

Chapter 23

Public Opinion and the Politics of Migration



James Dennison and Alina Vrânceanu

23.1 What Are Public Attitudes Towards and the Politics of Immigration?

Identifying and describing [attitudes to immigration](#), let alone explaining them, is not a simple matter. First, human attitudes in general are abstract and so any measurement of them is bound to be highly qualified and contingent on theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches. Second, immigration is a broad topic. Attitudes to immigration alone can be divided into attitudes towards immigrants, towards immigration policy, the perceived effects of immigration, or towards how important immigration is as an issue. Each of these can be divided by immigrant group as the most obvious qualifier. In this chapter we follow the political science literature in conceptualising attitudes as “people’s orientations toward objects” (Druckman & Lupia, 2000, p. 4). Below, we outline the major scholarly works explaining attitudes to immigration. We also sketch out existing research on the politics of immigration and the effects of attitudes to immigration on democratic politics.

23.2 Key Theories Explaining Attitudes to Immigration

A vast literature has been devoted to explaining variation in attitudes to immigration, particularly between individuals in host populations in developed western countries. Here we outline six strands: economics, socialisation, psychology, attitudinal

J. Dennison (✉) · A. Vrânceanu
Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, Florence, Italy
e-mail: james.dennison@eui.eu

embeddedness, cueing, and context and contact (for other useful reviews see Berg, 2015; Dennison & Dražanová, 2018; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014).

23.2.1 *Economic Interests*

Reflecting broader trends in scholarly work on political attitudes and behaviour, the use of economic factors to explain variation in attitudes to immigration is one of the longest standing, most developed and—currently—increasingly contested theoretical strands. In particular, evidence of the causal effect of actual economic indicators, such as income or employment, at the individual level is mixed; for example, Espenshade and Calhoun (1993) find no evidence to support this hypothesis, though recent studies have found evidence that labour market competition does affect attitudes (Huber & Oberdabernig, 2015; Pardos-Prado & Xena, 2019; Polavieja, 2016). The effect of psychological perceptions of economic threat has received greater support; Burns and Gimpel (2000) and Espenshade and Hempstead (1996) find that a pessimistic personal economic outlook leads to greater negativity.

At the national level, however, it has been shown repeatedly that economic downturns and rising unemployment rates increase anti-immigration sentiment (Ruist, 2016). Furthermore, Magni (2020) shows that inequality leads to decreasing support for access to welfare for immigrants. It seems that any negative effect of economic downturns on attitudes to immigration is primarily in sociotropic rather than pocketbook terms, i.e. individuals are more concerned about the potential effect on their fellow citizens than themselves, and when they are concerned about themselves it is in terms of perceived economics rather than actual economics. Somewhat tautologically, many works have shown that belief that immigration is bad for the economy or that immigrants take finite resources lead to opposition to immigration, though this may simply be a *post facto* justification (Fussell, 2014). However, there is evidence that some immigrant groups are seen as likely to contribute and are thus more likely to receive public support (Alba et al., 2005).

23.2.2 *Socialisation*

Other studies have suggested that attitudes to immigration are the result of one's socialising experiences early in life. Importantly, McLaren et al. (2020; see also García-Faroldi, 2017; Kauff et al., 2013) show that being socialised in a more heterogeneous society creates more pro-immigration attitudes. Individuals socialised in countries with strong ethnic, rather than civic or multicultural, identities have been shown to be less supportive of immigration (Van Assche et al., 2017; Levanon & Lewin-Epstein, 2010; Hiers et al., 2017; at the individual level, see McAllister, 2018), as have those in which there is a strong collective rather than individualist culture (Meeusen & Kern, 2016; Shin & Dovidio, 2016).

Education has been repeatedly shown to be positively associated with attitudes to immigration, particularly tertiary education, and to explain shifts in generational patterns (McLaren & Paterson, 2020). Jackman and Muha (1984) and Janus (2010) argue that education has an indoctrinating effect which leads individuals to support certain normative ideologies, in this case leading to pro-immigration views while attending university, with its focus on a ‘universal’, rather than national, outlook. Inversely, Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007) and Mayda (2006) argue that less education leads to less tolerance for diversity which leads to anti-immigration attitudes.

Other important socialising experiences include living or being born abroad, white collar-work or belonging to an ethnic minority, which lead to a cosmopolitan worldview and, thus, pro-immigration attitudes (Haubert & Fussell, 2006). Interestingly, less integrated Latinos have been shown to be more pro-immigration (Branton, 2007). Finally, being religious and taking part in religious activities have been argued to increase empathy or induce universalistic values and thus lead to support for immigration (Knoll, 2009; however, see Helbling & Traummüller, 2016).

