Public attitudes towards immigration and immigrants

What people think, why, and how to influence them

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Key messages

- People hold diverse and seemingly contradictory attitudes towards immigration – they can support reductions while recognising the positive economic and cultural impact of immigrants in their country.

- Segmentation across high-income countries shows roughly half of people form a 'conflicted' middle: neither for nor against migration.

- Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration are rooted in individuals' values and worldview. While they can be shifted by external factors, they are relatively fixed.

- Attempts to shift attitudes must therefore understand and engage with these values, particularly those of the 'conflicted' middle.

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Acronyms

EES   European Election Studies

EU   European Union

GCM   Global Compact for Migration

GDP   gross domestic product

IMF   International Monetary Fund

ISD   Institute for Strategic Dialogue

ISSP   International Social Survey Program

IOM   International Organization for Migration

OAMD   African Observatory for Migration and Development

OPAM   Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration

UK   United Kingdom

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

US   United States

Introduction

In June 2017, the authors wrote a short paper for ODI entitled *Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants* (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017): a summary of the available evidence on public attitudes, including survey data, academic conclusions about their drivers, and civil society efforts to influence them. Since then, the field of public attitudes towards immigration has grown immensely. Surveys that aim to ascertain how attitudes in certain areas change over time have proliferated at regional, national and global levels. Researchers have attempted to map individual drivers of public attitudes through attitudinal segmentation, while studies from around the world have detailed the influence of policymakers, public policy, the media, civil society and the private sector on public attitudes towards refugees and migrants (see Box 1 for a discussion of terminology). We are therefore in a better position than ever to revisit the conclusions in our original paper and provide new evidence to support anyone seeking to influence public attitudes towards immigration. The Covid-19 pandemic also provides us with a unique moment of opportunity to reflect on the role of refugees and migrants in societies across the globe, what people feel about them, and how to build more inclusive and socially cohesive societies.

This paper is split into four chapters. Chapter 1 details the global, regional, and national surveys that aim to understand public attitudes, and summarises some of the key messages that can be gleaned. Chapter 2 discusses individual drivers of attitudes towards immigration, including the role of personas; worldviews, values and experiences, and a recent move to attitudinal segmentation. Chapter 3 analyses broader contextual drivers of attitudes towards immigration, including the role of political rhetoric, policy, the media, social media, civil society, and the private sector. Finally, chapter 4 offers a series of recommendations to anyone aiming to influence public attitudes. It summarises what we know about effective messaging strategies and offers some evidence-based ways forward. The paper attempts to include evidence from across the world, with the caveat that most examples and evidence are concentrated in high-income countries.

This paper was written before the fallout from Covid-19 is fully understood. Governments around the world have enacted an increasingly restrictive series of border and business closures in response to Covid-19, which are having an unprecedented impact on global economic activity. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is predicting a three percent decline in global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020, a slump unparalleled since the Great Depression (Elliot, 2020). We do not yet know how this economic recession will impact public attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. In some countries, leaders are using this opportunity to advance xenophobia and racist rhetoric, attempting to end immigration (Ballhaus and Hackman, 2020), and in others the recognition of immigrants as 'key workers' may increase support for legal immigration pathways (ODI, 2020). It is too early to know the impact of these efforts, but we have sought to incorporate possible considerations into this paper's recommendations and conclusions.

Box 1   Terminology: refugees and migrants

'Migrants' are defined in this paper as those who have moved, whether internally or internationally, to improve their lives by finding work, or for education, family reunion, or other reasons. The term is often used to denote those who have moved for voluntary reasons. Individuals who have entered a new host country are referred to as 'immigrants', while the term 'emigrants' is used when referring to their departure from their country of origin; this distinction refers to the part of their journey under discussion, since all migrants can be considered to be both. Countries of migrant destination usually handle migrants under their own national immigration laws and policies.

'Refugees' are those who have been involuntarily compelled to flee internationally to escape persecution or armed conflict. There are over 26 million refugees in the world today, concentrated in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2020). Recognised refugees can access assistance from host country governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other organisations (UNHCR, 2016). Many remain in their host countries, while others (less than one percent) are able to access resettlement, mainly to high-income countries (UNHCR, 2019).

Terminology matters. When surveys specifically ask about attitudes towards refugees (rather than other immigrants), they usually find attitudes are more positive (Mayda, 2006; Rasmussen and Poushter, 2019). This may be because refugees are seen as more deserving of support, due to their circumstances or their lack of choice. Both refugees and other migrants contribute economically and socially to their host countries, and they often contribute more than they take out (Mayda, 2006).

Some polling has shown that people understand these distinctions , and identify support accordingly (Purpose Europe and More in Common, 2017a), while other surveys have shown that people often conflate different terms (Blinder and Richards, 2020). In reality, this distinction is not black and white – the same movements can include people moving for different reasons and people can move between categories. In this paper, we predominately refer to immigrants, as a broader category, though some conclusions refer more specifically to refugee movements.

1 What polling data tells us

The last four years have seen a proliferation of specific pieces of analysis attempting to measure host community attitudes towards refugees and immigrants across the world (see Box 2). Some of these surveys have a global lens (e.g. the Gallup World Poll and Pew Global Attitudes Survey), others have a regional focus (e.g. European Social Survey and Arab/Afro/Asian/Latino Barometers), and others concentrate on one country (e.g. the British Social Attitudes Survey and YouGov polling). These latter profiles try to understand local differences in attitudes, which are sometimes used to help craft targeted advocacy messages and outreach strategies. Unfortunately, data highlighting attitudes in low- and middle-income countries continues to be sparse. We have seen an increase in the number of outfits attempting to collate and analyse survey data, including the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Migration Data Portal, the Migration Policy Center's Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM), and the African Observatory for Migration and Development (OAMD). This chapter provides an overview of these surveys, their sample size, their questions, and their key findings, which are collated in full in Annex 1.

1.1 Global surveys

There are five notable global surveys that include questions on immigration and immigrants: the Gallup World Poll, Pew Global Attitudes Survey, International Social Survey Program (ISSP), the World Values Survey, and Ipsos Global Trends Survey. All cover a large cross-section of countries from most regions of the world (they range from 31 countries, covered by the ISSP, to 160 countries covered by the Gallup World Poll). All of these surveys contain multiple waves, and ask broadly the same questions in each wave. In addition, two of the surveys – the Gallup World Poll and Ipsos Global Trends – include specific sub-surveys on immigration issues (the Migrant Acceptance Index and Global @dvisor Immigration Tracker respectively).

The questions fall mainly within three themes. Firstly, some surveys have questions focused on numbers. For example, 'In your opinion, should we allow more immigrants to move to our country, fewer immigrants, or about the same as we do now?' (Pew Global Attitudes Survey) and 'Over the last 5 years, in your opinion has the amount of migrants in your country… [increased], [stayed the same], or [decreased]' (Ipsos Global Trends).

Box 2   The problems with polling

Public opinion surveys can be notoriously unreliable, with data sensitive to ambiguities and bias in question wording and ordering, and vulnerable to changes in methodologies and timing (Crawley, 2005). Evidence from United Kingdom (UK) polling shows dramatic shifts in public attitudes towards immigration when poll questions are reworded (Blinder and Allen, 2016). That said, polling data can be a valuable barometer of public attitudes, especially when consistent over time, between polls, and when polling is based on robust methodologies. But the interpretation of polls must be approached with due care; attention should be paid to understanding the limitations of any dataset.

Secondly, other surveys have questions focusing on the impacts of migrants. These impacts can be economic, social, and/or cultural. For example, some surveys ask respondents whether 'Immigrants today make our country stronger because of their work and talents' *or* 'Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and social benefits' (Pew Global Attitudes Survey). Others ask 'How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in (R's country)' (ISSP); and 'Should employers give priority to natives over immigrants when jobs are scarce?' (World Values Survey).

Finally, other surveys have questions focused on people's intrinsic support for immigrants, regardless of their contributions. For example, 'Please tell me whether you, personally, think each of the following is a good thing or a bad thing. [Immigrants living in this country], [An immigrant becoming your neighbor], and [An immigrant marrying one of your close relative]' (Gallup World Poll) and 'Do you want to live next to immigrants?' (World Values Survey).

1.2 Regional surveys

This review identified eight main regional surveys that include questions on attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. This list is not exhaustive, and more cross-comparison is needed.

Three focus solely on Europe: the European Social Survey (ESS), the Eurobarometer, and the European Election Studies (EES). The ESS is the most extensive for our purposes, asking six questions pertaining to immigration including 'To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?', and questions about views on immigrants speaking the local language, having relevant

work skills and qualifications, belonging to the same religion, and their impact on crime. The Eurobarometer asks whether immigration from outside or within the European Union (EU) 'evokes a positive or negative feeling', as well as a measure of immigration's salience (see Box 3). Finally, the EES focuses more on policy, asking people whether they favour a 'restrictive policy on immigration'.

The other five studies focus on different regions:[1]

1. The Transatlantic Trends poll focuses on people in Europe and the United States (US). They ask 19 migration policy questions including about whether immigration is a problem; immigrants' impact on crime, public services, and jobs for locals; government immigration policy; and integration.
2. The Afrobarometer surveys people across Africa, including a section on tolerance towards others, and a question asking whether people would like to have people of a different ethnicity, immigrants or foreign workers as neighbours.
3. The Asian Barometer surveys people across Asia – in 2014 they included a new questions asking people their support for new immigrants.
4. The Latino Barometer surveys people across Latin America, asking three questions about both the effects of immigration and emigration intentions.
5. The Arab Barometer surveys people across the Middle East and North Africa. While the survey focuses mainly on attitudes towards emigration, the survey also asks 'Would you like having immigrants or foreign workers as neighbours, dislike it, or not care/neither dislike nor like?'. The Arab Barometer also issued a specific study in Morocco's Casablanca-Settat region to explore how effectively traditional theories explain opposition to immigration.

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1 There is also a Eurasian Barometer, but it does not (to our knowledge) ask questions pertaining to immigration. For more information, see http://office.eurasiabarometer.org.

Box 3 Salience

There is a sharp difference between anti-immigrant sentiment and the salience (or 'perceived importance') of immigration as an issue. While public attitudes have remained relatively constant over recent decades, the salience of immigration as an issue has varied wildly; sometimes with no correlation between salience and attitudes. For example, the salience of immigration has risen sharply in Europe over the last decade. In this context, voters most concerned about immigration – who often already held anti-immigration attitudes – are more likely to vote for anti-immigration parties, even when these parties do not align with other issues they believe in (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018).

This salience could be affected by the media, government policy, political party rhetoric, or real-world events, as evidenced by the example of the UK. Over the last decade, Ipsos Mori has been asking Britons what they feel the most important issue facing the nation is. In the year or so before the Brexit referendum, immigration was consistently named as the most salient issue (peaking at 56 percent in September 2015). Yet before 2000 it was barely mentioned, and it has declined to 13 percent in November 2019 (Blinder and Richards, 2020). This may be due to people feeling immigration is now under control, or that other issues are viewed as more important (such as Brexit implementation, and the National Health Service). Regardless, it is notable that, over this time, attitudes actually improved (ibid.).

The relationship between salience, public attitudes, and public policy is complex (see Figure 1). There is some evidence that governments are more likely to enact permissive policies when salience is low, and vice versa (Culpepper, 2011).

