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Group Conflict Theory in a Longitudinal Perspective: Analyzing the Dynamic Side of Ethnic Competition

Bram Lancee
Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB)

Sergi Pardos-Prado
University of Oxford

Abstract
One of the most established approaches to explain attitudes toward immigration is group conflict theory. However, even though the theory was articulated in dynamic terms, previous research has almost exclusively tested it through cross-sectional analyses. The aim of this study is to disentangle the dynamic character of ethnic competition from more permanent determinants of ethnic threat. The findings show that a remarkable variation of concern over immigration, usually attributed to permanent positions of economic vulnerability, disappears when within-person variation is modeled. In line with a dynamic approach of ethnic competition, becoming unemployed or being laid off increases concern over immigration. This effect is independent of social class.

INTRODUCTION

Group conflict theory is ubiquitous in the still growing literature on anti-immigrant attitudes (Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Kellstedt, 2000; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers, 2002; Hayes and Dowds, 2006; Paxton and Mughan, 2006; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky, 2006; Kehrberg, 2007; Coenders and Scheepers, 2008; Masso, 2009). In short, the theory predicts that socioeconomically vulnerable individuals are more likely to articulate negative attitudes toward immigration due to a perception of ethnic competition for scarce resources such as jobs, housing, economic benefits, and social services. Along the scholarly development of the theory, researchers have been concerned with a number of propositions.

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Notable questions are the individual or the collective character of ethnic conflict (Quillian, 1995; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009), the real or perceived nature of ethnic competition (Blalock, 1967; Escandell and Ceobanu, 2008), and the relative explanatory strength of ethnic conflict *vis-à-vis* other theoretical accounts for anti-immigrant attitudes, like social contact (Oliver and Wong, 2003; McClain, 2006).

In spite of the empirical evidence that the theory has obtained, longitudinal tests of group conflict theory are scarce. This is surprising, because "the theoretical propositions regarding the rise of discriminatory attitudes toward out-group populations have been stated in dynamic terms and cast within a dynamic framework" (Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky, 2006:427). Previous works that analyze the over-time variation of attitudes toward immigration use aggregate trends and pooled cross-sections (Coenders and Scheepers, 1998, 2008; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky, 2006; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet, 2009). Not disputing the value of these studies, they cannot relate changing individual economic conditions to a change in the attitude of an individual. To the best of our knowledge, this study is among the first to implement a longitudinal design that uses within-individual over-time changes to analyze the impact of economic vulnerability on attitudes toward immigration.

The problem of testing group conflict theory with (pooled) cross-sectional data is twofold. First, because analyses based on cross-sectional data can only compare between persons, it is not possible to test whether *worsening* economic conditions are indeed a catalyst of *growing* anti-immigrant concerns. The main idea of group conflict theory is that changing economic conditions serve as an explanation for anti-immigrant concern (Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet, 2009:354). The analysis in this study explicitly models this longitudinal argument. Second, cross-sectional analysis suffers from unobserved heterogeneity. In cross-sectional analysis, one therefore does not know whether class or educational differences in attitudes toward immigration are caused by perceived ethnic competition or by identity-related arguments that correlate with one's social position (Tajfel, 1982; Coenders *et al.*, 2004). By applying longitudinal analyses and controlling for all between-person differences, one can isolate the effect of changing economic conditions from competing explanations in a way that cross-sectional research cannot do. In other words, one can separate ethnic competition mechanisms from rival theories such as social identity, which refer to more permanent sources of negativity toward immigrants.

While the influence of macroconditions has been studied more thoroughly (*see, e.g.*, Coenders and Scheepers, 1998, 2008; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky, 2006), studies that estimate the effect of changing individual economic conditions are scarce. This is why, in contrast to previous studies, we focus on changing economic conditions as an individual event, and not as a contextual effect.

THEORY

Ethnic Competition in Past Research

Blumer (1958) originally identified group identity, out-group stereotyping, preferred group status, and perceived threat as being intrinsic to prejudice. The theory "assumes that individuals identify with one or more groups and that the diverse interests of different groups generate conflicts that in turn generate negative attitudes" (Hjerm, 2007:1254). Group conflict theory presumes that inter-group conflicts are mainly rational (Bobo, 1988; Clark and Legge, 1997; Glaser, 2003). Hence, the general idea of group conflict theory is that hostile attitudes toward immigration can be seen as a defensive reaction to perceived inter-group competition for scarce goods (Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet, 2009:354).

Most research that builds on Blumer's (1958) group position model and other works, like Blalock's (1967) "power threat hypothesis" considers ethnic threat as a collective phenomenon. In this strand of research, the trigger of hostility toward migrants is a threat against the group's resources or status, rather than against the individual himself. Most work on attitudes toward immigration assumes ethnic threat to occur at the collective level (Quillian, 1995; Coenders and Scheepers, 1998, 2008; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers, 2002; Glaser, 2003; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Coenders *et al.*, 2004; McClain, 2006; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky, 2006; Hjerm, 2007; Schneider, 2008; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet, 2009; Gorodzeisky, 2011).