23.2.3 *Psychological*

Other studies have suggested that attitudes to immigration result from fundamental psychological predispositions, such as personality types, values and identities. The “Big Five Personality Types” have been shown to predict different types of attitudes to immigration (Dinesen et al., 2016). Individuals that value (defined as their long-term and deep-seated motivational goals) tradition, conformity, and security oppose immigration whereas those who value universalism are supportive (e.g. Davidov et al., 2008). Values shared by conservatives and progressives—such as benevolence—are not likely to divide individuals. Similarly, so-called “right wing authoritarian” predispositions—valuing order and unambiguity above all—have been shown to increase anti-immigration attitudes (Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010). Consciousness of *in-group and out-group social identities* are often shown to be associated with immigration attitudes (Fussell, 2014). Brewer (1999) showed that in-group favouritism was more important than out-group prejudice, with the former leading to a desire to see one’s group’s interests furthered. Lower societal trust is associated with anti-immigration attitudes (MacDonald, 2020).

23.2.4 *Cueing*

A common finding in the public opinion research is that individuals tend to take cues from trusted sources of information, such as political elites, in order to form opinions on a wide range of issues (e.g. Zaller, 1992). While individuals’ views may to some extent be influenced by cues from the overall elite stance (Sanders & Toka, 2013),

much of the literature explores the extent to which individuals take cues from the party they identify most closely with (e.g. Brader & Tucker, 2012). Several studies find this to be the case with respect to the immigration issue too, the impact of party cues being larger among the more highly educated individuals (Hellwig & Kweon, 2016; Vranceanu & Lachat, 2021). There is, however, variation in the strength of cueing effects. Harteveld et al. (2017) suggest that political parties at the extremes of the political spectrum have a higher capacity to cue their supporters. Since parties at the extremes are likely to adopt very distant positions from one another, the authors suggest that the cueing effect may contribute to mass polarisation. Along similar lines, Arndt (2016) corroborates that the Danish public opinion polarisation on cultural issues, including immigration, occurred in response to elite polarisation.

23.2.5 *Contact and Context*

Both contact theory and group threat theory predict that greater interaction with immigrants will affect attitudes to immigration, but with opposite theorised effects. Similarly, both, though particularly the former, have been studied extensively (Gravelle, 2016; Wilson-Daily et al., 2018). [Contact theory](#) theorises that individuals hold misconceptions about immigrants and that contact lessens those misconceptions and thus makes individuals more pro-immigration, as first outlined by Allport (1954; see also, e.g. Ha, 2010; Berg, 2009). Nevertheless, these findings suffer from two methodological weaknesses: contact tends to be either measured through the ethnic composition of the individual's neighbourhood, which fails to actually measure contact and more pro-immigration individuals are likely to be more willing to have contact with immigrants to start with. These weaknesses have to some extent been overcome by experimental studies (Hewstone et al., 2005), which support contact theory's supposed mechanisms of improved knowledge, greater empathy, and especially, a reduction in intergroup anxiety (Barlow et al., 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

By contrast, [group threat theory](#) expects contact with immigrants to increase the sense of threat felt by non-immigrants, who then become more opposed to immigration, with the effect sometimes contingent on the size of the majority group (e.g. Berg, 2014; McLaren, 2003). Two syntheses have been put forward, first, regarding the level of intimacy of the contact (Fetzer, 2000; Kaufmann, 2014) and, second, regarding who the immigrants are (Ha, 2010). Moreover, despite the vast literature, the effect sizes in either direction are usually considerably smaller than those related to socialisation and psychology and, theoretically, should be less persistent.

In policy terms, Schlueter and Davidov (2013) show that European countries that actively pursue immigrant [integration policies](#) foster lower levels of feelings of group threat amongst their citizens. Messing and Ságvári (2018) argue that perceptions of state capacity *in general* affect attitudes to immigration. Terrorist attacks had been shown to affect attitudes to immigration (Legewie, 2013), but more recent

evidence suggests that attitudes to immigration have become sufficiently embedded in Europe that short term events and attacks are unlikely to affect them further (Brouard et al., 2018).

At the personal level, Jackson et al. (2001) show that having a family and children leads to greater anti-immigration views, as individuals become more concerned and cautious about major societal changes. A lack of feeling of safety in one's neighbourhood has also been shown to lead to anti-immigration views (Chandler & Tsai, 2001).

23.2.6 Attitudinal Embeddedness

One of the reasons for the high interest in contact theory and group threat theory is that they are intuitively only applicable to attitudes to immigration. However, attitudes to immigration are to a large extent formed by similar forces that determine attitudes to other prevalent political issues, which, as a result, they correlate strongly with and together determine placements within broader attitudinal sets such as 'left-right' or 'authoritarian-libertarian' (de Vries et al., 2013). Owing to cognitive dissonance, this embeddedness limits the flexibility that individuals might have over such attitudes. Indeed, the correlation between immigration attitudes and broader political attitudes has increased over time (Semyonov et al., 2006).

