

Anxious Publics: Worries about Crime and Immigration

Jennifer Fitzgerald
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
University of Colorado at Boulder

K. Amber Curtis
Ph.D. Student, Department of Political Science
University of Colorado at Boulder

Catherine L. Corliss
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Political Science
Brown University

Forthcoming in *Comparative Political Studies*

Accepted September 1, 2010

Abstract: In this paper we investigate the relationship between concerns about crime and concerns about immigration. Panel survey data from Germany allow us to examine people's views about immigration as they develop over time, showing that consternation about crime is a significant predictor of anxiety over immigration. Moreover, it has more substantive impact than other explanatory factors, such as concerns about the economy and objective measures of crime and immigration at the regional level. We also demonstrate an interactive effect: the connection between these two issues is especially strong among those interested in politics. A confirmatory step using the European Social Survey reveals that the moderating effect of political engagement is generalizable to the rest of Western Europe. These findings establish that crime is a critical issue for the formation of immigration attitudes. They also highlight individual level characteristics that drive the bundling of political issues in people's minds.

Key words: Immigration attitudes, crime, political interest, Germany, Western Europe, panel data

Word count: 9,002

Many citizens of immigrant-receiving countries think immigration boosts crime. Public opinion polls show that a majority of West Europeans make this connection, as do large numbers of people in the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, and South Africa.¹ This widespread sentiment is curious given the absence of reliable statistical support. Objective reports from single and multi-country studies suggest that immigration does not actually elevate crime rates (e.g. Aebi, 2004; Hiatt, 2007). Recent U.S. research even finds that immigration is associated with *lower* levels of crime (e.g., Sampson, 2008; Wadsworth, 2010). Thus, an interesting puzzle emerges: if immigration does not actually increase crime, what causes citizens to perceive such a close association between these issues?

Reconciling this disconnect between reality and public perceptions can help get to the heart of anti-immigration attitudes. It can also provide insight into the processes through which people connect political matters in their minds. To these ends, we test three explanations of people's views toward immigration. First, we ask whether certain contextual circumstances—most notably, the prevalence of immigrant arrests in the area of residence—fuel opposition to immigration. Second, we investigate whether anxiety over crime drives immigration concerns. Third, we test an interactive thesis: that attention to politics amplifies the relationship between crime anxiety and immigration concerns.

We use German panel survey data to unpack people's immigration attitudes. Examining where people stand on immigration from year to year affords us unusual insight into micro-level shifts in attitudes over time, enabling us to parse out both the determinants and causal order behind immigration views. The results demonstrate that crime concerns are important propellers of immigration concerns; in fact, the weight of this effect surpasses the influence of economic worries and objective regional conditions. We also find that politically interested citizens are

especially likely to adjust their immigration views based on safety concerns. In some respects this is to be expected because political sophisticates are the most likely people to hold mental schemas or maps linking political issues in coherent ways (Converse, 1964, 2000). But it is also surprising since this issue pair has questionable validity. In a confirmatory analysis, we draw on the cross-national European Social Survey (ESS) to test the generalizability of these patterns. Overall, these findings enhance our understanding of how attention to politics can forge issue connections that are not supported by objective information.

THE EMPIRICS

Surveys

The cognitive tie between issues of immigration and crime is strong in Western Europe. Figure 1 shows that a large majority of West European participants in the 2002 wave of the ESS and the 2003 wave of the International Social Science Program (ISSP) survey think that immigrants make crime problems worse. The ESS asks, “Are [country’s] crime problems made worse or better by people coming to live here from other countries?” Over 73% of the native born West Europeans give an affirmative answer (see Panel A). German responses (not depicted in figure) are above average: over 77% of respondents claim that immigrants contribute to crime in Germany. Interestingly, West Europeans judge less harshly immigrants’ impact on the national economy and culture; the corresponding statistic for the economic effects of immigration is 36% and for cultural influence it is 18%.²

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Similarly, nearly 59% of West European respondents in the ISSP National Identity Survey agree with the statement, “Immigrants increase crime rates” (Panel B).³ The corresponding statistic for Germany is nearly 66%. As in the ESS data, the proportions of

respondents who think that immigrants threaten the economy, the job market, and the nation's culture are significantly lower.⁴

Crime Statistics

While prevalent in people's minds, the association of immigrants with crime lacks consistent objective evidence. A recent literature review on the effects of immigration on crime in the US and Western Europe reveals a mixed empirical picture (Hiatt, 2007). In Germany, first-generation guest workers are no more likely than natives to engage in crime, though second- and third-generation foreigners are over-represented in crime statistics (Albrecht, 1997). This reflects a potential self-selection effect in which the most ambitious and well-intentioned individuals tend to immigrate in the first place (Tonry, 1997). A U.S. neighborhood level study in three southern border cities finds that areas with high concentrations of Latinos do not have especially high homicide rates (Lee, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2001). And new time series analyses show that immigration is actually associated with fewer homicides and robberies across U.S. cities (Stowell, *et al.*, 2009; Wadsworth, 2010).

These snapshots of contemporary research underscore the importance of our analysis: If immigrants are not necessarily more prone to crime, why are most natives convinced they are? Criminologists and sociologists have asked this very question for decades, noting that such impressions are extremely robust to disconfirming evidence (Durkheim, 1997 [1933]; Gusfield, 1963; Hagan, Levi, & Dinovitzer, 2008; Roché, 1993; Sayad, 2004). Most explanations point to the fusing of these issues by elites; however, such suspicions have rarely been subjected to empirical test. Here, we assess this relationship statistically from a public opinion perspective.

Elite Rhetoric and Media Coverage

Politicians in many countries have publicly linked immigration and crime. Anti-immigrant radical right parties are especially clear in binding these issues. An Italian poster from a popular protest in support of the Lega Nord reads: “Immigration=crime” (Baker, 2002). The far right German National Party (NPD) blended these issues in a 2008 demonstration in North Rhein-Westphalia: “Gegen Überfremdung, Islamisierung und Ausländerkriminalität!” Translation: “Against excessive immigration, Islamization, and immigrant criminality!” (Keitsch, 2008). And Pauline Hanson, former leader of Australia’s One Nation party, claims, “You can’t bring people into the country who are incompatible with our way of life and culture... They get around in gangs and there is escalating crime that is happening” (Rehn & Watts, 2007).

Mainstream political actors have also coupled these issues. France’s Nicholas Sarkozy (as Interior Minister) seized headlines in 2005 with his vow to clean out the criminal rubbish in immigrant neighborhoods, and ascended to the presidency partly on promises to tackle crime and immigration (Chrisafis, 2009). In Italy, Berlusconi’s high approval ratings are attributed to “popular crackdowns on crime and immigration” (Nadeau, 2009). In 2007, British Conservative David Davis linked immigration to violent crime in public statements (Morris, 2007). Similar sentiments have even come from the Left: Spain’s socialist Zapatero targeted immigrant communities to ferret out terrorists and gang members (Baker, 2002). And Germany’s Social Democrats have pledged tough treatment of foreigners found guilty of crime (Hoadley, 2003).

