

# **Scepticism or Support towards Migrant Integration?**

How integration policies and elite discourses shape perceptions of ethnic threat

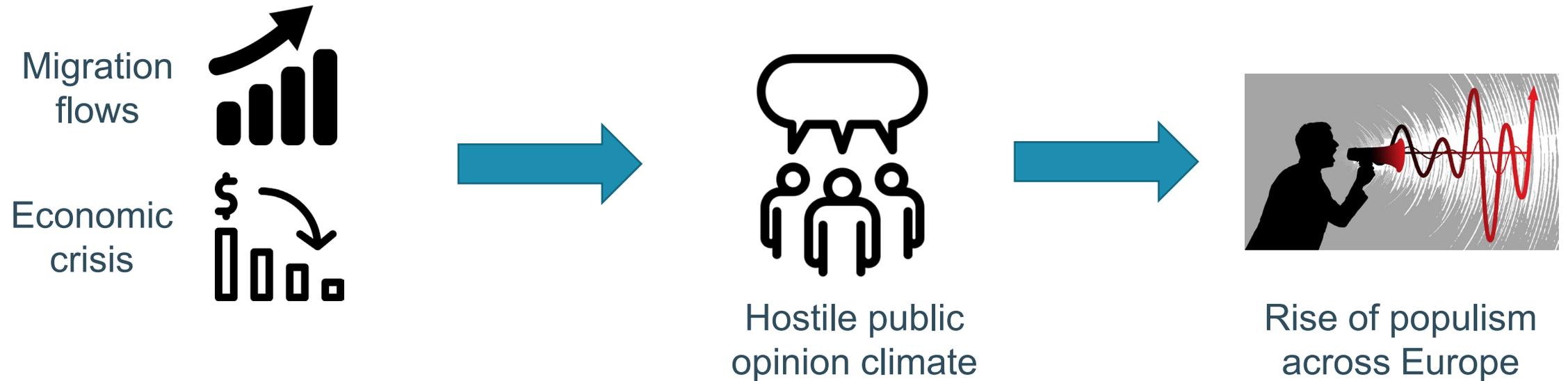
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*Going Forward or Backward? Perspectives on a European Social Citizenship*

*Düsseldorf, 23 November 2022*



# Introduction



- **Group conflict theory** (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967)
  - Majority and minority groups are locked in a zero-sum game for scarce material and cultural goods
  - Negative attitudes towards minorities / newcomers as a defensive reaction to perceived threat

# Theoretical perspectives

- “Not so much the numbers matter, but the way in which these numbers are framed in political discourses”
- Societal issues only get meaning by contestation in symbolic arena
- Framing theory  
(Bohman & Hjerm 2016; Slothuus & De Vreese 2010)
  - Help cognitive processing of events
  - Organize people’s experience and provide meaning
  - Selective: highlight a part of social reality



# Theoretical perspectives

- Party manifestos (Akkerman 2015)
  - Salience- *how often is a topic mentioned?*
  - Substance – *how is a topic mentioned evaluated?*
- Migrant integration policies
  - Policy feedback theory (Mettler & Soss 2004)
    - Policies have a normative function, and reshape the political environment
    - Policies create membership and frame societal problems
    - Generous integration policies create a positive public opinion climate



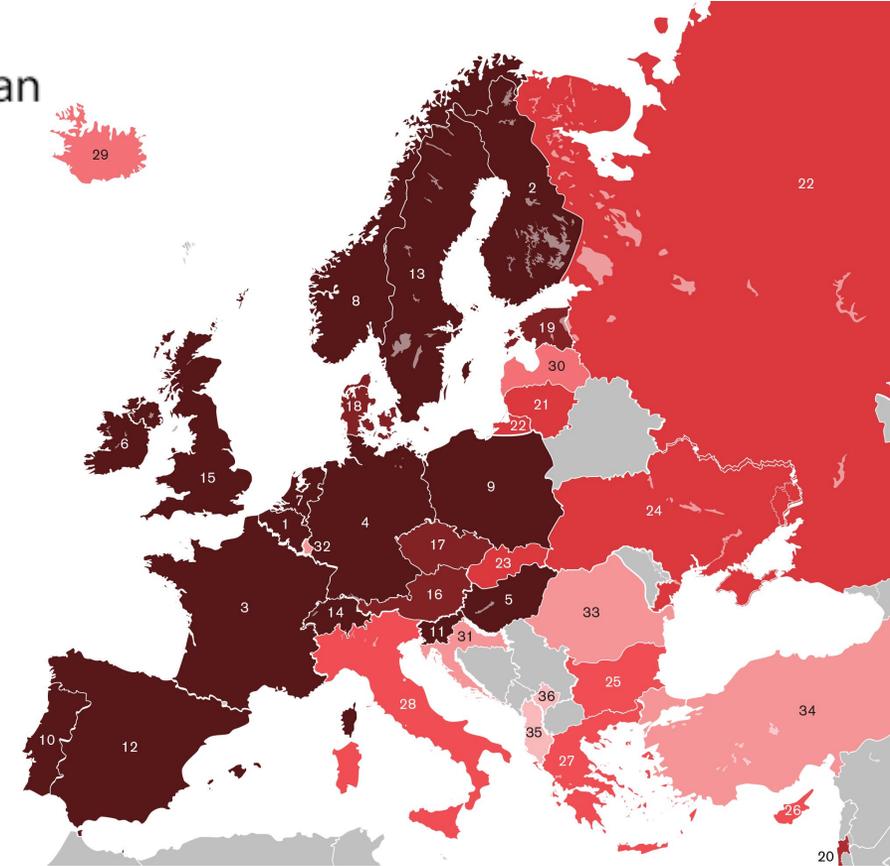
**MIGRANT  
INTEGRATION  
POLICY INDEX**  
2020