Figure 1   Theoretical model of what causes the national level salience of immigration to change
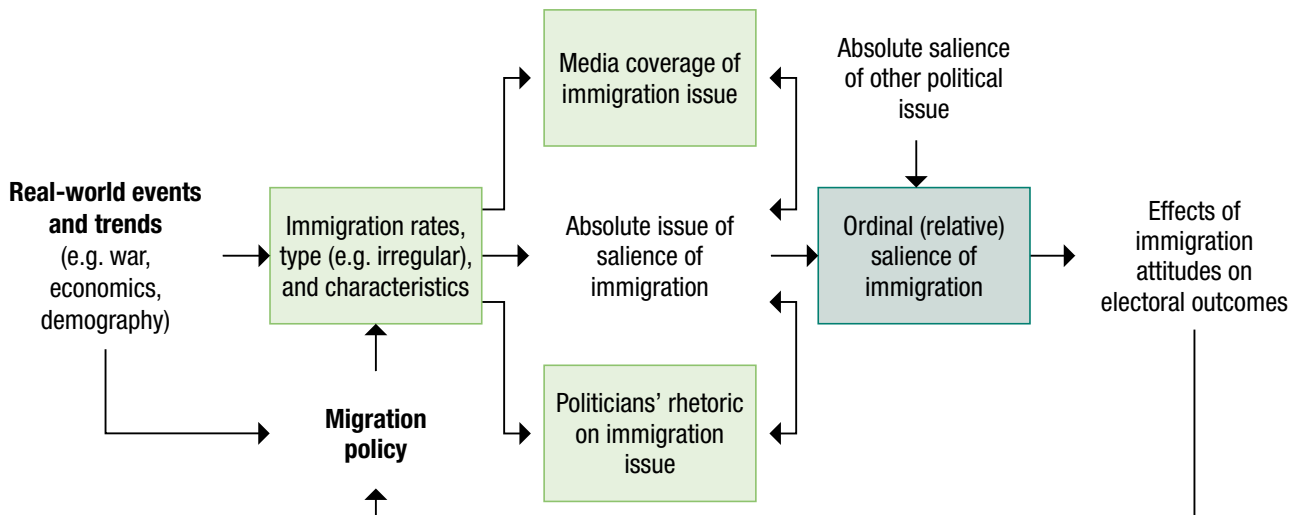
Source: Dennison and Nasr (2019)

1.3   National surveys

Finally, there are several country-specific surveys, predominately in high-income countries. This paper will not go into detail on these surveys; it is beyond the scope and has been adequately covered elsewhere.[2] Instead, we will briefly mention three here, given these countries tend to be on the extreme ends of results listed above.

Firstly, in the UK, a number of specific surveys such as the British Social Attitudes Survey, British Election Studies, Ipsos Mori, and YouGov polls have been undertaken, the findings of which are regularly summarised by the Migration Observatory (Blinder and Richards, 2020). These surveys also focus on numbers ('Do you think the number of immigrants to Britain nowadays should be… [Increased a lot], [Increased a little], [Remain the same as it is], [Reduced a little], and [Reduced a lot]'), and on whether people prioritise immigrants with skills and from culturally-similar countries. Secondly, in the US, polls such as the National Immigration Forum (2019) look at whether people feel immigrants have strengthened America. Thirdly, in Australia, immigration is regularly covered in national polling, such as the Lowy Institute Poll, the Australian Values Survey, and YouGov (Davidson, 2019). All ask about numbers ('Do you personally think that the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year is too high, too low, or about right?') as well as values statements such as whether 'the costs of immigration outweigh the benefits' and whether 'people are coming here to claim benefits'.
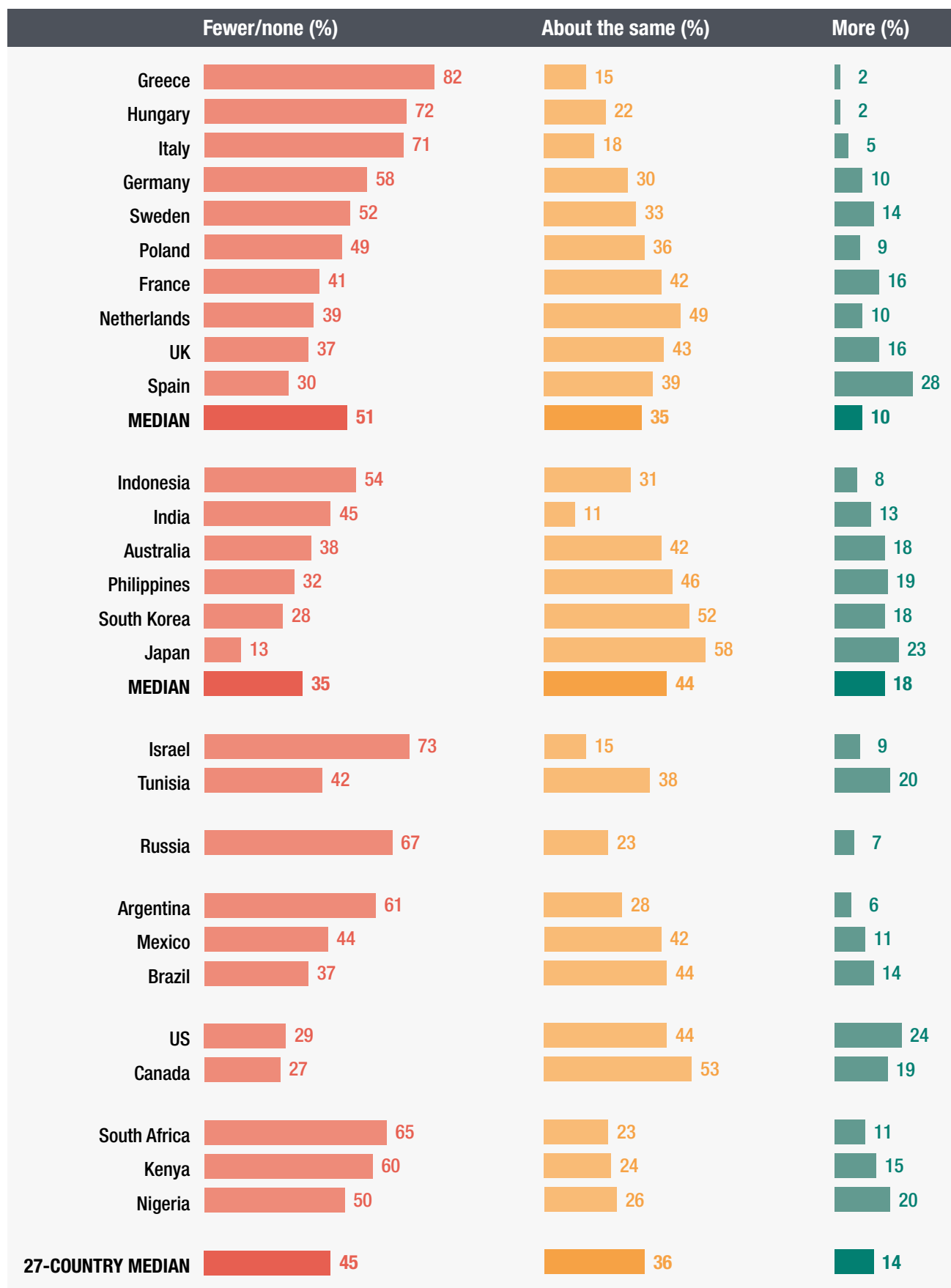
1.4   Key messages

Based on the above surveys, we have drawn out six key messages, listed below. These are by no means the only interesting observations in the surveys, and further research is needed. Yet two things are particularly striking: the *inherent contradictions* in the messages received from these surveys (people can seemingly hold two opposite views), and their *variation* (global, regional, and even national averages can obscure huge differences). The following messages are just a snapshot based on polling data; further chapters will explore why people hold these attitudes and how they can be influenced.

1. **Around the world, few want more immigration.** This hasn't always been the case: between 2012 and 2014, Gallup surveyed 140 countries and found that, in every major world region except Europe, the largest proportion of people wanted immigration to stay at current levels or increase (IOM, 2015). More recent polls have painted a less positive picture, although they cover fewer countries. For example, a Pew Global Attitudes Survey of 27 countries (of which 10 were European) in spring 2018 found little appetite for more immigration: 45 percent of people wanted fewer or no immigrants, and 36 percent wanted the number to stay the same. Just 14 percent said their countries should allow more immigrants (see Figure 2). Similarly, Ipsos's Immigration and Refugees Survey of 25 countries in July 2017 found that 48 percent of people felt there were too many immigrants in their country and 27 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

2. **Averages conceal massive variations between and within regions and countries.** One must always be careful about taking averages at face value. For example, a global average would obscure the vast differences between countries captured by the ISSP: 30 percent of South Africans feel immigration should be 'increased a lot' compared to just two percent in Norway. On a regional level, polls tend to show that those in Europe are more negative, while those in Oceania are more positive. Yet Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index found countries from both regions within the most accepting countries (e.g. Iceland and New Zealand). Within regions, polls find vast differences. The Asian Barometer finds those in Southeast Asia are the most anti-immigration (Chang and Welsh, 2016); and the EES finds that support for reducing immigration ranges

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2   For example, European national surveys are thoroughly covered in Dennison and Dražanová (2018).

Figure 2 Around the world, few want more migration

	Fewer/none (%)	About the same (%)	More (%)
Greece	82	15	2
Hungary	72	22	2
Italy	71	18	5
Germany	58	30	10
Sweden	52	33	14
Poland	49	36	9
France	41	42	16
Netherlands	39	49	10
UK	37	43	16
Spain	30	39	28
MEDIAN	51	35	10
Indonesia	54	31	8
India	45	11	13
Australia	38	42	18
Philippines	32	46	19
South Korea	28	52	18
Japan	13	58	23
MEDIAN	35	44	18
Israel	73	15	9
Tunisia	42	38	20
Russia	67	23	7
Argentina	61	28	6
Mexico	44	42	11
Brazil	37	44	14
US	29	44	24
Canada	27	53	19
South Africa	65	23	11
Kenya	60	24	15
Nigeria	50	26	20
27-COUNTRY MEDIAN	45	36	14