A recent event highlights the salience of the immigration-crime link in German media and politics: In 2007, security cameras documented two young immigrants assaulting a native German retiree on the Munich subway. The event was highly publicized, spurring popular demands for immigration reform and harsher penalties for foreign criminals (Kulish, 2008).

Subsequently, a prominent Christian Democratic leader stated: “We have spent too long showing a strange sociological understanding for groups that consciously commit violence as ethnic minorities” (Murphy, 2008). Chancellor Angela Merkel supported this point, announcing that nearly half of criminal offenders under the age of 21 are “foreign youths” (Kulich, 2008).⁵

THEORY

Dominant Explanations of Anti-Immigration Attitudes

Most explanations of immigration attitudes hinge on mechanisms of threat, which has been disaggregated into two main dimensions: economic and symbolic (Green, 2009). On the economic side, realistic group conflict theory predicts that competition over scarce resources—such as jobs, wages, low-income housing, or social services—will spur intergroup animosity (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Gang, Rivera-Batiz, & Yun, 2002; Olzak, 1994; Nagel, 1995). Some threat models test formal economic theories by examining the effects of individuals’ personal skill levels (Mayda, 2006; O’Rourke & Sinnott 2006; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). Others study the ways in which consternation over the national economy shapes views toward immigrants and immigration (Citrin, Green, Muste, & Wong, 1997; Kiewiet, 1983; Lahav, 2004; Popkin & Dimock 2000). In Germany, perceptions of economic threat drive anti-immigrant sentiment (Raijman et al. 2003).

Alternately, socio-psychological theories posit that immigration attitudes stem from perceptions of cultural threat (Fetzer, 2000; Sides & Citrin, 2007; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004). Here, the key motivation for anti-immigrant views is prejudice and intergroup hostility (Green, 2007, 2009; Quillian, 1995; Rieck, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Much of this recent work tests social identity theory, which posits that an individual’s sense of self derives from group categorization and comparison (see Tajfel, 1982).

People organize their social worlds into groups, determine their own placement, and seek to confirm that their group is of higher status than others. This process leads to out-group stereotyping as people strive to denigrate the status of “others.”

Safety Threat

A few scholars have tested the effect of perceived safety threat on immigration attitudes. Single country studies reveal that people who blame immigrants for crime have more restrictive immigration preferences in the UK and Canada (McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Palmer, 2006).

These patterns also hold in cross-national studies that find a link between the perception that immigrants bring crime and orientations toward immigration in general (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007; Mayda, 2006). Though informative, these studies have the drawback that their measures of crime concern are “coupled”: they combine safety concerns with perceptions of immigrants. (These measures are presented above in the discussion of ESS and ISSP descriptive trends.)

Because attitudes toward immigrants are represented on both sides of the equation, such studies cannot estimate the effects of crime worries on immigration views without anti-immigrant prejudice contaminating the analysis (on this point see Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Our analysis avoids this pitfall because the GSOEP measures we use for immigration and crime attitudes are conceptually and operationally distinct.

Other relevant studies also avoid this complication. In Israel, perceived security threats related to terrorism influence people’s attitudes toward immigrants (Canetti-Nisim, Ariely, & Halperin, 2008). And experimental evidence from the Netherlands reveals that worries about crime predict negative judgments about immigrants (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007).

Despite the contribution of these works, lingering questions about the connection between feeling unsafe and condemning immigration are: 1) whether concern about crime

influences how people feel about immigration (or if the influence only flows in the opposite direction); and 2) to what extent attitudes toward immigration stem from objective contextual circumstances. Furthermore, existing work cannot tell us *who* among the public is most likely to associate these issues.

A realistic conflict perspective would prompt an examination of objective conditions, which we offer below. In the case of crime, societal law and order may be perceived to be at stake. If people see (or think they see) that immigrants around them are likely to commit crime, such a perception can emerge. Of course, the threats people perceive need not be significant or even real (Cornelius & Rosenblum, 2005); out-group bias may be at the heart of crime concerns. Negative stereotypes of immigrants as deviants—with values incompatible with those of the host society—may play a role in shaping assessments of immigration’s effect on societal safety (McLaren & Johnson, 2007). Support for this notion comes from evidence that racial attitudes are important drivers of crime policy preferences (Peffley & Hurwitz, 2002). Below, we address the possibility of reverse causation: that biases against immigrants drive crime concerns, rather than vice versa.

Elite and Media Framing

Even if there were a clear statistical link between crime rates and immigration, constraints on time and cognitive capacity mean most people will not thoroughly investigate and dispassionately weigh the evidence to form judgments (Downs, 1957; Lau, 2003). Instead, research shows that rational individuals use heuristics to make up their minds on issues (Lau & Redlawsk, 2001; Lau, 2003; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991), and that a key mental shortcut is to take cues from trusted political elites (Kuklinski & Hurley, 1994; Kuklinski & Quirk, 2000; Mondak, 1993). Such elites have been found to aid people in framing issues and connecting issue pairs (Chong,

1993; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). And more than most people, politically knowledgeable citizens are guided by trusted media sources (Miller & Krosnick, 2000); these citizens also learn more from the media than their less engaged counterparts (Rhee & Cappella, 1997; Zaller, 1992), and have the cognitive capability to link different political issues (Carmines & Stimson 1982).

Studies on perceptions of minorities demonstrate that the media has effectively bundled race and crime in people's minds (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Valentino, 1999). And sensational coverage of violent crimes by immigrants increases individuals' perceptions of threat (Burns & Gimpel, 2000). Looking specifically at media coverage as it relates to immigrants, some evidence signals that elites play a role in shaping immigration views in Europe (McLaren, 2001). Dutch anti-immigrant parties enjoy the greatest public support when media content is packed with immigration-related stories (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007), and the Swiss radical right has benefitted from shifting trends in media coverage over time (Albertazzi 2007).

This body of research, combined with anecdotal evidence of widespread crime-immigration pairing in politics and the media (in Germany and elsewhere), suggest a top-down thesis: people adopt messages from elites and the media that identify the threatening implications of immigration. We therefore hypothesize that people who are interested in politics will pick up on elite cues and will therefore be especially likely to entangle crime and immigration worries. We now test these predictions.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

German Panel Data

For the first part of our analysis, we employ the German Socioeconomic Panel (GSOEP) survey, which interviews respondents about their concerns over various social issues across nine annual waves. These data provide an uncommon opportunity to examine the development of

individuals' immigration views over time. They also allow us to unpack the relationship between immigration attitudes and crime worries because the same respondents are asked every year about their level of concern about crime and, independently, their level of concern over immigration. Data from 1999 to 2007 yield more than 100,000 person-years for analysis.⁶

The dependent variable measures an individual's concern about immigration to Germany, scaled low to high and ranging from "not at all" to "somewhat" to "very" concerned. In an average year, 24% of respondents are not at all concerned while 30% are very concerned.

