morals, and manners: The culture of the French and the American upper-middle class*. University of Chicago Press.

Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *28*(1), 167–195. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107

Landmann, H., Gaschler, R., & Rohmann, A. (2019). What is threatening about refugees? Identifying different types of threat and their association with emotional responses and attitudes towards refugee migration. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *49*(7), 1401–1420. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2593

Larsen, E. G., Cutts, D., & Goodwin, M. J. (2020). Do terrorist attacks feed populist Eurosceptics? Evidence from two comparative quasi-experiments. *European Journal of Political Research*, *59*(1), 182–205. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12342

Lau, M., Busch, A., Mudde, C., Aydemir, F., Quent, M., & Hestermeyer, H. (2024, February 8). How should Germany deal with its far-right problem – and could it ban the AfD? *The Guardian*.

Lecheler, S., de Vreese, C., & Slothuus, R. (2009). Issue importance as a moderator of framing effects. *Communication Research*, *36*(3), 400–425. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650209333028

Lee, S. (2020). Does identity matter for adaptation? The influence of acculturation identity on the well-being and delinquency of adolescent students in Europe. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *23*(6), 797–817. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2019.1636950

Lee, W. N., & Tse, D. K. (1994). Changing media consumption in a new home: Acculturation patterns among Hong Kong immigrants to Canada. *Journal of Advertising*, *23*(1), 57–70.

Lees, C. (2008). The Limits of Party-Based Euroscepticism in Germany. In *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism* (pp. 16–37). Oxford University Press.

Lees, C. (2018). The 'Alternative for Germany': The rise of right-wing populism at the heart of Europe. *Politics*, *38*(3), 295–310. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263395718777718

Legewie, J. (2013). Terrorist events and attitudes toward immigrants: A natural experiment. *American Journal of Sociology*, *118*(5), 1199–1245. https://doi.org/10.1086/669605

Lelkes, Y. (2016). Mass polarization: Manifestations and measurements. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *80*(S1), 392–410. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfw005

Lewandowsky, S., Jetter, M., & Ecker, U. K. (2020). Using the president's tweets to understand political diversion in the age of social media. *Nature Communications*, *11*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-19644-6

Lopez-Escobar, E., Llamas, J. P., & McCombs, M. (1998). Agenda setting and community consensus: First and second level effects. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *10*(4), 335–348.

Lusk, A. B., & Weinberg, A. S. (1994). Discussing controversial topics in the classroom: Creating a context for learning. *Teaching Sociology*, 301–308.

Mackie, D. M., Devos, T., & Smith, E. R. (2000). Intergroup emotions: Explaining offensive action tendencies in an intergroup context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*(4), 602.

MacKuen, M., Wolak, J., Keele, L., & Marcus, G. E. (2010). Civic engagements: Resolute partisanship or reflective deliberation. *American Journal of Political Science*, *54*(2), 440–458. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00440.x

MacMaster, N. (2017). *Racism in Europe: 1870-2000*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Mader, M., & Schoen, H. (2019). The European refugee crisis, party competition, and voters' responses in Germany. *West European Politics*, *42*(1), 67–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1490484

Mason, L. (2018). *Uncivil agreement: How politics became our identity*. University of Chicago Press.

Massey, D. S. (1999). Why does immigration occur?: a theoretical synthesis. In *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience* (pp. 34–52). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Matthes, J., Knoll, J., & von Sikorski, C. (2018). The "Spiral of Silence" Revisited: A Meta-Analysis on the Relationship Between Perceptions of Opinion Support and Political Opinion Expression. *Communication Research, 45*(1), 3–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650217745429

Matute-Bianchi, M. E. (1986). Ethnic identities and patterns of school success and failure among Mexican-descent and Japanese-American students in a California high school: An ethnographic analysis. *American Journal of Education, 95*(1), 233–255.

McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. *Polity.*

McCombs, M., & Reynolds, A. (2002). News influence on our pictures of the world. In *Media effects* (pp. 11–28). Routledge.

McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 36*(2), 176–187.

