

Public attitudes and the “refugee crisis”

Evidence from survey and social media data



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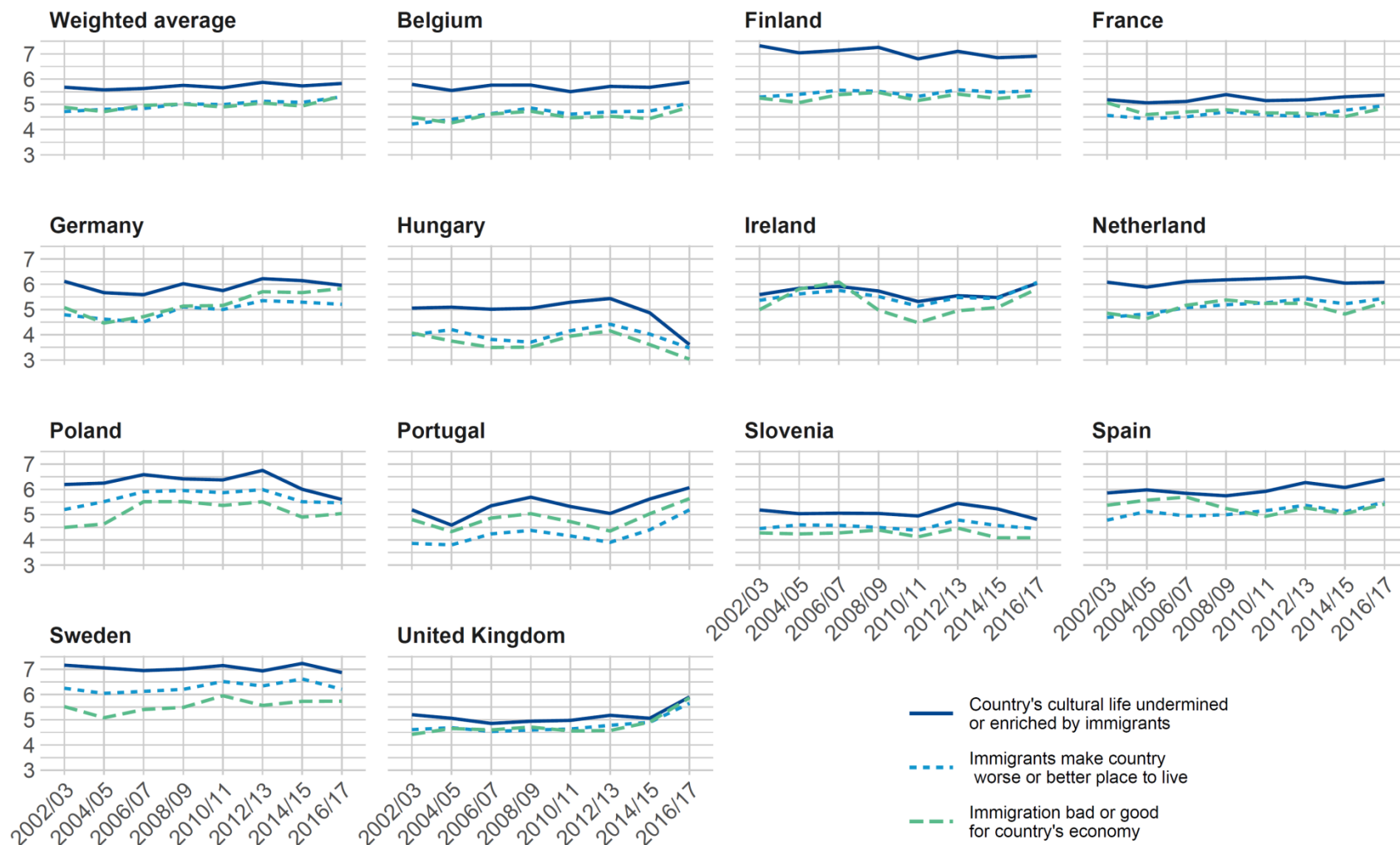
Motivation

- Perceived negativity in public opinion towards immigration: majority or loud minority?
- Micro-level evidence: European Social Survey, Facebook comments in Germany