# Data & measurements

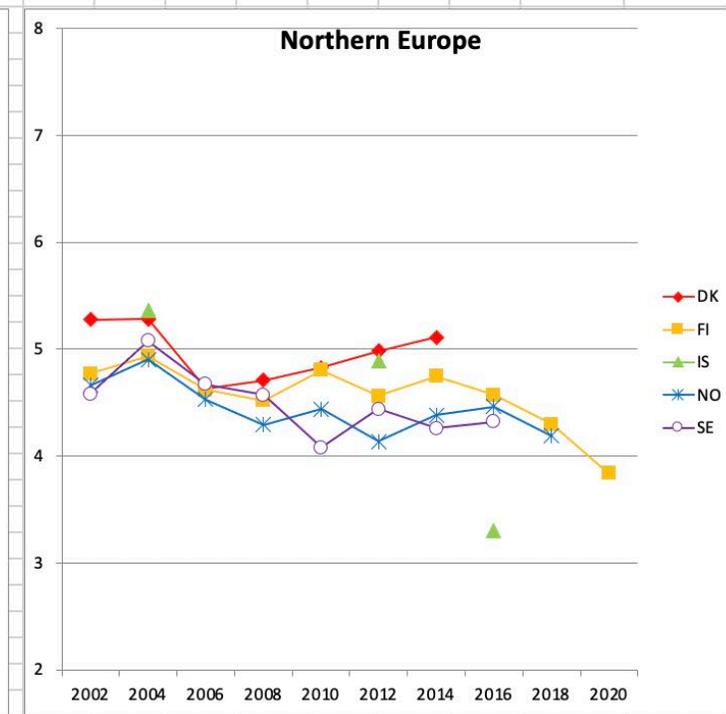
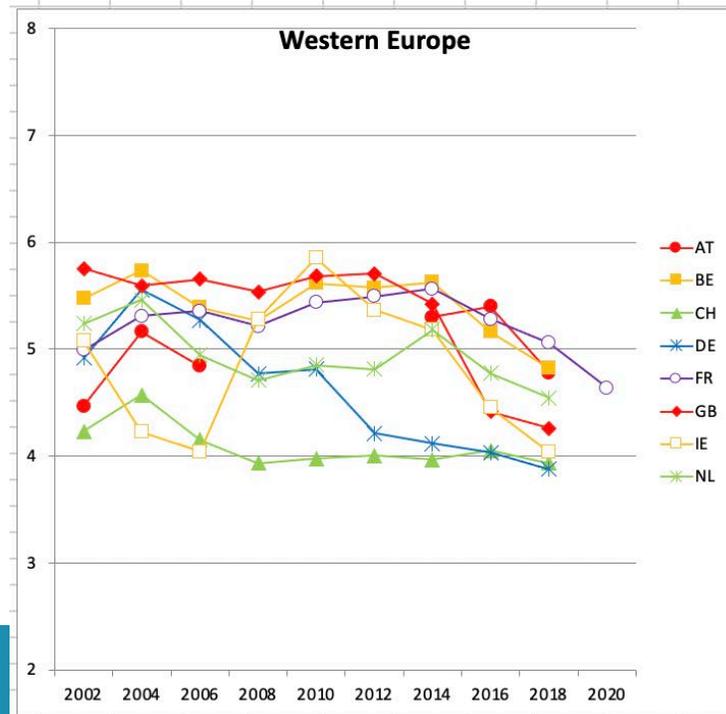
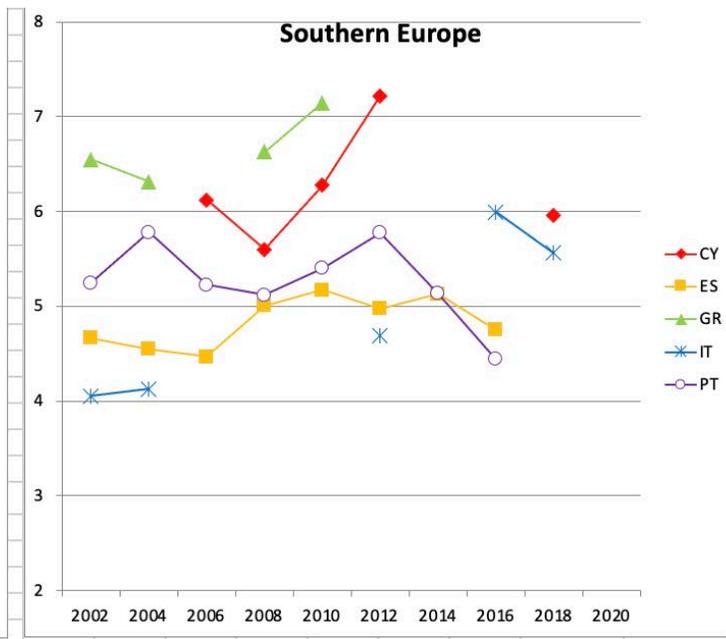
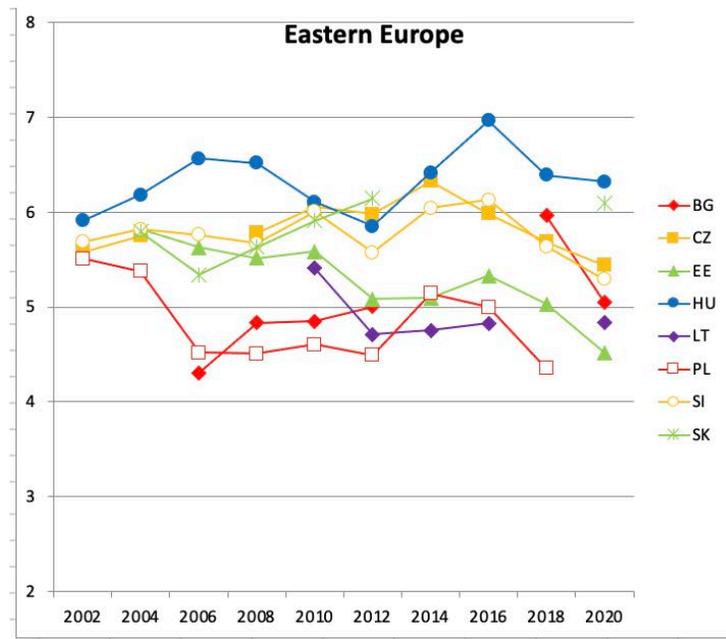
- European Social Survey (2002-2020)
  - 30+ countries with at least 3 measurements
  - Almost 500.000 respondents