As pointed out by Rosenstein (2008), the literature also identifies threat toward the individual. Research that assumes threat to be targeted at the individual builds upon Bonacich's (1972) work and is based on the idea of economic self-interest (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Clark and Legge, 1997; Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Hayes and Dowds, 2006; O'Rourke and Sinnot, 2006; Hainmuller and Hiscox, 2007; Malchow-Moller *et al.*, 2008). However, as shown by Rosenstein (2008), individual and

collective ethnic threats are not necessarily contradictory and can reinforce each other. In fact, some researchers explicitly acknowledge the existence of both types of threat (Wagner and Zick, 1995; Raijman, Semyonov, and Schmidt, 2003; Kehrberg, 2007; Escandell and Ceobanu, 2008; Manevska and Achterberg, 2011). In this study, we too acknowledge that threat can be collective and individual.

Previous tests of group conflict theory often include static measures like education, income, or social class (Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Hayes and Dowds, 2006; Hjerm, 2007). Such cross-sectional measures cannot test the dynamic character of ethnic competition. Moreover, they make the theory empirically indistinguishable from rival accounts of group conflict, such as social identity theory. Social identity theory stipulates that attitudes toward immigrants are rooted in more permanent and psychological distinctions between "us" and "them." For example, Tajfel (1982) conducted experiments and found that group members favored their in-group and discriminated members of the outgroup following a structural sense of identity, independent of the specific material benefit to be gained. The findings suggest that inter-group relations are not only driven by competition over resources.

Furthermore, as stated by ethnic conflict theory (Coenders *et al.*, 2004), certain socioeconomic characteristics such as social class and educational attainment come with a specific group identity that translates in attitudes toward immigrants. If this is the case, and permanent positions of economic vulnerability and social identity correlate, both theories are difficult to distinguish with cross-sectional analyses. Along the same lines, there is an increasing awareness that contextual variables that are used to measure economic ethnic competition (like the share of non-Western citizens in a given country) might also capture cultural competition (Schneider, 2008; Manevska and Achterberg, 2011).

The Dynamic Side of Ethnic Competition

The dynamic side of ethnic competition implies that worsening economic conditions result in an increasingly negative attitude toward immigration. The dynamic character is already addressed by Blumer (1958:3), who argued that inter-group relations vary. Instead of assuming a permanent hostile attitude toward the outgroup based on innate dispositions, authoritarian personalities, or slow social experiences, Blumer proposed a more flexible framework to analyze inter-group relations.

Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet (2009) formulate a dynamic version of group conflict theory. Although Meuleman *et al.* do not base their analyses on individual panel data but focus on the contextual determinants of ethnic competition, their idea of dynamic competition is valuable for our analysis. According to Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet (2009:354), "…one can expect that attitude changes are driven by changes in the level of actual competition. Following this logic, actual competition could remain constant at a high level without changing attitudes. It is only when sudden changes in minority group size or economic conditions occur that out-group attitudes evolve." In other words, the dynamic side of competition implies that a *change* in economic conditions results a *change* in one's attitude.

Besides the work of Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet (2009), there are some other studies that analyze attitudes toward immigration with repeated cross-sections (Firebaugh and Davis, 1988; Quillian, 1995; Schuman *et al.*, 1997; Coenders and Scheepers, 1998, 2008; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky, 2006). However, these contributions use pooled surveys or time trends aggregated at the country level and do not make use of individual panel data. For example, Coenders and Scheepers (2008) relate macrounemployment rates in Germany to attitudes toward immigration. Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky (2006) and Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet (2009) present an individual and cross-country comparison using aggregate trends. There is also some cross-sectional work that uses *only* static contextual indicators, like GDP, or the size of the immigrant population to measure ethnic competition (Kellstedt, 2000; Oliver and Wong, 2003; McClain, 2006). In spite of the clear comparative value of these contributions, the lack of panel data makes it impossible to isolate the effect of changing economic conditions and to distinguish it from other competing explanations at the individual level.

The use of individual indicators to capture both individual and collective threat is much more prominent in the literature (Clark and Legge, 1997; Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Glaser, 2003; Raijman, Semyonov, and Schmidt, 2003; Hayes and Dowds, 2006; O'Rourke and Sinnot, 2006; Malchow-Moller *et al.*, 2008; Rosenstein, 2008). Individual indicators, however, are almost never analyzed longitudinally. An exception is Schlueter, Schmidt, and Wagner's (2008) comparison between Germany and Russia. However, Schlueter *et al.* do not to model changing conditions of economic competition, but aim to disentangle the causal relationship between concepts like *perceived group threat* and *outgroup derogation*. Furthermore, the panel used in this study contains only three waves.

This study models the longitudinal variation of individual economic conditions while interacting them with and controlling for aggregate contextual characteristics. This is in line with the trend in the literature to account for individual and contextual variables simultaneously (Wagner and Zick, 1995; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers, 2002; Coenders *et al.*, 2004; Hainmuller and Hiscox, 2007; Hjerm, 2007; Kehrberg, 2007; Escandell and Ceobanu, 2008; Schneider, 2008; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Gorodzeisky, 2011; Manevska and Achterberg, 2011).

We argue that, on the microlevel, one of the best ways to measure changing economic conditions is the event of becoming unemployed and that of dismissal. Classic trade models – expecting that low-skilled workers are more anti-immigrant – have been recently considered too static and restrictive in their assumptions. For example, O'Rourke and Sinnot (2006:843) criticize the lack of life-course events in these models and stress that "a key economic variable missing from the analysis up to now is unemployment." Becoming unemployed or being fired implies that an individual moves from the relative security of employment to the labor market, where one has to compete for jobs. These transitions are likely to be involuntarily, suggesting that socioeconomic vulnerability indeed increases (as opposed to job transitions with the objective to improve one's career). In other words, becoming unemployed or being fired is likely to be a situation in which one faces ethnic competition strongly and suddenly.