McLaren, L., Boomgaarden, H., & Vliegenthart, R. (2018). News coverage and public concern about immigration in Britain. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 30*(2), 173–193. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edw033

Menshikova, A., & van Tubergen, F. (2022). What drives anti-immigrant sentiments online? a novel approach using twitter. *European Sociological Review, 38*(5), 694–706. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcac006

Messing, S., DeGregorio, C., Hillenbrand, B., King, G., Mahanti, S., Mukerjee, Z., Nayak, C., Persily, N., State, B., & Wilkins, A. (2020). Facebook Privacy-Protected Full URLs Data Set. https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/TDOAPG

Miller, J. M., Krosnick, J. A., & Fabrigar, L. R. (2016). The origins of policy issue salience: Personal and national importance impact on behavioral, cognitive, and emotional issue engagement. In *Political Psychology* (pp. 139–185). Psychology Press.

Miller, P. R., & Conover, P. J. (2015). Red and blue states of mind: Partisan hostility and voting in the United States. *Political Research Quarterly, 68*(2), 225–239. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912915577208

Miller, W. E., Shanks, J. M., & Shapiro, R. Y. (1996). *The new American voter.* Harvard University Press Cambridge, MA.

Molina, L. E., Phillips, N. L., & Sidanius, J. (2015). National and ethnic identity in the face of discrimination: ethnic minority and majority perspectives. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 21*(2), 225–236. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037880

Moon, S. J. (2013). Attention, attitude, and behavior: Second-level agenda-setting effects as a mediator of media use and political participation. *Communication Research*, *40*(5), 698–719. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650211423021

Morales, L., Pilet, J.-B., & Ruedin, D. (2015). The gap between public preferences and policies on immigration: A comparative examination of the effect of politicisation on policy congruence. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *41*(9), 1495–1516. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1021598

Mutz, D., & Goldman, S. (2010). Mass media. In *The SAGE handbook of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination* (pp. 241–258). SAGE publications.

Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social Problems*, *41*(1), 152–176.

Nanz, A., & Matthes, J. (2020). Learning from incidental exposure to political information in online environments. *Journal of Communication*, *70*(6), 769–793. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa031

Nekby, L., & Rodin, M. (2007). Acculturation identity and labor market outcomes. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 2826*.

Nguyen, A.-M. D., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2013). Biculturalism and adjustment: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *44*(1), 122–159. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111435097

Nir, L. (2017). Disagreement in Political Discussion. In *The Oxford handbook of political communication*. Oxford University Press.

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1973). Return to the concept of powerful mass media. *Studies of Broadcasting*, *9*(1), 67–112.

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993). *The spiral of silence: Public opinion–Our social skin*. University of Chicago Press.

Norris, P. (2023). A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies. In *The Political Communication Reader* (pp. 111–116). Routledge.

Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2020). Identity Politics and Populism in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *23*(1), 421–439. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-033542

OECD. (2023, October 4). Foreign-born population (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/5a368e1b-en

Páez, D., Rimé, B., Basabe, N., Wlodarczyk, A., & Zumeta, L. (2015). Psychosocial effects of perceived emotional synchrony in collective gatherings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *108*(5), 711–729. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000014

Palicki, S.-K. (2022). rKeywords: Query Expansion. https://github.com/seankellyhp/%20rKeywords

Palonen, K. (2003). Four times of politics: Policy, polity, politicking, and politicization. *Alternatives, 28*(2), 171–186.

Pang, N., Ho, S. S., Zhang, A. M., Ko, J. S., Low, W., & Tan, K. S. (2016). Can spiral of silence and civility predict click speech on Facebook? *Computers in Human Behavior, 64*, 898–905. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.07.066

Park, C. S., & Kaye, B. K. (2021). Applying news values theory to liking, commenting and sharing mainstream news articles on Facebook. *Journalism, 24*(3), 633–653. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211019895

Pérez, E. O. (2015). Xenophobic Rhetoric and Its Political Effects on Immigrants and Their Co-Ethnics. *American Journal of Political Science, 59*(3), 549–564. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12131

Peter, J. (2004). Our long 'return to the concept of powerful mass media'—A cross-national comparative investigation of the effects of consonant media coverage. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 16*(2), 144–168.