23.3 Politics of Immigration

Having reviewed various theoretical accounts for attitudes to immigration, it is relevant to ask to what extent political parties articulate and respond to public preferences. Moreover, which political entrepreneurs mobilise public views on immigration and what are the main patterns of party competition around this issue? We review below several findings from research focusing mostly on European countries.

23.3.1 Responsiveness

Political representation is the cornerstone of democratic functioning and political parties have a key role in this process (e.g. Dalton, 2017, p. 610). The immigration issue has gained growing political attention in European countries in recent decades (Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019) and it has been highly salient in recent national elections and referenda (e.g. Aardal & Bergh, 2018; Hobolt, 2016). There is thus increasing scholarly attention to how responsive political parties are to voters' preferences on this issue. O'Grady and Abou-Chadi (2019) find at best limited

evidence of party responsiveness to short-term changes in the general public opinion. By contrast, Dalton (2017) suggests that political parties tend to be responsive to their own supporters' views on cultural issues (including immigration), although he identifies a representation gap illustrated by lower congruence between parties' and citizens' policy positions, notably among leftist parties (see also Brady et al., 2020; Costello et al., 2012). In a recent study covering 17 European countries, Vranceanu (2019) finds that mainstream parties tend to be more responsive to the average voter when they face competition from strong radical right competitors. This highlights the role of 'issue entrepreneurs' (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012) in enhancing the responsiveness of mainstream parties to the general electorate.

23.3.2 Support for Radical Right and Other Party Families

Radical right parties (RRPs hereafter) represent the party family that has arguably benefitted most from mobilising public anti-immigrant sentiment (Kriesi et al., 2006). As Ivarsflaten (2008, p. 3) argues, "only the appeal on the immigration issue unites all successful populist right parties". Research consistently shows that holding anti-immigration views increases the likelihood of voting for an RRP (Kriesi & Schulte-Cloos, 2020; Lubbers et al., 2002; Rydgren, 2008). This is especially so when anti-immigrant parties are evaluated by voters on policy considerations (van der Brug et al., 2005). A string of recent studies focusing on single countries confirm the importance of anti-immigration attitudes for the success of RRP and extreme-right parties. Focusing on Greece, Dinas et al. (2019) document that exposure to refugees in the context of the 2015 refugee crisis increased the support for the extreme right party Golden Dawn. Similarly, in Germany, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) shifted radically in an anti-immigration direction by 2017, increasingly attracting voters with strong anti-immigrant views (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019). With reference to the same country, Neuner and Wratil (2020) suggest that the combination of anti-immigration and people-centric appeals is particularly attractive to voters. Dennison and Geddes (2019; see also Dennison, 2019; Mendes & Dennison, 2020) also show that the vote share of RRP in Western Europe increases as the public issue salience of immigration rises.

However, several studies dispute the idea that immigration is mobilised by RRP alone (e.g. Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011). There is cross-country variation in the extent to which centre-right and centre-left parties used the immigration issue for purposes of electoral competition (Odmalm & Super, 2014). Pardos-Pardo (2015) suggests that centre-parties can benefit from mobilising anti-immigrant sentiment when party competition occurs in a unidimensional space, i.e. when the economic and cultural dimensions of party competition overlap. Moreover, Downes and Loveless (2018) show that in the period following the 2008 economic crisis non-incumbent centre-right parties gained electorally from emphasising the immigration issue. By contrast, more recent studies suggest that Social Democratic parties fail to attract votes when they adopt tough positions on immigration, as this strategy

is especially likely to alienate highly educated voters and socio-cultural and self-employed professionals (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2020). Instead, mainstream left parties may win votes by combining liberal sociocultural positions (on immigration, among other issues) with investment-oriented economic positions (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2019).

In line with the issue voting literature, which examines how voting decisions are based on voters' issue preferences (e.g. Hobolt & Rodon, 2020, p. 228), the empirical evidence indicates that proximity between voters' positions on immigration and parties' stances on this issue matters for vote choice, including when examining mainstream parties only or countries without RRP at the time of the study (Pardos-Pardo, 2012; Brady et al., 2020). The effect of issue proximity on party support seems to be moderated by voter polarisation (Han, 2018), or by issue constraint and how immigration fits underlying cleavages (Pardos-Pardo, 2012). Note that perceptions of proximity may be endogenous to party affect (Dinas et al., 2016). Finally, the political supply may be scarce for voters who are economically left-wing but hold anti-immigration attitudes (Van der Brug & van Spanje, 2009). The vote choice of citizens in this group should thus be influenced by the relative personal importance of the two issues, economy and immigration (Lefkofridi et al., 2014).