- Economic and cultural threat (0-10; reversed)

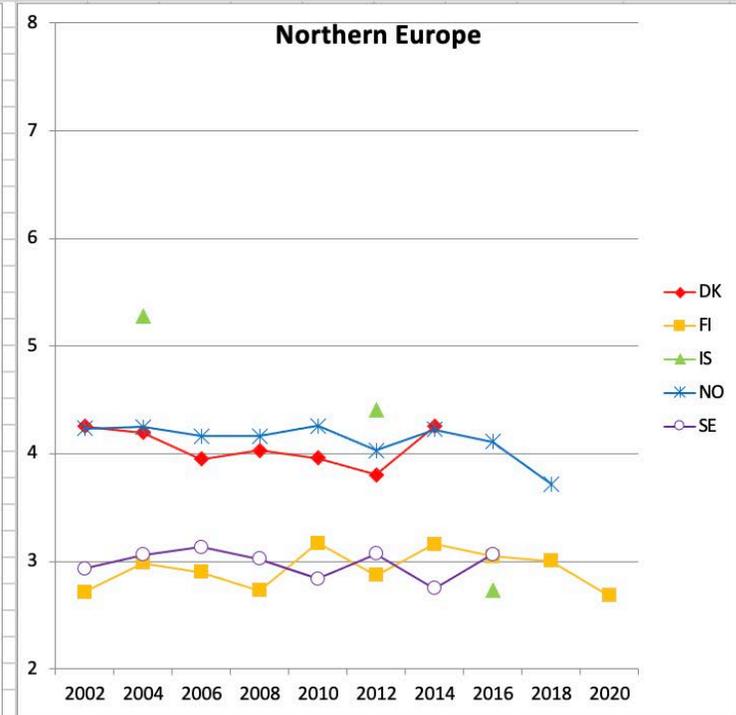
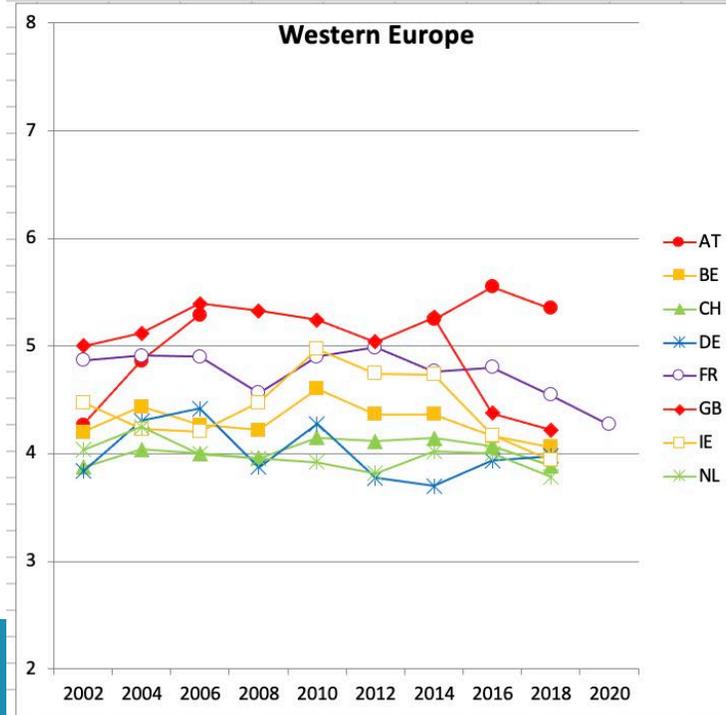
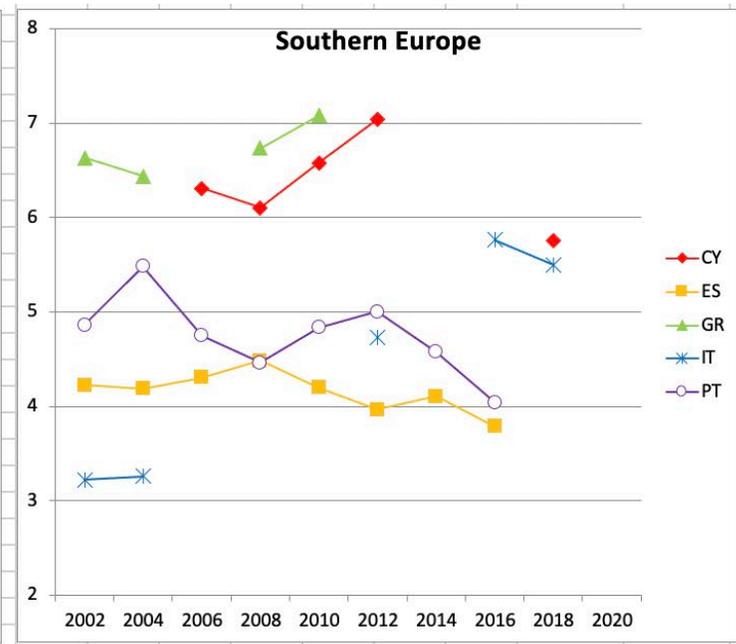
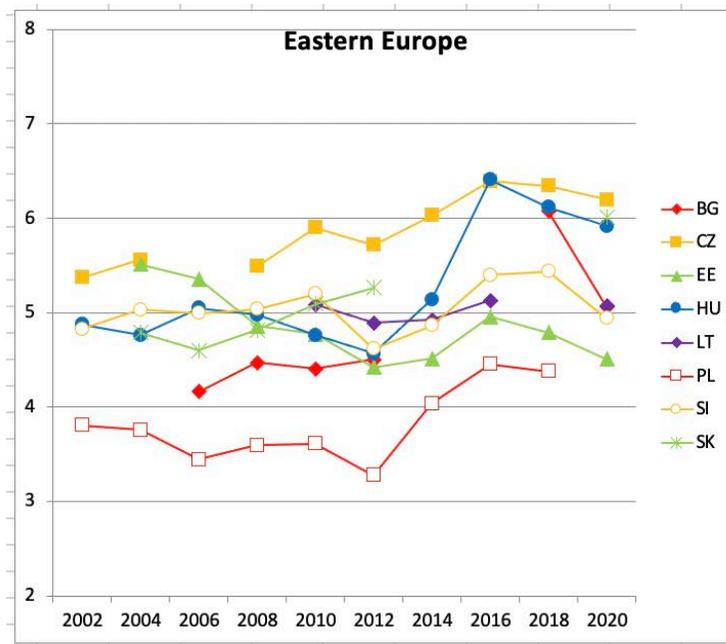
1. *Would you say it is generally bad or good for the economy that people come to live here from other countries?*
2. *Would you say that cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?*



