"Welcome" to Europe: How media and immigration affect increasing Euroscepticism

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“We asked for workers. We got people instead.”
Max Frisch
CHAPTER 4: REAL WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Real World is Not Enough: The Media as an Additional Source of Negative Attitudes Towards Immigration, Comparing Denmark and the Netherlands

Abstract

Most people are unable to accurately estimate the number of immigrants in their country. However, it is argued that the size of the immigrant population affects people’s immigration attitudes. Allegedly, the discrepancy between perceived and real immigration figures occurs because people’s views are guided by the news media. In this chapter, negative attitudes toward immigration are explained by investigating the impact of the salience and the tone of immigration in the news media and the impact of immigration statistics. The cases of Denmark and the Netherlands during the period from 2003 to 2010 are analyzed using a multi-level design. Overall, real-world immigration numbers have little impact. The findings show that increasing immigration often coincides with decreasing media attention; therefore, media salience and immigration numbers suppress each other’s effects. The tone of news coverage has an effect in the Netherlands only: a positive tone reduces negativity toward immigration and a negative tone does not increase negativity. I cautiously conclude that the longevity of the issue’s salience has a moderating effect. Whether an issue is considered important for a considerable period of time determines whether people are willing to become informed and adjust their opinions.

A version of this chapter, co-authored by Hajo Boomgaarden, Rens Vliegenthart & Claes de Vreese has been submitted for publication.
In the 1990s, many European countries experienced a large increase in immigration (Boswell, 2005). Immigrants from Western and non-Western countries entered Europe in greater numbers than before. Arguably, as much recent scholarship has noted, this increased immigration created tension between the native population and the immigrant population and triggered ethnic prejudice, xenophobia, hostile attitudes, and discrimination toward immigrants (e.g., Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010; Schlüter & Davidov, 2013). Previous studies have shown that real-world developments (RWDs), such as the size of the immigrant population or GDP, have a direct impact on negative attitudes toward immigrants (Scheepers et al., 2002; Semyonov, Rajman, & Gorodzeisky, 2006; Quillian, 1995).

Research also shows that the news media can play an important role in explaining anti-immigration attitudes (Esser & Brosius, 1996; Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000). However, the amount of media coverage of immigration does not accurately represent actual immigrant inflows (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007). Furthermore, Sides and Citrin (2007) found a systematic discrepancy between people’s estimates and the real size of the immigrant population; they argue that the discrepancy is due to the visibility of minority groups in the media, which differs from reality. Changes in the media environment (see also Jerit et al., 2006) — either alterations in the attention given to the issue or changes in the general valence of news reports — may have a substantial impact on immigration attitudes as well as RWDs. Because it is unclear whether the media magnify, mediate, or suppress the effect of RWDs, or vice versa, I propose the following research question: To what extent do the size of the immigrant population, the media coverage, and the tone of news reports about immigration affect immigration attitudes?

Scholars have established the effects of the media on immigration attitudes and related behaviors in various European countries (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; 2009; Esser & Brosius, 1996; Schemer, 2012; Schlüter & Davidov, 2013; Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000; Walgrave & De Swert, 2004). However, most of these studies are based on a single case or cross-sectional data. Only occasionally do they include systematically coded data of the content of the news (for example, see Schemer, 2012). This study expands on previous studies by investigating the impact of the immigrant population and the presence of the immigration issue in the media as well as the tone of news reports regarding this issue using manually coded content data. Here, the inclusion of tone is an important addition. Often the effects caused by the presence of media coverage (i.e., salience or exposure) are attributable to the predominantly negative nature of those news messages (e.g., Persson & Musher-Eizenman, 2005; Shrum, 2009). To date, there is limited empirical evidence for this assumption.

Furthermore, I investigate and compare the results from two northern European countries (i.e., the Netherlands and Denmark), which were selected based on a most similar system design. Comparative research is crucial to understand the generalizability of the effects, and the comparison between two countries allows for a more in-depth approach and discussion of the results. Of the four
main countries that are discussed in this dissertation, these two countries were chosen for this analysis because they are very compatible in many respects (as discussed in chapter 1), but they are different with regard to one crucial point: their immigration history. Therefore, the salience of the immigration issue also differs, which may play a role in the general influence of the media and RWDs. Because I am interested in the effects of contextual developments, this study covers an eight-year period (from 2003 to 2010) using biannual data.

The next sections present some of the most prominent theories about the formation of attitudes toward immigration. The first three hypotheses largely replicate and refine the results of previous studies but now applying a comparative and longitudinal perspective. The final part of the theory section proposes a contingency effect of different immigration-related national histories.