23.3.3 Party Competition

Research on party competition documents how RRP can benefit from the strategies that mainstream parties adopt on their main issue dimension, immigration (e.g. Meguid, 2005). On the one hand, studies exploring how the adoption by mainstream parties of accommodative strategies, that is, convergence toward the hard-line policy positions of RRP, affects the electoral success of RRP come with mixed findings. Arzheimer (2009) finds no effect, although RRP do benefit when their competitors talk more about immigration. By contrast, Arzheimer and Carter (2006) find that the probability to vote for an RRP increases when the mainstream right competitor adopts tough positions on RRP's core issues, which is in line with a legitimisation effect. Down and Han (2019) find a similar effect, but only among voters that did not consider RRP to be the most competent on immigration. On the other hand, Meguid (2005) suggests that niche parties, such as RRP, lose electoral support when both mainstream-left and right competitors ignore the immigration issue or converge toward the position of the RRP (see also Dahlström and Sundell (2012) who also show that the behaviour of the mainstream left matters to a higher extent), and win votes when at least one of their competitors adopts an adversarial strategy.

There is also vast research on the extent to which mainstream parties adopt accommodative strategies *in response to* RRP's electoral success, which would be indicative of a contagion effect. Van Spanje (2010) finds that electoral pressures exerted by anti-immigration parties generate incentives for other parties to adopt restrictive positions on immigration (see also Abou-Chadi, 2016; Abou-Chadi &

Krause, 2018). Han (2015) documents that, while contagion affects mainstream right parties unconditionally, mainstream left parties are affected only when their supporters become more negative about multiculturalism or immigration, or when they had suffered electoral losses in the previous election. RRPs' welfare chauvinistic stances may impact as well, although differentially, the positions of mainstream competitors on multiculturalism and welfare (Schumacher & van Kersbergen, 2016). Finally, large parties tend to adopt more restrictive stances also when issue saliency at the party-system level increases (Abou-Chadi et al., 2020). Interestingly, whereas issue attention tends to increase in countries with stronger RRPs and higher shares of foreign-born population, the potential to become a top issue on the political agenda depends on the coalition incentives facing centre-right parties (Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019).

However, other studies suggest that the effect of RRPs on mainstream parties' issue saliency and position-taking may have been exaggerated (e.g. Dancygier & Margalit, 2019). In terms of position-taking, these parties have at times adopted restrictive immigration stances before being challenged by radical right competitors (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011; see also Mudde, 2013). Furthermore, according to Bale et al. (2010), the response of centre-left (social democratic) parties to the RRP challenge depends on additional factors such as the strategic behaviour of centre-right and left-wing parties. Moreover, parties' strategies can also be affected by the extent to which the immigration issue aligns with the dominant societal fault line in a given country (Odmalm & Super, 2014). Finally, political parties may actually decide to blur their issue stances, particularly when it comes to issues that they do not primarily mobilise on and in a context of voter polarisation or divided partisan base (Han, 2018).

23.3.4 Politicisation

Grande et al. (2019) define issue politicisation as a combination of issue salience and polarisation. Focusing on six Western European countries, the authors document growing politicisation of the immigration issue after the 2000s, mostly due to growing party polarisation and issue entrepreneurial strategies on the part of RRPs. This resonates with Dancygier and Margalit's (2019, p. 28) claim that "if polarisation around immigration has occurred, it has likely been driven by parties located on the farther ends of the ideological spectrum" (but see Alonso & da Fonseca, 2011, p. 880). Researchers have also analysed contexts where party polarisation is driven by the first-time entry into Parliament of RRPs, to assess how this affects voter polarisation. Bischof and Wagner (2019) employ a range of methods to show that the first-time entry into Parliament of a RRP generates voter polarisation on the left-right dimension (see also Castanho Silva, 2018). The mechanisms responsible for this effect are legitimisation among supporters of radical right parties and backlash among citizens considering that RRPs violate social norms. Issue politicisation may also depend on the coalition incentives of mainstream right parties (Green-Pedersen & Krogstrup, 2008).

23.4 Future Avenues for Research

As already made clear in this review, there remain considerable debates and shortcomings in the literature related to attitudes to immigration. In terms of explanations for attitudes, there are relatively few comprehensive models that seek to explain variation *in toto*, with a strong preference instead for the testing of singular causal mechanisms. As such, we know relatively little about the respective importance of factors, their causal relationships to each other, or their respective positions in the ‘funnel of causality’. The vast majority of studies consider ‘western advanced democracies’ despite immigration being an important political issue in every region of the world. Also typical, though decreasingly so, is the reliance on relatively naïve methods. Moreover, while existing research sheds some light on the political representation of the average voter’s, or of partisan constituencies’ preferences, future research should explore in greater detail the potential contextual influences such as the dimensionality of the political space or the degree of public polarisation (e.g. Ezrow et al., 2014). Future studies should also seek to explore potential drivers and political consequences of mass polarisation specifically on the immigration issue.