# Economic threat perceptions



# Cultural threat perceptions

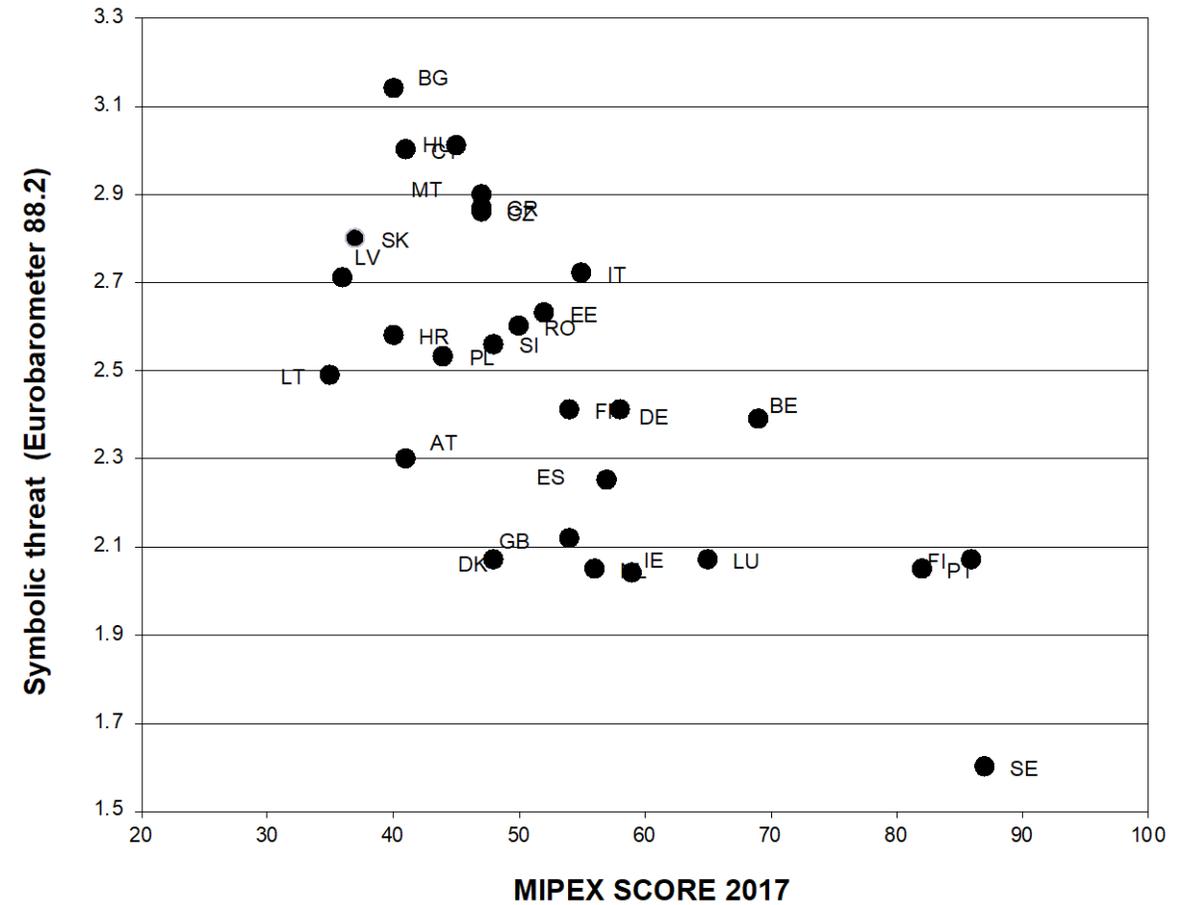
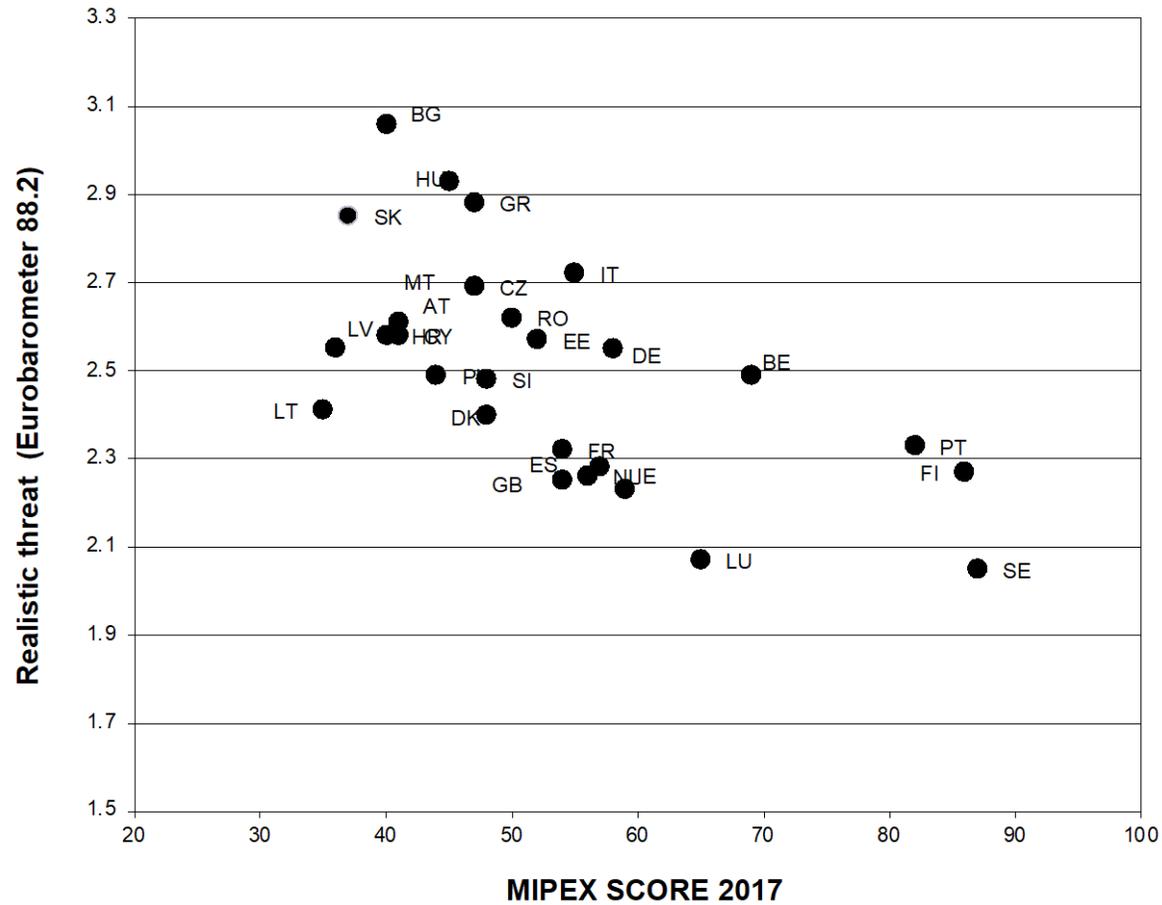