Peterson, E., & Simonovits, G. (2017). Costly values: the limited benefits and potential costs of targeted policy justifications. *Journal of Experimental Political Science, 4*(2), 95–106. https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2017.3

Petrocik, J. R. (1996). Issue ownership in presidential elections, with a 1980 case study. *American Journal of Political Science*, 825–850.

Pfetsch, B. (2008). Agents of Transnational Debate Across Europe. *Javnost - The Public, 15*(4), 21–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2008.11008980

Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 7*(2), 156–176.

Phinney, J. S., Berry, J. W., Vedder, P., & Liebkind, K. (2006). The Acculturation Experience: Attitudes, Identities and Behaviors of Immigrant Youth. In *Immigrant youth in cultural transition: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation across national contexts.* (pp. 71–116). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415963619-4

Phinney, J. S., & Devich-Navarro, M. (1997). Variations in bicultural identification among African American and Mexican American adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 7*(1), 3–32.

Phinney, J. S., Horenczyk, G., Liebkind, K., & Vedder, P. (2001). Ethnic identity, immigration, and well-being: An interactional perspective.

Journal of Social Issues, *57*(3), 493–510. https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00225

Quillian, L. (1995). Prejudice as a response to perceived group threat: Population composition and anti-immigrant and racial prejudice in Europe. *American Sociological Review*, *60*(4), 586–611.

Reece, D., & Palmgreen, P. (2000). Coming to America: Need for acculturation and media use motives among Indian sojourners in the US. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *24*(6), 807–824. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(00)00033-X

Rimé, B. (2009). Emotion Elicits the Social Sharing of Emotion: Theory and Empirical Review. *Emotion Review*, *1*(1), 60–85. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073908097189

Risse, T. (2015a). *A community of Europeans?: Transnational identities and public spheres.* Cornell University Press.

Risse, T. (2015b). *European public spheres.* Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, M., & McCombs, M. (1994). Agenda setting and political advertising: Origins of the news agenda. *Political Communication*, *11*(3), 249–262.

Roberts, M., Wanta, W., & Dzwo, T.-H. (2002). Agenda Setting and Issue Salience Online [(Dustin)]. *Communication Research*, *29*(4), 452–465. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650202029004004

Rogers, E. M. (2004). Theoretical diversity in political communication. In *Handbook of political communication research* (pp. 21–34). Routledge.

Russell, W., Neuman, Guggenheim, L., Mo Jang, S., & Bae, S. Y. (2014). The Dynamics of Public Attention: Agenda-Setting Theory Meets Big Data. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(2), 193–214. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12088

Saleem, M., & Ramasubramanian, S. (2019). Muslim Americans' responses to social identity threats: Effects of media representations and experiences of discrimination. *Media Psychology*, *22*(3), 373–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2017.1302345

Sanders, J. M. (2002). Ethnic boundaries and identity in plural societies. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *28*(1), 327–357. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.140741

Sanh, V., Debut, L., Chaumond, J., & Wolf, T. (2019). DistilBERT, a distilled version of BERT: smaller, faster, cheaper and lighter. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1810.04805*, *abs/1910.01108*.

Sayre, B., Bode, L., Shah, D., Wilcox, D., & Shah, C. (2010). Agenda Setting in a Digital Age: Tracking Attention to California Proposition 8 in Social Media, Online News and Conventional News. *Policy & Internet*, *2*(2), 7–32. https://doi.org/10.2202/1944-2866.1040

Schlueter, E., & Davidov, E. (2013). Contextual sources of perceived group threat: Negative immigration-related news reports, immigrant group size and their interaction, Spain 1996–2007. *European Sociological Review*, *29*(2), 179–191.

Schmitter, P. C. (1969). Three neo-functional hypotheses about international integration. *International Organization*, *23*(1), 161–166.