Evidence from the European Social Survey

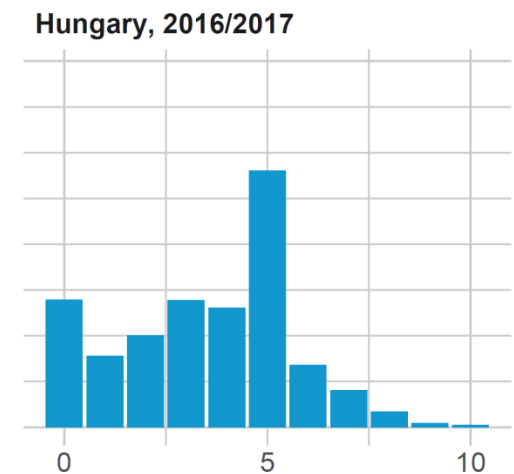
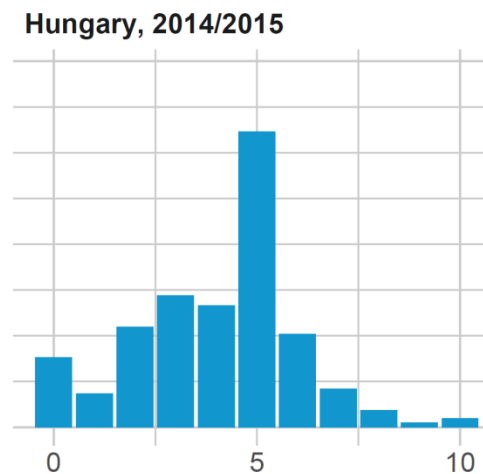
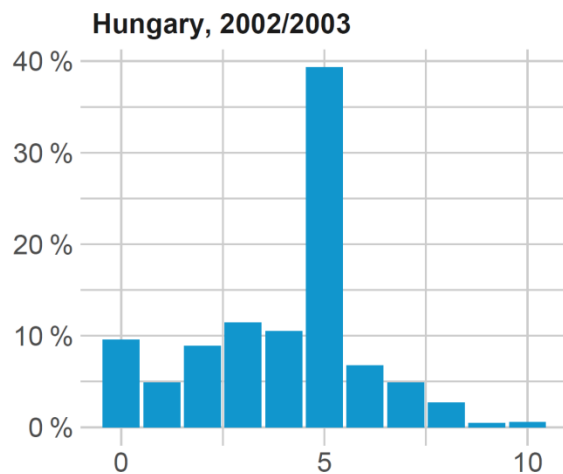
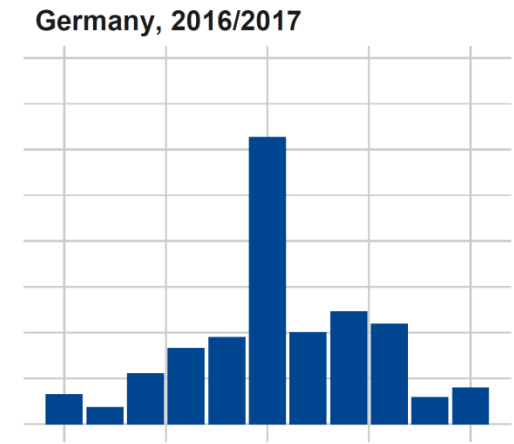
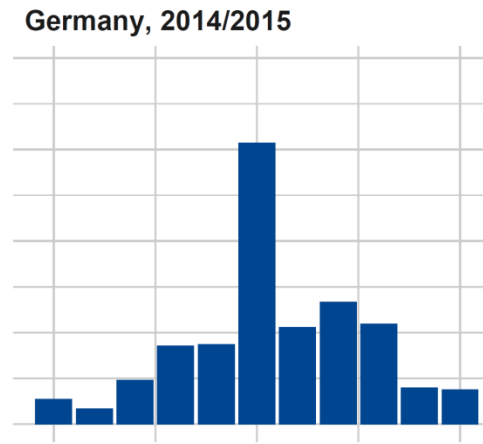
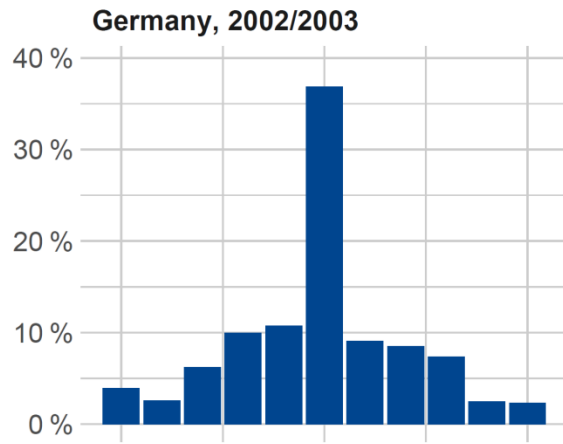
(MEDAM Policy Brief #1)

Aggregated Attitudes in Europe



Source: Ademmer Stöhr MEDAM Policy Brief October 2018

Polarization within countries?



Source: Ademmer Stöhr MEDAM Policy Brief October 2018

Immigrants make country worse or better place to live

Evidence from social media

(Ademmer et al. 2018, European Union
Politics)

Sample and research design

- Analysis of Facebook comments regarding
 - Articles on asylum/migration
 - In German local/regional newspapers
- Analysis with different methods
 - Manual coding of content
 - Different quantitative methods, incl. topic modelling