We group the independent variables into four categories. The first is key issue concerns. *Worried about Crime* and *Worried about Economy* are scaled the same way as the dependent variable. Crime creates more worry in general with 47% very concerned and only 9% not concerned; likewise, 37% of responses are very concerned about the economy while around 10% register no concern. (See Appendix A for descriptive information on all variables.)

The next set of predictors is contextual, measuring features of the regional (or Länder) arena: *Crimes per Capita*, *Unemployment*, and *Non-German Population*.⁷ These objective factors will illustrate how relevant some basic conditions are for immigration attitudes. Non-German population and the unemployment rate are established predictors of anti-immigration concerns (Schneider, 2008; Semyonov, Raijman, & Gorodzeisky, 2006; Ha, 2010), though crime rates have not received the same attention. These variables can also be expected to shrink the effects that safety concerns and economic worries have on immigration attitudes if such concerns are based on realistic threat. Two more contextual factors represent, as closely as possible, the visibility of immigration threats to security and the economy in the region of residence. To capture any overrepresentation of foreigners in arrests, we include *Non-German Suspects*, a measure of the percent of crime suspects who are not German as a proportion of the regional

Non-German population.⁸ We also include an interaction between non-German population and unemployment rate (in the region) to represent immigration's economic implications. If people are driven by realistic threats—as opposed to *perceptions* of either economic or safety threat—these variables should be positively related to the dependent variable. As a final set of regional controls, we measure electoral environments with dummy variables for federal and regional election years to account for campaign contexts, which are known to heighten anxiety in general (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993).

The third set of predictors incorporates personal characteristics and additional controls. To capture economic insecurity, we include *Occupation*, which is broken down by Goldthorpe's (1999a, 1999b) classification; whether an individual is *Worried about Finances* or *Worried about Health*; *Education* level; and *Home Ownership*. We expect that individuals in service sector jobs with high education levels are less concerned about immigration, and that home owners are more concerned (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). Those who worry about their finances and health should be more anxious, fearing that immigration drains coveted welfare resources.

We account for the effects of cultural threat by including a dummy variable for whether the individual is of *German* nationality⁹ and, as noted above, by including regional statistics for the non-German population. The final personal characteristics we include are *Political Interest*, to test the influence of political engagement and—indirectly—signals from political leaders on immigration concerns, and *Worried about Anti-Foreigner Attacks*, which accounts for any compassionate aspect of worries about immigration.¹⁰ We expect that politically interested individuals will be less concerned about immigration because they are generally less biased against out-groups (Meertens & Pettigrew, 1997) and less likely to hold anti-immigration views (Ha, 2010). And since aggression towards foreigners across Germany has drawn much attention

(Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Oberwittler & Hofer, 2005), we suspect that concerns for the well-being of foreigners will promote concerns about immigration in general.

Political interest interactions comprise the final set of predictors. To test the effects of political engagement on the likelihood that people will use their crime and economic concerns to form views on immigration, we interact political interest with *Worried about Crime* and *Worried about Economy*. Positive coefficients would mean that attention to politics boosts the connection people make between immigration and these other issues. Lastly, all models include year and region fixed effects to account for contextual factors not directly captured by our models.

To deal with the autocorrelation inherent in time series data as well as the suspected correlation in errors between each individual's responses over time, all models include a lagged dependent variable. This also addresses potential omitted variable bias and captures the dynamic nature of attitude formation and change. As such, these models can be interpreted as predicting year-to-year change in the dependent variable (Keele & Kelly, 2006). In other words, we conduct a 'tough test' of whether crime concerns and other predictors have independent effects on immigration attitudes *after* controlling for an individual's level of concern over immigration (and all its determinants) the previous year.¹¹ And by controlling for past immigration attitudes, we limit the confounding reverse effects of immigration views on crime concerns. We go even further to address this issue in Appendix C.¹² Observations are clustered by household because the GSOEP's design (with multiple respondents from the same family) does not yield a sample of fully independent observations.¹³

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The first model in Table 1 is a Baseline ordered logit model that includes worries about crime and the economy, along with basic individual and contextual level factors. The main

purpose of this model is to establish that crime concern is a significant predictor of immigration worries, net the effects of immigration worries in the prior year. The results signal that there is indeed a strong causal effect of crime concerns on the development of immigration worries over time. This means that immigration attitudes do not fully drive crime concerns through characterization of immigrants as social deviants. Also, the effects of worries about crime are robust to controls for regional crime, immigration and unemployment levels, and it is a much stronger predictor of immigration worries than economic concerns. These are key findings since existing empirical work has not uncovered this set of statistical relationships.

The Regional Threat model adds statistical measures of the immigration-crime and immigration-economy links, and removes the indicators of worries over crime and the economy. The results show that the contextually based connections that people might make between immigration and crime and immigration and economic strain are positive and significant, suggesting that some surrounding factors are relevant for immigration attitudes when they relate to crime and the economy. The Full model next pits worries about crime against the regional measures. In this more demanding specification, all the contextual threat factors lose their significance while the subjective worry variables remain robust. Compared to their coefficients in the Baseline model, the key issue concerns do not lose any of their effect to the objective regional conditions.¹⁴ This demonstrates the power of worries over the effects of “realistic” threat. For immigration attitudes, threat perceptions matter much more than objective conditions¹⁵, and a perceived safety threat matters more than twice as much as economic concerns.

The last model in Table 1 (Interactive model) includes interactions between political interest and worries over crime and the economy. It shows that interest in politics (which on its

own is a significant and *negative* predictor of immigration concerns per the first three models), plays an enhancing role. *Worried about Crime* has a stronger positive effect on immigration concerns for those who are very interested in politics compared to those who are not.¹⁶ The same cannot be said for the effect of economic concerns: among those who are very politically engaged, economic worries are weaker predictors (though still positive) of immigration concerns. Put simply, political interest enhances the effects of crime concerns on immigration views and mitigates the effects of economic concerns.¹⁷ These findings support our suspicion that attention to elite rhetoric and media cues can trigger the connection between immigration and crime in people's minds. Yet interestingly, the same effect is not present for economic issues.

As for the remaining predictors, the presence of a federal election (in 2002 and 2005) raises concerns about immigration, yet regional elections do not. Personal economic factors such as financial worries and owning a home also affect immigration attitudes but, in keeping with prior analyses, these concerns are not as relevant as concern over national economic conditions. Occupation matters as well: service sector workers are less likely and manual workers more likely than others to worry about immigration. People worried about their health tend to be more concerned about immigration, while the well educated are expectedly less so. People of German nationality are more concerned about immigration (as cultural threat theories predict), as are those who are male, older (when worries are not controlled for in the Full model), and concerned about hostility to foreigners. These results confirm that anxiety over crime activates concern about immigration and imply that those who are politically interested are even more likely to reach this conclusion.