Schüller, S. (2016). The effects of 9/11 on attitudes toward immigration and the moderating role of education. *Kyklos*, *69*(4), 604–632.

Schulz, B., & Leszczensky, L. (2016). Native friends and host country identification among adolescent immigrants in Germany: The role of ethnic boundaries. *International Migration Review*, *50*(1), 163–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12163

Schwartz, C., Simon, M., Hudson, D., & van-Heerde-Hudson, J. (2021). A populist paradox? How Brexit softened anti-immigrant attitudes. *British Journal of Political Science*, *51*(3), 1160–1180. https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0007123419000656

Serrano, J. C. M., Shahrezaye, M., Papakyriakopoulos, O., & Hegelich, S. (2019). The rise of Germany's AfD: A social media analysis. *Proceedings of the 10th international conference on social media and society*, 214–223.

Shapiro, M. A., & Hemphill, L. (2017). Politicians and the policy agenda: Does use of Twitter by the US Congress direct New York Times content? *Policy & Internet*, *9*(1), 109–132. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.120

Sherkat, D. E., & Lehman, D. (2018). Bad Samaritans: Religion and anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. *Social Science Quarterly*, *99*(5), 1791–1804. https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12535

Shoemaker, P. J., & Cohen, A. A. (2006). *News around the world: Content, practitioners, and the public*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203959091

Simon, B., & Klandermans, B. (2001). Politicized collective identity: A social psychological analysis. *American Psychologist*, *56*(4), 319–331. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.4.319

Simon, B., Reininger, K. M., Schaefer, C. D., Zitzmann, S., & Krys, S. (2019). Politicization as an antecedent of polarization: Evidence from two different political and national contexts. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *58*(4), 769–785. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12307

Skrobanek, J. (2009). Perceived discrimination, ethnic identity and the (re-)ethnicisation of youth with a Turkish ethnic background in Germany.

Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, *35*(4), 535–554. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830902765020

Smith, C. A., & Ellsworth, P. C. (1985). Patterns of cognitive appraisal in emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *48*(4), 813–838. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.48.4.813

Sniderman, P. M., Brody, R. A., & Tetlock, P. E. (1991). *Reasoning and choice: Explorations in political psychology.* Cambridge University Press.

Soroka, S. N. (2003). Media, public opinion, and foreign policy. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, *8*(1), 27–48.

Staerklé, C., Sidanius, J., Green, E. G., & Molina, L. E. (2010). Ethnic minority-majority asymmetry in national attitudes around the world: A multilevel analysis. *Political Psychology*, *31*(4), 491–519. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20779581

Statham, P., & Trenz, H.-J. (2012). *The politicization of Europe: Contesting the constitution in the mass media.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203094808

Statham, P., & Trenz, H.-J. (2015). Understanding the mechanisms of EU politicization: Lessons from the Eurozone crisis. *Comparative European Politics*, *13*, 287–306. https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2013.30

Stefan, S., & Linh, D.-X. (2013). Emotions and Information Diffusion in Social Media—Sentiment of Microblogs and Sharing Behavior. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *29*(4), 217–248. https://doi.org/10.2753/MIS0742-1222290408

Swami, V., & Coles, R. (2010). The truth is out there: Belief in conspiracy theories. *The Psychologist*, *23*(7), 560–563.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In *Political Psychology* (pp. 276–293). Psychology Press.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology.* Cambridge University Press.

Talò, T. (2017). Public attitudes to immigration in Germany in the aftermath of the migration crisis. *Policy Briefs, Migration Policy Centre*, (2017/23).