# Integration policies & perceived threat

	Realistic threat		Symbolic threat	
	Model 2	Model 3	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
Country-level indicators				
GDP per capita	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.10* (0.05)
Unemployment ratio	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)
Asylum applications PC	0.02 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.10* (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)
Media freedom	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.07)	-0.18** (0.06)	-0.10 (0.06)
Integration policies				
MIPEX: Total		-0.11* (0.07)		-0.15* (0.06)

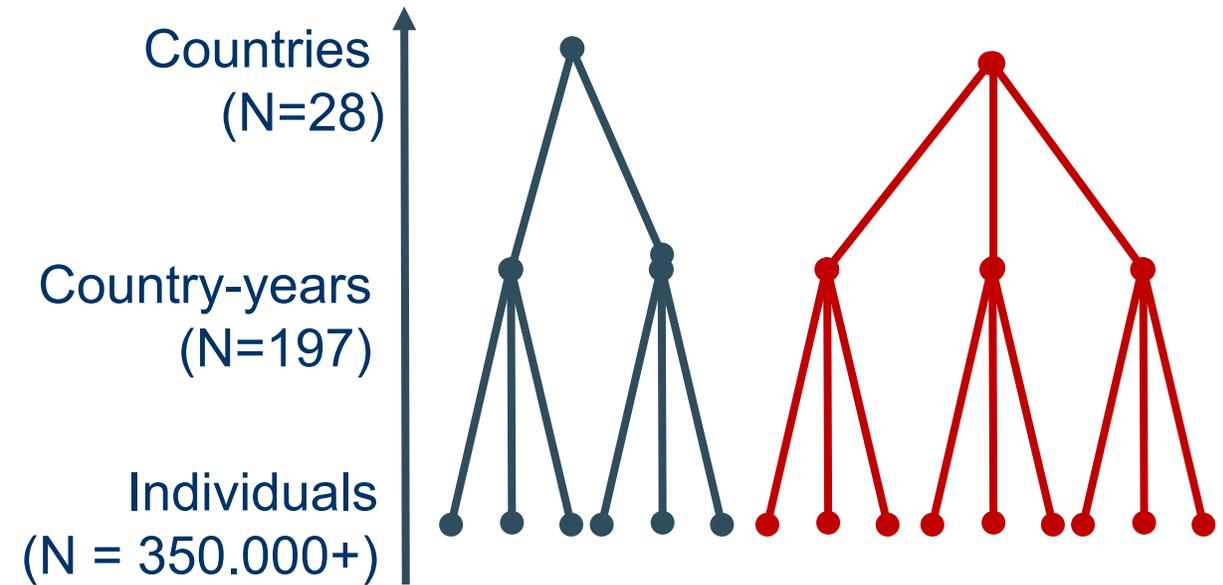
De Coninck, D., Solano, G., Joris, W., Meuleman, B., & d'Haenens, L. (2021). Integration policies and threat perceptions following the European migration crisis: New insights into the policy-threat nexus. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 62(4), 253-280.