European Social Survey

We use descriptive data from the 2002 European Social Survey to test the generalizability of the interactive patterns identified with the German data.¹⁸ As illustrated in Figure 1, many West Europeans associate immigration with crime. We examine whether the most politically engaged citizens are especially likely to make this connection. This survey allows for better operationalization of political engagement than the GSOEP, as it includes a fuller set of relevant measures.

Figure 2 displays the relationship between a perceived crime-immigration link and three different measures of political engagement: political interest, frequency of political discussion, and daily time spent reading about politics in the newspaper. For the sake of comparison, we also plot this same set of relationships for perceptions of immigration's ill effects on the economy and national culture. If the GSOEP results travel successfully, politically engaged persons will be especially likely to link immigration with greater crime but *not* with adverse economic or cultural developments. The figures display the percent of respondents who report the highest level of threat from immigration (10 on the 0-10 scale).

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Panel A of Figure 2 shows a pronounced, curvilinear relationship between the belief that immigrants are a very strong safety threat and political interest. Though the least politically interested most often make this association, those who are very interested are the next most likely to do so. The comparable trends for blaming economic problems and cultural demise on immigration show a more even downward pattern as political influence increases. The same basic relationship is evident for political discussion, shown in Panel B. Those who never or rarely talk about politics are the most likely to make the connection, with daily political

discussants coming in as the second most likely group. Here, too, the U-shaped pattern is not clearly mirrored for the other issues. The newspaper reading measure reveals a similar dynamic (Panel C). For the crime threat, people who spend over three hours per day reading about politics are more likely to blame immigrants compared to those who read the paper less frequently. The same can be said for perceptions of cultural threats, whereas the relationship between written media consumption and perceived economic threat is more erratic. We consider these patterns further below. For now, Figure 2 reinforces the GSOEP finding and demonstrates its relevance outside Germany: the most politically engaged people are more likely than most others to connect immigration with crime.

To summarize, our analysis yields three main findings. First, fear of crime is a strong predictor of immigration concerns, and it trumps worries about economic development. Second, objective measures of crime and economic threats are relatively weak predictors of immigration attitudes, emphasizing that reality is no match for the power of perceptions when it comes to attitude formation. And third, people who are politically engaged are especially likely to connect the issue of crime (but not economic or cultural problems) with immigration.

DISCUSSION

Crime-related anxiety clearly intensifies concerns over immigration. This effect is independent of past immigration concerns, objective measures of regional crime, regional over-representation of foreigners among those arrested, and a host of personal characteristics and other controls. The thesis that perceptions of safety threat influence the development of immigration attitudes has never before been subjected to such a rigorous test. We also find that fear of crime is a stronger driver of immigration attitudes than other predictors such as worries over the economy. Given

the intense scholarly interest in the roots of immigration attitudes, these findings should spur analysts toward more careful consideration of the safety dynamics behind such views.

Our finding that those most attuned to public affairs are especially likely to blame immigrants for crime, but not for economic strain, warrants further attention. Research on media content in Europe and elsewhere points to an answer rooted in the contours of news reporting. For instance, one study reports that German media coverage of immigration is dominated by economic themes most prominently, followed by cultural and then safety frames. Yet, the immigration-economy link is portrayed in mostly positive terms, the immigration-culture connection is cast in relatively neutral terms, and the immigration-crime pairing is typically framed in a negative light (Bauder, 2008). Similar characterizations of newcomers as threatening social deviants are identified in Australia and Austria, among other countries (Pickering, 2001; El Rafaie, 2001). More broadly, European news tends to be characterized more by crime than economic themes, and when immigration is reported on, it is framed most often in terms of conflict and much less frequently in terms of economics (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). These studies help to explain why we find that crime concerns affect immigration anxiety more than economic worries: the media sets the stage for engaged audiences to connect immigration with crime.

Another interpretation of the interactive finding that high levels of political interest boost the prospects for this issue pairing is that people who are worried about crime become more politically interested, seek out information, and encounter political messages that connect crime with immigration.¹⁹ Information seeking is one strategy people use to deal with anxiety (Garofolo, 1981; Brader, 2005; Valentino et al., 2008; Marcus & MacKuen, 1993). And the

psychological weight of basic safety concerns trumps that of most economic considerations (Maslow, 1954; Inglehart, 1979, 1997).

Untangling these mechanisms would further help to explain how immigration views develop. If the real action in forging a cognitive link between crime and immigration is located in the media environment, a person could maintain a relatively high level of political interest over time and persistent media attention would enhance the issue connection. An alternate scenario is that those who fear crime experience anxiety, which deepens political interest and prompts information seeking. Here, the moving part of the process is level of interest in politics. To assess these two possibilities, we utilize the panel nature of the GSOEP. These data offer some support for the former interpretation, that politically interested people are presented with and internalize signals of a crime-immigration link. Specifically, over time an individual's level of political interest is quite stable (see Prior 2010), and relatively speaking it is much more stable than his issue concerns. The year-to-year correlation is .70 for political interest, .49 for crime fears, .42 for economic worries, and .53 for immigration concerns. And from panel year one to nine the respective correlations are .58 (interest), .36 (crime), .26 (economy) and .41 (immigration). These comparative figures support the media environment narrative over the information seeking thesis, though we suspect that these mechanisms operate in tandem.

The ESS data offer a more detailed way to interpret the interaction by showing that the correlation between political engagement and the view that immigrants bring crime is U-shaped. Those most likely to buy into the notion of immigrant criminality are the least and the most engaged citizens. This pattern suggests that there are multiple mechanisms at work in pushing the two issues together for people, and brings to mind the distinction between being uninformed and being misinformed about political affairs (Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schwieder, & Rich, 2000).