Chapter Bibliography

- Aardal, B., & Bergh, J. (2018). The 2017 Norwegian election. *West European Politics*, 41(5), 1208–1216.
- Abou-Chadi, T. (2016). Niche party success and mainstream party policy shifts – How Green and radical right parties differ in their impact. *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(2), 417–436.
- Abou-Chadi, T., & Krause, W. (2018). The causal effect of radical right success on mainstream parties’ policy positions: A regression discontinuity approach. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123418000029>
- Abou-Chadi, T., & Wagner, M. (2019). The electoral appeal of party strategies in postindustrial societies: When can the mainstream left succeed? *The Journal of Politics*, 81(4), 1405–1419.
- Abou-Chadi, T., & Wagner, M. (2020). Electoral fortunes of social democratic parties: Do second dimension positions matter? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(2), 246–272.
- Abou-Chadi, T., Green-Pedersen, C., & Mortensen, P. B. (2020). Parties’ policy adjustments in response to changes in issue saliency. *West European Politics*, 43(4), 749–771.
- Alba, R., Rumbaut, R. G., & Marotz, K. (2005). A distorted nation: Perceptions of racial/ethnic group sizes and attitudes toward immigrants and other minorities. *Social Forces*, 84, 901–919.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Addison-Wesley.
- Alonso, S., & da Fonseca, S. C. (2011). Immigration, left and right. *Party Politics*, 18(6), 865–884.
- Arndt, C. (2016). Issue evolution and partisan polarization in a European multiparty system: Elite and mass repositioning in Denmark 1968–2011. *European Union Politics*, 17(4), 660–682.
- Arzheimer, K. (2009). Contextual factors and the extreme right vote in Western Europe, 1980–2002. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(2), 259–275.
- Arzheimer, K., & Berning, C. C. (2019). How the alternative for Germany (AfD) and their voters veered to the radical right, 2013–2017. *Electoral Studies*, 60, 102040. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2019.04.004>
- Arzheimer, K., & Carter, E. (2006). Political opportunity structures and right-wing extremism. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45, 419–443.

- Bale, T., Green-Pedersen, C., Krowel, A., Luther, K. R., & Sitter, N. (2010). If you can't beat them, join them? Explaining social democratic responses to the challenge from the populist radical right in Western Europe. *Political Studies*, 58, 410–426.
- Barlow, F. K., Paolini, S., Pedersen, A., Hornsey, M. J., et al. (2012). The contact caveat: Negative contact predicts increased prejudice more than positive contact predicts reduced prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38, 1629–1643.
- Berg, J. A. (2009). Core networks and Whites' attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73, 7–31.
- Berg, J. A. (2014). 'Whites' attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy: Are multiracial individuals a source of group threat or intergroup contact? *Sociological Focus*, 47, 194–217.
- Berg, J. A. (2015). Explaining attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy: A review of the theoretical literature. *Sociology Compass*, 9, 23–34.
- Bischof, D., & Wagner, M. (2019). Do voters polarize when radical parties enter Parliament? *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(4), 888–904.
- Brader, T., & Tucker, J. A. (2012). Following the party's lead. Party cues, policy opinion, and the power of partisanship in three multiparty systems. *Comparative Politics*, 44(4), 403–435.
- Brady, D. W., Ferejohn, J. A., & Paparo, A. (2020). 'Are we losing touch?' Mainstream parties' failure to represent their voters on immigration and its electoral consequences. *Italian Political Science Review*, 50(3), 398–421.
- Branton, R. (2007). Latino attitudes toward various areas of public policy. *Political Research Quarterly*, 60, 293–303.
- Brewer, M. B. (1999). The psychology of prejudice: Ingroup love and outgroup hate? *Journal of Social Issues*, 55, 429–444.
- Brouard, S., Vasilopoulos, P., & Foucault, M. (2018). How terrorism affects political attitudes: France in the aftermath of the 2015–2016 attacks [online]. *West European Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1429752>
- Burns, P., & Gimpel, J. G. (2000). Economic insecurity, prejudicial stereotypes, and public opinion on immigration policy. *Political Science Quarterly*, 115, 201–225.
- Castanho Silva, B. (2018). Populist radical right parties and mass polarization in the Netherlands. *European Political Science Review*, 10(2), 219–244.
- Chandler, C. R., & Tsai, Y. (2001). Social factors influencing immigration attitudes: An analysis of data from general social survey. *The Social Science Journal*, 38, 177–188.
- Cohrs, J. C., & Stelzl, M. (2010). How ideological attitudes predict host society members' attitudes toward immigrants: Exploring cross-national differences. *Journal of Social Issues*, 66, 673–694.
- Costello, R., Thomassen, J., & Rosema, M. (2012). European parliament elections and political representation: Policy congruence between voters and parties. *West European Politics*, 35(6), 1226–1248.
- Dahlström, C., & Sundell, A. (2012). A losing gamble. How mainstream parties facilitate anti-immigrant party success. *Electoral Studies*, 31, 353–363.
- Dalton, R. (2017). Party representation across multiple issue dimensions. *Party Politics*, 23(6), 609–622.
- Dancygier, R. M., & Margalit, Y. (2019). The evolution of the immigration debate: A study of party positions over the last half-century. *Comparative Political Studies*, 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3192913>
- Davidov, E., Meuleman, B., Billiet, J., & Schmidt, P. (2008). Values and support for immigration: A cross-country comparison. *European Sociological Review*, 24, 583–599. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcn020>
- de Vries, C. E., & Hobolt, S. B. (2012). When dimensions collide: The electoral success of issue entrepreneurs. *European Union Politics*, 13(2), 246–268.
- de Vries, C., Hakhverdian, A., & Lancee, B. (2013). The dynamics of voters' left/right identification: The role of economic and cultural attitudes. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1(2), 223–238.
- Dennison, J. (2019). How issue salience explains the rise of the populist right in Western Europe. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edz022>