**Real-World Developments**

Many studies using the ethnic threat perspective have assessed the effect of national and regional immigration inflows on immigration attitudes (e.g., Blumer, 1958; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Scheepers et al., 2002). This perception stems from group conflict theory (Austin & Worcel, 1979; LeVine & Campbell, 1972) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The latter states the felt need of people to be part of a larger entity or group. Individuals strongly identify with group characteristics, and to maintain a positive perception, they apply positive labels to the ingroup and negative labels to the outgroup. This labeling may appear harmless but can result in real intergroup conflict. The group conflict theory states that the scarcity of goods adds to intergroup rivalry. This competition may revolve around realistic resources (such as jobs and housing) or symbolic resources (such as cultural identity, values or political power). Intergroup competition strengthens identification with the ingroup (e.g., natives) but creates negative associations with outgroups (e.g., ethnic minorities); hence, competition increases the perceived threat from outgroups.

Goods become scarcer and the perceived threat increases when the competing groups become larger. In relation to immigrant groups in particular, an increasing group size increases anti-immigration sentiment (Scheepers et al., 2002; Semyonov et al., 2006).

H1: An increasing immigrant population leads to more negative immigration attitudes.

**Media Effects**

Mass media provide central information regarding people's perceptions of others (Schlüter & Davidov, 2013), and therefore, the media are able to shape anti-minority attitudes (Allport, 1954; Blumler, 1958) in a way that is similar to their ability to affect EU attitudes, as described in chapter 3. I assume that the media have an influence that adds to the influence of RWDs; media developments show little overlap with RWDs (e.g., for the economic realm, Goidel & Langley, 1995;
Smith, 1988) because of the extent of journalistic freedom (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) and the fact that immigration inflows alone are not necessarily newsworthy. However, the media version of reality forms the foundation of a nation's collective knowledge. Even those who are not (frequently) exposed to news reports are often made aware of media reality indirectly via interpersonal conversations (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Schmitt-Beck, 2003). This means that most people are aware of the media landscape and thus have a media-based impression of immigration, which has the potential to alter their attitudes.

Previous literature has investigated such media influences. Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009), for example, investigated the effects of news coverage about immigration on anti-immigration attitudes in Germany. Vergeer et al. (2000) established that exposure to certain Dutch newspapers (i.e., those characterized by negative reporting on immigrants and crime) significantly increased ethnic threat perceptions. Schlüter and Davidov (2013) scrutinized the role of negative immigration-related news reports on perceived ethnic threat in Spain and found that these news reports affect perceived group threat over and above the effect of immigrant group size. Schemer (2012) found that exposure to positive news reduces negative outgroup attitudes among those who are less knowledgeable about immigrants.

With regard to media salience, I propose that frequent exposure to outgroups in the media acts as a reminder about people's own identities and their distinct differences from certain outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This reminder triggers feelings of competition, and in line with conflict theory and social identity theory, increased media visibility can initiate the perception of a threat and negative outgroup associations (Austin & Worcel, 1979; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001).

H2: Increased visibility of the immigration issue in the news increases negative immigration attitudes.

**Tone of Media Messages**

Previous studies have often applied "any news is bad news" reasoning (i.e., an increase in media salience coincides with an increase in negative messages regarding immigration). Therefore, an increase in media salience provides more negative information about minority groups, which readily attracts the attention of the majority and increases negative immigration attitudes (e.g., Persson & Musher-Eizenman, 2003; Shrum, 2009). This notion is strengthened by Soroka's (2006) asymmetrical influences thesis, discussed in chapter 3, which states that people are generally more responsive to negative information than to positive information. Thus, it is likely that negative media coverage will have a larger effect than positive news, even when there is no substantial increase in negative news coverage. The data show no correlation between media salience and negative messages, but there is still a chance that negative information may have a larger impact than positive
REAL WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

information. Therefore, I distinguish between positive and negative message tone and investigate whether and to what extent negative or positive media coverage affects immigration attitudes (see also Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). Previous research found that negative media environments produce negative immigrant stereotyping (Domke, 2001; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Schemer, 2012), negative evaluations of immigrants, negative immigration attitudes and ethnic prejudice (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart 2009; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996).

People’s political preferences are often guided by information from the news media (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Zaller (1992) describes this process as follows: people receive information from the news and decide whether to accept this information or not. When formulating an opinion, people sample this accepted information. This receive-accept-sample model (RAS) shows how people make use of the news. Previous research has shown that this is a dynamic process and that each individual collection of accepted information changes over time in line with the developments in the news (Schwenk, 1988). I argue that the dominant tone in the news affects the general sample of people’s accepted information because recent information is the easiest to access cognitively (Higgins, 1989). Hence, in an increasingly negative media environment, the likelihood that people will sample negative messages increases; therefore, immigration attitudes become more negative. The same logic applies in the opposite direction: an increase in positive news reduces anti-immigration sentiment.