Tenenboim, O., & Cohen, A. A. (2015). What prompts users to click and comment: A longitudinal study of online news. *Journalism*, *16*(2), 198–217. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913513996

Tesler, M. (2018). Elite domination of public doubts about climate change (not evolution). *Political Communication*, *35*(2), 306–326. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1380092

Theocharis, Y. (2015). The conceptualization of digitally networked participation. *Social Media+ Society*, *1*(2), 2056305115610140. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115610140

Theocharis, Y., de Moor, J., & van Deth, J. W. (2021). Digitally networked participation and lifestyle politics as new modes of political participation. *Policy & Internet*, *13*(1), 30–53. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.231

Todaro, M. P., & Maruszko, L. (1987). Illegal migration and US immigration reform: A conceptual framework. *Population and development review*, *13*(1), 101–114. https://doi.org/10.2307/197212

Trebbe, J. (2007). Types of integration, acculturation strategies and media use of young Turks in Germany. *Communication*, *32*(2), 171–191. https://doi.org/10.1515/COMMUN.2007.011

Trenz, H.-J., & Eder, K. (2004). The democratizing dynamics of a European public sphere: Towards a theory of democratic functionalism. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *7*(1), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431004040016

Trittler, S. (2019). Consequences of religious and secular boundaries among the majority population for perceived discrimination among Muslim minorities in Western Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *45*(7), 1127–1147.

Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., & White, I. K. (2002). Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns. *American Political Science Review*, *96*(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055402004240

Van Klingeren, M., Boomgaarden, H. G., Vliegenthart, R., & De Vreese, C. H. (2015). Real world is not enough: The media as an additional source of negative attitudes toward immigration, comparing Denmark and the Netherlands. *European Sociological Review*, *31*(3), 268–283. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcu089

Van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: a quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. *Psychological Bulletin*, *134*(4), 504.

Vergeer, M., Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2000). Exposure to newspapers and attitudes toward ethnic minorities: A longitudinal analysis. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *11*(2), 127–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/106461700246661

Verkuyten, M. (2016). The integration paradox: Empiric evidence from the Netherlands. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *60*(5-6), 583–596. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764216632

Verkuyten, M., & Martinovic, B. (2012). Immigrants' national identification: Meanings, determinants, and consequences. *Social Issues and Policy*

Review, *6*(1), 82–112. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-2409.2011.01036.x

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, *359*(6380), 1146–1151. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559

Vraga, E. K., & Bode, L. (2020). Defining misinformation and understanding its bounded nature: Using expertise and evidence for describing misinformation. *Political Communication*, *37*(1), 136–144.

Wakefield, W. D., & Hudley, C. (2007). Ethnic and racial identity and adolescent well-being. *Theory into practice*, *46*(2), 147–154.

Walsh, J. P. (2021). Digital nativism: Twitter, migration discourse and the 2019 election. *New Media& Society*, *25*(10), 2618–2643. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211032980

Weaver, D. (1991). Issue salience and public opinion: Are there consequences of agenda-setting? *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *3*(1), 53–68.

Weaver, D., & Choi, J. (2017). The Media Agenda: Who (or What) Sets It? In *The Oxford handbook of political communication*. Oxford University Press.

Weaver, D., McCombs, M., Shaw, D. L., et al. (2004). Agenda-setting research: Issues, attributes, and influences. In *Handbook of political communication research* (pp. 257–80). Mahwah, NJ, USA.

Weber, C. (2013). Emotions, Campaigns, and Political Participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, *66*(2), 414–428. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912912449697

Weber, P. (2014). Discussions in the comments section: Factors influencing participation and interactivity in online newspapers' reader comments. *New media & Society*, *16*(6), 941–957.

Webster, S. W., & Albertson, B. (2022). Emotion and Politics: Noncognitive Psychological Biases in Public Opinion. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *25*(1), 401–418. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-105353

Weeks, B. E. (2015). Emotions, partisanship, and misperceptions: How anger and anxiety moderate the effect of partisan bias on susceptibility to political misinformation. *Journal of Communication*, *65*(4), 699–719.

Weismueller, J., Harrigan, P., Coussement, K., & Tessitore, T. (2022). What makes people share political content on social media? The role of emotion, authority and ideology. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *129*, 107–150.

Weiß, H.-J., & Trebbe, J. (2001). Mediennutzung und Integration der türkischen Bevölkerung in Deutschland. *Ergebnisse einer Umfrage des Presse-*

und Informationsamtes derBundesregierung. Potsdam: GöfaK Medienforschung GmbH.