Q: In your opinion, should we allow more immigrants to move to our country, fewer immigrants, or about the same as we do now?
Source: Data from the Pew Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, discussed in Connor and Krogstad (2018)
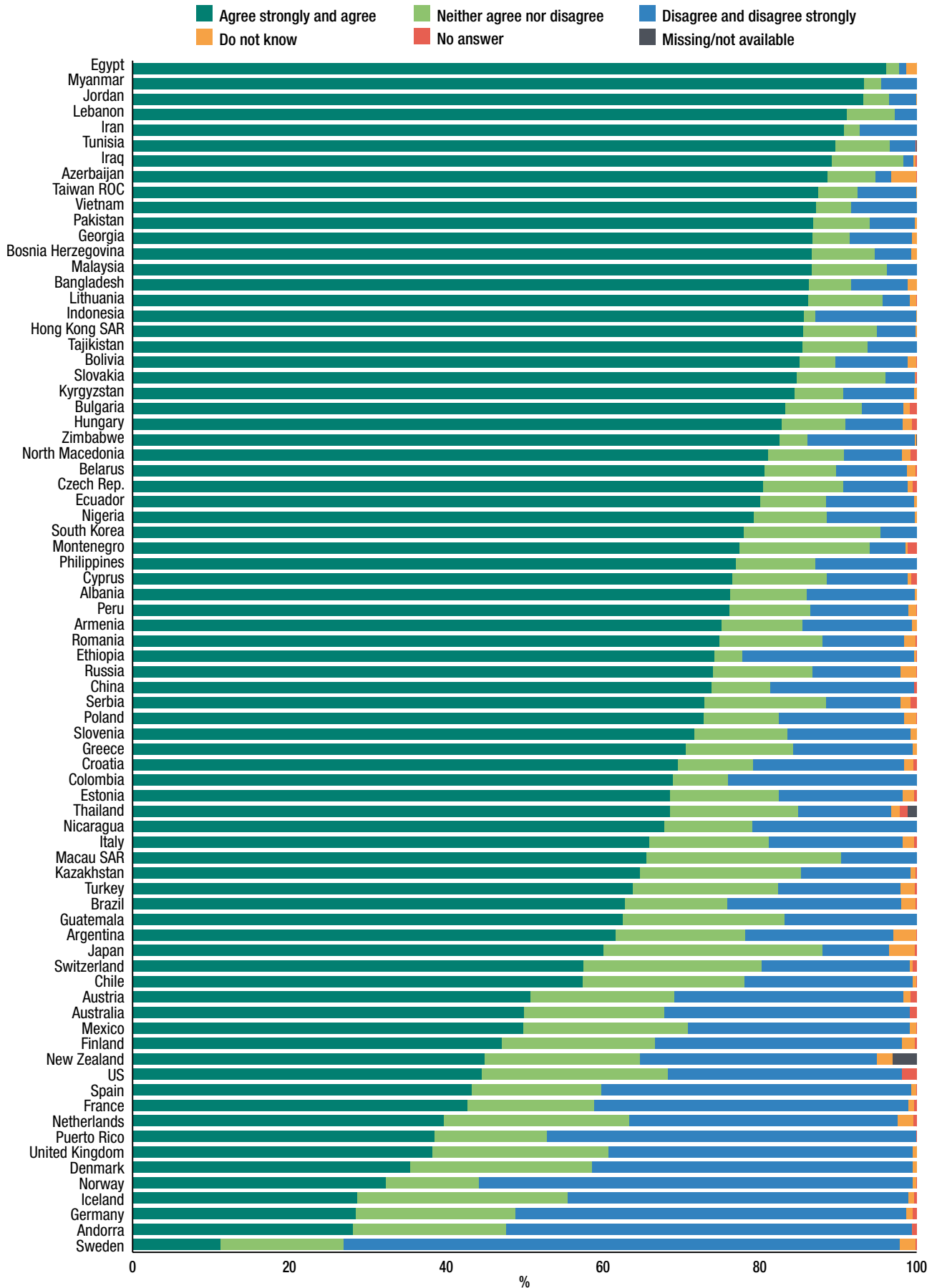
from 85 percent (e.g. Cyprus) to 65 percent (e.g. the UK). Such variations demonstrate the difficulty of agreeing common regional or global policies towards issues like immigration (Heath et al., 2020). Overall, attitudes towards immigration generally have an inverse relationship with the number of immigrants. Those countries that host the most immigrants are more positive than those that host fewer.

3. **People are unsure whether immigrants enrich their economies.** The 2018 Pew Global Attitudes Survey found that majorities in 10 of the 18 top migrant destination countries (including the US, Germany, UK, France, Canada, and Australia) feel migrants have made their country stronger because of their work and talents; together, these ten positive countries host 40 percent of migrants worldwide. 65 percent of Australians feel immigration has had a positive impact on the economy (Lowy Institute, 2019). In contrast, the Ipsos July 2017 Immigration and Refugees Poll found that only 28 percent across 25 countries surveyed (including all those included in Pew's poll) felt immigration was good for their economy (ranging from 50 percent in Saudi Arabia to 8 percent in Serbia). The stark difference between these polls is difficult to account for. Even within the same survey, people can agree both that immigrants take jobs and create jobs. Bobby Duffy suggests this inherent contradiction may be due to the framing of the question (both can be true) and people prioritising the impacts of immigrants locally rather than nationally (Duffy, 2019). However, even those who believe that immigrants contribute economically think locals should be prioritised for employment. The World Values Survey asks whether employers should prioritise locals when jobs are scarce; with the exception of Sweden (11 percent), most other countries saw majorities in favour (Figure 3).

4. **Many feel immigrants are putting pressure on social services.** The Ipsos July 2017 Immigration and Refugees Poll found that 49 percent of people globally agree that 'immigration has placed too much pressure on public services in our country' with another 27 percent remaining neutral. While some countries have become more worried (e.g. Turkey and Sweden), and some have become less concerned (e.g. Britain and Australia), the overall percentages have remained relatively constant between 2011 and 2017 (Ipsos Mori, 2017). This belief is common across regions. While majorities in Europe and the US believe immigrants come for work, the second most common answer was 'to seek social benefits' (41 percent in Europe and 45 percent in the US). In Australia, 75 percent of people are against 'people coming here to claim benefits' (Davidson, 2019).

5. **People often prefer migrants who are culturally similar to themselves.** The 2016 ESS found that people are more likely to be opposed to immigrants of a different race or ethnicity, though support varies considerably country by country (for example, Spain and Sweden are more positive than Hungary, Israel, and Greece). Some countries demonstrate a strong hierarchy of preference in terms of immigrants' country of origin, religion and ethnicity. For example, in the UK, at the preferred end of the scale are those who are white, English-speaking, European and from Christian countries, while the least preferred are non-whites, non-Europeans and those from Muslim countries (Blinder and Richards, 2020). Surveys outside Europe paint a different picture. Afrobarometer finds that 90 percent of people in the 27 countries surveyed 'would not care', 'somewhat like', and 'strongly like' neighbours of a different ethnicity. And Arab Barometer's Casablanca study finds that the majority of Moroccans are more worried about sub-Saharan immigration than from elsewhere. Even in Europe, while many prefer culturally similar migrants, this isn't always the most important factor. For example, the ESS finds that being 'white' is less important to Europeans than being able to economically contribute and speak the local language (with 75 percent in favour). Of course, it is difficult to know how much social desirability bias is playing a part here (Janus, 2010).

Figure 3   When jobs are scarce, people feel employers should give priority to locals over immigrants

Legend:
- Agree strongly and agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree and disagree strongly
- Do not know
- No answer
- Missing/not available

Countries (top to bottom): Egypt, Myanmar, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Tunisia, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Taiwan ROC, Vietnam, Pakistan, Georgia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Lithuania, Indonesia, Hong Kong SAR, Tajikistan, Bolivia, Slovakia, Kyrgyzstan, Bulgaria, Hungary, Zimbabwe, North Macedonia, Belarus, Czech Rep., Ecuador, Nigeria, South Korea, Montenegro, Philippines, Cyprus, Albania, Peru, Armenia, Romania, Ethiopia, Russia, China, Serbia, Poland, Slovenia, Greece, Croatia, Colombia, Estonia, Thailand, Nicaragua, Italy, Macau SAR, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, Japan, Switzerland, Chile, Austria, Australia, Mexico, Finland, New Zealand, US, Spain, France, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Germany, Andorra, Sweden

X-axis: % (0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)

Q: [To what extent do you agree?] 'Employers should give priority to [nation] people than immigrants'.
Source: Data from World Values Survey (2020)

6. **People prefer refugees over immigrants.**
   The attitudes summarised here pertain to attitudes towards immigrants. However, people generally are more supportive when asked specifically about refugees. Pew's Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey found that, across the 18 countries surveyed, 71 percent supported taking in refugees fleeing violence and war. In contrast, a median of 50 percent said they supported 'more' or 'about the same' number of immigrants moving to their country.[3] Despite these positive top-line views, people are divided as to whether they believe refugees are genuine claimants, will cause crime or security issues, or will integrate well (Ipsos Mori, 2017).

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3   Only two countries supported taking in immigrants more than refugees: Japan and the US (Rasmussen and Poushter, 2019).

2 Individual drivers of public attitudes

The literature exploring the drivers of public attitudes towards immigration and immigrants is substantial and can be split broadly into two categories. First, there are 'individual' drivers, which include individuals' personal characteristics (for example their age or gender), internal factors (such as their psychology and values), their life experiences and their immediate surroundings (for example whether there is a high number of migrants in their neighbourhood). Second are 'contextual' drivers: factors which relate to the broader context in which individuals are situated, including government policy and politics, media narratives and civil society campaigns. This chapter delves further into individual drivers, while contextual drivers are explored in chapter 3.

Historically, the literature looking at individual drivers has often focused on demographics as predictors of attitudes. For example, a long-running body of evidence finds that hostility towards refugees and immigrants is less prevalent among younger, politically liberal, and more educated people (Crawley, 2009; IOM, 2015; Heath and Richards, 2016; TENT, 2016; Esipova et al., 2018), although the prominence of this effect can vary between contexts (Mayda, 2006; Heath and Richards, 2016). Yet it has increasingly been acknowledged that – although important predictors of attitudes – demographics do not give the full picture. Instead, a large and growing body of literature goes beyond the question of *who* is likely to have particular attitudes, to instead focus on *how* and *why* attitudes are formed. As Dennison and Dražanová (2018) have outlined, the latter literature has numerous weaknesses, including methodological issues, a tendency towards testing explanatory factors in isolation (as opposed
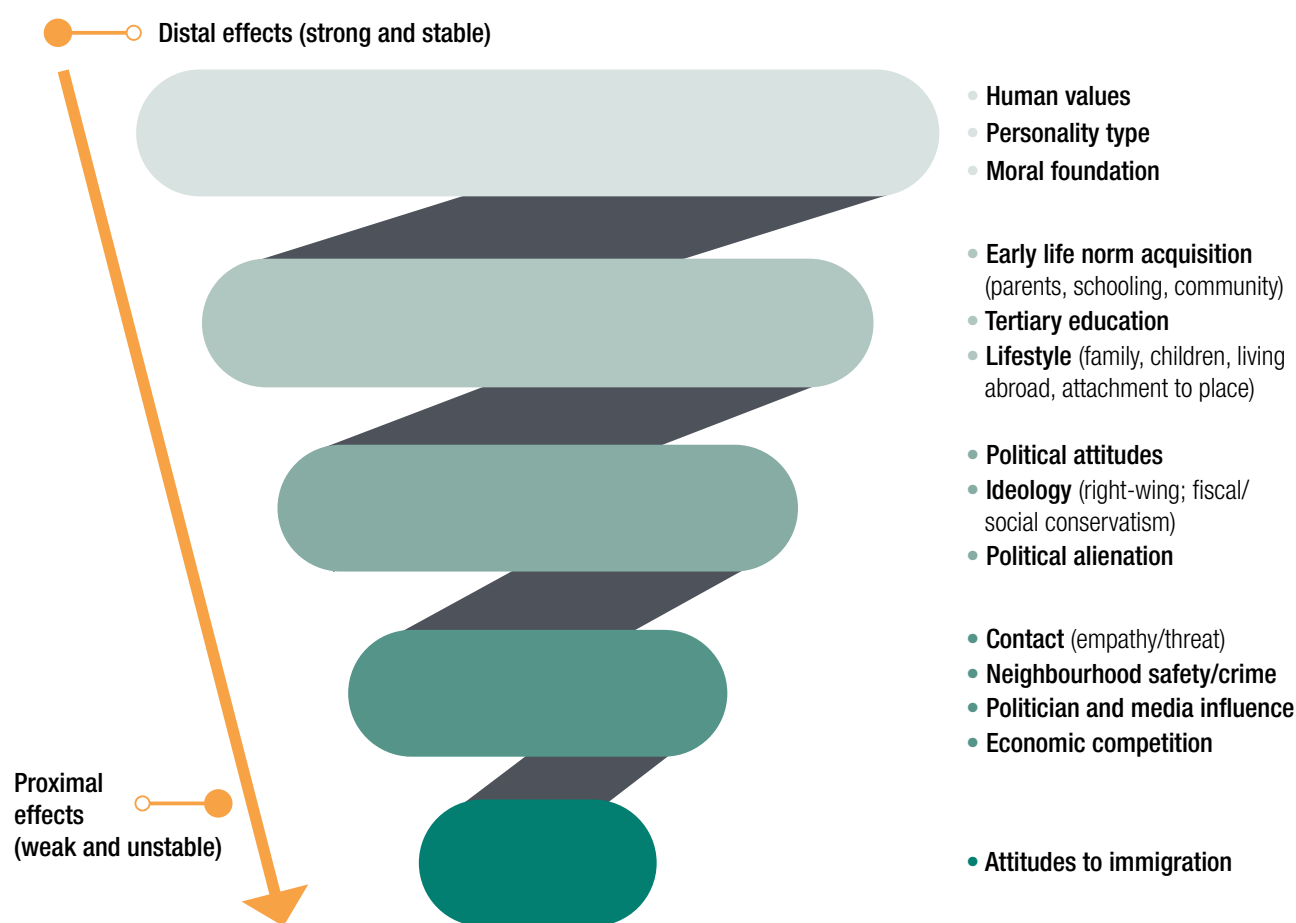
to how they interrelate), a US-centric bias, and a focus on explaining negative as opposed to positive perceptions. However, overall it remains far more illuminating than demographics alone and, despite weaknesses, reveals a number of commonalities and insights.