Previous research analyzing unemployment offers contradictory results regarding its significance (Raijman, Semyonov, and Schmidt, 2003; O'Rourke and Sinnot, 2006:851–853; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009:224). The diverging results with respect to unemployment could be due to the fact that within-person variation is not accounted for in previous analyses.

Hypotheses

This study does not challenge previous findings showing the effect of permanent indicators on perceptions of ethnic threat. Hence, we expect that more economically vulnerable people (like lower social class, and those with a lower education) are more likely to be concerned about immigration. However, to the extent that concerns about immigration are caused by permanent and enduring sources of ethnic threat, we expect these differences to diminish or disappear when eliminating all between-person differences. If, on the other hand, there is a dynamic side to ethnic

competition, we expect to observe growing concerns about immigration when economic vulnerability increases.

This reasoning implies that when an individual becomes unemployed, he will be more concerned with immigration, independently of his socioeconomic position. That is, increasing economic vulnerability results in increasing concern with immigration in both upper and lower social strata. This is consistent with economic trade models expecting that high- and low-skilled individuals fear immigrants of their own skill level. For example, Gorodzeisky (2011) finds that richer countries are on average less favorable to richer immigrants, and that poorer countries fear more immigrants from poorer backgrounds. We thus expect that increasing vulnerability affects concerns about immigration across all social strata:

H1 People who become unemployed are more likely to be concerned about immigration, independent of their social class.

Not all transitions to unemployment are necessarily involuntary. Furthermore, not all job terminations end in unemployment. To further test the effect of increasing vulnerability, we also analyze the reason why people leave their job. We expect that the effect of job termination on concerns about immigration is particularly strong when people leave their job involuntarily, like in the case of dismissal. Hence, we formulate an additional hypothesis:

H2 People who are laid off are more likely to be concerned about immigration, independent of their social class.

As mentioned above, there is a debate about the objective or constructed nature of ethnic threat (Bobo, 1983; Fetzer, 2000; McLaren, 2003; Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007; Hjerm and Nagayoshi, 2011). While some researchers build upon a realistic interpretation of group conflict theory and test the effect of objective economic indicators (Quillian, 1995), others believe that these indicators might not be perceived as threatening by the relevant actors and therefore deem subjective perceptions of threat as theoretically more appropriate (Rosenstein, 2008).

Our data allow us to analyze differences between perceived and actual economic vulnerability. The German Socio-Economic Panel Survey (SOEP) survey contains a variable that measures the expected difficulty to find a new job, which serves as a good proxy for perceived economic vulnerability. The first advantage is that by controlling for perceived economic vulnerability, we better estimate the effect of changes in actual economic circumstances, as is hypothesized in H1 and H2.

However, even controlling for people's socioeconomic position, it is likely that persons who perceive themselves to be more economically vulnerable are more concerned about immigration. A social group can articulate a permanent sense of ethnic threat because of social identity or because of an enduring perception of economic vulnerability. Perceived vulnerability is not necessarily a real, nor a sudden event. However, if actual and changing economic conditions result in a changing attitude on immigration, the effect of perceived vulnerability is likely to disappear once we control for all between-person variance. Put differently, rather than perceptions of vulnerability, we expect that changes in people's actual economic position result in increasing concern with immigration. This is formulated in hypothesis 3:

> H3 The effect of perceived economic vulnerability disappears when modeling changes within persons over time.

DATA AND MEASUREMENT

Sample

We use the German Socio-Economic Panel Survey, a household-based panel study with a yearly questionnaire since 1984 (Wagner, Frick, and Schupp, 2007). Our dependent variable, "Being concerned about immigration to Germany," is available from 1999 onwards. Consequently, the analysis is restricted to the years 1999–2008. As with all panels, the SOEP is subject to attrition, which could bias the results. The main source of attrition was refusal; special measures were taken to reduce attrition, such as contacting respondents again each year until all members of the household refused for two consecutive years (Haisken-DeNew and Frick, 2005).

The sample consists of all people aged between 18 and 65, who are full-time or regular part-time employed at $t-1$. People who are in school, performing military or civil service, or retired earlier than age 65 are excluded. Furthermore, as we focus on attitudes of majority group members, the sample is restricted to people who are born in Germany and have a German nationality. Missing values are replaced with information available from earlier waves.

The Case of Germany

As the number and scope of previous studies shows, group conflict theory is a general theory predicting negative views toward immigrants. The theory

is universal in the sense that it can be used in every country. Besides the high-quality panel data that are available, Germany is a suitable case to test the dynamic side of ethnic competition. Germany is an immigration country, with a substantial ethnic minority population: the share of foreigners is 8.9 percent in 1999 and 8.8 percent in 2008 (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, 2009); the share of persons with a migration background is 19.3 percent in 2010.[1] Also economic conditions changed in the observed period, with the national unemployment rate oscillating between 7.8 percent in 2005 and 11.7 percent in 2008, with stark regional differences (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2011).