H3a: Negative news reports increase anti-immigration attitudes, whereas (H3b) positive news reports reduce anti-immigration attitudes.

Conditionality of Country Characteristics

Most Similar Systems Design

The countries were selected using a most-similar-systems design, which allows me to rule out potential country-specific confounding factors related to political, fiscal and media. For this chapter, it is crucial to consider countries that are similar in terms of their political system (mature democracies, multi-party systems), economic situation (welfare status, in the OECD GDP top 20), media systems, and media news outlets (a combination of public and private television broadcasters, quality and tabloid newspapers, and a democratic corporatist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Additionally, the countries should be compatible with regard to the ethnic, religious and cultural background of the immigrant population1 (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011; Jensen et al., 2010; SCP, 2009). I decided to compare the Netherlands and Denmark because these countries fulfill these requirements.

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1 The Netherlands: Between 1972 and 2010, non-Western immigration grew from 200,000 to 1.9 million (SCP, 2012), with the largest proportion descending from Turkey, Morocco, and Suriname (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011). Denmark: a small group of guest workers from Turkey, Pakistan and Yugoslavia entered in the 1960s (Jensen et al., 2010). In the 1980s and 1990s, refugees arrived mostly from Sri Lanka, the Middle East, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq. In 2010, the immigrant population was 9.8%.
Despite the clear similarities, there is one imperative difference. Though both countries have dealt with immigration since the 1970s and early 1980s, the immigrant population grew faster and is larger in the Netherlands (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011; Jensen et al., 2010). For several decades, immigration has played a crucial role in Dutch politics, public debates and the news media, and attention increased briefly after the assassinations of right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn (in 2002) and filmmaker Theo van Gogh (in 2004) (Vliegenthart & Roggeband, 2007). Immigration has been a politicized issue in the Netherlands since the late 1970s (i.e., a multi-cultural society); the issue became politicized in Denmark in the late 1990s (i.e., with the founding of the Danish People’s party in 1995). Hence, the immigration topic has been prominent for a longer period of time in the Dutch context than in the Danish context. Ceteris paribus, I tentatively propose that these country differences have led to different effects of the media and RWDs, even in the 2000s.

Divergent country effects

Neuman (1990) stated that the public is especially attuned to some issues, while others receive “no more than a collective yawn” (p.162). An explanation for the difference in the attention paid to difference issues is provided by the classical theory of public response function by Downs (1972), which describes a five-stage issue response function (issue-attention-cycle): the pre-problem stage, in which a problem exists but has not been given any public attention (yet); the discovery stage, in which public attention to the issue is catalyzed after the issue has passed the attention threshold; the plateau stage, in which enthusiasm for the issue wanes and public attention stabilizes; the decline stage, an inattentive phase in which the public is frustrated by the notion that the problem has no simple solution; and the post-problem stage, in which the issue is old and uninteresting and therefore receives little attention.

Arguably, the stage of an issue is crucial to the amount of public attention it receives and the willingness of the public to pay attention to the issue, to gain information through mass media or otherwise, and to (re)formulate an opinion about an issue (e.g., Behr and Iyengar, 1985; Neuman, 1990). I argue that this issue stage may moderate the effects of RWDs and the media. Based on descriptive data—which are presented in the first part of the results section—and the immigration history of both countries described in the previous section (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011; Jensen et al., 2010; also see endnote 1), I cautiously propose that the Netherlands entered the plateau stage in the early to late 2000s, whereas Denmark entered the discovery stage sometime in the late 1990s or early 2000s. However, this categorization is disputable. Because public attention is highest in the discovery stage and wanes in the stages that follow, I propose the following hypothesis:

H4: RWDs and the media have a larger influence on anti-immigration sentiment in Denmark than in the Netherlands.
Data and Method

The data were collected between 2003 and 2010 in Denmark and between 2003 and 2009 in the Netherlands. I draw on three types of longitudinal data: real world data, which were collected from the Eurostat website; media data, including a random selection of newspaper articles about immigration that were manually coded by a group of trained coders (native speakers); and survey data, for which several waves of the Eurobarometer were used (i.e., from wave 59.1 to wave 74.2).