Dennison and Dražanová (2018) put forward a 'funnel of causality' (see Figure 4) for the multiple and interrelated factors which come together to shape attitudes throughout an individual's lifetime. Some factors link to demographic trends, for example how the experiences and ideology attained through (particularly tertiary) education shape attitudes, or the role of political identification. However, a wider set of explanatory factors are applicable. While some factors included in this model fall under the contextual factors considered in chapter 3 (for example the role of the media and politicians), the majority concern individuals' own circumstances, including their personality, lifestyle, experiences, and values. We have termed this combination a person's 'worldview'.

2.1 The role of worldview

Recent years have seen a growth in the literature exploring the role of internal factors that shape individuals' attitudes towards immigration, detailing the fundamental role played by human psychology and mindsets. In particular, the role of values in attitude formation is increasingly invoked by practitioners aiming to engage with attitudes towards immigrants, although the academic literature in this area is relatively limited (Dennison, 2020). Drawing on Schwartz's framework of 10 core values, as well as analysis of 2018–2019 ESS data, Dennison (ibid.) has demonstrated that strongly anti-immigration

Figure 4   Dennison and Dražanová's 'funnel of causality' for attitudes to immigration

Distal effects (strong and stable)

- Human values
- Personality type
- Moral foundation

- Early life norm acquisition
  (parents, schooling, community)
- Tertiary education
- Lifestyle (family, children, living
  abroad, attachment to place)

- Political attitudes
- Ideology (right-wing; fiscal/
  social conservatism)
- Political alienation

- Contact (empathy/threat)
- Neighbourhood safety/crime
- Politician and media influence
- Economic competition

Proximal
effects
(weak and unstable)

- Attitudes to immigration

Source: Dennison and Dražanová (2018)

Europeans tend to be more likely to value conformity, security, tradition, and power; those who are strongly pro-immigration place a high value on universalism, undervaluing security and conformity.[4] The links between sets of values is strongly illuminated by a recent Pew study which found a correlation between those who favour diversity and those who support refugees and immigrants moving to their country (Rasmussen and Poushter, 2019).

Likewise, a number of studies have documented a commonly held perception that approaches and polices responding to immigration should be 'fair'. In Australia, people state an aversion to those arriving by boat, who are perceived to have unfairly 'queue-jumped'

and avoided proper resettlement channels (Doherty, 2015). A focus on fairness is also reflected in desires that migrants 'contribute' to the country they are living in; this is particularly emphasised in studies from the UK (Shorthouse and Kirkby, 2015; Blinder and Richards, 2020). Links made between immigration and national interests are evident in a new study by Kustov (2020). He shows that even those who are educated and racially egalitarian ('parochial altruists') can be anti-immigration if restrictions are not perceived to benefit their compatriots.

The growing acknowledgement of the wide range of internal factors that influence attitudes is reflected in a new polling approach called 'attitudinal segmentation' which aims

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4   For more information about the motivational goals behind these values, see Dennison (2020). For example, the 'universalism' value has a basic motivational goal of 'understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature'.

to go beyond demographic data. Attitudinal segmentation divides the public into different segments based not only on their attitudes towards immigration, but also their broader values and attitudes towards a number of related issues, for example multiculturalism, diversity, social change, and optimism about the future. Typically, it involves mixed methods research, employing a combination of polling and focus group discussions. Although this approach seeks to understand the demographic characteristics of population segments at a later stage, its uniqueness is the underlying notion that demographics are not the main predictor of attitudes. Recent years have seen the steady growth of countries where the approach has been applied, beginning with a much-cited 2011 analysis of national values and attitudes in the UK (including in relation to immigration), which split the public into six 'tribes' (Lowles and Painter, 2011). Countries where attitudinal segmentation has been deployed now also include Germany, France, Italy, Greece, and the US (see Annex 2). In general, this has been spearheaded by initiatives aiming to effect social change through better understanding of population segments (such as the international

initiative 'More in Common') working in partnership with polling organisations.

Perhaps the greatest insight from this body of work is that the broad shape of opinion across different countries is notably similar. Across contexts, public segments appear to be divided into the most hostile groups (consisting in 17 to 32 percent of the public across studies), the most liberal (anywhere from 8 to 30 percent), and then the largest section of the public (39 to 67 percent): the various segments of which have together been termed a 'conflicted', 'anxious', or even 'exhausted' middle. This middle grouping is less ideologically motivated than groups more confidently 'for' or 'against' immigration, and much more ambivalent towards refugees and immigrants, prioritising different concerns between groups but being relatively open to effective persuasion (Katwala et al., 2014).

Within these broad trends, population segments in different countries are strongly shaped by particular national histories, as well as individual circumstances (see Figure 5 and Annex 2). For example, US segments include the 'Traditional Liberals', a group of individuals reflecting the liberal ideals of the 'Baby Boomer' generation. They are passionate about social justice and

Figure 5   Attitudinal segmentation in six countries
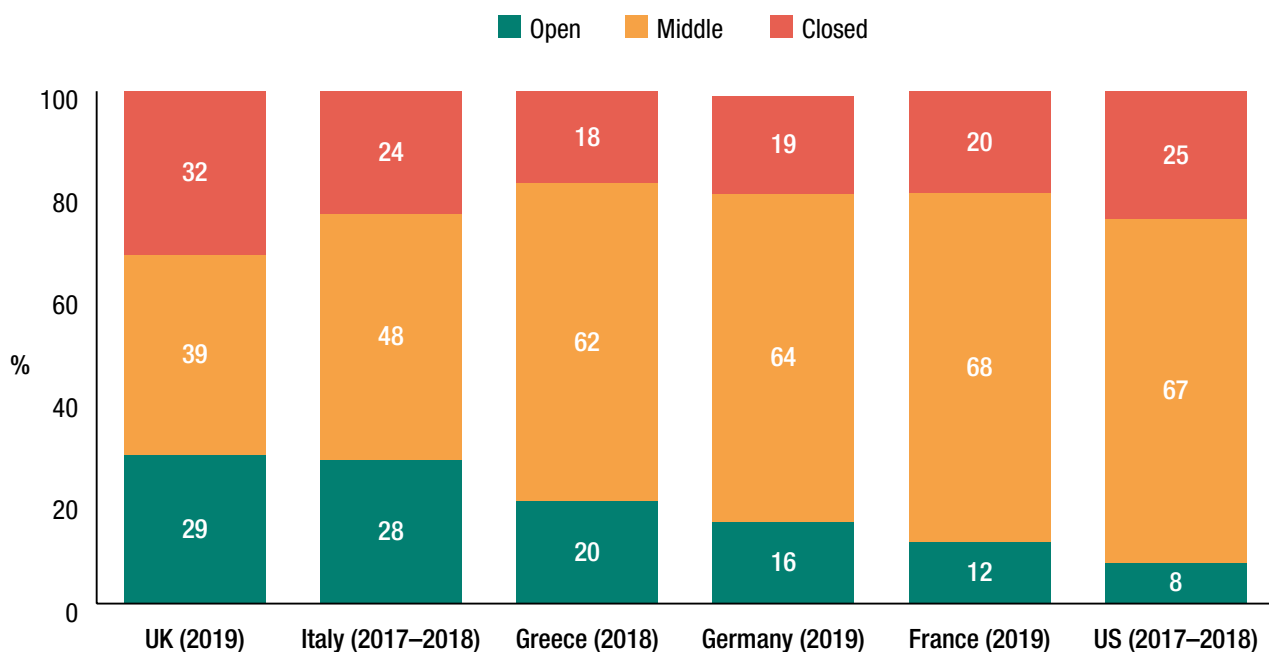
Note: Source data for Germany totals 99% due to rounding.
Source: HOPE not hate (2011), Demoures (2017), Purpose (2017a; 2017b), Dixon et al. (2018), Hawkins et al. (2018), Dixon et al. (2019) and Krause and Gagné (2019)

humanitarian values, yet less ideological and intolerant of conservatives than other groupings (Hawkins et al., 2018). At the other end of the spectrum, a group of 'Traditional Conservatives' value patriotism and America's Christian foundations, and feel they are under threat from liberal politics, though they are relatively open to compromise on some immigration issues. In Italy, segments include a group of 'Catholic Humanitarians' who are distinctly proud of their national identity and feel a strong sense of duty to help refugees due to a view that solidarity and compassion are 'part of being Italian' (Dixon et al., 2018). On the other hand, a group of 'Hostile Nationalists', while also being proud of Italy's history, feel that their Catholic heritage must be protected from outside beliefs, consequently viewing immigrants, refugees, and Muslims as a threat. Attitudinal analysis reveals that religious beliefs appear to engender both positive and negative attitudes: for some individuals they promote a sense of duty towards others, while for others they create the desire to protect one's religion from a threatening other.

2.2 The role of experiences

An individuals' worldview provides the foundations on which attitudes towards immigrants are built, which are then mediated by their experiences throughout their lifetime. As shown earlier in this chapter, this includes early formative experiences, including education; national and cultural traditions; as well as the households and communities where individuals grow up. The research suggests that attitudes towards immigration remain relatively fixed throughout an individual's life. While survey data finds that older generations are consistently more negative towards immigrants, Schotte and Winkler (2014) demonstrate that this is a generational effect: rather than people becoming more negative as they get older, these findings are indicative of different formative influences on different generations. However, later life and current experiences also play a part. While these are unlikely to alter an individual's fundamental beliefs and values, their attitudes nonetheless adjust to and are shaped by the world as they move through life.