White, I. K., Laird, C. N., & Allen, T. D. (2014). Selling Out?: The politics of navigating conflicts between racial group interest and self-interest. *American Political Science Review, 108*(4), 783–800.

Wiltermuth, S. S., & Heath, C. (2009). Synchrony and cooperation. *Psychological Science, 20*(1), 1–5.

Wimmer, A. (2008). The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: A multilevel process theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 113*(4), 970–1022.

Wlezien, C. (2005). On the salience of political issues: The problem with 'most important problem'. *Electoral Studies, 24*(4), 555–579.

Wojcieszak, M., & Garrett, R. K. (2018). Social identity, selective exposure, and affective polarization: How priming national identity shapes attitudes toward immigrants via news selection. *Human Communication Research, 44*(3), 247–273.

Wolf, F., Lehmann, S., & Lorenz-Spreen, P. (2022). Successive Cohorts of Twitter Users Show Increasing Activity and Shrinking Content Horizons. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media, 2*. https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2022.014

Wright, M., & Bloemraad, I. (2012). Is there a trade-off between multiculturalism and socio-political integration? Policy regimes and immigrant incorporation in comparative perspective. *Perspectives on Politics, 10*(1), 77–95.

Yang, C., Wu, H., Zhu, M., Brian, G., & Southwell. (2004). Tuning in to fit in? Acculturation and media use among Chinese students in the United States. *Asian Journal of Communication, 14*(1), 81–94.

Yarchi, M., Baden, C., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2021). Political polarization on the digital sphere: A cross-platform, over-time analysis of interactional, positional, and affective polarization on social media. *Political Communication, 38*(1-2), 98–139.

Yasui, M., Dorham, C. L., & Dishion, T. J. (2004). Ethnic identity and psychological adjustment: A validity analysis for European American and African American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 19*(6), 807–825.

Yoon, T.-I., Kim, K.-H., & Eom, H.-J. (2011). The border-crossing of habitus: media consumption, motives, and reading strategies among Asian immigrant women in South Korea. *Media, Culture& Society, 33*(3), 415–431.

Zaal, M. P., Saab, R., O'Brien, K., Jeffries, C., Barreto, M., & van Laar, C. (2017). You're either with us or against us! Moral conviction deter-

mines how the politicized distinguish friend from foe. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *20*(4), 519–539.

Zajonc, R. B. (1980). Feeling and thinking: Preferences need no inferences. *American Psychologist*, *35*(2), 151–175.

Zajonc, R. B. (1984). On the primacy of affect. *American Psychologist*, (2), 117–123.

Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion.* Cambridge university press.

Ziegele, M., Breiner, T., & Quiring, O. (2014). What creates interactivity in online news discussions? An exploratory analysis of discussion factors in user comments on news items. *Journal of Communication*, *64*(6), 1111–1138.

Ziegele, M., & Quiring, O. (2013). Conceptualizing Online Discussion Value: A Multidimensional Framework for Analyzing User Comments on Mass-Media Websites. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *37*(1), 125–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2013.11679148

Ziegele, M., Weber, M., Quiring, O., & Breiner, T. (2018). The dynamics of online news discussions: Effects of news articles and reader comments on users' involvement, willingness to participate, and the civility of their contributions. *Information, Communication & Society*, *21*(10), 1419–1435.

Zucker, H. (1978). The Variable Nature of News Media Influence. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *2*(1), 225–240. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1978.11923728

Zürn, M., Binder, M., & Ecker-Ehrhardt, M. (2012). International authority and its politicization. *International theory*, *4*(1), 69–106. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971912000012