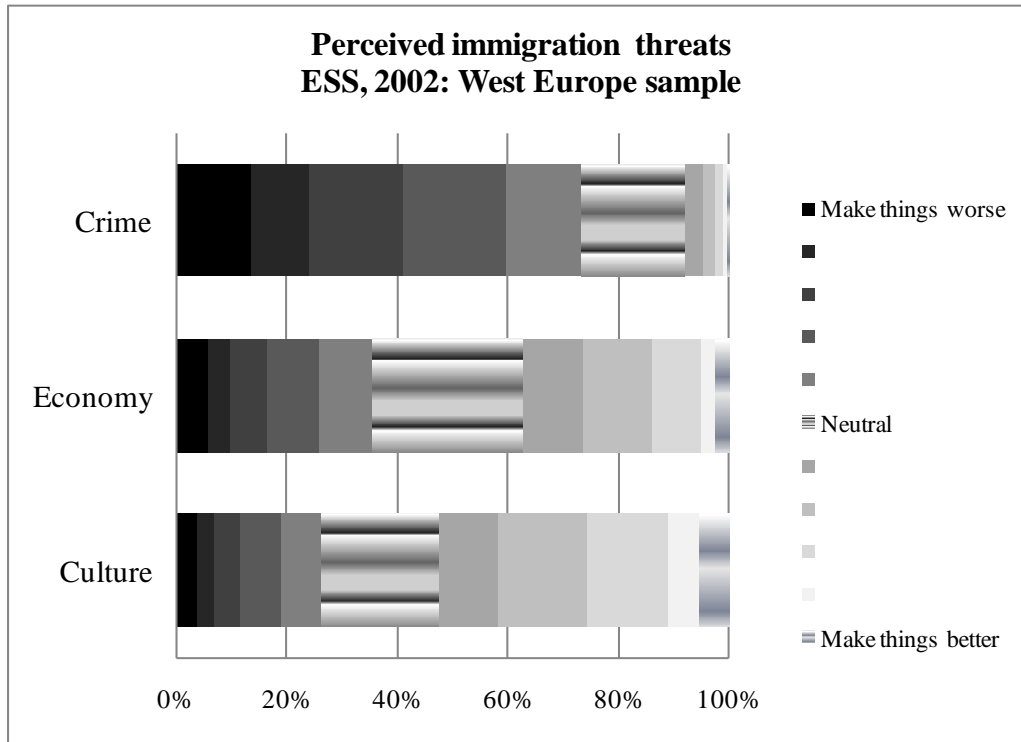
Those who are not interested in politics, who never talk about politics, and who never read the newspaper exemplify the uninformed. Most research on immigration attitudes, which emphasizes economic threat and cultural bias, sets the stage for this finding. From these perspectives, it makes sense that unsophisticated citizens would lump immigration and crime together without much information or thoughtful reflection. More surprising in light of this literature is that the highly engaged are also more prone to connect these two issues. We propose that this makes them misinformed. This insight is supported by developments in the broader behavioral literature discussed above, which shows that politically engaged people more readily absorb media messages.

Established findings in political behavior also highlight the political significance of these misinformed citizens. The most politically oriented people in society are also those most likely to vote (Glenn & Grimes, 1968; Denny & Doyle, 2008; Voogt & Saris, 2003), volunteer for campaigns (Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 1997), engage in blogging and other online political activities (Best & Krueger, 2005; Woodly, 2008), get involved with talk radio (Hofstetter et al., 1999), and persuade others about politics (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Hansen, 1997). In other words, these people are opinion leaders whose views have major political implications.

Given the psychological primacy of safety concerns for individuals, which are understood as more fundamental human needs than economic wealth, group belonging, etc., (Maslow, 1954), it is imperative that we learn more about how people come to mentally connect immigration and crime. As our results demonstrate, worries about crime can fuel anxiety over immigration once crime becomes associated with newcomers. This, combined with the fact that the citizens expected to make the most reasoned and educated political choices are among those

most likely to hold immigrants responsible for crime, leaves great potential for anti-immigration views to further harden in immigrant-receiving countries.

Figure 1
Panel A



Panel B

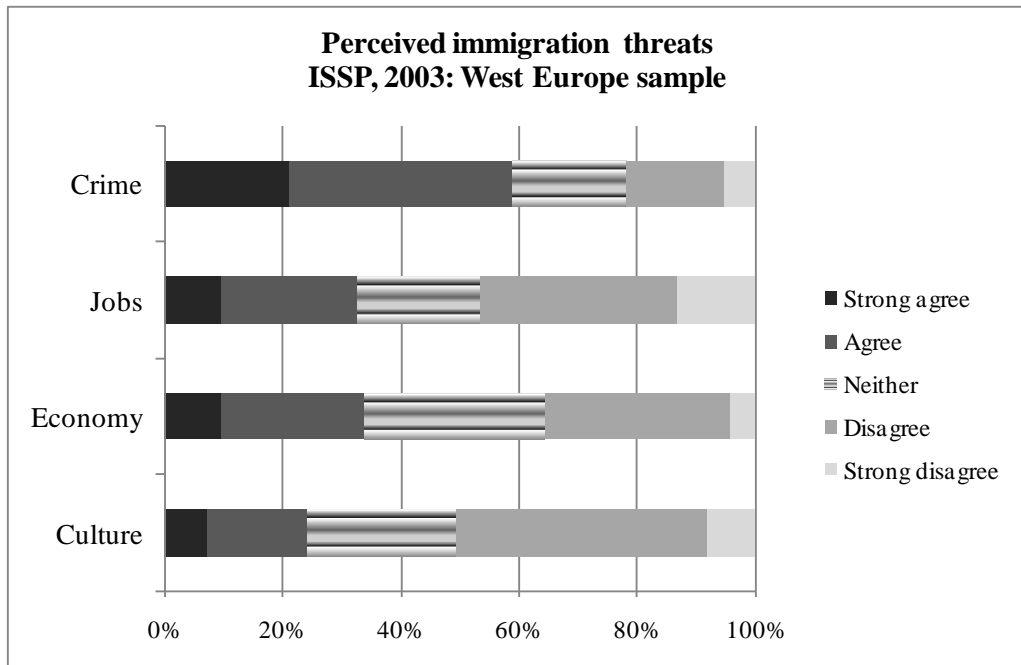
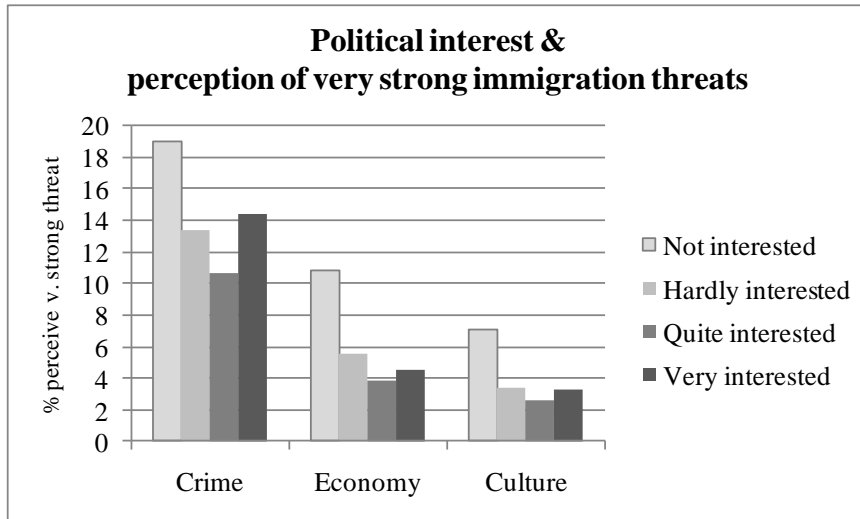
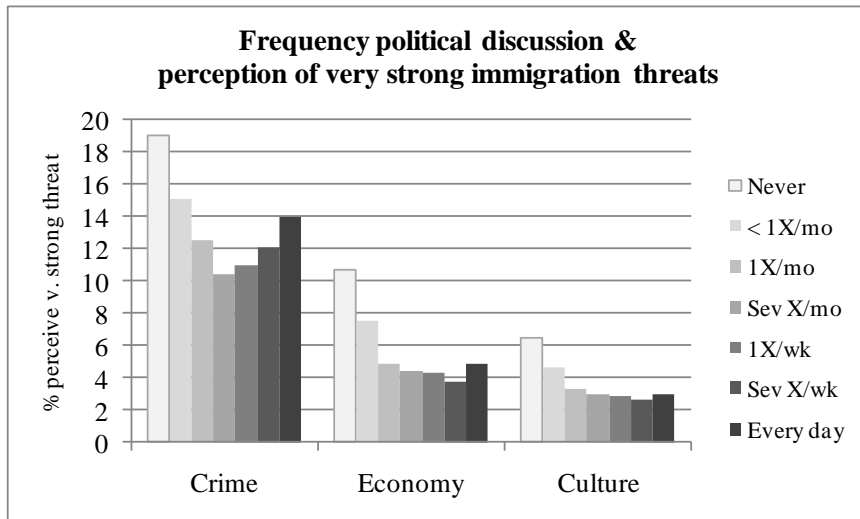