Furthermore, Germany is a wealthy country with a strong welfare state. This could attenuate the effect of unemployment on perceptions of ethnic threat. In all, Germany does not seem to be an obvious case where changing individual economic conditions could easily trigger concerns about immigration.

Method of Estimation

We estimate random-effects (RE) and fixed-effects (FE) models.[2] In the Results section, we first report RE models, which contain longitudinal variation but which are also based on between-person differences. Then, to show the dynamic side of ethnic competition, we report FE models that control for all differences between persons and exclusively focus on over-time variation. By comparing the RE with the FE model and performing a Hausman test, we analyze which model is to be preferred from a statistical point of view.

The RE model assumes a randomly varying intercept (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2008) and is specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{logit}(y_{it} - \theta\bar{y}_i) = {} & \beta_0(1-\theta) + \beta_1(x_{it} - \theta x_i) + \beta_2(z_{it} - \bar{z}_l) \\ & + \{(1-\theta)v_i + (\varepsilon_{it} - \theta\bar{\varepsilon}_i)\}\end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where y_{it} is the concern about immigration of individual i at time t; x_{it} is the labor market status of individual i at time t; z_{it} is the value of controls of individual i at time t; v_i is a random parameter for each individual (accounting for between-person variance); θ is a parameter that ranges from 0 (when

[1]Before 2010, the concept of migration background was not used in Germany, consequently, no official statistics are available.

[2]Models are estimated with the program Stata 11.

there is no between-person variance) and 1 (when there is no within-person variance); β_k are vectors of fixed-effects parameters; ε is the error term.

The advantage of the RE model is that it uses within- and between-person variance; hence, also time-constant covariates can be estimated. This makes it a suitable technique to estimate the more permanent effects of ethnic competition. The major drawback is that the error term is assumed to be uncorrelated with the covariates. RE models therefore cannot control for unobserved individual characteristics and do not solve the problem of unobserved heterogeneity (Halaby, 2004).

Fixed-effects models estimate an intercept for each individual. FE models use each variable's difference from its within-person mean and hence can estimate only coefficients that have within-person variation (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2008).

Fixed-effects models are optimized through maximum likelihood estimation and using a logit link function:

$$\text{logit}(y_{it} - \bar{y}_l) = \beta_1(x_{it} - \bar{x}_l) + \beta_2(z_{it} - \bar{z}_l) + \varepsilon_{it} - \bar{\varepsilon}_l \qquad (2)$$

Where the parameters are the same as in Equation (1), with the exception that there is no between-person variance component, because the differences between persons are fixed. The advantage of the FE model is that it controls for all differences between persons, thereby eliminating all time-constant unobserved heterogeneity (Halaby, 2004). FE models only use within-person variation to estimate coefficients and are therefore particularly useful to analyze changes over time. Therefore, FE models are ideal for modeling (and isolating) the dynamic side of ethnic competition from enduring ethnic threat. The disadvantage of FE models is that it is not possible to estimate the effect of time-constant covariates.

Measures

Dependent Variable: Each survey year, respondents are asked what their main concerns are. The question is "What is your attitude toward the following areas—are you concerned about them?" One of the areas is "immigration to Germany" with the response categories "very concerned" (30.6%), "somewhat concerned" (45.0%), and "not concerned at all" (24.4%). This is an ordered variable. As an ordered logistic FE model does not exist, we recoded the variable into "very concerned" (1) versus somewhat concerned/not concerned at all (0). With respect to RE models,

an ordered logistic variant exists. We estimated all RE models with an ordered logit as well, and there were no substantial differences. As there are no differences and as we cannot compare a RE ordered logistic model with a FE logit model, we present the results of the RE logit estimation.

It is important to note that the *perceptions of threat* referred to by group conflict theorists is not the dependent variable itself, but the theoretical mechanism accounting for the relationship between economic conditions and concern about immigration. As discussed above, perceptions of collective and individual threat can be distinguished conceptually, but are not mutually exclusive and can actually reinforce each other (Rosenstein, 2008). It is intuitive to think that becoming unemployed is an individual threat, but we cannot preclude the possibility that this threat extends to the individual's social group.

As shown in previous research, items capturing concern or being worried about immigration are valid indicators to capture a negative attitude or feeling *vis-à-vis* immigration, which at the same time is salient for the respondent (McGhee and Neiman, 2009:7). The combination of saliency and negativity is important for the validity of our dependent variable. Unfortunately, the SOEP does not contain other items regarding immigration attitudes and hence does not allow for a validity test.[3] However, there are two reasons to believe that the item captures both a salient and negative attitude toward immigration. First, the wording of the survey question refers to "concern" rather than more neutral "opinions" or "sentiments," and therefore contains an explicitly negative predisposition toward the object of the question. Second, as argued by Singer (2011) and Fournier *et al.* (2003), survey items capturing the *saliency* of social or political issues are also valid and reliable proxies for the negative *opinion* toward these issues. Wlezien (2005:559) shows that items measuring a public concern have two indistinguishable attributes, namely importance of issues and the degree to which issues are a problem. In other words, it is expected that immigration becomes a salient concern for a respondent when this issue is perceived as a problem or when the current policy regarding this issue is perceived as unsatisfactory.

[3]To the best of our knowledge, there are no datasets allowing us to correlate saliency or concern over immigration issues with other indicators capturing attitudes towards immigration. An exception is the European Election Study from 1999, where "considering immigration issues as the most important problem facing the respondent's country" is clearly associated with "dissatisfaction toward the current immigration policy" (results available upon request).