Appendix A

Appendix

A.1 Study 1: Keywords for immigration related URLs identification

Keywords are as follows. % indicates wildcard. '%immigra%' OR '%migra%' OR '%emigra%' OR '%asylum%' OR '%asylum seeker%' OR '%refugee%' OR '%foreigner%' OR '%multicultur%' OR '%intercultur%' OR '%deport%' OR '%visa' OR '%citizenship' OR '%work permit' OR '%study permit' OR '%work visa' OR '%study visa' OR '%nationality' OR '%naturali%' OR '%forced wed%' OR '%forced marri%' OR '%forced engag%' OR '%parallel societ%' OR '%headscar%' OR '%honor murder' OR '%hate preach%' OR '%burka%' OR '%islam%' OR '%muslim%' OR '%mohammed cartoon' OR '%family reunifi%' OR '%sham marri%' OR '%sham wed%' OR '%racis%' OR '%race%' OR '%rohingya%' OR '%aborigin%' OR '%birthright%' OR '%emigrat%' OR '%ethnic%' OR '%genocide%' OR '%holocaust%' OR '%jew%' OR '%mexican%' OR '%mexico%' OR '%undocumented%' OR '%abortion*%' OR '%contraception%' OR '%detain%' OR '%evict%' OR '%extradit%' OR '%flee%' OR '%hiv%' OR '%palestin%' OR '%resettl%' OR '%repatria%' OR '%slave%' OR '%white%' OR '%black%' OR '%passport%' OR '%persecut%' OR '%unlawful%' OR '%absentee%' OR '%noncitizen%' OR '%discriminate%' OR '%mistreatment%' OR '%caravan%' OR '%residen%' OR '%asia%'

A.2 Study 1: Predictors for Random Forest classifier

The predictors were as follows: the positive (calculated as the average of loves and hahas), the negative (calculated as the average of angers and sorrys), the aggregate of positive and wows, the aggregate of negative and wows, differences in frequency between pairs of emotions (e.g., loves minus angers), the former value minus wows, negative minus wows, positive minus wows, the sum of the positive and negative minus wows, the sum of the positive and wows minus negative, the sum of the negative and wows minus positive, the sum of either positive emotions or wows minus either negative emotions, the sum of either negative emotions or wows minus either positive emotions (e.g., loves plus wows minus angers), the differences between the positive and negative (positive minus negative).

A.3   Study 1: Robustness check

Table A.1: Multilevel analysis.

Dependent variable	Model 1 Comments	Model 2 Shares
Constant	8.21***	7.36***
	(1.25)	(1.61)
Emotional synchrony		
Agreement	230.86***	228.02***
(baseline = polarization)	(1.87)	(2.53)
Diversity with agreement	-2.63	-1.67
	(1.62)	(2.18)
Diversity with polarization	0.47	2.49
	(1.44)	(1.95)
User report: false news	0.76***	0.63***
	(0.07)	(0.08)
User report: hate speech	1.84***	1.01***
	(0.06)	(0.07)
Groups: Url ID	33,458	32,851
log Likelihood	-3923497 (df=8)	-4081468 (df=8)
N	530,693	530,686

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table A.2: Standard linear regression controlling the URL frequency

Dependent variable	Model 1 Comments	Model 2 Shares
Constant	55.23***	43.47***
	(1.89)	(2.55)
Emotional synchrony		
Agreement	228.02***	225.57***
(baseline = polarization)	(1.88)	(2.53)
Diversity with agreement	-2.58	-1.55
	(1.62)	(2.18)
Diversity with polarization	0.58	2.53
	(1.45)	(1.95)
User report: false news	0.74***	0.61***
	(0.06)	(0.07)
User report: hate speech	1.81***	1.01***
	(0.05)	(0.07)
URL frequency	-2.3***	-1.67***
	(0.07)	(0.09)
Adjusted R^2	0.04	0.02
N	530,686	530,686

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table A.3: Standard linear regression with the first month of occurrence

Dependent variable	Model 1 Comments	Model 2 Shares
Constant	127.55***	151.77***
	(20.45)	(26.4)
Emotional synchrony		
Agreement	687.08***	629.52***
(baseline = polarization)	(22.52)	(29.07)
Diversity with agreement	-52.6	12.63
	(29.79)	(38.46)
Diversity with polarization	-1.89	28.9
	(25.12)	(32.42)
User report: false news	2.19**	3.66***
	(0.71)	(0.92)
User report: hate speech	4.11***	3.84***
	(0.66)	(0.85)
Adjusted R^2	0.07	0.02
N	32,845	32,845