# Integration policies & perceived threat



# Intermezzo: Societal growth curves

- ESS-data: repeated cross-sections
  - Three-level structure
  - Repeated measurements level 2



- Societal growth curve model (Fairbrother 2014; Meuleman, Davidov & Billiet 2018):

$$Y_{itj} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10} \text{time}_{tj} + u_{1j} \text{time}_{tj} + u_{0j} + u_{0tj} + e_{itj}$$

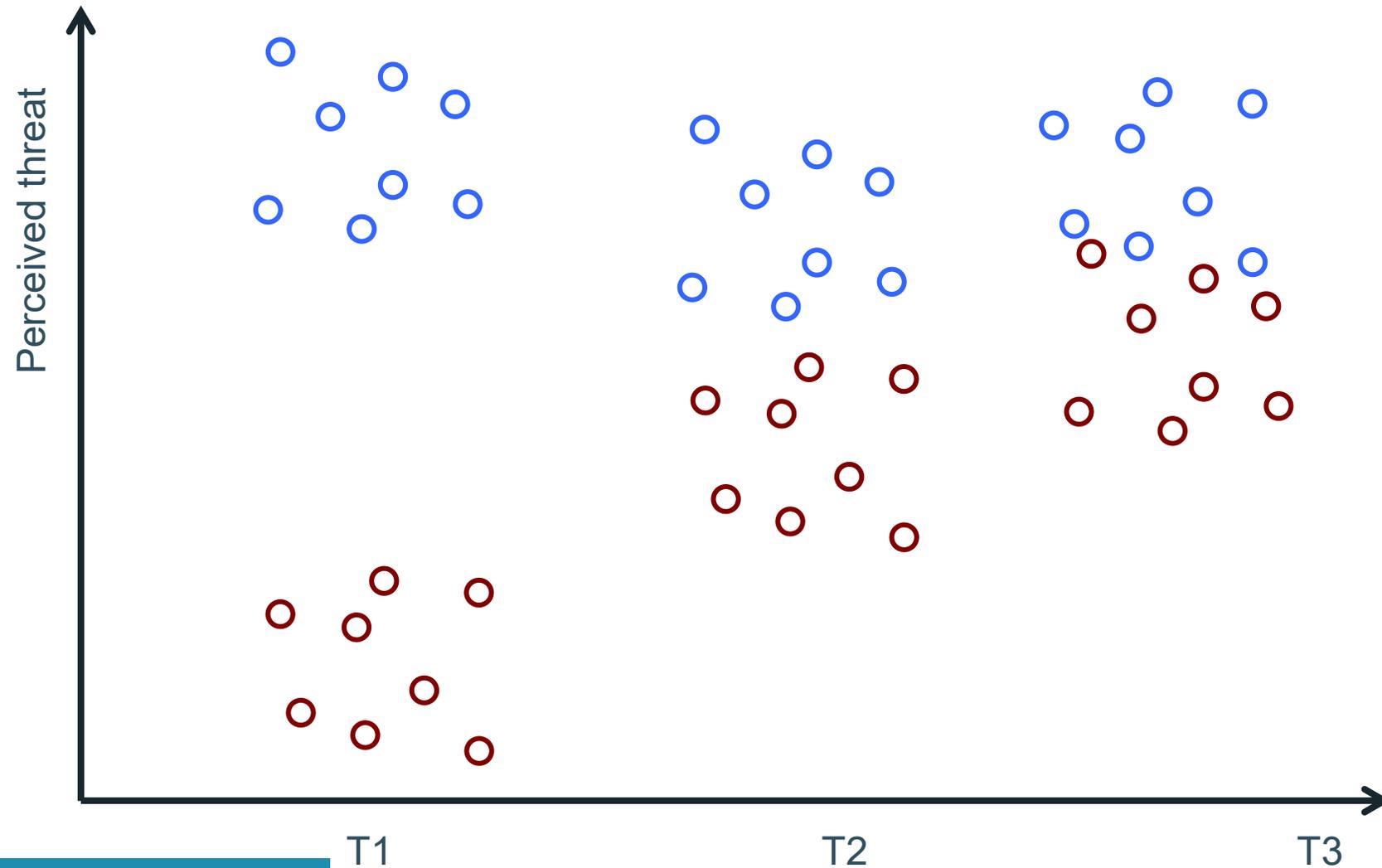
$$\text{with } e_{itj} \sim N(0, \sigma_e^2)$$