- Dennison, J., & Dražanová, L. (2018). Attitudes to immigration in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. ICMED report. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/62348>
- 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.
- Dinas E, Hartman E and Van Spanje J (2016) Dead man walking: The affective roots of issue proximity between voters and parties. *Political Behavior* 38(3): 659–687.
- Dinas, E., Matakos, K., Xeferis, D., & Hangartner, D. (2019). Waking up the golden dawn: Does exposure to the refugee crisis increase support for extreme-right parties? *Political Analysis*, 27, 244–254.
- Dinesen, P. T., Klemmensen, R., & Nørgaard, A. S. (2016). Personality and immigration attitudes. *Political Psychology*, 37, 55–72.
- Down, I., & Han, K. J. (2019). Marginalisation or legitimation? Mainstream party positioning on immigration and support for radical right parties. *West European Politics*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2019.1674055>
- Downes, J. F., & Loveless, M. (2018). Centre right and radical right party competition in Europe: Strategic emphasis on immigration, anti-incumbency, and economic crisis. *Electoral Studies*, 54, 148–158.
- Druckman, J. F., & Lupia, A. (2000). Preference formation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, 1–24.
- Espenshade, T. J., & Calhoun, C. A. (1993). An analysis of public opinion toward undocumented immigration. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 12, 189–224.
- Espenshade, T. J., & Hempstead, K. (1996). Contemporary American attitudes toward U.-S. immigration. *International Migration Review*, 30, 535–570.
- Ezrow, L., Tavits, M., & Homola, J. (2014). Voter polarization, strength of partisanship, and support for extremist parties. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(11), 1558–1583.
- Fetzer, J. S. (2000). *Public attitudes toward immigration in the United States, France, and Germany*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fussell, E. (2014). Warmth of the welcome: Attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy in the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40, 23.1–23.20.
- García-Faroldi, L. (2017). Determinants of attitudes towards immigration: Testing the influence of interculturalism, group threat theory and national contexts in time of crisis. *International Migration*, 55, 10–22.
- Grande, E., Schwarzbözl, T., & Fatke, M. (2019). Politicizing immigration in Western Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(10), 1444–1463.
- Gravelle, T. (2016). Party identification, contact, contexts, and public attitudes toward illegal immigration. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(1), 1–25.
- Green-Pedersen, C., & Krogstrup, K. (2008). Immigration as a political issue in Denmark and Sweden. *European Journal of Political Research*, 47, 610–634.
- Green-Pedersen, C., & Otjes, S. (2019). A hot topic? Immigration on the agenda in Western Europe. *Party Politics*, 25(3), 424–434.
- Ha, S. E. (2010). The consequences of multiracial contexts on public attitudes toward immigration. *Political Research Quarterly*, 63, 29–42.
- Hainmueller, J., & Hiscox, M. J. (2007). Educated preferences: Explaining attitudes toward immigration in Europe. *International Organization*, 61, 399–442.
- Hainmueller, J., & Hopkins, D. J. (2014). Public attitudes to immigration. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17(1), 225–249.
- Han, K. J. (2015). The impact of radical right-wing parties on the positions of mainstream parties regarding multiculturalism. *West European Politics*, 38(3), 557–576.
- Han, K. J. (2018). Beclouding party position as an electoral strategy: Voter polarization, issue priority and position blurring. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 653–675.
- Harteveld, E., Kokkonen, A., & Dahlberg, S. (2017). Adapting to party lines: The effect of party affiliation on attitudes to immigration. *West European Politics*, 40(6), 1177–1197.
- Haubert, J., & Fussell, E. (2006). Explaining pro-immigrant sentiment in the U.S.: Social class, cosmopolitanism, and perceptions of immigrants. *International Migration Review*, 40, 489–507.