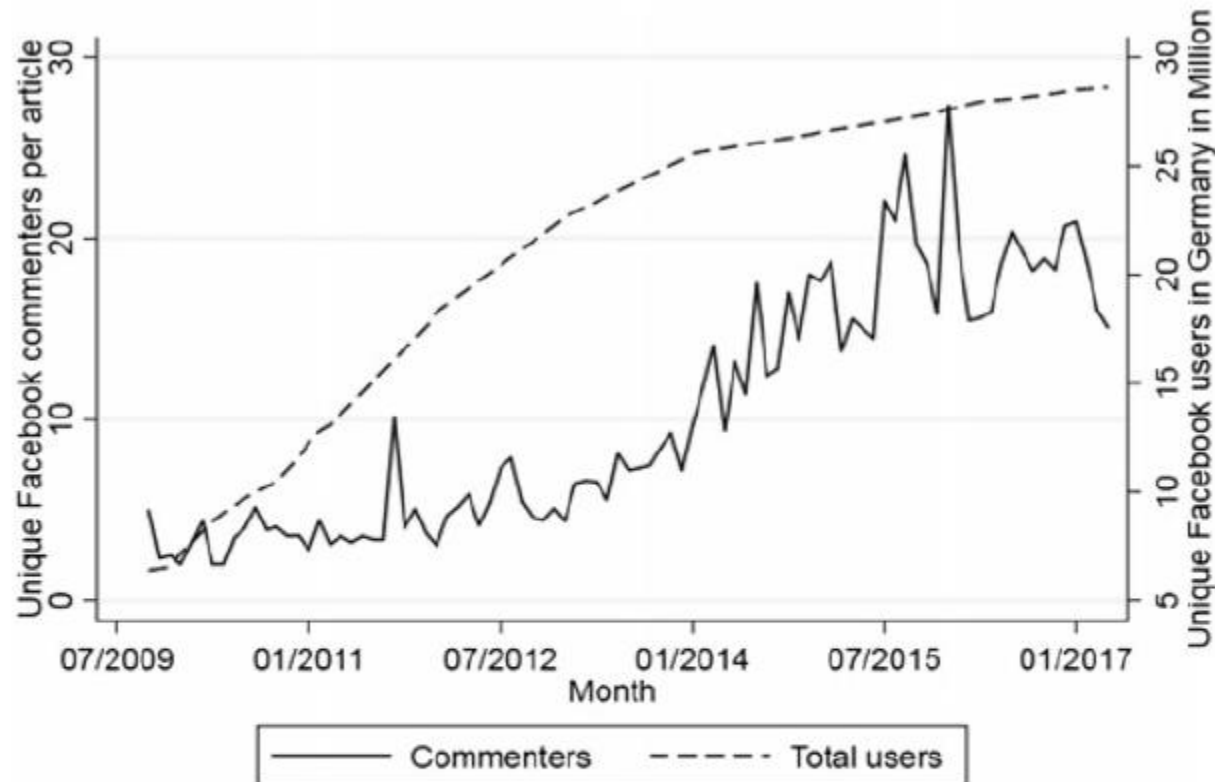


Figure 3. Number of unique commenters per article over time (full sample). Time series plot of the number of unique commenters per article over time. Based on the full sample of 622,621 user comments. In total, the data cover 32,702 articles, i.e. Facebook posts by a newspaper on their Facebook page. Data on unique Facebook commenters from own data and calculations, data on unique Facebook users in Germany from Facebook and Statista.

Source: Ademmer, Leupold, Stöhr, 2018. *European Union Politics*

Research question

Do social media users in Germany increasingly politicize the EU in the course of the “refugee crisis”?

No politicization of Europe in the social media debate (in Germany)