To analyze these longitudinal data, I employ a multi-level model with individuals nested within bi-yearly time periods (16 in Denmark and 14 in the Netherlands). Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, a logistic version of this modeling technique3 is applied. The intra-class correlations (ICC)4 (0.12 in the Netherlands and 0.16 in Denmark) indicate that attitudes (level 1) are correlated within each six-month period (level 2). This means that country-level characteristics are relevant and that a multilevel approach is required.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is assessed using Eurobarometer data, which required the respondent to select the problem they find most important from a list of 12 political issues ranging from international economic competition, crime, and unemployment to immigration5 (see Appendix 4, Table A4.1, for the descriptive statistics for this variable in each country)6. As Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) argue, “The most important problem (MIP) question provides an utilisable proxy measure for anti-immigration attitudes. By asking about the most important problem, the question prescribes a negative evaluative component. If people consider immigration the prime problem the nation is facing, it is reasonable to interpret this immigration problem perception as a measure of anti-immigration attitudes.” (p. 522). The authors elaborate on their statement by comparing the MIP responses to the responses to more explicit anti-immigration sentiment measures. They divided people in two groups—those who did and those who did not indicate immigration as the most important problem—and found significant differences after comparing their responses to a more explicit immigrant attitude measure. This result indicates that this MIP question measures not only salience but also attitudes toward the issue (Wlezien, 2005).

Media variables

The current study employs coded newspaper articles to represent the news media. To capture a wide news spectrum, newspapers with a wide range of political views were selected: De Telegraaf and De
Volkskrant in the Netherlands and Jyllands Posten and Politiken in Denmark. De Telegraaf is the only tabloid in the Netherlands and one of the oldest and largest Dutch dailies to date. It is known for its relatively right-wing perspective. De Volkskrant is a large, central-leftist newspaper; it is also one of the largest newspapers in the Netherlands and has been in existence since the early 1900s. Jyllands Posten, one of the largest newspapers in Denmark, became internationally infamous for its portrait of Mohammed in 2005. It is a liberal, central-right broadsheet newspaper. One of its main competitors is Politiken, the leading Danish newspaper, which was originally connected to the Danish Social Liberal Party but declared its independence in the 1970s.

The search terms used to collect the data on immigration from these newspapers were created in Dutch and translated into Danish. Two to seven articles per month per country were randomly selected from the collected data and manually coded by nine native speakers. Media salience, as well as the tone of the newspaper articles, was aggregated into biannual figures for each country.

Media salience is defined as the percentage change in the total number of newspaper articles compared to the previous observation period for each country (see Figure 4.1 for frequencies and Table A4.1 in Appendix 4 for descriptive statistics). The media tone is defined as the percentages of negative and positive news messages from all the randomly selected newspaper articles during a six-month period. To code tone, the coders read the articles and answered the following question from the perspective of an immigrant: ‘How would you say the main topic is discussed?’ The responses were ‘in a negative way’, ‘in a balanced way’, ‘in a positive way’ or ‘in a neutral way’. The percent agreement was 63% among the five Dutch coders and 65% among the four Danish coders. These reliability scores are reasonable but not ideal; therefore, the results of the tone analysis are interpreted with care.

RWDs

From Eurostat, I obtained the immigrant population size and inflow figures; the first includes the number of non-Western immigrants in each country per year, and the second captures the long-term immigrants who move into each of the two countries each year. From these data, two variables were created: the number of non-Western immigrants relative to the entire population of the country (i.e., in line with Schlüter & Davidov, 2013 and Semyonov et al., 2006, non-Western

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7 The search string for the Netherlands reads: (discrim! or (haat w/5 aanzet) or (scholing! or (cursus! or les! or onderwijs or opro1) w/10 (migrant! or immi! or alloch! or asiel! or buitenl!!)) or (cursus w/1 Nederlands) or taalcur! or taalles! or taalonderwi! or gezinsherenig! or schijnhuw! or npehw! or unihuw! or immig! or alloch! or vreemdeling! or migrant! or moslim! or islam! or asiel! or illegale! or uitgezet! or verhuisd! or multicult! or (massa w/1 regularis!) or regularis! or inmatrikulatie! or (bruid! w/5 buitenland) or (inkomenseis w/20 trouw!) or pluriform! or asielzoeker! or vluchteling! or (generaal pardon) or hoofddoek! or kopv!; for Denmark: Diskrim* <or> integr* <or> islam* <or> muslin* <or> arabisk* <and> Kultur* <or> hovedbeklædning* <or> tørklæde* <or> "burka" <or> sprogcur* <or> "300" <near/5> reg*.

8 459 articles (of 55,374) in the Netherlands and 835 (of 86,835) in Denmark.

9 See the Eurostat website for more information (migr_imm3ctb & migr_pop5ctz).

10 These variables could not be measured in half yearly figures, which means that every year is added twice. To avoid type I error, marginally significant results are interpreted with care.
countries are defined as those in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe or Latin America) and the percent change compared to the previous year. The two variables enable me to compare my results with previous studies that have used similar measures and to find out how the change over time affects anti-immigration sentiment.