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

A.4 Study 2-3: Keywords for immigration related articles identification

The keywords for the UK case study were; immigra* OR migra* OR asylum* OR emigra* OR multicultur* OR intercultur* OR aslyum* OR refugee* OR foreigner* OR deport* OR (residence permit) OR visa* OR citizenship OR (permanent residen*) OR (work permit) OR (study permit) OR (work visa) OR (study visa) OR nationality OR (forced AND (wed* OR marri* OR engag*)) OR (parallel societ*) OR headscar* OR (honor murder) OR (hate preach*) OR burka* OR islam* OR muslim* OR (mohammed w/10 cartoon*) OR (naturali*) OR (family reunifi*) OR (sham AND (marri* OR wed*)) OR ((discrim* OR terror* OR threat* OR grop* OR rob* OR incident* OR sexual* OR assault* OR crime* OR violen* OR attack* integrat* OR bomb* OR crisis*) w/10 ((New Year) OR (New Year's) OR racis*))
The keywords for German case study were; zuwand* OR einwand* OR migra* OR flücht* OR asyl* OR ausländer* OR geflüch* OR immigr* OR rassis* OR multikult* OR integrat* OR abschieb* OR abgeschob* OR aufen-

thaltsgeneh* OR Visum* OR Staatsbürgerschaft OR Niederlassungserlaubnis OR Aufenthalt* OR Aufenthaltserlaubnis OR Staatsangehörigkeit OR rassis* OR terror* OR anschlag* OR zwangshochzeit* OR zwangsheirat* OR parallelgesellschaft* OR kopftuch* OR ehrenmord* OR hassprediger* OR burka* OR islam* OR muslim* OR mohammedkarikatur OR (mohammed w/10 karikatur*) OR einbürgerung* OR Familienzusammenführung* OR Scheinehe* OR Zwangsverlobung* OR Scheinhochzeit* OR ((diskrim* OR terror* OR anschlag* OR Diebs* OR Vorfäll* OR sexuell* OR Übergriff* OR Täte* OR gewalt* OR Tötungsdelikt OR Messer*) w/10 (Silvester* OR rassis*)). When I downloaded the articles from Nexis Lexis and FAZ.net, I changed search command and connector according to each website's rules.

A.5 Study 2: Research question 1 testing with wave 13

Table A.4: Research question 1 testing (wave 13).

	Dependent variable: Anti-immigrant attitudes	
	(1)	(2)
Political controversy	0.0002	-0.008
	(0.007)	(0.008)
Conservative	1.238*	
	(0.594)	
Labour	-0.758	
	(0.640)	
Political ideology		0.161
(Left = 0, Right = 10)		(0.100)
UK economic concerns	0.190***	0.087*
	(0.036)	(0.035)
Political attention	-0.141***	-0.139***
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Marital status	0.143*	0.040
(Married = 1, Not married = 0)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Christian	0.168**	0.061
(base = no religion)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Other religion	0.176	-0.022
	(0.152)	(0.147)
Unemployed	0.697***	0.452*
(Unemployed = 1, Employed = 0)	(0.190)	(0.216)
Household income	-0.068***	-0.056***
	(0.009)	(0.009)
Political controversy X Conservative	-0.007	
	(0.008)	
Political controversy X Labour	0.006	
	(0.009)	
Political controversy X Political ideology		0.002
		(0.001)
Constant	4.642***	4.059***
	(0.512)	(0.583)
Observations	3,083	2,877
R2	0.176	0.237

Adjusted R2	0.173	0.234
Residual Std. Error	1.416 (df = 3070)	1.360 (df = 2866)
F Statistic	54.701*** (df = 12; 3070)	72.029*** (df = 10; 2866)

Note 1: All variables are from wave 13.

Note 2: Public preference is proxied by anti-immigrant attitudes (higher the number, higher the respondents answered immigration is bad for economy/cultural life).

Note 3: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001