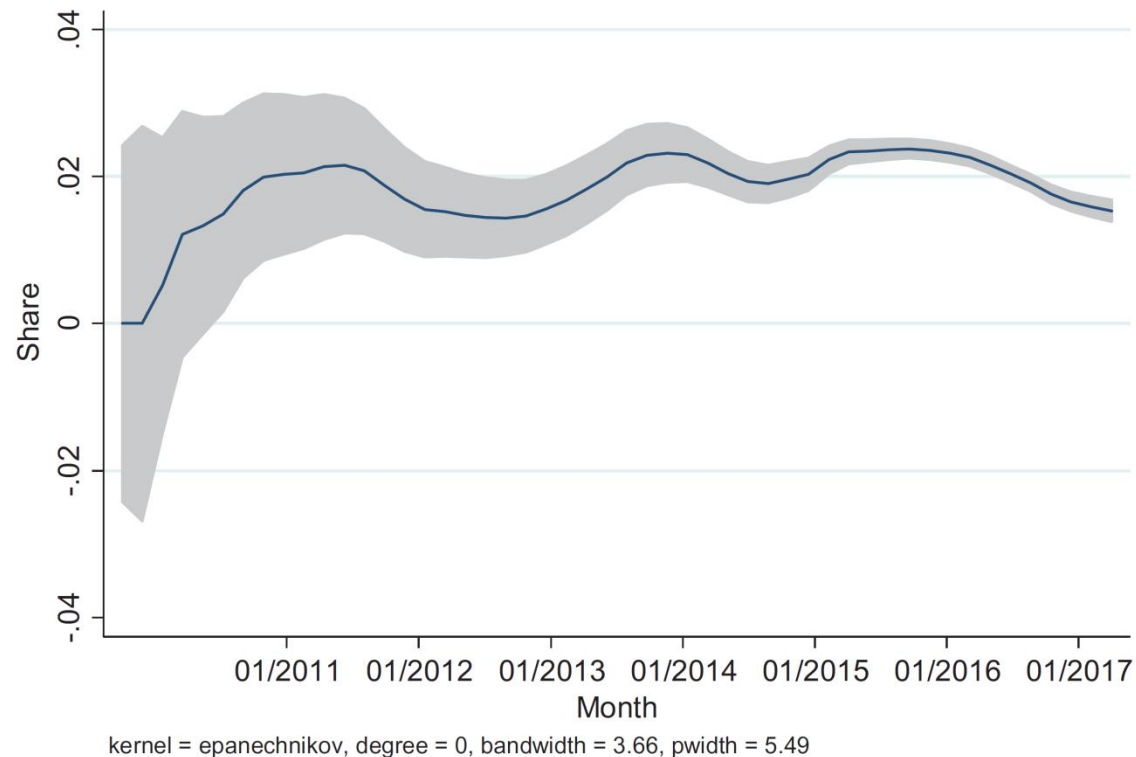


Figure 1. Average share of comments mentioning 'europ*' or 'EU' under articles over time. Local polynomial smooth with 95% confidence band of average share of comments under articles that mention either 'EU' or 'europ'. Based on the full sample of 622,621 user comments.

Source: Ademmer, Leupold, Stöhr, 2018. *European Union Politics*

Table 2. Actor expansion by highest reference level, over time.

	(1) Number of unique commenters under post	(2) Number of comments under post
Local	3.119 (9.861)	10.84 (13.40)
Regional	7.147 (17.85)	10.03 (20.04)
National	2.391 (6.038)	1.998 (6.607)
Europe	1.070 (12.60)	-0.614 (13.68)
Trend	2.005** (0.813)	1.780* (0.910)
Local × Trend	2.294 (2.522)	0.961 (3.139)
Regional × Trend	0.0376 (4.452)	-0.255 (4.910)
National × Trend	3.091** (1.528)	3.296** (1.641)
Europe × Trend	-0.140 (2.709)	0.296 (2.921)
Constant	4.345 (2.729)	5.920* (3.280)
Observations	422	422
R-squared	0.053	0.046

or Dialogue on
and Migration

Heteroskedasticity robust standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Regional levels are indicator variables taking the values 0 or 1. The baseline outcome relates to comments without or with another geographical reference. The trend variable is 0 in the year 2011 and increases by 1 per year. Based on the coded sample of 5040 comments.