One significant factor is whether or not an individual interacts with migrants on a day-to-day basis. The literature focuses on how the number of migrants in an individual's community or country influences their attitudes, with mixed conclusions. On the one hand, this is supported by global polling data: the countries which are consistently the most positive over time have higher numbers of immigrants and long histories as receiving countries (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018). It is also supported by 'contact theory', according to which, if people have the opportunity to communicate with others in a particular way they will be better able to appreciate different points of view, leading to a reduction in prejudice (Allport, 1954). One review of 515 studies found that intergroup contact typically reduces prejudice (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). Indeed, an analysis of Gallup World Poll survey data found a strong correlation in 134 of 140 countries between respondents reporting that they personally knew a migrant living in their home country and demonstrating greater acceptance (Fleming et al., 2018).

However, there is a need for caution in inferring a straightforward connection between more contact with migrants and positive attitudes towards them. For example, one 2017 survey of 2,000 individuals explores the impact of sudden and large-scale refugee arrivals in the Greek islands, finding that Greek citizens grew increasingly more hostile as arrivals increased – towards refugees, but also migrants more broadly and Muslims (Hangartner et al., 2019). The study makes the point that 'proximity […] does not necessarily lead to contact' (ibid: 445), nor does contact necessarily generate the meaningful interaction or 'friendship potential' (Finney, 2005; Dennison and Dražanová, 2018) which motivates positive perceptions (see chapter 3 for further discussion). On the Greek islands, refugees stayed typically for just 24 hours, meaning interactions (if any) were fleeting. With interaction limited and short-lived, and arrivals sudden, Greek residents instead came to hold negative views, finding their lives disrupted.

Another significant strand of the research explores how, beyond the influence of contact, attitudes are shaped by the impact that

migration has – or is perceived to have – on an individual's life and surroundings. Most studies agree that immigration tends to be a 'state of the nation' issue, meaning that these concerns tend to centre around individuals' fears for their country or community as a whole, rather than simply self-interested worries about their own circumstances (Hatton, 2016; Katwala and Somerville, 2016). This finding is consistent in studies across North America and Western Europe (McLaren and Johnson, 2007; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2013). Importantly, these concerns are more strongly correlated with *perceived* negative impacts due to migrants' presence, as opposed to actual pressures linked to migration (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018). Yet, equally, the pressures individuals are concerned about may be real and grounded in their day-to-day experience – they may just have nothing (or little) to do with migration. For example, one study using ESS data demonstrates a link between negative attitudes and economic downturns (Isaksen, 2019). These kinds of pressures may not be caused, or even exacerbated, by immigration. Yet narratives stemming from actors such as politicians and the media can nonetheless place the blame on immigration, ascribing an erroneous causality.

Broadly speaking, the literature suggests three groups of concerns linked to perceived impacts of migration: economic competition, pressure on resources and whether or not migrants are sufficiently 'contributing'; cultural concerns and – relatedly – scepticism regarding prospects for integration; and worries relating to crime and security. As already outlined, many of these are reflected in global polling data. However, polling also makes clear that the traction of different types of concerns varies widely between different countries. For example, the public in Sweden is far less preoccupied with economic concerns compared to European neighbours, instead focusing on crime and security (Holloway, 2020). In Morocco, economic competition and security are at the fore, with minimal focus on cultural differences (Buehler and Han, 2019). While in Italy, over half of the population have reported concerns that immigration is diluting their cultural identity, alongside widespread economic worries (Dixon et al., 2018). Between countries, differences may stem from distinct national histories and circumstances as well as different policy, political and media environments. Attitudinal segmentation has also shown how, within a country, the balance of such concerns differs with different segments of the public, based on individuals' values and priorities.

3   Contextual drivers of public attitudes

As outlined in the previous chapter, public attitudes are also shaped by broader 'contextual' drivers, including how various external actors shape the broader context in which individuals are situated, notably government policy, political rhetoric, traditional media, civil society, and the private sector. This chapter considers each of these drivers in turn, with the caveat that understanding and ascribing causality to these relationships is difficult.

   In particular, this chapter considers the *narratives* employed by politicians, the media, civil society and the private sector. Here, a note on narratives. Dennison (2020) argues that the majority of pro-immigration campaigns appeal to the values of 'universalism' and 'benevolence'. These values are held by those *already* pro-immigrant, and therefore such campaigns are unlikely to appeal to those who are more nuanced or anti-immigrant. Instead, Dennison highlights the efficacy of campaigns which focus on the economic or labour contribution of migrants, speaking to the 'power' value, while also speaking to 'conservation' and 'conformity'. Organisations such as British Future have conducted campaigns aiming to show migrants participating in national holidays, thereby speaking to values such as 'conformity', as held by those in the 'anxious' middle. Similarly, in Australia, messaging leading with values like family, freedom, fairness, and 'treating others as you would wish to be treated' have worked to shift attitudes towards asylum (ASRC, 2015).

3.1   Policy

When considering the impact of government policy on attitudes, it is useful to outline which policies we are talking about and who is in control of them. National governments control immigration policy (people moving for study, work, family and tourism), and asylum policy (people seeking international protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention or regional frameworks). Both of these policies are subject to both international and regional agreements (e.g. the EU's Schengen Agreement or commitments under international human rights law). Both national and local governments are responsible for integration policy, interventions which help facilitate immigrants becoming part of life in their host country, especially in schools, workplaces, and communities.[5]

   Globally, people's attitudes towards immigration are broadly in line with their government's immigration policies, although it is difficult to ascribe causality as to whether policies are determined by public attitudes or vice versa. In 2014, Gallup analysis of 136 countries found that in countries with restrictive policies, 61 percent of adults wanted to see immigration levels decrease. In countries with more permissive policies, only 24 percent of people wanted to see immigration decrease (Esipova and Ray, 2015; see Table 1). More recent polls show similar alignment. For example, Pew's analysis in 2018 found that countries with little support for more

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5   Polling shows that while people want immigrants to integrate well into society, many don't believe they are doing so. Part of the reason is funding. Many national governments see integration as a local responsibility, while cutting available local resources.

Table 1   Attitudes towards immigration by country immigration policy

| | Government policy on immigration levels | | | |
	No intervention	Lower	Maintain	Raise
Should be kept at present level	20%	22%	23%	20%
Should be increased	15%	11%	23%	23%
Should be decreased	42%	61%	35%	24%
Don't know/refused	24%	7%	19%	35%

Source: Esipova and Ray (2015)

immigration included Greece, Hungary, and Italy (all countries with restrictive immigration policies), and those with more support for increasing immigration included Spain and Japan (Connor and Krogstad, 2018).[6]

Despite this apparent alignment, many people appear to be unhappy with the way that national immigration policies are being formulated and implemented. In December 2018, in the wake of the Windrush scandal, polling found that only 11 percent of people in the UK were satisfied with their government's handling of immigration (Ipsos Mori, 2019a). In the US, a 2019 poll found that 55 percent of Americans opposed building a wall at the Mexican border, despite this being a central pillar of the Trump administration's immigration policy (Quinnipiac University, 2019). Such discontent spans those who favour both less and more restrictive immigration policies. In terms of the latter, Andreas (2009) has pointed to an 'escalating performance' spiral. Governments may set unrealistic targets or policies that cannot be met, in the hope of appealing to voters supportive of restrictive immigration policies. But their failure to meet these policies increases public unease that migration is 'out of control' and decreases trust in the government to deliver.

3.2   Political rhetoric

Since the early 2000s, the number of populist leaders worldwide has more than doubled (Lewis et al., 2019). Populists frame politics as a battle between the will of ordinary people and corrupt, self-serving elites (Mudde, 2004). At the core of far-right populism sits a nationalism fuelled by anti-immigrant rhetoric. Increasingly, such populism has permeated mainstream politics across the world. Both US President Donald Trump and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán have described immigrant movements as 'invasions' (Walker 2018; Zimmer, 2019). This 'threat narrative', which draws on the concerns people may hold about migrants (detailed in chapter 2), is a common feature of right-wing administrations and has been deployed to depict refugees and migrants as a challenge to values and culture, a source of terrorism and crime, and a threat to living standards, jobs, and public services (ODI and Chatham House, 2017). More recently, both leaders have also used Covid-19 as an excuse to maintain or extend border closures, linking human mobility with the spread of disease (Trilling, 2020).

Again, proving a causal connection between this political rhetoric and public attitudes is

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6   While Japan has historically had a restrictionist immigration policy, its rapidly ageing population has forced a national conversation about the role of immigration to plug specific skills gaps (6.4 million workers are needed by 2030). In June 2018, the Government of Japan announced a new 'Specified Skills' visa with a plan to admit 500,000 foreign workers in 14 key sectors by 2025; this goal represents nearly a third of Japan's current foreign workforce (Smith and Vukovic, 2019).

difficult. Certainly, studies across different countries consistently demonstrate a correlation between individuals' political opinions and their attitudes towards migrants and immigration policy, with a growing trend towards polarisation (see Box 4). But the ability of politicians to directly influence attitudes through their rhetoric is unclear. Some argue that given a lack of trust in the political establishment generally, their ability to directly influence attitudes is diluted (McClaren, 2016). There is some evidence that negative rhetoric can filter down; in Australia, people echo government language such as 'queue-jumper', 'illegal', and 'terrorist' when discussing migration (Doherty, 2015). And people seem to feel more positive about immigrants when their political leaders frame migration in positive terms, as can be seen in Portugal and Spain (Arango, 2013; Crawley and McMahon, 2016).

Where political rhetoric does have a clearer influence is over the salience of an issue (Hatton, 2017). As an example, Viktor Orbán embarked on an 'anti-immigrant' campaign when the level of migration to Hungary was low, and just three percent of the population considered it a serious issue. Evidence from the Eurobarometer and national opinion polls shows that the campaign increased the salience of immigration as an issue, while increasing support for restrictive immigration policies and xenophobia (Howden, 2016; Glorius, 2018). This increased salience has made attitudes towards immigration more consequential for voting behaviour (Rooduijn, 2020). When immigration is considered highly salient, voters with pre-existing, latent anti-immigration attitudes are more likely to switch their vote to such parties than when economic or social issues are considered more important, when those same voters will stick with parties they consider more trustworthy (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018).

3.3 The media

The way news is produced and consumed is rapidly changing, with the last decade one of 'digital disruption' (Newman, 2019). In this section we focus on news concerning immigration delivered via traditional broadcast, press, and online news platforms, with a subsection on the role of social media.

It is hard to evaluate the impact of media coverage of immigration on how people view immigrants and immigration more broadly. This is because it is almost impossible to discern whether people learn their political viewpoints from the media sources they rely upon, or if they choose to rely on media sources that reflect their existing political viewpoint. Any impact the media may have in the short-term appears to be non-durable, with people falling back on their ingrained views (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018; see chapter 2).

More clear is the relationship between levels of immigration, media coverage, and the salience of immigration as an issue. Figure 6 shows this relationship in the UK – as immigration levels increase, media coverage increases, which in turn increases the salience of immigration as an issue.

