Anti-Immigration attitudes in Europe, 2002-2016
A Longitudinal test of the group conflict theory

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Research framework

THREAT THEORIES

Negative attitudes towards outgroups as a defensive reaction of the majority group to the perception that their exclusive privileges are threatened by the presence of minority groups

(Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Bobo 1983; Quillian 1995, 1996; Scheepers et al. 2002).
Threat theories - theoretical issues

- **Individual vs group threats**
  - Competition between individuals (individual in weak position)
  - Competition between groups (all members of the majority group)

- **Economic vs cultural threats**
  - Competition over scarce economic resources (housing, good jobs)
  - Outgroup as a threat to - national - identities

- **Static or longitudinal interpretation**
  - Impact of high but stable levels of competition
  - Evolution of attitudes when changes in competition happen
Hypotheses

ENDURING THREATS HYPOTHESES

- HP1: The larger the immigrant population in a country, the higher the level of individual anti-immigration attitudes
- HP2: The higher the unemployment rate in a country, the higher the level of individual anti-immigration attitudes

LONGITUDINAL HYPOTHESES

- HP3: A growing immigrant population in a country is linked to an increase in individual anti-immigration attitudes
- HP4: A growing unemployment rate in a country is linked to an increase in individual anti-immigration attitudes
Data & Methods
DATA

- **ESS Longitudinal dataset** (waves 1-8, 2002-2016)

- **DV**: reject scale as proposed by Meuleman et al. (2009)
  - Allow people from same race/different race/poorer countries...
  - Checked for both cross-country and across-time equivalence

- **Individual IV**
  - Employment status (Employed, unemployed, inactive)
  - Social class (5 cat. ESeC scheme)
  - Feeling about household income (Difficult, not difficult)
  - + gender, age, education, migratory background

- **Macro IV**
  - Share of immigrants (OECD International Migration Database)
  - Unemployment rates (Eurostat LFS database)
METHODS

- **Longitudinal 3 levels model (I,CY,C)**
  - MACRO vbl as country means - enduring cross-sectional differences
  - MACRO vbl as country-year deviations from the country means - longitudinal effects
  - INDIVIDUAL variables
  - Control for time (2nd order)
Results
Anti-Immigration attitudes in Europe

- Austria
- Belgium
- Czech Rep
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Hungary

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- --- Reject
- --------------- Share of immigrants
- ---------------- Unemployment rate
## INDIVIDUAL

*Education (ref: Less than lower sec.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>INDIVIDUAL</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>COMPLETE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary</td>
<td>-0.215***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.216***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>-0.521***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.522***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>-0.742***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.742***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>-1.174***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.175***</td>
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*Migratory background (ref: No)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migratory background</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.385***</td>
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<td>-0.385***</td>
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</table>

*Employment status (ref: Employed)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0.103***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.103***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.010</td>
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</table>

*Difficult on present income (ref: No)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Difficult on present income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.289***</td>
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<td>0.288***</td>
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</table>

*Social Class ESeC (Ref: Higher)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>COMPLETE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower-grade service class</td>
<td>0.177***</td>
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<td>0.177***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small business owners</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.442***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
<td>0.529***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.529***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>0.606***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.606***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## MACRO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MACRO</th>
<th>INDIVIDUAL</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>COMPLETE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants share</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants share - deviation</td>
<td>0.130***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.135***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate - deviation</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.004</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

- Very strong effect of education and social class
- Weak - but existing - effect of employment status and income difficulties
- No effects of enduring cross-sectional differences
- Effect of longitudinal change in the share of immigrants
- Both individual and contextual threats play a role, but the effects are independent
BUT...
TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

- Enduring country differences do not explain AIA
- Longitudinal changes in the country share of immigrants matter
  ...but results obtained for Hungary, Poland, Austria and Italy cannot be explained by increased competition

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- Change in immigrant population are just pre-condition to politicize immigration issues
- Media power to emphasise even small changes, thus raising public concern

FUTURE RESEARCH: how such changes can - or cannot - be perceived and transformed into political issues
THANK YOU!

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