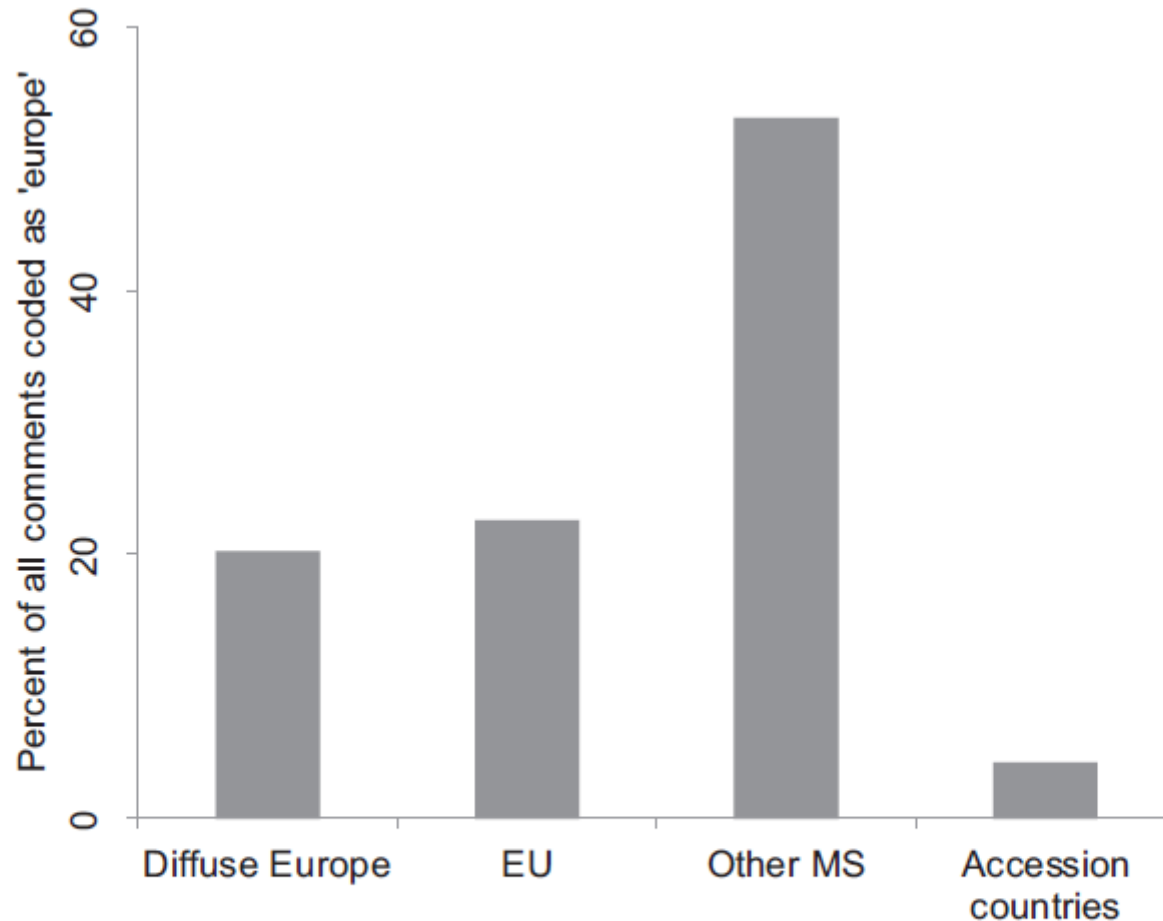


Figure 5. Overview of different concepts of Europe. The figure plots the distribution of different concepts of Europe used in the user comments that refer to Europe or the EU. Concepts are assigned to the highest level of authority in case of multiple mentions. Out of 213 relevant comments 31 refer to multiple levels; 26 of them are included in the 'EU' category.

Summary

- Attitudes are more positive than 16 years ago, little variation across EU countries
- On social media we see a lot of activity
- Europe has not been increasingly politicized in the debate on social media, national politics dominate
- May contribute to our understanding why we perceive a change in views, despite little evidence in the ESS

Thank you

For more see www.medam-migration.eu



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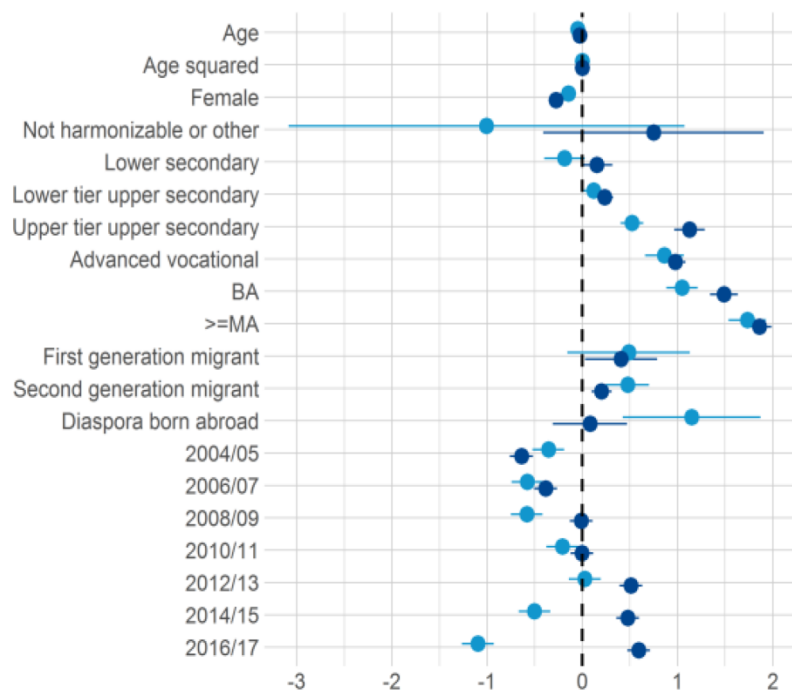
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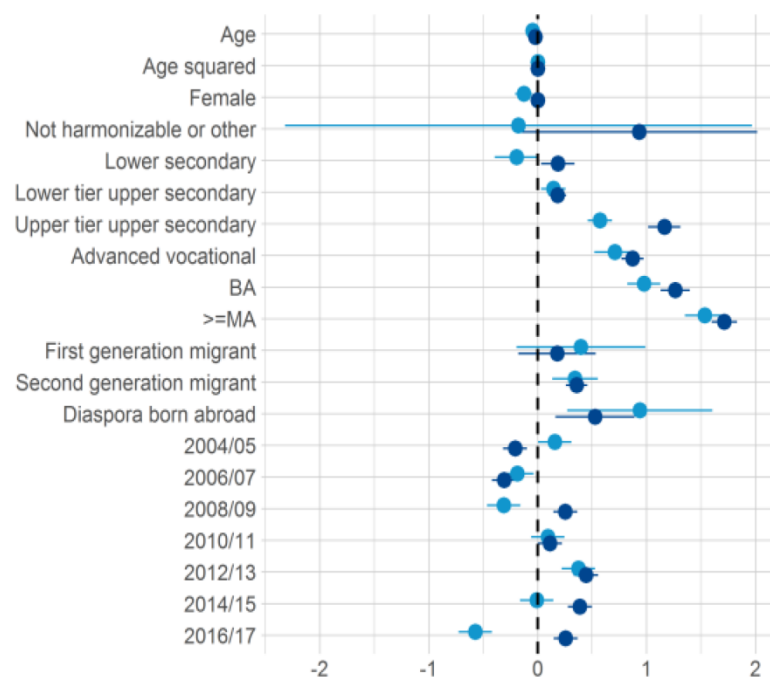
Similarities and differences