Figure 2
Panel A



Panel B



Panel C

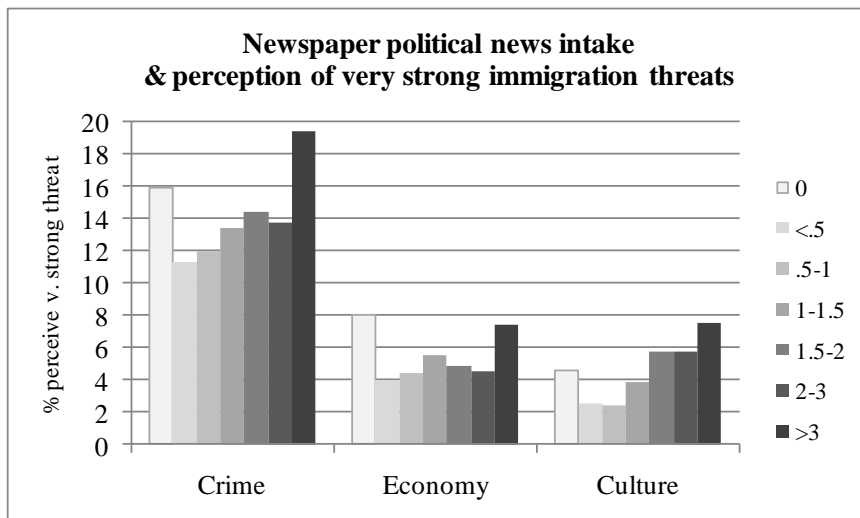


Table 1

Predicting concerns about immigration

<i>Predictor</i>	1: Baseline			2: Contextual			3: Full			4: Interactive		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	
Lagged DV	.80	(.01)	**	.91	(.01)	**	.80	(.01)	**	.80	(.01)	**
KEY ISSUE CONCERNS												
Worried abt. crime	.56	(.01)	**				.56	(.01)	**	.51	(.02)	**
Worried abt. economy	.25	(.01)	**				.24	(.01)	**	.28	(.01)	**
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS												
Election year--federal	.16	(.02)	**	.13	(.02)	**	.16	(.02)	**	.07	(.02)	**
Election year--regional	-.02	(.01)		-.02	(.01)	*	-.02	(.01)		-.02	(.01)	
Crimes percap--reg'l	.73	(1.27)		2.29	(1.30)		.13	(1.35)		.09	(1.35)	
Unemployment--reg'l	-.01	(.01)		-.02	(.01)		-.01	(.01)		-.01	(.01)	
Non-German pop--reg'l	2.14	(1.02)	*	1.73	(1.36)		1.82	(1.39)		1.81	(1.39)	
Non-German suspects--reg'l				.18	(.22)		.27	(.22)		.27	(.22)	
Non-German pop X Unemp--reg'l				.22	(.10)	*	.11	(.11)		.12	(.11)	
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS												
Occupation (ref=not & unemp'd)												
Service	-.03	(.02)		-.06	(.02)	**	-.08	(.02)	**	-.08	(.02)	**
Routine non-manual		<i>dropped</i>		-.02	(.02)		-.05	(.02)	*	-.05	(.02)	*
Self employed	.02	(.02)		-.01	(.02)		-.03	(.02)		-.03	(.02)	
Manual	.09	(.02)	**	.07	(.02)	**	.03	(.02)		.04	(.02)	*
Unemployed	.05	(.02)	*		<i>dropped</i>			<i>dropped</i>			<i>dropped</i>	
Retired	.03	(.02)		.01	(.02)		-.03	(.02)		-.03	(.02)	
Worried abt. finances	.07	(.01)	**	.17	(.01)	**	.07	(.01)	**	.07	(.01)	**
Worried abt. health	.04	(.01)	**	.07	(.01)	**	.04	(.01)	**	.04	(.01)	**
Education	-.04	(.00)	**	-.05	(.00)	**	-.04	(.00)	**	-.04	(.00)	**
Homeowner	.04	(.01)	**	.04	(.01)	**	.04	(.01)	**	.04	(.01)	**
German	.33	(.02)	**	.37	(.02)	**	.33	(.02)	**	.33	(.02)	**
Political interest	-.03	(.01)	**	.00	(.01)		-.03	(.01)	**	-.05	(.02)	**
Worried abt. anti-foreigner attacks	.23	(.01)	**	.38	(.01)	**	.23	(.01)	**	.24	(.01)	**
Age	.00	(.00)		.00	(.00)	**	.00	(.00)		.00	(.00)	
Male	.12	(.01)	**	.08	(.01)	**	.12	(.01)	**	.12	(.01)	**
INTERACTIONS												
Pol. interest X Worried abt. crime										.03	(.01)	**
Pol. interest X Worried abt. econ										-.02	(.01)	**
Cut 1/Cut 2	1.6/3.34			.81/2.44			1.63/3.37			1.52/3.26		
Wald chi²	25506.6			20636.9			25512.8			25570.8		
N	104,856			105,070			104,856			104,856		

S.E.s clustered by household. These are ordered logit models that control for each region and year. * p<.05; **p<.01

APPENDIX A
Descriptive Statistics, 1999-2007

<u>Variable (Range)</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Worried About Immigration (0-2)	1.054	0.734
Worried About Crime (0-2)	1.373	0.649
Worried About Personal Finances (0-2)	0.930	0.705
Worried About Economy (0-2)	1.263	0.623
Professional (0-1)	0.930	0.705
Unemployed (0-1)	0.068	0.252
Receives Social Assistance (0-1)	0.011	0.103
Household Income (/10,000) (0-9.99)	0.319	0.218
German (0-1)	0.323	0.468
Male (0-1)	0.498	0.499
Years of Education (7-18)	11.955	2.639
Age (16-100)	41.283	23.302
Political Interest (0-3)	1.302	0.820
Worried About Hostility to Foreigners (0-2)	1.100	0.677
Worried About Environment (0-2)	1.114	0.624
Year (1999-2007)	2003	2.582
Regional Crimes Per Capita _(t-1) (0.054-0.185)	0.077	0.024
Homeowner (0-1)	0.495	0.499
Live in East Germany (0-1)	0.503	0.499
Worried in General (0-1)	0.012	0.108