Meanwhile, as in chapter 3, in each model I control for potentially influential key events that were not only prominent nationally but also spilled over into international broadcasting and public debate. These key events were identified from the extant literature (e.g., Sides & Citrin, 2007; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007) and verified in interviews with country experts. These include the London bombing (July 2005) and the Madrid bombing (March 2004), the Van Gogh homicide in the Netherlands (November 2004), and the Mohammed cartoon in Denmark (September 2005). Key events were considered a country-specific dichotomous variable (key events, 0 = no event; 1 = event).

**Control variables**

In the models, I controlled for a variety of individual characteristics: gender, because women are generally more tolerant than men (Kuran & McCaffery, 2008); age, because younger people are generally more tolerant than the elderly (Firebaugh & Davis, 1988; Quillian, 1995); and education\(^{11}\), because more educated people are generally more accepting (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). Hainmueller and Hiscox argue that education, not labor market competition, affects xenophobic feelings. My exploratory analyses show similar results; therefore, I only include education. Finally, left-right identification (1 = left-wing to 10 = right-wing) is included because the immigration issue is crudely divided along this dimension (Money, 1999).

**Results**

**Country differences**

To provide a complete picture of the media landscape and the opinion climate with regard to immigration in the two countries, the recent developments are briefly described on the basis of the data. Subsequently, I continue by describing the results of the analyses.

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\(^{11}\) Measured on a 1 to 10 scale (1 = up to age 14, 2 = up to age 15, and so on until 9 = up to age 22, and 10 = still studying after the age of 22).
Figure 4.1 shows the absolute number of articles about immigration in the Netherlands and Denmark. Note that the size of the newspapers and the number of articles in each newspaper may differ. Hence, I can only look at the crude differences in fluctuations across time. In Denmark, media salience reaches a high peak but fluctuates substantially over time. The presence of the immigration issue is more stable in the Netherlands, with no large peaks or valleys over the entire time period. This result supports the idea that the issue has entered the discovery stage in Denmark and is beyond this stage in the Netherlands (see Downs, 1972).

Figure 4.2 shows the percentages of negative and positive immigration news reports. Negative reports trump positive reports in the Netherlands, but the tone is more moderate. The percentage of negative news reports remains well under 50 percent until the second half of 2009. In the first half of 2009, there is an obvious peak in positive news coverage.
Negative news dominates the Danish media landscape. Positive and negative news fluctuate a great deal, with a positive news peak in 2007 (49.1 %) and a negative new peak in 2008 (50 %). The former peak might have been a counter-reaction to the period of negative news following the Mohammed cartoon in 2005. The latter occurred immediately after the Danish People’s Party had won the elections.

Figure 4.3 presents the percentage of people indicating that immigration is the most important problem in their country. The Netherlands shows a peak in the first half of 2004 (15.5 %) and another clear peak in the first half of 2008 (16.9 %). Denmark had higher percentages, especially between 2003 and 2006, with the highest peak in the second half of 2005 (30.3 %); after 2006, negative immigration attitudes steadily declined from 22.7 % in 2007 to 6.5 % in 2010. These findings support the idea that Denmark has reached the discovery stage more recently, while the Netherlands has moved beyond the discovery stage to the plateau stage (Downs, 1972).

12 As Figure 4.2 shows, media data for the Netherlands was available up to 2010. The analyses in the Netherlands therefore do not reach beyond that point in time.
Chapter 4

Figure 4.3  Percentage of People that Indicates Immigration as the Most Important Problem in Their Country, 2003–2010

Note: These graphs are based on data from the Eurobarometer, 2003–2010

It is likely that media characteristics have an added effect on top and beyond the effect of RWDs on anti-immigration sentiment because media do not necessarily follow real-world developments. Figure 4.4 shows that this assumption is largely correct. In both countries, there is no strong positive correlation between immigrant inflows and media attention toward the issue.

In the Netherlands, however, there is quite a substantial negative correlation between RWDs and media salience. A decline in one variable coincides with an increase in the other, which may cause suppression effects in the overall model. Because the correlation is not very high, I do not foresee that this negative correlation will have a large impact, but it is something that needs to be investigated in the overall analyses.