● Germany ● Hungary

3.1 Is immigration bad or good for a country's economy?

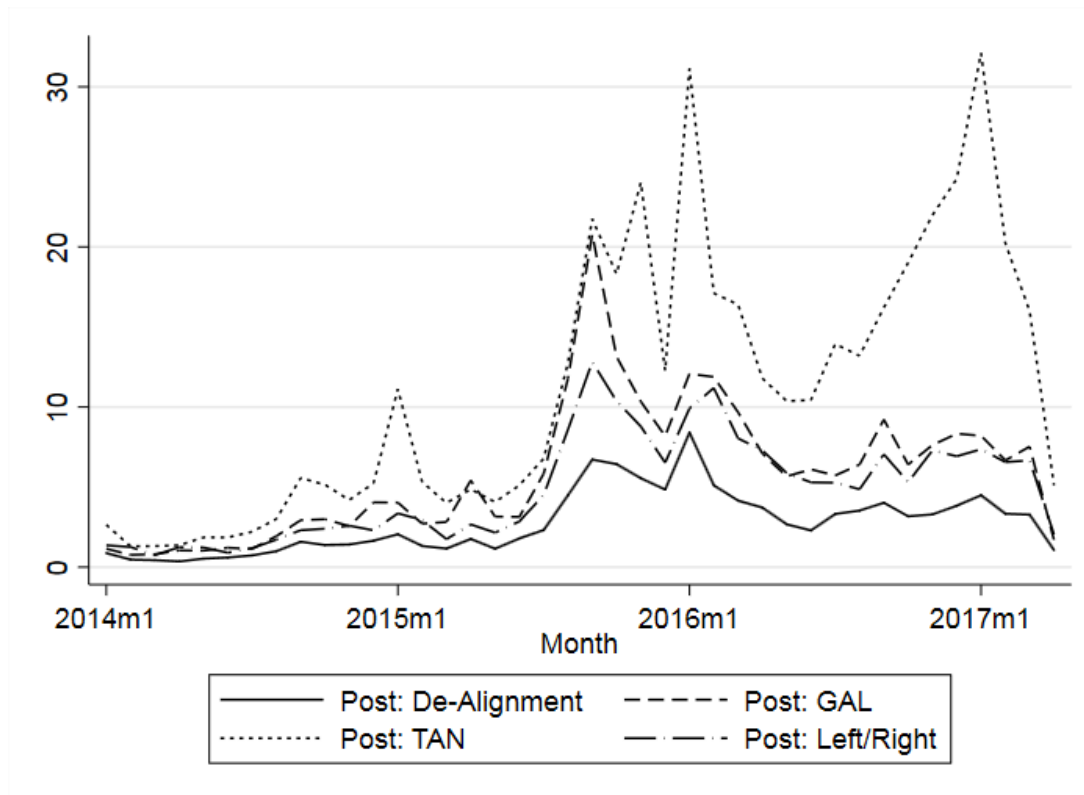


3.4 Does immigration make the country a worse or better place to live?