Unemployment and Class: Each year, respondents are asked what their current occupation is. One of the variables that SOEP generates from this question is the Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) class scheme (EGP). Because it is measured every year, the EGP class variable also contains the category "unemployed," and "pensioner." For all people who are employed at $t-1$, we estimate the effect of class on their concerns about immigration to Germany at time t. By doing so, we estimate the effect of becoming unemployed simultaneously with possible transitions to other classes. The effect of one lagged year does not preclude the possibility that other effects are found at other time lags. However, we believe that the stricter test for dynamic explanations of anti-immigrant concern consists of minimal time lags. If concern over immigration rises after becoming unemployed, this supports the idea of the dynamic character of group conflict theory.

Leaving One's Job: Each survey year, respondents are asked whether they left their job the year before. In case they did so, it is asked "How was this job terminated?" To respect the causal ordering of events, we analyze the effect of leaving one's job for people who were employed at $t-1$ on their concerns about immigration to Germany at time t. In other words, we estimate the effect of leaving one's job for those that are actually "at risk" of leaving.

Estimated Difficulty of Finding a Job: To measure perceived economic vulnerability, we include the following variable. Each year, employed people are asked "If you lost your job today, would it be easy, difficult, or almost impossible for you to find a new position which is at least as good as your current one?" To respect the causal ordering of events, this variable is lagged 1 year. We hence analyze the effect of the estimated difficulty at $t-1$ (when people are employed) on their concerns about immigration to Germany at time t.

Control Variables: Our models build upon explanations proposed in past research on attitudes toward immigration (Hainmuller and Hiscox, 2010; Rustenbach, 2010). Social contact is expected to generate positive attitudes toward immigration (Oliver and Wong, 2003; Escandell and Ceobanu, 2008; Lancee and Dronkers, 2011). We capture this by including the number of friends from outside Germany. Second, political disaffection is related to anti-immigrant concern (Mayer, 2002). We therefore include interest in politics. Third, it could be that worsening economic conditions have an effect on one's general mood and well-being, and for that reason result in a change of any attitude toward the negative. To avoid that a relation between career changes and optimism biases our results, we therefore control for general life satisfaction (measured each year).

Changing economic conditions on the macrolevel have received much attention in the literature studying attitudes toward immigration. We control for these contextual explanations following two strategies. First, by including dummies for each survey year and federal state. To control for a general time trend, we include dummies for each survey year. To account for regional differences, we include a dummy for each federal state. By including these dummies, the individual-level effect we estimate is not biased by contextual variance across time or regions.

Second, previous studies find that attitudes toward immigration are affected by an increase in unemployment levels and foreign immigration (Coenders and Scheepers, 2008; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet, 2009) as well as by regional variation in the size of the ethnic minority population (Schneider, 2008). To make sure that our results do not change when explicitly accounting for these contextual explanations, we replaced the dummies with year- and federal state-specific unemployment percentages (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2011) and the number of foreigners per 1,000 inhabitants (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, 2009).

Last, we include basic sociodemographic controls like gender, age, marital status, and educational attainment. Previous research shows that religious people express less negative anti-immigrant behavior (Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers, 2002:348, Rustenbach, 2010). We therefore include the frequency of attending church. Our substantive results are robust across different model specifications and they remain unchanged if each control variable is excluded once at a time. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the sample; Table 2 presents the descriptives of the dependent and independent variables by survey year.

RESULTS

In Table 3, a RE model and a FE model are presented, predicting the likelihood of being concerned about immigration to Germany.[4] In the RE model (M1), which combines within- and between-person variance, we see clearly that there are differences in class: compared to the low service

[4]The logistic FE model only includes individuals who have variation on the dependent variable. The sample size for the FE models is therefore much smaller then when estimating RE models. To ensure that the results in the RE models are not driven by the larger sample size, we also estimated the RE models with the sample of the FE models. No substantial differences were found.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES, BY SURVEY YEAR

	Very concerned about immigration %	Unemployed %	Dismissed %	Perceived difficulty to find a new job if the current one is lost	
				Mean	SD
1999	37	3	2	0.50	0.31
2000	34	4	2	0.49	0.30
2001	27	3	2	0.47	0.32
2002	29	4	3	0.46	0.32
2003	25	4	3	0.47	0.32
2004	32	4	2	0.53	0.31
2005	38	3	2	0.55	0.31
2006	34	3	2	0.56	0.30
2007	30	2	2	0.55	0.30
2008	25	3	2	0.52	0.31

Source: SOEP 1999–2008.

class, skilled and semi/unskilled manual workers and the unemployed are more likely to be concerned about immigration. Similarly, the high service class is less likely to be concerned. Educational attainment follows the same pattern: people with higher levels of education are less likely to be concerned. This confirms previous cross-sectional analyses.

To analyze how changes in economic conditions affect concerns over immigration, we estimate a FE model (M2). As only within-person information is used to estimate coefficients, in model 2, all time-constant variables are dropped. Whereas in the RE model, lower classes are more likely to be concerned about immigration, and in the FE model, this only holds true for people who make a transition into unemployment. When eliminating all between-individual differences and herewith the permanent determinants of out-group hostility, we see that it is not lower classes that are more likely to report increasing concern, but persons who make a transition to unemployment. This confirms hypothesis 1 and supports the idea of the dynamic character of ethnic competition. To analyze whether the effect of becoming unemployed is larger for certain classes, we estimated a FE model in which we interacted being unemployed at time t with the class of origin while working (at $t-1$). This did not yield significant results. In other words, as expected, the effect of becoming unemployed on being concerned about immigration does not differ across class.