$$u_{0tj} \sim N(0, \sigma_{u_{0tj}}^2)$$

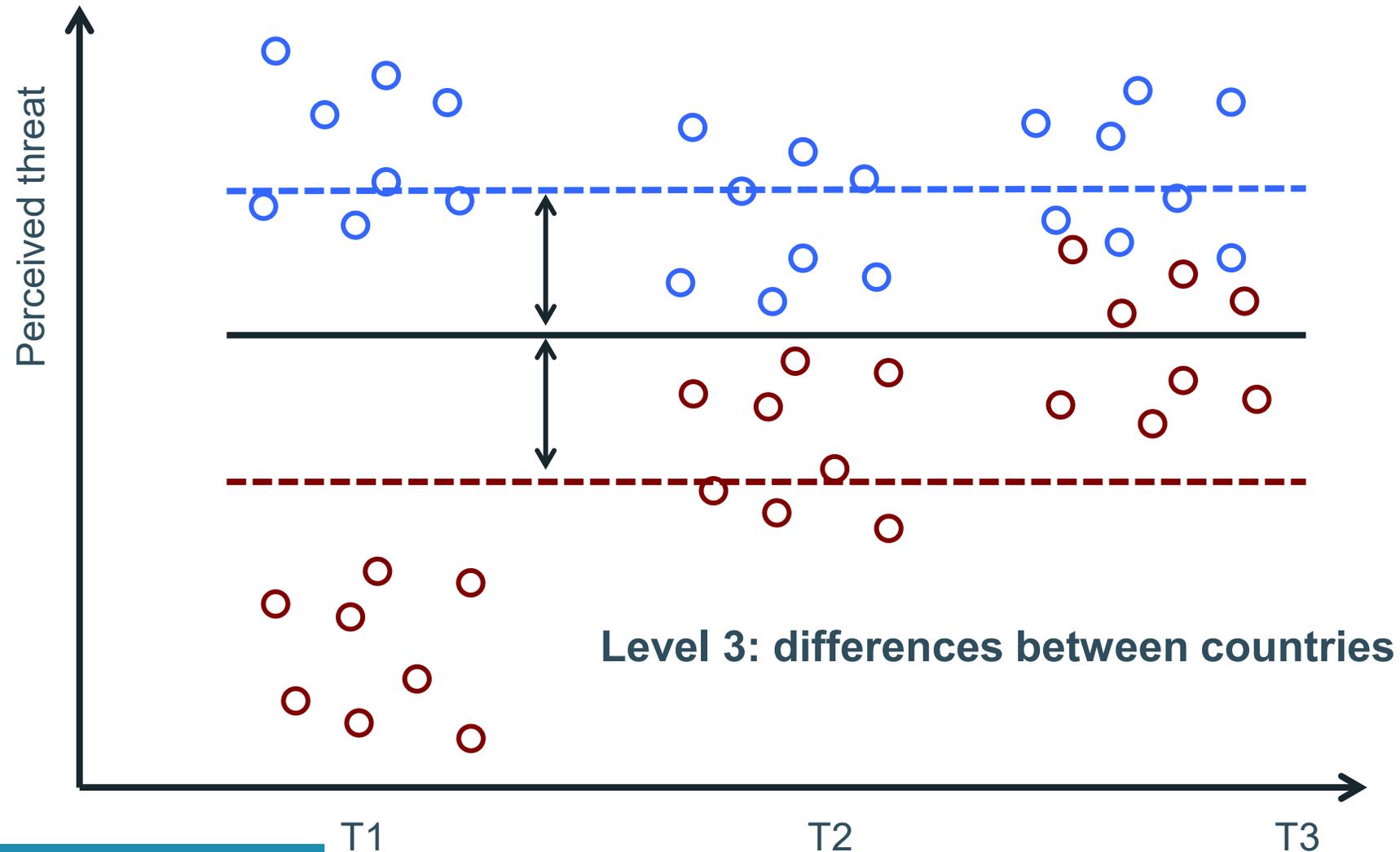
$$u_{0j} \sim N(0, \sigma_{u_{0j}}^2)$$

$$u_{1j} \sim N(0, \sigma_{u_{1j}}^2)$$

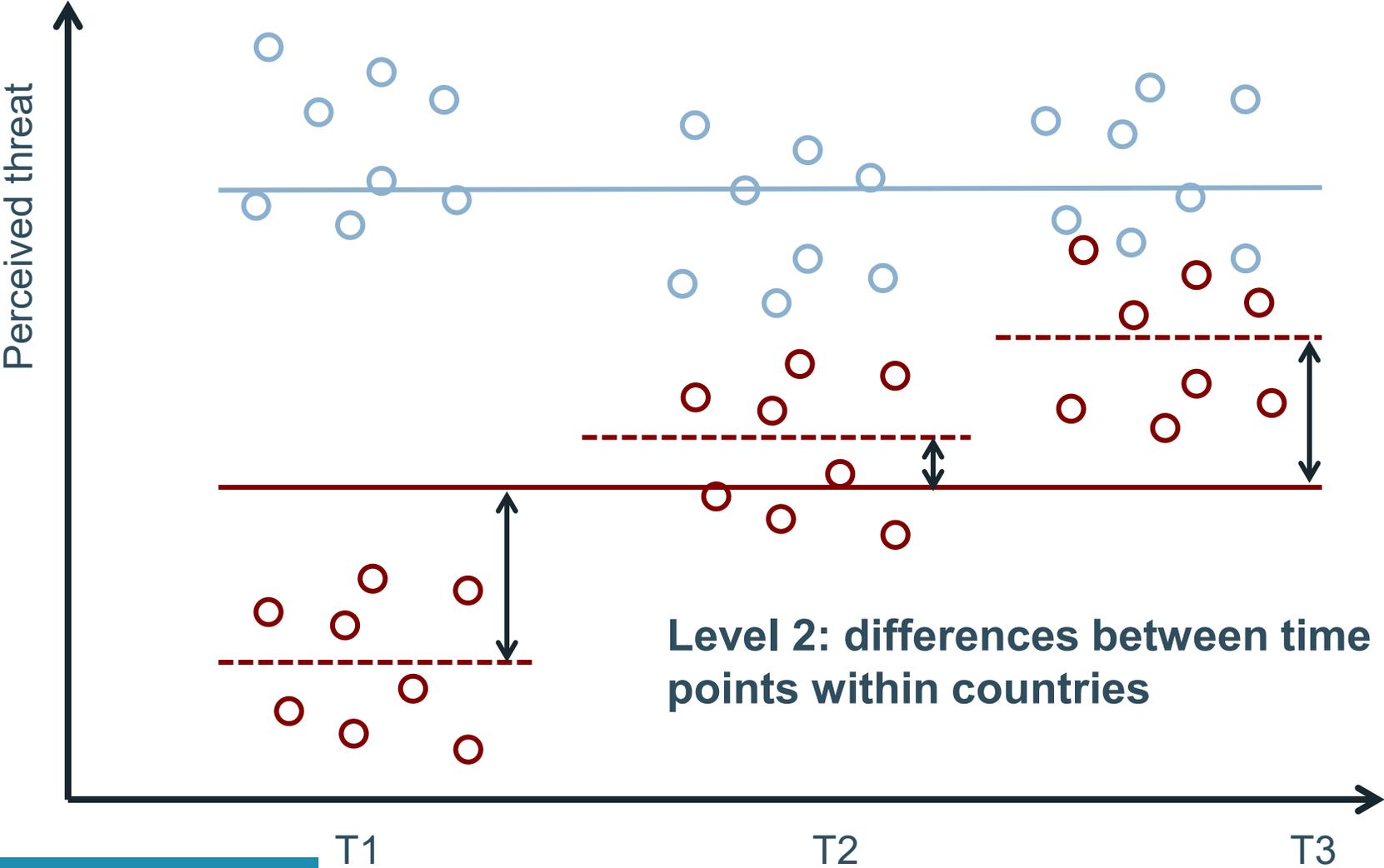
# Intermezzo: Societal growth curves



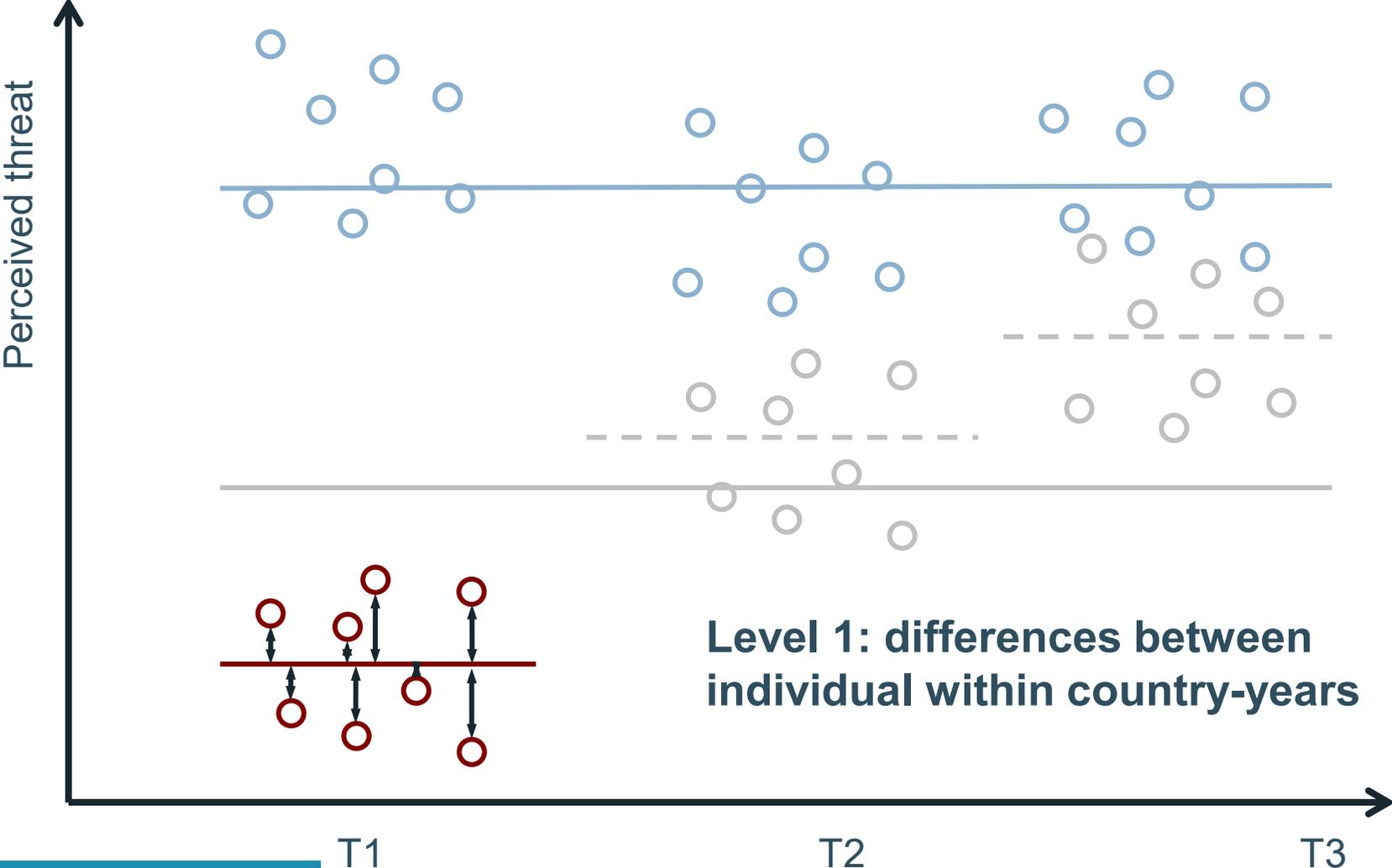
# Intermezzo: Societal growth curves



# Intermezzo: Societal growth curves



# Intermezzo: Societal growth curves



# Political discourse & perceived threat

- Party manifesto project indicators:

- Way of life – positive

Favourable mentions of the country's nation, history, and general appeals. Appeals to nationalism, patriotism,...

- Way of life – negative

Unfavourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation and history. Opposition against nationalism, patriotism,...

- Multiculturalism – positive

Favourable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies.

- Multiculturalism – negative

The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration. Appeals for cultural homogeneity in society.

- Salience: sum of the abovementioned

# Political discourse & perceived threat

- Within-country effects based on societal growth curve models

	<i>Cultural threat</i>		<i>Economic threat</i>	
	<i>Par. Est.</i>	<i>Sign.</i>	<i>Par. Est.</i>	<i>Sign.</i>
<b>SUBSTANCE</b>				
PM: Way of Life Positive	<b>0.0038</b>	<b>&lt;.0001</b>	0.0019	0.0637
PM: Way of Life Negative	0.0100	0.0596	0.0010	0.8977
PM: Multiculturalism Positive	0.0037	0.2862	0.0056	0.0729
PM: Multiculturalism Negative	0.0073	0.0884	0.0047	0.1313
<b>SALIENCE</b>				
Sum of all indicators	<b>0.0031</b>	<b>0.0009</b>	0.0018	0.0545

For a similar approach, see: Schmidt-Catran, A. W., & Czymara, C. S. (2022). Political elite discourses polarize attitudes toward immigration along ideological lines. A comparative longitudinal analysis of Europe in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-25.

# Conclusions

- 1 Overall, no increase in threat perceptions, only in Eastern Europe a (temporary) increase in cultural threat in 2014 & 2016
- 2 In the countries with the most generous integration policies, populations feel least threatened
- 3 A strong emphasis on nationalism / patriotism in party manifestos instigates cultural threat perceptions