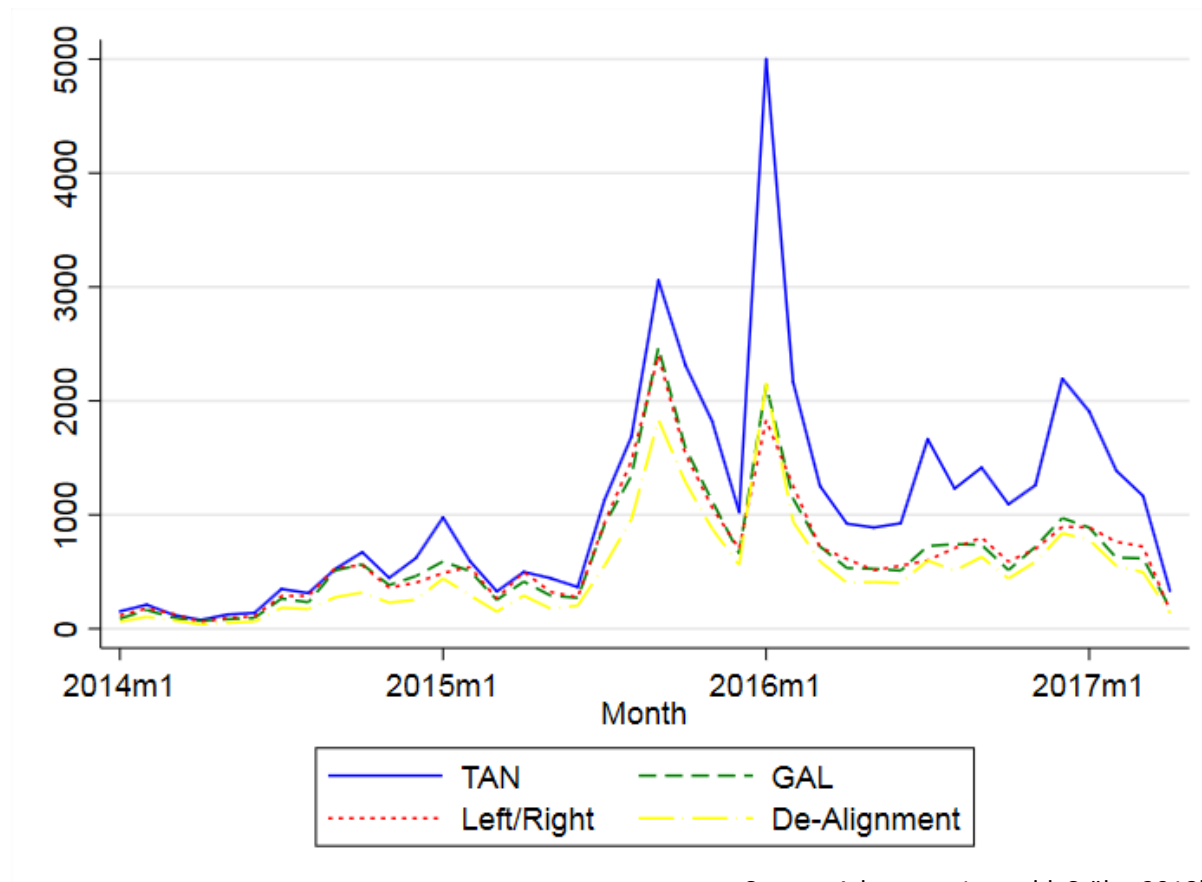
Source: Ademmer Stöhr MEDAM Policy Brief October 2018

What about the media?



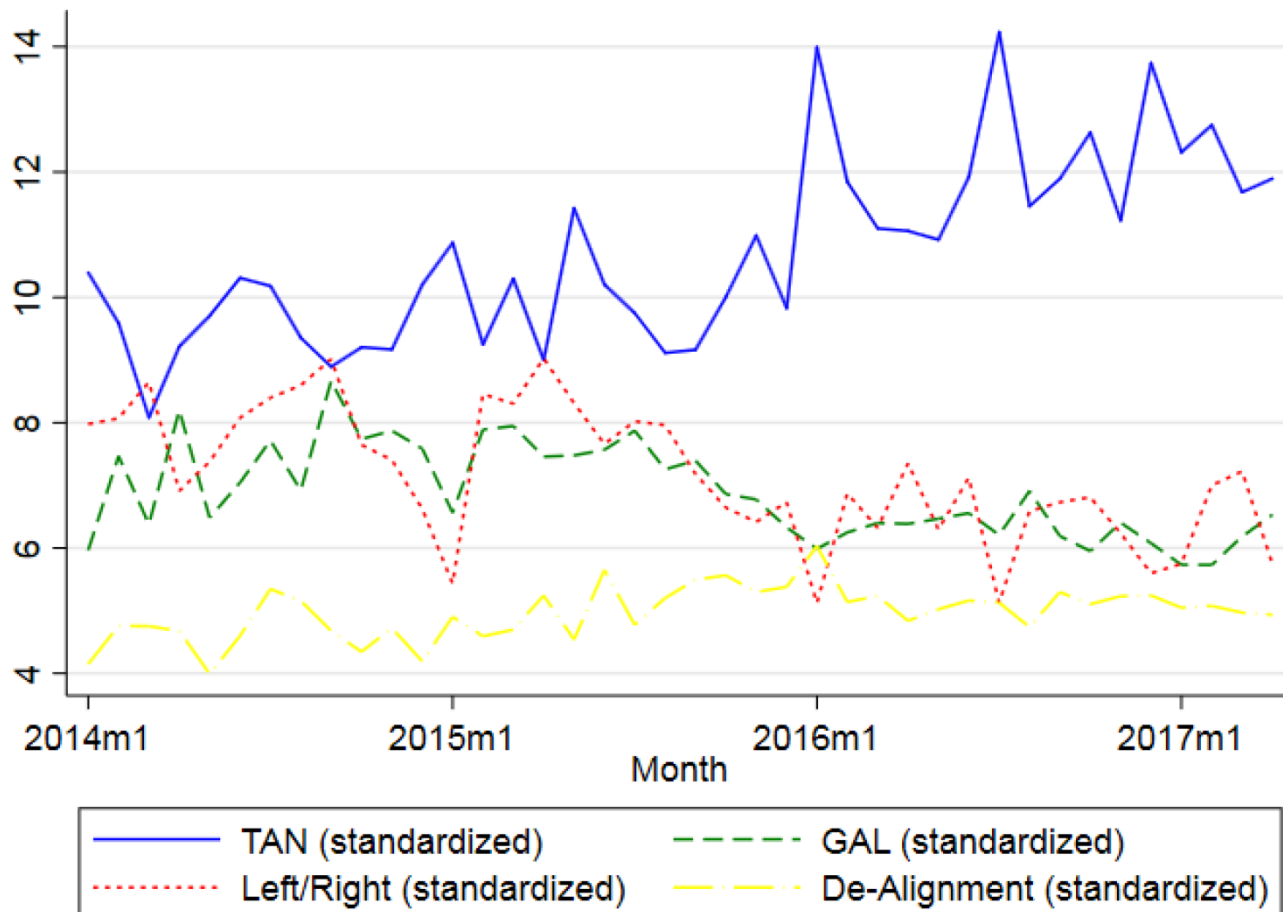
Source: Ademmer, Leupold, Stöhr, 2018b. *mimeo*