Figure 4.4  Correlation Between Immigration Inflows and Media Salience

Further correlations between RWDs and media variables are presented in Table A4.2 of appendix 4.
Logistic regressions

Table 4.1 shows the results (log odds) of the logistic multi-level analyses in each country. The limited number of time periods per country calls for parsimonious modeling. Therefore, a stepwise approach is applied (see superscript a, b and c in Table 4.1).14

The first hypothesis states that increased immigration leads to more negative attitudes toward immigration. This hypothesis was tested using two RWD variables: the first is the immigrant population relative to the entire population (see Models 1.1 and 2.1), and the second is the immigration inflow (see the results in Models 1.2 and 2.2). The results using the first variable were insignificant in both countries, which does not support the hypothesis. With regard to the second immigration variable, the results show that the odds of developing anti-immigration attitudes increase significantly with increased immigration inflows in the Netherlands ($\text{logit} = 0.02; p = 0.00$). Thus, when the immigrant inflow increases one percent compared with the previous six-month period, the odds of considering immigration a problem increase 2.02%. The effect in Model 2.3 in Denmark shows similar but insignificant results ($\text{logit} = 0.01; p = 0.27$). This means that there is no convincing support for the first hypothesis.

Second, I expected the increased media visibility of immigration to significantly increase anti-immigration attitudes (H2). This media effect is significant in Denmark (see Model 2.3; $\text{logit} = 0.011; p = 0.02$), but the effect is mediated by the immigrant inflow, which makes the overall effect insignificant ($\text{logit} = 0.01; p = 0.07$).

In the Netherlands, the effect in Model 1.3 shows no support for the hypothesis at all; however, when controlling for immigrant inflows, the effect of media salience becomes significant ($\text{logit} = 0.222; p = 0.00$).15

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14 Each model controls for age, education, left-right affiliation and gender. Because my interest is mostly in the influence of contextual characteristics, these results are not presented in the model. The results related to these control variables are in line with previous studies. Older people, men, people with less education and people with right-wing views are more negative. Furthermore, key events significantly increase anti-immigration attitudes only in Denmark.

15 The model is not represented in the table, but it produced the following results: intercept: $\text{logit} = -2.80, se = 0.19$, immigrant inflows: $\text{logit} = 0.05, se = 0.005, u_0 = 0.20, e_0 = 0.00$ and a $-2$-loglikelihood of 9043.19. Due to a limitation in the degrees of freedom, this model did not control for key events. However, because the results of Model 3 in the Netherlands remained the same with or without these key events, and because key events have no significant influence on anti-immigration attitudes, I believe that key events should not influence the results of this model.
Table 4.1 Logistic Multi-Level Models, Real World Factors and Media Influences on Anti-Immigration Attitudes

### The Netherlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Model 1.1</th>
<th>Model 1.2</th>
<th>Model 1.3</th>
<th>Model 1.4</th>
<th>Model 1.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-2.33(0.33)***</td>
<td>-3.81(3.44)</td>
<td>-2.52(0.21)***</td>
<td>-2.36(0.39)***</td>
<td>-2.07(0.49)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key events</td>
<td>-0.16(0.28)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.21)</td>
<td>-0.20(0.27)</td>
<td>-0.50(0.22)***</td>
<td>-0.20(0.27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant population</td>
<td>0.12(0.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant inflows</td>
<td>0.02(0.00)**</td>
<td>0.01(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media salience</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive news</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.04(0.01)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative news</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Denmark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Model 2.1</th>
<th>Model 2.2</th>
<th>Model 2.3</th>
<th>Model 2.4</th>
<th>Model 2.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-1.64(0.25)***</td>
<td>-1.15(1.16)</td>
<td>-2.41(0.47)***</td>
<td>-2.42(0.47)***</td>
<td>-2.92(0.71)***</td>
<td>-2.43(0.74)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key events</td>
<td>0.47(0.38)</td>
<td>0.64(0.36)**</td>
<td>0.71(0.34)**</td>
<td>0.73(0.38)**</td>
<td>0.62(0.38)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant population</td>
<td>-0.24(0.22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant inflows</td>
<td>0.01(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media salience</td>
<td>0.01(0.000)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive news</td>
<td>0.01(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative news</td>
<td>0.00(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each model shows the log odds first and the standard error between parentheses. Each model also includes age, education, gender and left right position, which showed the expected results; significant one-tailed results: * alpha <0.10, ** alpha < 0.05, *** alpha < 0.01. The Netherlands: n = 13,236, n<sub>2</sub> = 14; Denmark: n = 15,123, n<sub>2</sub> = 16. This result remains significant (p < .05) with the inclusion of media salience, and tone variables; b This result becomes significant (p < .05) with the inclusion of immigrant inflows.