Yet media coverage often falls back on over-simplistic narratives. Narratives can be

Box 4   Increasing polarisation in attitudes towards immigration and immigrants

In the UK, differences between those who voted 'leave' or 'remain' in the 2017 Brexit referendum have become a prominent dividing line. 'Remain' voters are markedly more pro-immigration, more likely to see immigration as having positive impact, and more likely to believe that it is being discussed too often – with 'leave' voters tending to feel the opposite (Ipsos Mori, 2018; Blinder and Richards, 2020). Interestingly, new research finds that the Brexit referendum softened anti-immigrant views among 'leave' and 'remain' voters; the former group felt the government had got control over immigration, and both groups wanted to distance themselves from accusations of xenophobia and racism (Schwartz et al., 2020). Likewise, in the US, partisan divides are key. One Pew Research Center survey (2018) showed that Republican voters ranked 'illegal immigration' as the top national problem of 18 issues, while Democratic voters considered it the least important.

Figure 6   The relationship between levels of immigration, media coverage, and salience in the UK
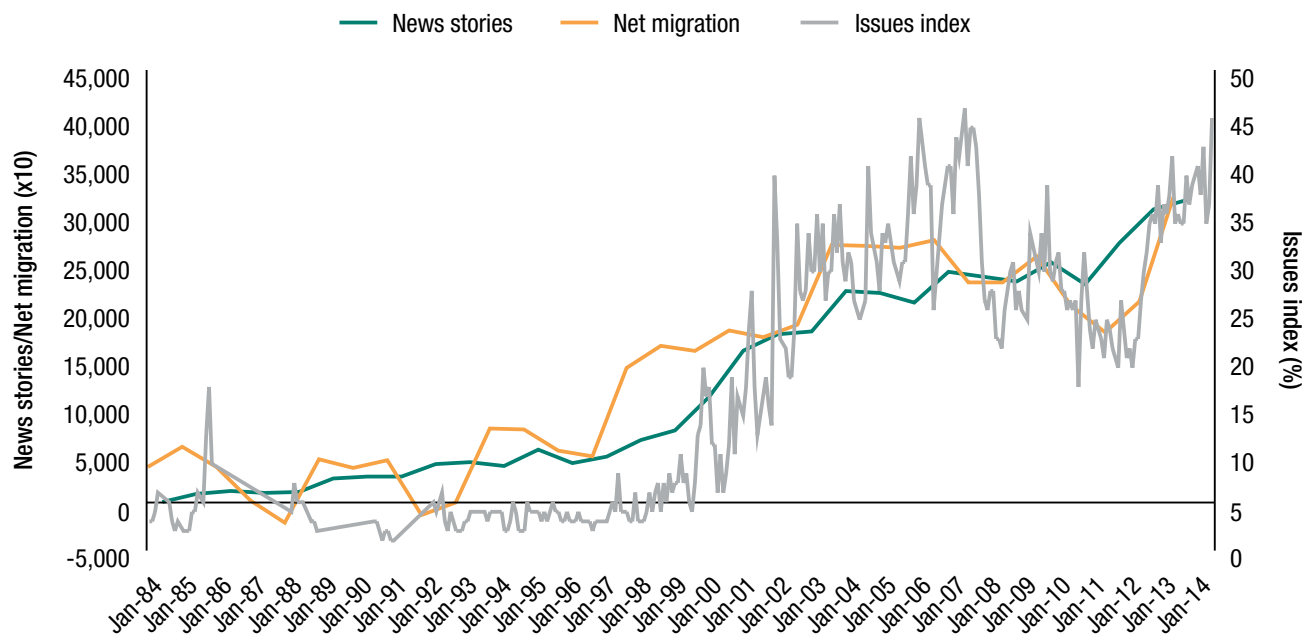
Source: Duffy et al. (2015)

understood as the different stories told about migration by different actors, framed in diverse ways, which work to influence an individual's world of thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Perceptions, belief systems and ideology then shape the way people define what is 'right' and 'wrong' (Mtetwa, 2020). While some narratives are internal to individuals, providing a coherent internal explanation of external trends and events, and influenced by an individual's experiences and worldview (see chapter 2), internal narratives are often themselves linked to narratives put forwards by external actors. The popularity of different narratives tends to rise and fall according to how much the (complex) external world aligns with the (simple) assumptions put forward in narratives. In the sphere of media coverage on immigration issues, over-simplistic narratives often fall into those of threat and humanitarian need:

- **Threat.** Journalists often cover negative stories which increase perceptions of threat to one's group, with some media coverage on immigration designed to unreasonably exaggerate and scaremonger (Duffy and Frere-Smith, 2014; Landmann et al., 2019). For example, highlighting a story of one immigrant committing a serious crime is likely to lead

people to tar many immigrants with the same brush. This effect is stronger in regions with smaller existing immigrant populations (Dennison and Dražanová, 2018).

- **Humanitarian need.** Conversely, stories emphasising humanitarian plight can lead to increased support for the provision of services to immigrants and more permissive policies. Research conducted across 13 countries in 2014 found that messaging on migration and migrants in print and online media was predominantly depicted through a 'humanitarian' lens (McAuliffe et al., 2017), although the threat narrative became far more dominant during the 'refugee crisis' of 2015–2016 (Trilling, 2019). Images of immigrants engaging in common human activities (e.g. participating in national holidays or sharing the local sport) can increase positivity towards migrant groups (Harrison, 2018).

Both of these narratives risk reproducing images of migrants as either solely bad or good, contributing to attitudes falling within these two buckets. While stories portraying migrants living normal lives are unlikely to sell, they would be typical of the majority of immigrants. But this is largely missing from media coverage.

3.3.1 Social media

Public attitudes on immigration are increasingly shaped and driven online. In the UK, almost half of people now use social media as their primary news source (Ofcom, 2019). Yet social media can be a polarising space. Krasodomski-Jones (2016) outlines an 'echo chamber effect', whereby online communities reinforce ideological positions. In the UK, online debate on immigration does not reflect public opinion but rather creates a space which amplifies the strongest views (Rutter and Carter, 2018). Evidence from the 2018 National Conversation on Immigration, the biggest-ever public consultation on immigration in the UK, shows the extent to which prejudiced and hateful comments on immigration can reach a wide audience through social media: comments that are no longer socially acceptable in a face-to-face conversation are now expressed through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (ibid.).

The so-called 'refugee crisis' of 2015–2016 highlights the polarisation of debates around immigration online. Analysis of 7.5 million tweets during this time shows a surge in far-right online activism; activists used accounts to

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Box 5   Far-right activism, social media and the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration

In the latter half of 2018, far-right activists across Europe used social media to spread large-scale misinformation about the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) (IOM, 2020b). YouTube was a common platform, with most videos discussing the GCM produced by far-right activists (see figure below). These online campaigns were effective in spreading large-scale misinformation about the GCM, changing public opinion, and even changing policy direction. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) conducted an analysis of GCM social media coverage, finding that an uptick in online activity preceded government decisions to change course (Baldauf et al., 2019).

These online campaigns were effective in spreading large-scale misinformation about the Compact. For months, the most shared link on German social media was to a petition against the pact organised by Austrian far-right commentator Martin Sellner (Tagesschau, 2018; Cerulus and Schaart, 2019). At the same time, Italian right-wing politician Matteo Salvini and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte were in the top 10 most-mentioned social media accounts in the ISD database. Sellner's YouTube videos about the pact, arguing that the deal would mean the 'demise of the European people', also made it to the top of the most-viewed YouTube clips about the GCM (Tagesschau, 2018). Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian Chancellor, was the first to pull his country out of the GCM in October 2018 (Schaart, 2018). Soon after, the Italian government followed suit.

75 of the 100 most popular YouTube videos discussing the GCM were created by far-right activists
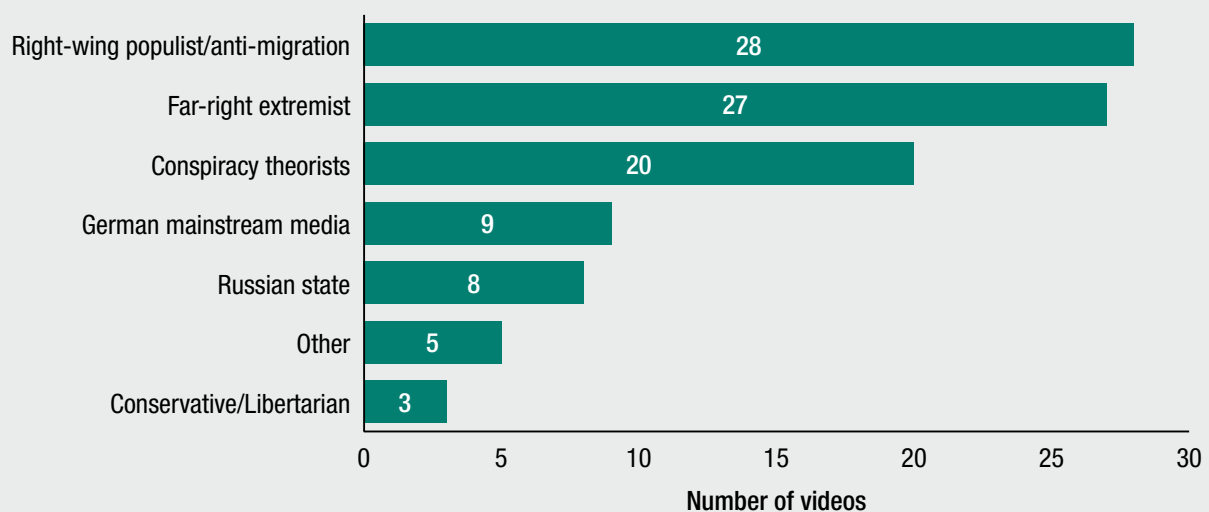
Source: Cerulus and Schaart (2018)

influence framing during and following these events in negative and racist ways for political purposes (Siapera et al., 2018). Despite the fact that, in many countries, the majority of the public fall into an 'anxious' middle when it comes to their views on immigration, this segment of the public is rarely heard or reached on social media. Instead, social media serves to amplify polarised attitudes around immigration, both positive and negative (see Box 5).

3.4   Civil society

Across the globe, civil society has engaged in dynamic action to counter anti-immigrant narratives and views, and there is increasing interest amongst the public in engaging and participating in these efforts (Crawley and McMahon, 2016). 'Civil society' in this context includes organisations who provide legal advice, research, and advocacy services, as well as those who bring immigrant and host communities together. These groups often involve, or are set up by, refugees and immigrants themselves.

In general, their efforts fall into five areas of action:

1. **Platforming and promoting migrant voices.** For example, the VOICES Network is a UK initiative that has been instrumental in amplifying more immigrant voices in public debate with a network of refugee and asylum seeker ambassadors spanning the UK (British Red Cross, 2020).

2. **Myth-busting** (see Box 6). In the US, Teaching Tolerance provides free resources – including classroom lessons, webinars, podcasts and policy guides – to schools and other education institutions, with one toolkit devoted to myth-busting on immigration (Teaching Tolerance, 2020).

3. **Aiming to change the frame of the debate.** In Peru, IOM and UNHCR are coordinating the #TuCausaEsMiCausa campaign spanning civil society, the private sector, and others and designed to increase solidarity towards Venezualan immigrants through social media, community workshops, and street theatre performance (IOM and UNHCR, 2018).