In models 3 and 4, we replace the year and regional dummies with unemployment rates and the proportion of foreigners. The dummies

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS SAMPLE (N = 77,691, n = 15,694)

	%
EGP class	
High service	16
Low service	23
Routine non-manual	11
Routine, service sales	10
Self-employed	4
Self-employed no employment	4
Skilled manual	14
Semi/unskilled manual	13
Farm labor	1
Self-employed farm	1
Not working/unemployed	3
Not working/pensioner	<1
Educational attainment	
Inadequately/general elementary	4
Basic vocational/general	24
Intermediate vocational/general	35
General/Vocational maturity	10
Tertiary education	27
Marital status	
Married	65
Single	22
Divorced/separated/widowed	13
Female	45

	Mean	SD
Difficulty to find a new job if current one is lost	0.51	0.32
Interested in politics	0.46	0.26
Frequency of attending church or religious events	0.21	0.28
General life satisfaction	0.71	0.16
Friends who are not from Germany	0.02	0.09
Age	42.9	10.11
Unemployment rate	10.32	4.41
Proportion foreigners (Number of foreigners per 1,000 inhabitants)	84.19	37.32

Source: SOEP 1999–2008.

control for all contextual over-time and regional variation. When estimating an individual effect, such models are therefore preferred from a statistical point of view. However, by including unemployment and immigration rates, we more substantially account for the contextual factors that have been shown to explain attitudes toward immigration (Coenders and Scheepers, 2008; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet, 2009). In M3, we see that, in line with previous findings, both the unemployment rate and the proportion of foreigners increase the likelihood to be concerned about immigration. The effect of the proportion of foreigners disappears when only including over-time variation (M4), suggesting that

TABLE 3
LOGISTIC RANDOM- AND FIXED-EFFECTS MODELS PREDICTING THE LIKELIHOOD TO BE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT IMMIGRATION TO GERMANY, ODDS RATIOS (STANDARD ERRORS)

	M1 Random effects	M2 Fixed effects	M3 Random effects	M4 Fixed effects
Class				
High service	0.823** (0.055)	0.863* (0.051)	0.824*** (0.042)	0.857 (0.068)
Low service	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Routine non-manual	1.024 (0.092)	0.958 (0.104)	1.015 (0.059)	0.926 (0.102)
Routine, service sales	1.092 (0.097)	0.899 (0.068)	1.078* (0.041)	0.896 (0.069)
Self-employed	0.964 (0.049)	0.929 (0.131)	0.963 (0.112)	0.964 (0.217)
Self-employed no Employment	1.001 (0.067)	1.085 (0.125)	1.028 (0.090)	1.142 (0.184)
Skilled manual	1.542*** (0.118)	1.141 (0.117)	1.526*** (0.052)	1.120 (0.125)
Semi/unskilled manual	1.408*** (0.088)	0.969 (0.068)	1.390*** (0.079)	0.981 (0.073)
Farm labor	1.173 (0.243)	1.118 (0.264)	1.140 (0.276)	1.110 (0.187)
Self-employed Farm	0.683 (0.192)	1.303 (0.431)	0.733 (0.176)	1.519 (0.515)
Not working/Unemployed	1.502*** (0.147)	1.318*** (0.110)	1.396*** (0.103)	1.242* (0.121)
Not working/Pensioner	1.926 (0.674)	1.384 (0.463)	1.798 (0.690)	1.496 (0.462)
Difficulty to find a new job if current one is lost	1.284** (0.104)	1.096 (0.057)	1.438*** (0.053)	1.358*** (0.100)
Interested in politics	0.974 (0.044)	1.292** (0.119)	0.880 (0.059)	1.139 (0.095)
Attending church or religious events	0.875** (0.041)	0.931 (0.060)	0.811** (0.056)	0.955 (0.039)
General life satisfaction	0.378*** (0.022)	0.658** (0.086)	0.367*** (0.048)	0.582*** (0.062)
Friends that are not from Germany	0.530*** (0.091)	0.698* (0.110)	0.563** (0.117)	0.762 (0.140)

TABLE 3 (Continued)
Logistic Random- and Fixed-Effects Models Predicting the Likelihood to be Very Concerned About Immigration to Germany, Odds Ratios (Standard Errors)