Social media comments over time



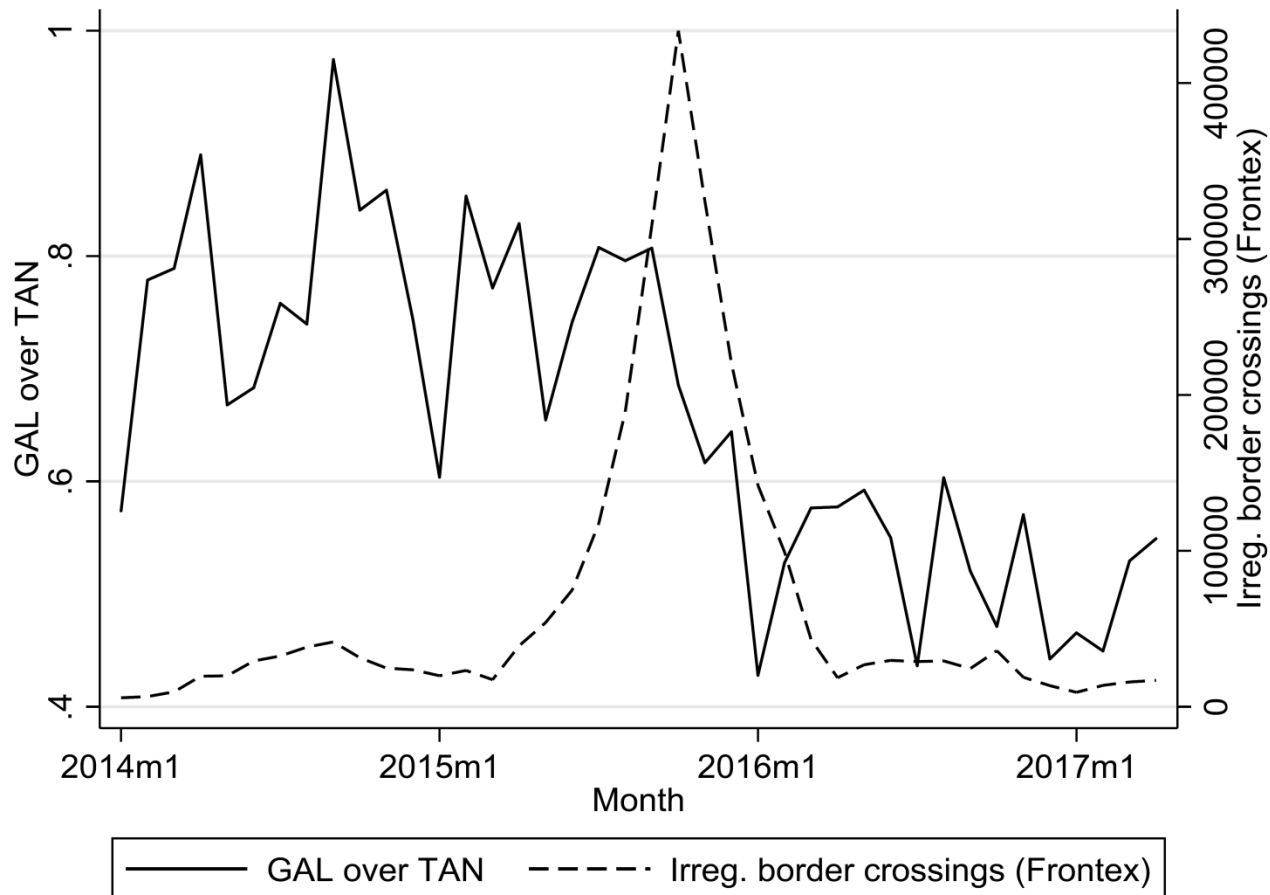
Source: Ademmer, Leupold, Stöhr, 2018b. *mimeo*

Open/closed (increasingly) important



Source: Ademmer, Leupold, Stöhr, 2018b. *mimeo*

Shift during height of “refugee crisis”



Source: Ademmer, Leupold, Stöhr, 2018b. *mimeo*