Thus, because immigrant inflows decrease at the same time that media salience increases (negative correlation), the effect of media salience is suppressed by immigrant inflows. Therefore, media salience only matters when immigrant inflows are held constant. Media salience does increase anti-immigration attitudes in the Netherlands, but this effect is invisible because immigration inflows reduce anti-immigrant attitudes at the same time. Adding immigrant inflows to the model with
media salience significantly improves the model fit\textsuperscript{16}. These findings lend support for the media salience hypothesis, but only in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, I expected negative reports on immigration to increase anti-immigration attitudes (H3a) and positive news to decrease them (H3b). The effect of negative news in the Netherlands is insignificant and only borders on significance when immigrant inflows are controlled for ($logit = 0.013; \ p = 0.054$). This finding, however, should not be given too much weight. The effect of negative news is small, and the reliability scores of the coded tone variables are rather low. Positive news (see Models 1.4 and 2.4 in Table 4.1), however, clearly reduces anti-immigration attitudes in the Netherlands ($logit = -0.04; \ p = 0.00$), but not in Denmark ($logit = 0.01; \ p = 0.13$). Thus, H3a is not supported by the results, and H3b is only supported by the results in the Netherlands. The fact that negative news has no effect whatsoever shows that negative media coverage has no effect with regard to immigration attitudes, as suggested by Soroka (2006).

Table 4.2 \textit{Pooled Logistic Regression Models of RWDs and Media on Anti-Immigration Attitudes}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-1.63(0.02)***</td>
<td>-11.55(1.26)***</td>
<td>-3.38(0.00)***</td>
<td>-3.10(0.19)***</td>
<td>-3.18(0.19)***</td>
<td>-0.85(0.19)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country (nl = ref)</td>
<td>9.72(1.52)***</td>
<td>0.84(0.06)***</td>
<td>0.70(0.04)***</td>
<td>1.16(0.21)***</td>
<td>0.63(0.21)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant population (1)</td>
<td>0.86(0.13)***</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant inflows (2)</td>
<td>0.006(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.006(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media salience (3)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive news (4)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td>-0.01(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative news (5)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country * 1</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country * 2</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country * 3</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country * 4</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country * 5</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each model shows the log odds first and the standard error between parentheses; Each model also includes period dummies, age, education, gender and left right position and key-events. * Alpha <0.10, ** alpha < 0.05, *** alpha < 0.01.

Thus, it appears that RWDs and media have significantly different impacts depending on the country of observation. Based on the issue-attention cycle, I expected to find the biggest influences

\textsuperscript{16} Likelihood ratio of 16.47, df=1. Prob $> X^2 = 0.00$
in Denmark (H4), but the opposite effect emerged. The Danish are affected less by these factors than the Dutch, although some of the effects in the Netherlands are suppressed by RWDs.

To determine whether the effects differ significantly between the Netherlands and Denmark, interaction models were created in a pooled logistic regression model with country dummies\(^{17}\). The results in Table 4.2 show that there are significant differences in the impact of RWDs. Although the effects of the immigrant population are insignificant in both countries, a significant difference was found in Model 1 because of the negative effect in Denmark and the positive effect in the Netherlands \((\logit = -0.89; \ p = 0.00)\). Immigrant inflows (see Model 2) are significant in the Netherlands and differ significantly from the effects in Denmark \((\logit = -0.02; \ p = 0.00)\). There is also a significant difference in the effect of media salience \((\logit = -0.01; \ p = 0.00)\), which indicates that the effect of media salience is slightly but significantly smaller in Denmark than in the Netherlands. The negative effect of positive news in the Netherlands differs slightly but significantly from the effect in Denmark \((\logit = 0.02; \ p = 0.009)\), but I found no systematic difference with respect to negative news \((\logit = 0.00; \ p = 0.41)\). Overall, the results do not comply with the fourth hypothesis; the results are significantly more pronounced in the Netherlands than in Denmark.

### Discussion

Scholars have frequently demonstrated the influence of context on people’s attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Scheepers et al., 2002; Schlüter & Davidov, 2013; Semyonov et al., 2006). The aim was to replicate some of these findings as well as to investigate the influence of media salience and tone. This chapter provided new insights regarding the generalizability of the effects, the effects of change rather than the mere presence of an immigrant population, and the effects of the media over time using a comparative perspective. The main goal of this chapter was to tackle the following research question: To what extent do the size of the immigrant population, the media coverage, and the tone of news reports about immigration affect immigration attitudes? Below, each element of this question is discussed.

Based on realistic group conflict theory (Austin & Worchel, 1979; LeVine & Campbell, 1972) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), I hypothesized that increased competition caused by immigrant inflows causes feelings of threat and increases anti-immigration attitudes (Scheepers et al., 2002; Semyonov et al., 2006). The findings support this assumption for the Netherlands, but only with regard to the relative immigrant inflows. In Denmark, no support for this hypothesis was found, in contrast to the recent findings of Schlüter and Davidov (2013) but in line with the recent study by Manevska and Achterberg (2013), which found a very limited influence of immigration on immigration attitudes.