	M1 Random effects	M2 Fixed effects	M3 Random effects	M4 Fixed effects
Female	0.825*** (0.041)		0.819** (0.063)	
Age	1.005* (0.002)		1.008* (0.003)	
Marital status				
Married	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Single	0.883 (0.089)	0.891 (0.101)	0.878 (0.085)	0.850 (0.116)
Divorced/separated/widowed	1.076 (0.068)	1.097 (0.128)	1.081 (0.071)	1.196 (0.135)
Educational attainment				
Inadequately/general elementary	1.541*** (0.181)	0.865 (0.234)	1.520*** (0.113)	0.897 (0.335)
Basic vocational	1.309*** (0.076)	0.974 (0.176)	1.330*** (0.075)	1.085 (0.273)
Intermediate vocational/general	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
General/vocational maturity	0.392*** (0.035)	0.946 (0.139)	0.400*** (0.027)	0.901 (0.273)
Tertiary education	0.219*** (0.016)	0.763 (0.138)	0.222*** (0.011)	0.803 (0.256)
Year and federal state dummies	Yes	Yes	No	No
Unemployment rate			1.089*** (0.007)	1.153*** (0.009)
Proportion foreigners			1.006*** (0.001)	1.004 (0.003)
Constant	4.658*** (0.142)		4.575*** (0.112)	
Log-likelihood	−37285.3	−15531.6	−37684.1	−15881.7
N observations	77,691	40,359	77,691	40,359
N subjects	15,694	6,181	15,694	6,181

Source: SOEP 1999–2008.
Notes All variables are standardized in a range from zero to one, except for age.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$; two-tailed tests. Standard errors clustered on the individual, obtained with bootstrapping.
Hausman test between random-effects and fixed-effects models significant at $p < 0.01$.

this effect is due to regional variation in the migrant population, rather than to an increase over time.

More important for the purpose of this study is that the effect of becoming unemployed remains statistically significant, albeit less strongly. Also when accounting for over-time and regional variation in unemployment rate and foreign population, people who become unemployed are more concerned about immigration. The smaller coefficient of individual unemployment can be because we explicitly model changing conditions on the contextual level. It can, however, also be that other contextual variance that remains when including unemployment and the foreign population, biases the coefficient of unemployment. Such variance is accounted for in the region and time dummies in M1 and M2. We also estimated models in which we interacted becoming unemployed with the unemployment rate and the share of foreigners, but this was not significant. This suggests that the individual effect we observe is rooted in individual competition, rather than in market conditions. Hence, both contextual and individual economic conditions affect concern about immigration, but the contextual effect does not amplify the individual effect.

In Table 4, we estimate the coefficients for ways of leaving one's job. The sample consists of all people who are employed at $t-1$, the year about which respondents indicate whether and if yes how they left their job. In both the RE and FE models (M1 and M2), we clearly see that people who are dismissed are more likely to be concerned about immigration, herewith confirming hypothesis 2. Also when controlling for EGP class at $t-1$, this effect remains (not shown here). In M3 and M4, we again include the unemployment rate and the proportion of the foreign population. As we can see, the coefficient of being laid off remains statistically significant, and only changes little in size, indicating that the effect of dismissal is not influenced by macroconditions. Like with the analysis of unemployment, we examined whether the effect of being fired differs across the class of origin. We estimated a FE model containing an interaction between being fired (at time t) and the class of the respondent when still employed (at $t-1$). This did not yield any significant results. Hence, as it was the case with becoming unemployed, the effect of being fired on attitudes toward immigration is not different across social classes. We also estimated interaction terms with the unemployment rate and the share of foreigners, but these were not significant.

As stated in hypothesis 3, those who expect it to be more difficult to find a new job, if the current one is lost, are more concerned about

TABLE 4
Logistic Random- and Fixed-Effects Models Predicting the Likelihood to be Very Concerned About Immigration to Germany, Odds Ratios (Standard Errors)

	M1 Random effects	M2 Fixed effects	M3 Random effects	M4 Fixed effects
Leaving one's job				
No job change	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Own resignation	0.965 (0.075)	0.974 (0.069)	0.926 (0.089)	0.916 (0.068)
Dismissal	1.362*** (0.086)	1.350*** (0.110)	1.324* (0.168)	1.307** (0.129)
Mutual agreement	0.954 (0.110)	1.034 (0.134)	0.923 (0.138)	1.004 (0.158)
Temporary contract expired	1.075 (0.108)	1.126 (0.116)	1.024 (0.107)	1.053 (0.188)
Reached retirement age/sabbatical	1.139 (0.203)	1.050 (0.231)	1.133 (0.118)	1.033 (0.190)
Business closed down/Place of work closed	0.944 (0.088)	1.003 (0.090)	0.888 (0.114)	0.938 (0.095)
Difficulty to find a new job if current one is lost	1.284*** (0.052)	1.094 (0.058)	1.436*** (0.065)	1.355*** (0.083)
Interested in politics	0.946 (0.081)	1.297** (0.107)	0.855* (0.058)	1.145* (0.063)
Attending church or religious events	0.871* (0.048)	0.933 (0.053)	0.814*** (0.032)	0.959 (0.031)
General life satisfaction	0.364*** (0.033)	0.647*** (0.074)	0.355*** (0.043)	0.575*** (0.058)
Friends that are not from Germany	0.544*** (0.088)	0.707 (0.150)	0.579*** (0.084)	0.771 (0.159)
Female	0.779*** (0.033)		0.773*** (0.033)	
Age	1.003 (0.002)		1.006*** (0.002)	
Marital status				
Married	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Single	0.867* (0.058)	0.882 (0.096)	0.863 (0.106)	0.842 (0.109)
Divorced/separated/widowed	1.086 (0.073)	1.101 (0.061)	1.092 (0.071)	1.200* (0.090)
Educational attainment				

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)
LOGISTIC RANDOM- AND FIXED-EFFECTS MODELS PREDICTING THE LIKELIHOOD TO BE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT IMMIGRATION TO GERMANY, ODDS RATIOS (STANDARD ERRORS)