APPENDIX B
Marginal Effects on Predicted Probability from Model 3

<i>Predictor</i>	At Minimum	At Maximum	Change
Lagged DV	.06	.50	.44
Worried abt. crime	.07	.33	.27
Worried abt. economy	.13	.27	.13
Occupation (ref=not employed)			
Service	.22	.20	-.02
Routine non-manual	.21	.20	-.02
Manual	.21	.22	.01
Worried abt. finances	.19	.24	.04
Worried abt. health	.20	.23	.02
Education	.27	.16	-.11
Homeowner	.21	.22	.01
German	.14	.22	.08
Political interest	.23	.20	-.03
Worried abt. anti-foreigner attacks	.15	.28	.13
Male	.20	.23	.03

Table entries indicate the predicted probability of possessing the highest value of the DV while moving from low to high on each IV and holding all other predictors at their mean values. Calculated using the Stata `prvalue` command (Long and Freese 2006). Only variables passing the $p \geq 0.05$ significance threshold are included above.

APPENDIX C

Predicting concerns about immigration -- robustness tests

Predictor	Directional ivreg			Multilevel (2005)		Ideology (2005-2007)		Interactive logit					
	Coeff.	S.E.		Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.				
Lagged DV	.39	(.00)	**	2.19	(.07)	**	1.38	(.02)	**	1.73	(.02)	**	
KEY ISSUE CONCERNS													
Worried abt. crime	.27	(.00)	**	1.29	(.06)	**	1.02	(.02)	**	.94	(.04)	**	
Worried abt. economy	.12	(.00)	**	.72	(.06)	**	.45	(.02)	**	.47	(.02)	**	
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS													
Election year--federal	.08	(.01)	**	<i>dropped</i>		<i>dropped</i>				.43	(.06)	**	
Election year--regional	-.01	(.01)		<i>dropped</i>						-.04	(.02)		
Crimes percap--reg'l				-8.28	(3.03)	**	54.13	(15.60)	**	1.95	(3.01)		
Unemployment--reg'l	.00	(.00)		.03	(.02)		.11	(.03)	**	-.03	(.02)		
Non-German pop--reg'l	1.19	(.48)	*	3.43	(1.92)		-49.70	(12.58)	**	2.31	(2.99)		
Non-German suspects--reg'l				-.05	(.05)		-.34	(.12)	**	.57	(.49)		
Non-German pop X Unemp--reg'l				<i>dropped</i>						.36	(.23)		
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS													
Occupation (ref=not employed)													
Service	-.04	(.01)	**	-.12	(.11)		-.02	(.05)		-.12	(.04)	**	
Routine non-manual	-.03	(.01)	*	-.25	(.14)		<i>dropped</i>				-.11	(.05)	*
Self employed	-.01	(.01)		-.01	(.11)		-.02	(.05)		-.05	(.04)		
Manual	.02	(.01)	*	.11	(.11)		.09	(.05)		.05	(.04)		
Unemployed	<i>dropped</i>			.09	(.13)		.10	(.06)		<i>dropped</i>			
Retired	-.01	(.01)		<i>dropped</i>						-.06	(.04)		
Worried abt. finances	.03	(.00)	**	.21	(.05)	**	.14	(.02)	**	.15	(.02)	**	
Worried abt. health	.02	(.00)	**	.02	(.05)		.04	(.02)	*	.06	(.02)	**	
Education	-.02	(.00)	**	-.11	(.01)	**	-.06	(.01)	**	-.070	(.01)	**	
Homeowner	.02	(.01)	**	-.03	(.06)		-.01	(.02)		.02	(.02)		
German	.15	(.01)	**	.83	(.12)	**	.55	(.05)	**	.67	(.04)	**	
Political interest	-.02	(.00)	**	-.03	(.04)		-.05	(.02)	**	-.16	(.04)	**	
Worried abt. Anti-foreigner attacks	.11	(.00)	**	.31	(.04)	**	.47	(.02)	**	.34	(.02)	**	
Age	.00	(.00)		.00	(.00)		.00	(.00)		.00	(.00)		
Male	.06	(.00)	**	.30	(.05)	**	.21	(.02)	**	.28	(.02)	**	
INTERACTION													
Political interest X Worried abt. crime										.08	(.02)	**	
Constant	-.15	(.06)	*	-.88	(.04)	**	4.93/8.01			-.251	(.06)	**	
R ² /Wald chi ²	R ² =.41 F=1483.7			X ² =1391.5		**	X ² =11904.8			X ² =14726.4			
N	104,856			13,829			40,407			104,856			
Deviance (-2 x Log Likelihood)	n/a			13337.4			62806.4			94975.2			
Household-Level Variance	n/a			1.26		(.07)	**	n/a		n/a			
Regional-Level Variance	n/a			.00		(.04)		n/a		n/a			

Directional model: S.E.s clustered by household, control for region & year included, instruments=regional crime per capita & number crimes

Multilevel model: 3-level multilevel model with individuals nested in (8951) households nested in (13) regions. Calculated using xmelogit with Laplacian approximation, models control for each region, DV=v. worried about immigration (1), not at all or somewhat worried (0).

Ideology model: Ordered logit model, S.E.s clustered by household, control for region included, survey years 2005-2007.