- Helbling, M., & Traummüller, R. (2016). How state support of religion shapes attitudes toward Muslim immigrants: New evidence from a sub-national comparison. *Comparative Political Studies*, *49*, 391–424.
- Hellwig, T., & Kweon, Y. (2016). Taking cues on multidimensional issues: The case of attitudes toward immigration. *West European Politics*, *39*(4), 710–730.
- Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Voci, A., Craig, J., et al. (2005). Intergroup contact in a divided society: Challenging segregation in Northern Ireland. In D. Abrams, J. M. Marques, & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *The social psychology of inclusion and exclusion* (pp. 265–292). Psychology Press.
- Hiers, W., Soehl, T., & Wimmer, A. (2017). National trauma and the fear of foreigners: How past geopolitical threat heightens anti-immigration sentiment today. *Social Forces*, *96*, 361–388.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2016). The Brexit vote: A divided nation, a divided continent. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *23*(9), 1259–1277.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Rodon, T. (2020). Cross-cutting issues and electoral choice. EU issue voting in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *27*(2), 227–245.
- Huber, P., & Oberdabernig, D. (2015). The impact of welfare benefits on natives' and immigrants' attitudes toward immigration. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *44*, 53–78.
- Ivarsflaten, E. (2008). What unites right-wing populists in Western Europe?: Re-examining grievance mobilization models in seven successful cases. *Comparative Political Studies*, *41*(1), 3–23.
- Jackman, M. R., & Muha, M. J. (1984). Education and intergroup attitudes: Moral enlightenment, superficial democratic commitment, or ideological refinement. *American Sociological Review*, *49*, 751–769.
- Jackson, J. S., Brown, K. T., Brown, T. N., & Marks, B. (2001). Contemporary immigration policy orientations among dominant-group members in Western Europe. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*, 431–456.
- Janus, A. L. (2010). The influence of social desirability pressures on expressed immigration attitudes. *Social Science Quarterly*, *91*, 928–946.
- Kauff, M., Asbrock, F., Thörner, S., & Wagner, U. (2013). Side effects of multiculturalism: The interaction effect of a multicultural ideology and authoritarianism on prejudice and diversity beliefs. *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, *39*, 305–320.
- Kaufmann, E. (2014). 'It's the demography, stupid': Ethnic change and opposition to immigration. *The Political Quarterly*, *85*, 267–276.
- Knoll, B. R. (2009). 'And who is my neighbor?' Religion and immigration policy attitudes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *48*, 313–331.
- Kriesi, H., & Schulte-Cloos, J. (2020). Support for radical parties in Western Europe: Structural conflicts and political dynamics. *Electoral Studies*, *65*, 102138.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., et al. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, *45*(6), 921–956.
- Lefkofridi, Z., Wagner, M., & Willmann, J. E. (2014). Left-authoritarians and policy representation in Western Europe: Electoral choice across ideological dimensions. *West European Politics*, *37*(1), 65–90.
- Legewie, J. (2013). Terrorist events and attitudes toward immigrants: A natural experiment. *American Journal of Sociology*, *118*, 1199–1245.
- Levanon, A., & Lewin-Epstein, N. (2010). Grounds for citizenship: Public attitudes in comparative perspective. *Social Science Research*, *39*, 419–431.
- Lubbers, M., Gijsberts, M., & Scheepers, P. (2002). Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, *41*, 345–378.
- Macdonald, D. (2020). Political trust and support for immigration in the American mass public. *British Journal of Political Science*, *1*-19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123419000668>
- Magni, G. (2020). Economic inequality, immigrants and selective solidarity: From perceived lack of opportunity to in-group favoritism. *British Journal of Political Science*, *1*-24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123420000046>
- Mayda, A. M. (2006). Who is against immigration? A cross-country investigation of individual attitudes towards immigrants. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *88*, 510–530.