	M1 Random effects	M2 Fixed effects	M3 Random effects	M4 Fixed effects
Inadequately/General elementary	1.741*** (0.215)	0.863 (0.170)	1.703*** (0.150)	0.897 (0.166)
Basic vocational	1.407*** (0.113)	0.978 (0.130)	1.421*** (0.093)	1.091 (0.128)
Intermediate vocational/general	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
General/Vocational maturity	0.360*** (0.018)	0.953 (0.228)	0.369*** (0.024)	0.910 (0.169)
Tertiary education	0.182*** (0.007)	0.759 (0.193)	0.186*** (0.007)	0.797 (0.190)
Year and federal state dummies	Yes	Yes	No	No
Unemployment rate			1.092*** (0.007)	1.153*** (0.013)
Proportion foreigners			1.006*** (0.001)	1.004 (0.004)
Constant	4.722*** (0.081)		4.636*** (0.089)	
Log-likelihood	−37334.9	−15538.6	−37729.9	−15887.5
N observations	77,691	40,359	77,691	40,359
N subjects	15,694	6,181	15,694	6,181

Source: SOEP 1999–2008.
Notes All variables are standardized in a range from zero to one, except for age.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$; two-tailed tests. Standard errors clustered on the individual, obtained with bootstrapping.
Hausman test between random-effects and fixed-effects models significant at $p < 0.01$.

immigration a year later (M1, Tables 2 and 3). However, this effect is no longer significant once taking into account within-person changes only (M2). In other words, persons who perceive themselves to be more economically vulnerable are more concerned about immigration than persons who do so to a lesser extent. As the model controls for class and educational attainment, the effect cannot be attributed to "objective" economic vulnerability. Yet, an *increase* in perceived economic vulnerability does not result in an increasing concern about immigration.

In M3 and M4, we examine whether the effect of perceived economic vulnerability is affected by a higher level of unemployment, or increasing levels of immigration. In both M3 and M4, perceived economic vulnerability is significant. This suggests that the effect of perceived vulnerability is dependent on contextual conditions. Put differently, perceived vulnerability triggers concern about immigration when accounting for unemployment and immigration, but not when controlling for all contextual variance (M2). These findings are only partly in line with our hypothesis, which stated that the effect would disappear in FE estimation. Also with respect to perceived vulnerability, we checked whether the effect differs across class, or whether it is different for those who are dismissed. No interaction appeared to be significant.

The control variables are mostly in line with previous findings. As it was the case with social class, when looking at the coefficients of educational attainment, we observe that people with higher levels are less likely to be concerned about immigration. Also in the case of education, the effect disappears in the FE model. Furthermore, as expected, an increasing life satisfaction decreases the likelihood to be concerned about immigration, as is also the case with a higher frequency of attending church. Having friends who are not from Germany has a negative effect (although only significantly in the RE models). Contrary to previous findings, people expressing over-time increasing interest in politics are more likely to be concerned about immigration. However, we do not find a difference between persons with respect being interested in politics.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we aimed to fill a research gap, namely the longitudinal analysis of group conflict theory from an individual-level perspective. Studies that estimate the effect of changing economic conditions on concerns about immigration are scarce. Previous studies analyzing the

temporal evolution of attitudes toward immigration use pooled survey data and aggregate trends, and thus do not test the mechanism at the individual level. Like previous work, we find that people belonging to lower social classes are more likely to be concerned about immigration. These differences are, however, likely to be rooted in permanent constructions of ethnic threat and not in changing conditions of ethnic competition: when eliminating all between-person differences, only people who lose their job are more likely to be concerned about immigration, independently of their social class. More specifically, becoming unemployed and getting fired has a strong effect on increasing concerns over immigration.

We therefore find two mechanisms at play. First, a "static" and between-persons mechanism: persons from lower classes are on average more negative toward immigration than persons from higher classes. Second, a dynamic mechanism: becoming unemployed and being laid off result in being more concerned about immigration. As all between-person differences are controlled for, this effect is not biased by identity-related explanations of attitudes toward immigration. Moreover, the dynamic mechanism holds for all people and not only for people who are more economically vulnerable in the long run, such as lower classes. This finding is consistent with previous work showing that ethnic competition increases with a change relative to one's socioeconomic position and that individuals are more likely to be concerned about immigrants with the same level of skills (Gorodzeisky, 2011). The effect of unemployment and being laid off is neither dependent on the fraction of foreigners nor on unemployment rates. Furthermore, this effect refers to real changes in economic conditions rather than perceptions of economic vulnerability. This validates realistic interpretations of group conflict theory, in the sense that a change in the distribution of material scarce resources can increase interethnic hostility across different social strata.

Future research with other datasets than the German Socio-Economic Panel will have to validate or refute the role of changing economic conditions for individuals. Including other cases is needed to test the generalizability of our findings. Considering further valid and reliable indicators to operationalize the permanent and dynamic aspects of socioeconomic vulnerability will be particularly challenging. For instance, social class tends to vary little over time for a single individual, resulting in a limited statistical power for FE models. However, it is also true that permanent indicators by definition have little temporal variation. Social class

was the best indicator of this kind that was available to us, but more efforts need to be made to measure different aspects of ethnic competition and to consistently test group conflict arguments explaining inter-group attitudes.

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