4. **Promoting social cohesion by utilising contact theory.** Welcoming America is one such organisation in the US organisation that builds on contact theory to bring immigrants and US born community members into direct contact, often for the first time, through local gatherings (Welcoming America, 2020)

5. **Lobbying to change the policy environment and build public support for reform.** NGOs across the globe are working to hold their governments to account on immigration. For example, the Refugee Council of Australia represents over 200 Australian organisations and has spoken out on a range of policy issues over the last three decades, with a strong focus on campaigning against the conditions in Australia's offshore migrant processing system, Nauru and Manus (Cornish, 2016).

Box 6   The problems with 'myth-busting'

It is sometimes assumed that negative attitudes are based mainly on poor levels of information about the volume and impacts of immigration and immigrants. Surveys consistently show that people frequently overestimate the number of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in their country (Duffy, 2019). There is therefore a long tradition of attempting to change these perceptions by providing the truth, or 'myth-busting'. Yet the effects of myth-busting are mixed and inconclusive. Some studies have also demonstrated a 'backfire effect' whereby 'correcting delusions can actually result in people more strongly asserting an incorrect belief that fits with their ideological view' (ibid.). Others reject the truth as they lack faith in government statistics. But some studies show that myth-busting can have a positive effect on political beliefs if done correctly (Walter et al., 2019). Overall, while myth-busting is important, and providing the facts can shift attitudes in some cases, it should be combined with more sophisticated efforts to engage with an individual's worldview through stories and individual connections.

Academic literature shows that interventions relying on messaging to reduce prejudice and xenophobia have mixed effectiveness, particularly with issues like immigration which are often highly salient (Paluck and Green, 2009; Nyhan and Reifler, 2010; Jerit and Barabas, 2012; Kalla and Broockman, 2020). Some studies demonstrate the effectiveness of pro-immigration messaging in a targeted context. For example, a large-scale experiment conducted in Japan, a country with widespread anti-immigrant sentiment, showed that exposure to information highlighting potential benefits of immigration resulted in an uptick in support for a more open immigration policy (Facchini et al., 2016). Contact theory can also be effective, as long as the contact involves equal status between the groups, cooperation in pursuit of common goals, and support from the authorities (Allport, 1954; Paluck et al., 2019).

As outlined above, much of the literature concludes that the efficacy of any efforts are highly context-specific and can be difficult to scale, underscoring the need for individual evaluations of place-based interventions. For example, a 2019 Ipsos Mori poll in the UK showed that the public had become more positive towards immigration and that, among those who had become more positive, over half said this was because discussions had in recent years highlighted immigrants' contributions (Figure 8). While this has been a key focus of UK civil society efforts in recent years, suggesting that they may have played a successful role in this shift, a lack of more detailed evidence makes it difficult to attribute this shift to specific civil society efforts and interventions.

In general, few civil society interventions have been rigorously evaluated, and there is therefore little evidence as to their efficacy. There is a tendency to evaluate effort and outputs, rather than impact, and an over-reliance on knowledge or awareness as a measure of success, rather than attitudinal and behavioural change (Crawley, 2009). Of course, such evaluations are expensive and harder to conduct, and few civil society organisations have the resources or capacity to do so. In that regard, much can be learnt in the evaluation of campaigns in other spaces, particularly public health campaigns (ibid.).

Figure 7   Some civil society efforts appear to be changing public attitudes
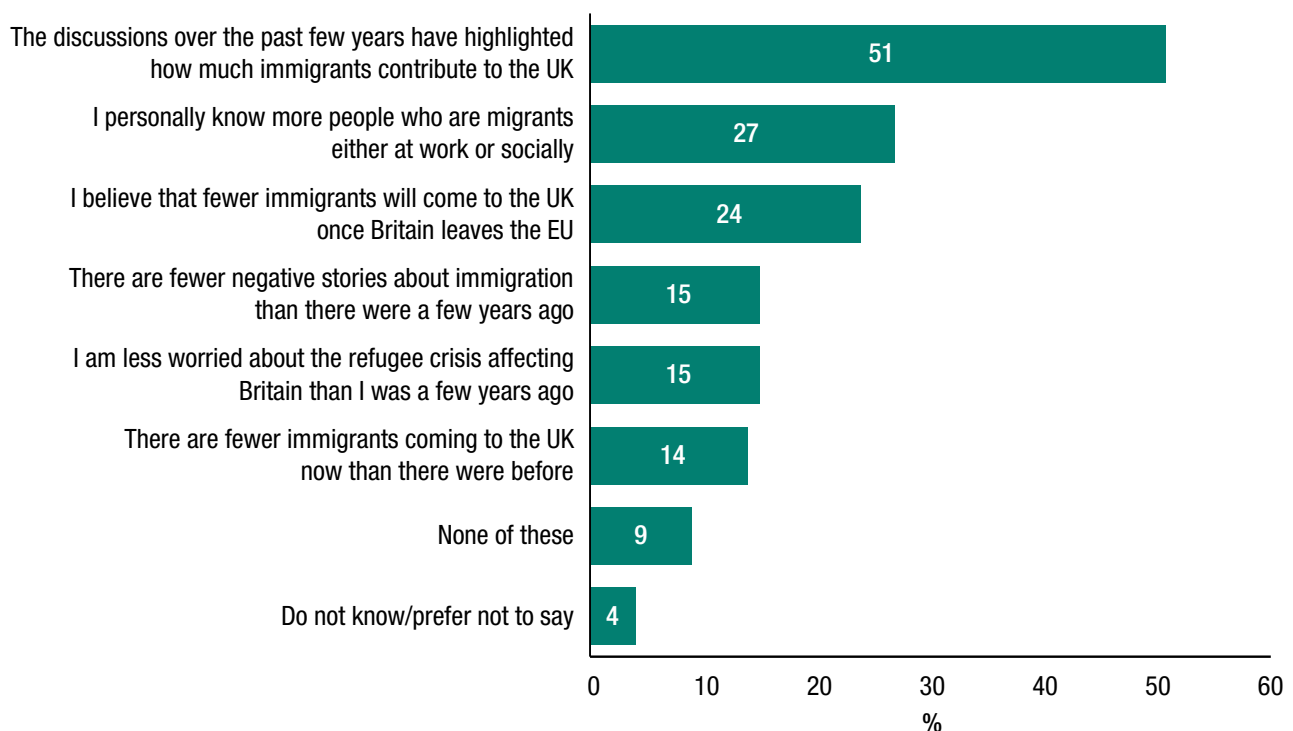
Q: Which of the following reasons explain why you think that you have become more positive or less worried about the impact of immigration has on Britain?
Source: Ipsos Mori (2019b)

3.5   The private sector

The private sector is playing an increasingly active role in publicly engaging on immigration issues – sometimes explicitly with a view to influencing public perceptions – with businesses of all sizes, across all geographies and all sectors, employing migrant labour. The scale and type of their engagement varies, and often sits within Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts. Engagement includes:

1. **Publicly promoting the value of immigration.** In the US, President Trump's 2017 travel ban was met with vocal opposition from business; with companies including Starbucks, Google, Amazon, and Facebook speaking out against the ban. Mark Zuckerburg, CEO of Facebook, posted 'we are a nation of immigrants, and we all benefit when the best and brightest from around the world can live, work and contribute here' in response (Graham, 2017). Public corporate support for immigration has primarily focused on showcasing the benefits of highly-skilled migration. Yet this focus has shifted during Covid-19, with newfound attention on the contribution of migrant frontline workers, termed 'key' or 'essential' workers, during the pandemic. From truck drivers to healthcare workers, these key workers cover a broad spectrum of skills and have been central to coverage on the response to Covid-19 across the globe (ODI, 2020).
2. **Proactively and promoting hiring refugees and migrants.** Many businesses are actively promoting the recruitment of refugees and migrants, albeit often with a focus on high-skill immigration. For example, in the US, 30 percent of Chobani Yogurt's workforce are refugees due to a concerted effort by founder Hamdi Ulukaya, himself a Turkish migrant (Alesci, 2018).
3. **Lobbying for policy reform.** The UK post-Brexit has seen business becoming increasingly vocal on the importance of immigration. In January 2020, UK government plans for a points-based immigration system ending low-skilled visas received widespread pushback from the private sector, with an open letter sent to the Home Secretary by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and over 30 other leading trade associations (CBI, 2020).
4. **Directly supporting and contributing to integration and social cohesion efforts.** For example, in Uganda the Mastercard Smart Communities Coalition has developed an ICT hub in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement that brings new learning and entrepreneurship opportunities to the southern area of the settlement and host community as part of the Coalition's work with refugee and host communities across East Africa (Smart Communities Coalition, 2018).
5. **Participating and building coalitions for change.** In Germany, Bertelsmann Stiftung and seven other foundations fund the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration which develops reports, policy briefings and policy recommendations to promote Germany as a country of immigration and integration (Mosel et al., 2019).

Although evidence is scant on the correlation between the size of organisation and their level of engagement on immigration issues, our research indicates that larger multinationals can be far more active in this space. This is in part due to greater capacity and resources, from awareness training to the availability of guidance in different languages. Private sector engagement is a new and emerging trend in the context of public engagement on immigration. Currently, there is little available evaluation of how private sector initiatives and activities are impacting public attitudes, and there is significant scope to continue developing evaluation mechanisms to guide private sector engagement in this space.

4   Recommendations

The above discussion demonstrates a variety of forces driving people's attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, including those inherent values which can be difficult to shift, as well as more transient influences. This section provides six recommendations aimed at those seeking to influence such attitudes, particularly civil society organisations and private sector actors.

We have deliberately highlighted efforts beyond acknowledged best practice. Advocates should engage closely with why people feel the way they do, including their underlying values. They should explore what has already been done, what has worked and what has not, and build on existing momentum. Finally, they should employ interventions that have been proven to work, including tailored contact theory, 'myth-busting' that factors in both facts and emotion, and amplifying migrant voices (Grigorieff et al., 2016).

1. Coordinate better across different groups, disciplines, themes, and countries

As this paper demonstrates, there is a huge proliferation of work in this area. Yet better coordination is needed to avoid duplication and identify gaps across four different spheres:

- **Different groups.** The close connection between immigration and wider issues in public perceptions signals the need to engage those outside the migration space. Civil society groups working on immigration and asylum issues should engage those working outside these areas and seek to build bridges with existing and potential private sector players.
- **Different disciplines.** The close interrelation between different drivers of public opinion means that successful efforts to engage with public attitudes will require political scientists, sociologists, economists, behavioural economists, psychologists, marketers, journalists, and others to come together. Working groups could be formed between these actors, to explore nuances within the data and conduct impact evaluations and other types of experiments to test what works (see recommendation 6).
- **Different themes.** Attitudes towards immigration touch on a wide variety of areas, including access to social services, housing, jobs, and security. Those in the 'anxious' middle are often most worried about the impact of immigration on these areas, rather than immigration per se. Therefore, migration advocates should build bridges with those working on the delivery of broader social services and other infrastructure to ensure the contributions of migrants are recognised.
- **Across regions, countries and communities.** While accounting for cross-contextual variation, there is much we can learn by taking a global approach, learning from other regions, countries and communities. Specifically, efforts should compare 'anxious' middle populations across countries and see what resonates with similar target groups in different geographies.