\(^{17}\) This was done through 2010 in order to compare the same time periods in both countries.
REAL WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Perhaps these influences occur at a lower contextual level: region, city or neighborhood. Immigrants mostly settle in bigger cities and urban areas. Natives who live in these areas will notice change and be affected more than those in rural areas. However, in big cities, people are also more likely to come into contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds, which can reduce ethnic prejudice according to contact theory (Allport, 1954).

Furthermore, I expected media salience to increase anti-immigration sentiment; this effect yielded in the right direction in the Netherlands. I found that immigrant inflows suppress the effect of media salience. Both variables produced the same result; however, because a decrease in media salience often coincided with an increase in immigrant inflows, the effect of media salience was not visible until immigrant inflows were added to the model. This means that the coverage of immigration in the media in the Netherlands had an impact.

In the Netherlands, the results showed support for the idea that a greater assortment of received messages with a particular tone, through the acceptance of these toned messages, leads to a change in the sample that affects people’s attitudes (see Zaller’s (1992) RAS model). Tone had an effect on the public discourse in the Netherlands such that a positive tone in news reports reduced anti-immigration attitudes (also see Boomgaard 2007). Surprisingly, the effect of negative news was not significant. This—and the fact that negative news did not mediate the effect of media salience—counters the “any news is bad news” notion, which is frequently used to explain the effect of news salience on anti-immigration attitudes when it is not possible to assess the tone of news. It also counters Soroka’s asymmetrical influences thesis that people are generally more responsive to negative information than to positive information, which was confirmed in chapter 3.

The limited influence of media variables in Denmark does not mean that there is no effect of media at all. One might find more fluctuations at the individual level that do not appear when averaged at the country level (Zaller, 1996). To further explore these individual fluctuations, an experimental design or a panel study with individual media-usage variables would be more appropriate. Therefore, in chapter 5, individual-level media effects will be explored in more detail. In this chapter, media influences are more thoroughly investigated using an experimental study.

So why did I find differences between the two countries? First of all, my findings are not in line with Down’s issue-attention-cycle. Whether this is due to the selection of specific cases, the inaccuracy of the theory or inaccurate categorization on my part is not clear. However, I do know that the Netherlands has a more rapidly growing immigrant population and a longer political immigration history. Thus, Dutch citizens have had the opportunity to become familiar with the issue through politics, media and personal experiences. Arguably, the relatively steady presence of this issue in the news has paved the way for news content to have an effect (i.e., tone). When the public pays no attention to an issue or related developments, contextual characteristics cannot have an effect because there is no critical mass that pays attention to the issue (Neuman, 1990).
There appears to be a critical mass in the Netherlands that pays attention to the tone in the news and is influenced by it. In Denmark, however, although the media gives plenty of attention to the issue, there are no signs of a critical mass that pays attention to news content. The fluctuations in media salience over time were large: these patterns appeared to have attracted people’s attention and influenced their attitudes rather than the tone of the messages. Although the correlation between immigration inflows and media salience was not very large, it was large enough to mediate most of the effect of media salience.

One limitation of this study is that perceived ethnic threat is missing as a mediator. This variable was not taken into consideration because the data were insufficient, but it has been found to play a crucial role with regard to people’s immigration attitudes (e.g., Manevska & Achterberg, 2013). Second, one downside to the otherwise innovative longitudinal design is the limited availability of longitudinal dependent variables. The Eurobarometer provided the only immigration attitude question that recurred frequently over the time period of interest. Their “most-important problem” question is a crude measure that does not differentiate between ethnic groups. It is a tricky question to use because the answer depends on the prominence of other issues on the agenda. It is possible that the drop in the number of people indicating immigration as a problem from 2008 onwards was attributable to the start of the economic crisis. It is very likely that many people identified the economy as the most important problem from that moment onwards. The fact that economy became a more prominent problem makes the tests of the hypotheses more stringent, because it reduces the chances of finding effects of RWDs and the media. Nevertheless, it is by no means ideal.

It would be inappropriate to draw firm conclusions from just two cases; hence, these conclusions are largely speculative and intended as a basis for future research. Even so, this chapter shows quite interesting (country-specific) effects. In Denmark, media salience was the only contextual effect that approached significance, whereas immigrant inflows and most media characteristics had an influence in the Netherlands. The fact that I found such prominent influences in the Netherlands is intriguing. In this country, the immigration topic is established; therefore, I expected that people would have largely stable opinions (see Saltier & Woelfel, 1975) or perhaps even be bored with the issue (Downs, 1975), but my findings show evidence to the contrary. From these results, I can crudely deduce that it takes time for an issue to become part of a country’s vocabulary before people are willing to invest in the topic and before contextual changes can affect individual attitudes.