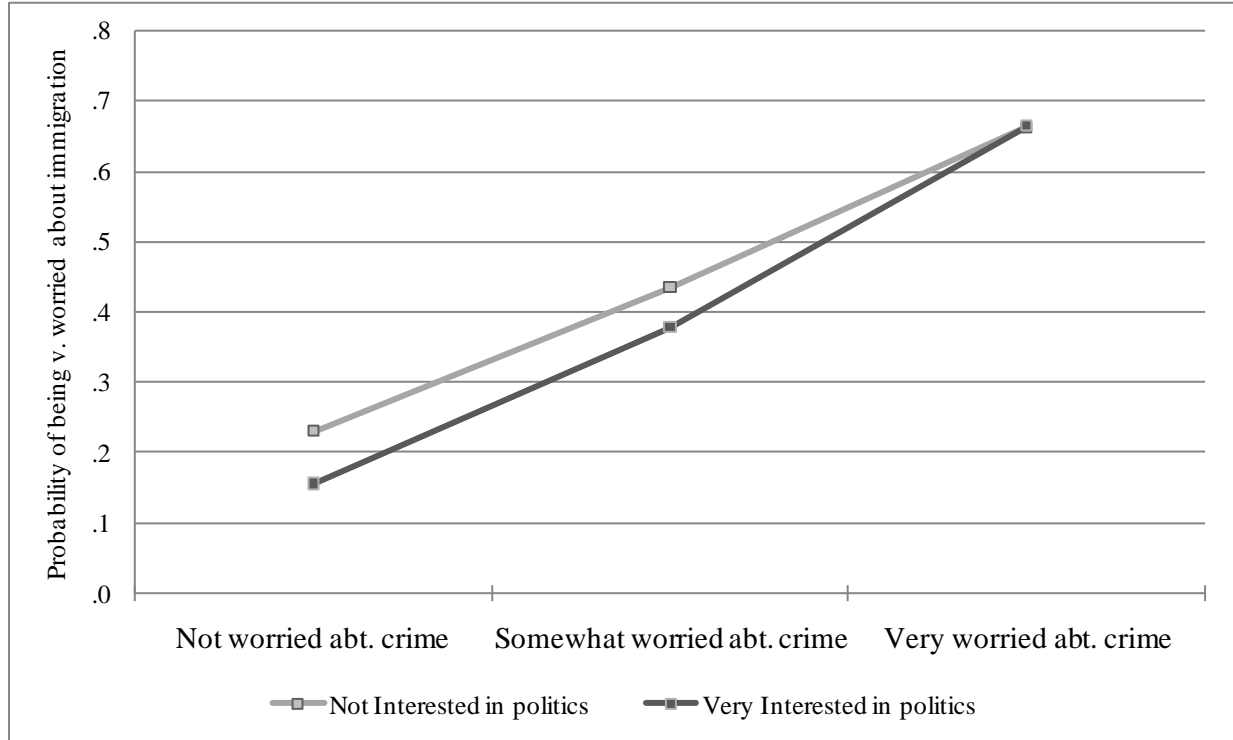
Interactive logit model: Dependent variable=v. worried about immigration (1), not at all or somewhat worried (0).

S.E.s clustered by household, control for region & year included.

For all models: * p<.05; **p<.01

APPENDIX D

Figure A1. Marginal Effect of Crime Concerns on Being Very Worried About Immigration for Different Levels of Political Interest



Probabilities calculated as $\Pr(Y) = 1/[1+e^{-(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_1 X_2 + \beta_4 \text{Controls} + \varepsilon)}]$

Based on the Interactive logit model in Appendix C.

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Author biography statements and acknowledgements

Jennifer Fitzgerald is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research focuses on comparative political behavior, with specific emphasis on immigration attitudes, radical right party support, electoral participation, interpersonal influence and local context.

K. Amber Curtis is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Politics at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research interests revolve around political behavior and psychology, with a specific focus on European integration and identity construction.

Catherine L. Corliss is a Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at Brown University. Her research focuses on social movements, local political participation and German politics.

**The authors thank Vanessa Baird, Terri Givens, Lauren McLaren, Jennifer Wolak, two anonymous reviewers, and panel participants at the 2009 International Society of Political Psychology meeting and the 2010 International Studies Association meeting for many helpful comments and suggestions.

NOTES

¹ See the 2002 European Social Survey, the 1995 and 2003 International Social Science Program surveys, and Danso & McDonald (2001).

² Countries included in the ESS West Europe sample: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Sample limited to citizens who were born there and whose parents were both there. Data available at <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>.

³ Countries included in the ISSP West Europe sample: Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Sample limited to citizens whose parents are also citizens. Data available at <http://www.issp.org/data.shtml>.

⁴ Large numbers of respondents from other countries make this association as well: Australians (39%), Americans (28%), New Zealanders (32%), Canadians (32%), and Israelis (46%).

⁵ See Albrecht (1997) on German politicians linking immigration and crime in the early 1990s.

⁶ A complete description of these data is available at <http://www.diw.de/en/soep>.

⁷ Source information for these measures comes from official federal and regional websites. Contact authors for a table identifying all sites.

⁸ Crime statistics are often biased against minorities and German statistics on immigrants' involvement in crime are problematic (Albrecht, 1997; Oberwittler & Hoefler, 2005).

⁹ This is the best measure of in-group bias in the GSOEP, so we also include a set of proxy variables. Older, poorly educated males with weak job skills are consistently found to exhibit anti-immigrant tendencies (Fetzer, 2000; Green, 2007; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007).

¹⁰ This variable should also capture much of the variance that may otherwise be due to left-right ideology (see Lahav, 1997). Because the GSOEP only asks about ideology in 2005, we present a separate Ideology model as a robustness test (see Appendix C).

¹¹ This strategy also helps to account for the effects of out-group biases since prejudice is unlikely to change much during a person's life (Miller & Sears, 1986; Krosnick & Alwin, 1989).

¹² We successfully put the thesis that crime worries influence immigration concerns to a more rigorous test, using an instrumental variable regression model to address the endogeneity of this relationship. This model includes as instruments factors that influence the dependent variable only via their effects on the key independent variable (*Worried about Crime*). We use the regional crime rate (*Crimes per Capita*) and number of crimes (*Crimes*) as instruments, selected based on the sociological and criminological literature regarding fear of crime (see Ferraro 1995). These instruments prove robust, as they pass the standard statistical requirements for the *F*-score and the Hansen's *J* statistic.

¹³ We also test a three-level hierarchical model of individuals nested in households within regions; no substantive results change (see Appendix C).

¹⁴ For ease of interpretation, Appendix B compares the substantive effect of moving from the minimum to maximum value of each independent variable (based on results from the Full model in Table 1). While last year's immigration concerns have the greatest effect on current ones, the next largest determinant is concern about crime. Moving from "not at all" to "very" concerned about crime increases the probability of being very concerned about immigration by .27. The corresponding effect for economic concern is only .13.

¹⁵ Given our expectation that objective regional conditions should matter, their insignificance in the full model suggested that issue concerns mediated contextual variables' effect. Using Stata's

sgmediation command, we determined that the effects of *Non-German Population*, *Crimes Per Capita*, and *Non-German Population*Unemployment Rate* on worries about immigration were all significantly mediated by being worried about crime. Details available upon request.

¹⁶ Appendix D explores the substantive effect of this interaction based on a separate logit model.

We use a logit model for this step because it is better suited to presenting interactive effects than is ordered logit. Predicted probabilities show that the marginal effect of crime concern on immigration attitudes is stronger and steeper for those who are very interested in politics.

¹⁷ In an unreported robustness test, we ran models with each interaction separately. The crime interaction does not change, but the economic interaction loses statistical significance (to .085).

We also interacted political interest with non-German suspects and found no significant effect, showing that political interest does not condition the effect of objective contextual threat.

¹⁸ The ISSP's National Identity Surveys do not include any questions on political engagement.

¹⁹ Though we emphasize the effects of crime fears on immigration attitudes, it is also possible that an individual could become anxious about immigration (or about immigration as well as crime), pay closer attention to media content as a result, and come to accept the issue link.