2. Finance more integration efforts, polling, and the testing of interventions

Significant attitudinal shifts are unlikely unless supported by significant, targeted investment. Specifically, funding is needed to support integration efforts, polling (see recommendation 3) and testing interventions (see recommendation 6), all of which are expensive. To improve integration, Katwala and Somerville (2016) provide some recommendations for where money should be spent, including on apprenticeship courses (for locals) and language courses (for immigrants). Global Future (2019) has proposed a Migration

Dividend Fund, whereby the economic benefits of migrants accruing to some areas are redistributed to others.

3. Collect more nuanced data, particularly in low- and middle-income countries

As discussed in chapter 1, the number of surveys measuring attitudes towards immigration has proliferated, as has their variation. While this is to be welcomed, there is a long way to go. There are three recommendations for future efforts conducted by polling organisations, and the donors, civil society, and international organisations commissioning them:

- **Ask different questions.** In particular, go beyond whether people want more immigrants or not to focus instead on the types of immigrants they *do* want and why. This type of nuance will help advocates understand how to target their campaigns to be able to shift attitudes.
- **Focus more on values.** Attitudinal segmentation is a welcome step forwards, and the global evidence base would be strengthened through further country studies. Additional analysis could drill down on the segments identified, particularly the 'anxious' middle, to better understand their values and what messages are likely to resonate with them.
- **More data focusing on low- and middle-income countries.** This can be achieved both through the extension of existing global and regional polling, as well as additional targeted country studies. For example, the Afro-, Asian, and Arab Barometers could be extended to focus just as strongly on immigration and immigrants as emigration and emigrants. While the World Values Survey has proposed extending its scope to include various new countries, including in sub-Saharan Africa, to date funding has not been identified to facilitate this. Such research would help donors target humanitarian and development investments, as well as providing a public good.

4. Engage with values and target accordingly, particularly the 'anxious' middle

Existing research makes clear that attitudes towards immigration are, at their most fundamental level, rooted in an individual's worldview, which is relatively fixed after an early age. Those seeking to shift public attitudes towards immigration, particularly civil society organisations, the private sector, and those undertaking campaigns, should focus on understanding these values and work within their parameters. Here, it makes sense to target those groups which are in the 'anxious' or 'exhausted' middle. They are likely to hold concerns about the impacts of immigration that can be addressed by nuanced arguments.

5. Change the frame by focusing on skills, and the role of migrants in our economies

Covid-19 presents an opportunity to move the conversation on from talking about immigrants and immigration per se, to focusing on the roles that immigrants play in our economies and societies and their vital contributions to Covid-19 recovery. This appeals to the values held by those in the 'anxious' middle, and provides an opportunity to highlight the contribution of migrants. Such efforts can be undertaken by civil society organisations and the private sector, as well as politicians and policymakers.

Here, skills could be an entry point. All labour markets contain needs, within certain skill levels or industries, which cannot be filled by local labour. The future prosperity of a country depends on these needs being met, and immigration is one way to do this. Advocates should move beyond current dichotomies: the bad migrant and the deserving refugee; the native and the foreign born; us and them. Instead, emphasis should be placed on the type of society and economy we want and how to configure a new social contract that includes immigrants as part of a shared 'rebuilding' endeavour (Foresti, 2020).

6. Test what works and recalibrate

Finally, while the last few years has seen a proliferation of surveys understanding *what* people think, and even *why* they think this, alongside a plethora of initiatives trying to shift their opinions, less has been produced evaluating these initiatives and identifying what works. Evaluations are required that look across the broad sweep of initiatives to measure attitudinal shifts, and which strategies prove effective, both in the short- and long-term. Instead of more efforts, we should focus our attention on identifying what works, then recalibrating to do less and better in a more coordinated way. This will require more support from donors, both in increasing funding for such efforts and in pushing for such evaluations to be conducted within the projects they support.

Both existing approaches and those highlighted above will be tested by the impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic on attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. As outlined above, evidence shows that economic recessions – such as that expected due to Covid-19 – tend to lessen support for immigration, as locals prioritise their own access to jobs and social services. Some governments have used the pandemic to keep borders closed, reduce migrant visas, and scapegoat migrants as carriers of disease. On the other hand, some countries are seeing a renewed appreciation for the role migrants play throughout our societies, with many designated as 'key' or 'essential' workers. Visas have been extended and made cheaper. Regularisation efforts have been pursued in Portugal and Italy, and explored in other countries such as Spain. This could be a moment of opportunity: to push for more migration, more support for migrants, and to reframe the conversation in the light of post-Covid recovery (Dempster, 2020; Foresti, 2020; ODI, 2020).

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Annex 1   Existing global and regional surveys

Table A1   Existing global and regional surveys

Name	Number of countries surveyed	Relevant questions	Years covered	Most useful pieces of data	Further reading
Global					
Gallup World Poll	160	6	2005–2019	*Migrant Acceptance Index* (created in 2015) measures whether people think migrants living in their country, becoming their neighbours, and marrying into their families is a good or bad thing. Last surveyed in 2016 and 2017 across 136 countries.	www.gallup.com/analytics/232838/world-poll.aspx
International Social Survey Program	34	12	1995, 2003, 2013	*National Identity III* (2013) surveyed 1,000–2,000 people in 31 countries on attitudes towards immigrants.	http://w.issp.org/menu-top/home
Ipsos Global Trends	33	2	2013, 2016, 2020	Additional *Global @dvisor Immigration Tracker* (2017), covering 25 countries and 17,903 people, asks whether immigration has increased and about its impact. The *Refugee Study* (2019), covering 26 countries and 18,207 people) asks whether people support refugees.	www.ipsosglobaltrends.com
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	60	3	2004–2018	Questions on immigration ask whether people are supportive of greater levels of immigration, and whether they are a 'strength' or a 'burden'.	www.pewresearch.org/global
World Values Survey	100	2	1981–2017 (every five years)	Waves ask whether people want to live next to immigrants, and whether employers should give priority to natives when jobs are scarce.	www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp
Regional					
Afrobarometer	37	1	1999/2001, 2002/2003, 2005/2006, 2008/2009, 2011/2013, 2014/2015, 2016/2018	Includes sections on tolerance towards others, including immigrants. Additional South African analysis (2018) asked 1,800 South Africans about their attitudes towards immigration.	http://afrobarometer.org

Name	Number of countries surveyed	Relevant questions	Years covered	Most useful pieces of data	Further reading
Regional					
Arab Barometer	15	1	2006–2009, 2010–2011, 2012–2014, 2016–2017, 2018–2019	*Migration Topic Report* (2019) contains answers from Wave V. While the majority of questions relate to emigrants, they do ask whether people would like to live next to immigrants. Additional analysis in Morocco's Casablanca-Settat region explored how effectively traditional theories explain opposition to migration.	www.arabbarometer.org
Asian Barometer	14	1	2014–2016	Wave 4 included the first question on immigration, surveying people's support for increasing or decreasing numbers.	www.asianbarometer.org
Eurobarometer	34	2	2014-2017	Questions ask whether immigration from outside or within the EU evokes a 'positive or negative feeling' as well as a measure of immigration's salience.	https://ec.europa.eu/ commfrontoffice/publicopinion/ index.cfm
European Social Survey	22	6	2002, 2014	Every wave asks six questions about attitudes towards immigration. Additional 'special immigration rounds' were conducted in 2002 and 2014.	www.europeansocialsurvey.org
European Election Studies	28	1	1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	Survey asks whether people support a restrictive policy on immigration. Special immigration round (2009) asks whether people felt immigration had decreased or increased, whether this was a good thing or not, and what they would like to see happen.	http://europeanelectionstudies.net
Latino Barometer	18	3	1995–2018	The three relevant questions look at whether immigrants benefit or harm the respondent, whether workers should be allowed to work in any country freely, and whether they have emigration intentions.	www.latinobarometro.org
Transatlantic Trends	6	19	2008-2011, 2013, 2014	From 2008–2011 it ran a stand-alone survey on immigration and integration, which was folded into the main survey from 2013. They ask 19 migration policy questions including whether immigration is a problem, immigrants' impact on crime, public services, and jobs for locals, government immigration policy, and integration.	www.gmfus.org/initiatives/ transatlantic-trends- %E2%80%93-public-opinion

Sources: Dennison and Dražanová (2018) and IOM (2020a)

Annex 2 Existing attitudinal segmentation studies

Table A2   Existing attitudinal segmentation studies

Country	Years	Organisations	Focus	Segments (at latest survey)
France	2016	MIC, Purpose, IFOP, SCI	Immigration	**Closed groups (17% total):** Identitarian Nationalist (17%) **Open groups (30% total):** Multiculturals (30%) **Middle groups (53% total):** Left Behind (21%), Economically Insecure (17%), Humanitarians (15%)
France	2019	MIC, Kantar	National values	**Closed groups (20% total):** Identitarians (20%) **Open groups (12% total):** Disillusioned activists (12%) **Middle groups (68% total):** Left Behind (22%), Disengaged (16%), Optimistic Pragmatists (11%), Stabilizers (19%)
Germany	2016	More in Common (MIC), Purpose, Ipsos, Social Change Initiative (SCI)	Immigration	**Closed groups (17% total):** Radical Opponents (17%) **Open groups (22% total):** Liberal Cosmopolitans (22%) **Middle groups (61% total):** Moderate Opponents (18%), Humanitarian Sceptics (23%), Economic Pragmatists (20%)
Germany	2019	MIC, Kantar	National values	**Closed groups (19% total):** Angry (19%) **Open groups (16% total):** Open (16%) **Middle groups (64% total):** Disillusioned (14%), Detached (16%), Established (17%), Involved (17%)
Greece	2018	More in Common, Ipsos, SCI	Immigration	**Closed groups (18% total):** Nationalist Opponents (15%), Alarmed Opponents (3%) **Open groups (20% total):** Greek Multiculturals (20%) **Middle groups (62% total):** Detached Traditionalists (15%), Instinctive Pragmatists (19%), Moderate Humanitarian (28%)
Italy	2017–2018	MIC, Purpose, Ipsos, SCI	Immigration	**Closed groups (24% total):** Hostile Nationalists (7%), Cultural Defenders (17%) **Open groups (28% total):** Catholic Humanitarians (16%), Italian Cosmopolitans (12%) **Middle groups (48% total):** Security Concerned (12%), Left Behind (17%), Disengaged Moderates (19%)

Country	Years	Organisations	Focus	Segments (at latest survey)
United Kingdom	2011, 2016, 2017, 2019	HOPE not hate, Populus (2011–2017), YouGov (2019)	National values	**Closed groups (32.4% total):** Hostile Brexiters (15.3%), Anti-establishment Pessimists (17.1%)
				Open groups (28.7% total): Active Multiculturalist (12.3%), Liberal Remainers (16.4%)
				Middle groups (38.9% total): Anxious Ambivalent (6.5%), Comfortable Ambivalent (16.2%), Established Pptimist (16.2%)
United States	2017-2018	MIC, YouGov	National values	**Closed groups (25% total):** Devoted Conservatives (6%), Traditional Conservatives (19%)
				Open groups (8% total): Progressive Activists (8%)
				Middle groups (67% total): Moderates (15%), Politically Disengaged (26%), Passive Liberals (15%), Traditional Liberals (11%)

Sources: HOPE not hate (2011), Demoures (2017), Purpose (2017a; 2017b), Dixon et al. (2018), Hawkins et al. (2018), Dixon et al. (2019), Krause and Gagné (2019)

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