- McAllister, I. (2018). National identity and attitudes towards immigration in Australia. *National Identities*, 20(2), 157–173.
- McLaren, L. M. (2003). Anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe: Contact, threat perception, and preferences for the exclusion of migrants. *Social Forces*, 81, 909–936.
- McLaren, L., & Paterson, I. (2020). Generational change and attitudes to immigration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(3), 665–682.
- McLaren, L., Neundorff, A., & Paterson, I. (2020). Diversity and perceptions of immigration: How the past influences the present. *Political Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720922774>
- Meeusen, C., & Kern, A. (2016). The relation between societal factors and different forms of prejudice: A cross-national approach on target-specific and generalized prejudice. *Social Science Research*, 55, 1–15.
- Meguid, B. (2005). Competition between unequals: The role of mainstream party strategy in niche party success. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 347–359.
- Mendes, M. S., & Dennison, J. (2020). Explaining the emergence of the radical right in Spain and Portugal: Salience, stigma and supply. *West European Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2020.1777504>
- Messing, V., & Ságvári, B. (2018). *Looking behind the culture of fear. Cross-national analysis of attitudes towards migration*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Mudde, C. (2013). Three decades of populist radical right parties in Western Europe: So what? *European Journal of Political Research*, 52(1), 1–19.
- Neuner, F. G., & Wratil, C. (2020). The populist marketplace: Unpacking the role of “thin” and “thick” ideology. *Political Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09629-y>
- O’Grady, T., & Abou-Chadi, T. (2019). Not so responsive after all: European parties do not respond to public opinion shifts across multiple issue dimensions. *Research & Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168019891380>
- Odmalm, P., & Super, B. (2014). If the issue fits, stay put: Cleavage stability, issue compatibility and drastic changes on the immigration ‘issue.’. *Comparative European Politics*, 12(6), 663–679.
- Pardos-Pardo, S. (2012). The electoral effect of immigration preferences and the centre-periphery cleavage in Spain. *South European Society and Politics*, 17(3), 503–518.
- Pardos-Pardo, S. (2015). How can mainstream parties prevent niche party success? Center-right parties and the immigration issue. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(2), 352–376.
- Pardos-Prado, S., & Xena, C. (2019). Skill specificity and attitudes toward immigration. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63, 286–304.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 751–783.
- Polavieja, J. G. (2016). Labour-market competition, recession and anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe: Occupational and environmental drivers of competitive threat. *Socioeconomic Review*, 14, 395–417.
- Rekker, R. (2016). The lasting impact of adolescence on left-right identification: Cohort replacement and intracohort change in associations with issue attitudes. *Electoral Studies*, 44, 120–131.
- Ruist, J. (2016). How the macroeconomic context impacts on attitudes to immigration: Evidence from within-country variation. *Social Science Research*, 60, 125–134.
- Rustenbach, E. (2010). Sources of negative attitudes toward immigrants in Europe: A multi-level analysis. *International Migration Review*, 44, 53–77.
- Rydgren, J. (2008). Immigration sceptics, xenophobes or racists? Radical right-wing voting in six west European countries. *European Journal of Political Research*, 47(6), 737–765.
- Sanders, D., & Toka, G. (2013). Is anyone listening? Mass and elite opinion cueing in the EU. *Electoral Studies*, 32(1), 13–25.
- 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, 179–191.
- Schumacher, G., & van Kersbergen, K. (2016). Do mainstream parties adapt to the welfare chauvinism of populist parties? *Party Politics*, 22(3), 300–312.

- Semyonov, M., Raijman, R., & Gorodzeisky, A. (2006). The rise of anti-foreigner sentiment in European societies, 1988-2000. *American Sociological Review*, 71, 426-449.
- Shin, H., & Dovidio, J. F. (2016). Cultural differences in the role of economic competitiveness in prejudice toward immigrants and foreign workers. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 17, 7-32.
- Van Assche, J., Roets, A., De Keersmaecker, J., & Van Hiel, A. (2017). The mobilizing effect of right-wing ideological climates: Cross-level interaction effects on different types of outgroup attitudes. *Political Psychology*, 38, 757-776.
- Van der Brug, W., & van Spanje, J. (2009). Immigration, Europe and the 'new' cultural dimension. *European Journal of Political Research*, 48(3), 309-334.
- Van der Brug, W., Fennema, M., & Tillie, J. (2005). Why some anti-immigrant parties fail and others succeed. A two-step model of aggregate political support. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(5), 537-573.
- Van Spanje, J. (2010). Contagious parties: Anti-immigration parties and their impact on other parties' immigration stances in contemporary Europe. *Party Politics*, 16(5), 563-586.
- Vranceanu, A. (2019). The impact of contextual factors on party responsiveness regarding immigration issues. *Party Politics*, 25(4), 583-593.
- Vranceanu, A., & Lachat, R. (2021). Do parties influence public opinion on immigration? Evidence from Europe. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 31(1), 1-21.
- Wilson-Daily, A., Kemmelmeyer, M., & Prats, J. (2018). Intergroup contact versus conflict in Catalan high schools: A multilevel analysis of adolescent attitudes toward immigration and diversity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 64, 12-28.
- Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge University Press.

James Dennison is a part-time professor at the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute. He is also a visiting scholar at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University and a researcher at the University of Stockholm. His interests include political attitudes and behaviour, and migration politics. He has been published in a range of top international journals including the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *European Union Studies*, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *West European Politics* and others.

Alina Vranceanu is a research fellow at the European University Institute (Migration Policy Centre). Her research focuses on political behaviour, political representation and public opinion. She has published articles in *Party Politics* and the *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

