Opinion Polarization of Immigration and EU Attitudes between Social Classes – The Limiting Role of Working Class Dissensus

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Abstract

This study examines the extent of polarization between occupational classes in political opinions towards immigration and the European Union. We define structural polarization as the combination of high between-class dissimilarity and high within-class consensus. Using data from four high-quality German surveys spanning three decades, we find that workers in lower classes express substantially more negative average opinions about immigration and the EU than the upper classes. However, we also observe considerable opinion heterogeneity within the working class, indicating that only a small share of workers can be mobilized by strict anti-immigration and anti-EU politics. This speaks against viewing societal tensions around these topics as embedded in the social structure. Furthermore, we do not document increases in structural polarization over the last thirty years.

Data Availability: Replication packages will be made available on the authors' Open Science Framework homepage. Survey data sets are available to researchers after signing a data sharing agreement and downloadable from the following sources: https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA5274; https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA6835; <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>; https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA5960

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Introduction

Opinion polarization between groups of individuals in similar socio-structural positions is of long-standing interest to sociologists. In particular, social class was undoubtedly a major socio-structural component of political cleavages during the 19th and 20th centuries, and scholars have argued that it continues to structure politics well into the 21st century (Oesch, 2008). However, the topics of political contentions have evolved in recent decades. According to the landmark work of Hanspeter Kriesi et al. (2008), increasing globalization leads to the rise of a globalization cleavage that divides citizens with positions favoring national closure and immigration restrictions from those who support positions favoring transnational integration, denationalization, and immigration (Kriesi *et al.*, 2008; Azmanova, 2011).

Our main goal in this study is to assess the extent to which opinions on immigrants and the EU are polarized between social classes. The empirical debate on globalization cleavage points to occupational classes and educational level as its main structural components (Oesch, 2008; Bornschier and Kriesi, 2012; Bornschier, 2018; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018; Langsæther and Stubager, 2019; Ares, 2022). Indeed, recent events, such as the 2016 Brexit referendum (Hobolt, 2016), Donald Trump's election (Morgan and Lee, 2018), and the 2022 French presidential face-off between Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, raised questions about the role of the working class in political space (Westheuser and della Porta, 2022). Furthermore, research on class realignment argues that radical right-wing parties find particular appeal among workers (Oesch, 2008), including Germany (Adorf, 2018), the case of the following study.

This leads us to ask the following question: ‘What is the extent and breadth of polarization in political opinions on immigration and the EU between social classes?’, and more particularly, “which immigration- and EU-related issues are most polarized between classes in Germany?”

Our main contribution to the literature on attitudinal class divides is the introduction of the idea of within-class consensus, a concept born from a long tradition in sociological research on opinion polarization (DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson, 1996). Previous research has documented sizable differences in average opinions between working-class and upper-class individuals (Langsæther and Stubager, 2019; Ares, 2022). However, we argue that *within-class consensus*, the attitudinal homogeneity of positions within each class, is of major importance to interpret differences in average opinion between classes as outright class polarization or a cleavage (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996, 698). Only issues that show differences between classes *and* consensus within classes are likely candidates for class polarization.

Furthermore, we overcome four limitations of previous research. First, a sizable share of empirical studies on the globalization-related divide in Europe is based on cross-sectional analyses or short time periods (Hobolt, 2016; Langsæther and Stubager, 2019; Lux, Mau and Jacobi, 2022; Pless, Khoudja and Grunow, 2023). However, the globalization cleavage should increase over time because it is

theoretically caused by globalization pressures that have risen continually in the past decades until recently. Furthermore, long-term trend analyses are essential in polarization research because past opinion distributions provide a valuable yardstick for assessing the extent of current polarization (Fiorina and Abrams, 2008). Second, studies that track trends in globalization-related attitudes over long periods (Down and Wilson, 2008; Caughey, O’Grady and Warshaw, 2019; Teney and Rupieper, 2021; Claassen and McLaren, 2022), rarely analyze attitudinal differences between occupational classes. However, occupational classes, next to educational level, are said to constitute an important structural component of opinion divides on globalization-related issues (Bornschieer 2018; Bornschieer and Kriesi 2012; see Langsæther and Stubager 2019 or Kitschelt and Rehm 2014 for empirical evidence). Considering occupations as a major structural determinant of opinion polarization enables us to group citizens not only along their skills level but also along one of the most important socialization places in an adult’s life (Oesch, 2006; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014). Third, the few studies that focus on class differences and longer time frames (Perrett, 2021; Ares, 2022) focus on mean differences, ignoring the homogeneity or heterogeneity of opinions within classes.

Empirically, we provide an encompassing descriptive assessment of the class polarization of opinions towards immigration and the European Union for the German case. Immigration and the EU are two issue domains at the core of the globalization cleavage in Western Europe (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2018; Kriesi 2008). Indeed, immigration has been found to be among the most polarized issue in Europe (Lux, Mau and Jacobi, 2022). Germany provides a good case study, as it is the EU member state with the largest population and belongs to the most globalized EU member states (Gygli *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the availability of high-quality survey data in Germany allows us to cover trends over a long period and a broad range of attitudinal indicators. Our results document a clear and stable attitudinal class hierarchy: the working class is more immigration- and EU-skeptic on almost all issues than the higher service classes. However, we also find that responses to items that showed large between-class differences were extremely diverse within the working class. Thus, the working class is hardly mobilizable as a group based on these issues. Finally, based on our selection of multiple indicators, we are able to detect issues that have the highest potential for structural polarization.

Structural polarization

According to the classical cleavage concept of Bartolini and Mair (1990), a cleavage requires three key components. In addition to the organizational component (referring to organizations representing the conflicting interests of the population on the divide) and the normative component (referring to common ideologies and collective identities underpinning the two poles of the conflict), a cleavage is based on a structural divide within the population. Thus, a cleavage is characterized by an overlap of social structural positions and positions on political issues. This overlap is what we will call structural polarization.

Structural polarization is a form of societal division with potentially dramatic consequences for social cohesion. In a structurally polarized society, opinion differences are not simply occurring between different ideological groups, but between groups which share similar material living conditions, networks, cultural practices, and potentially, identity (Blau, 1977; DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson, 1996; Baldassarri and Bearman, 2007). Indeed, research suggests that social networks are segregated along occupational and educational lines (Blau, 1977; Alecu *et al.*, 2022) and that material constraints shape everyday culture (Fielding-Singh, 2017). Thus, differences in opinions on political issues are embedded in larger societal differences in shared social realities shaped by social structure. This makes structural polarization difficult to reverse once it exists.

In their seminal conceptual work, DiMaggio et al. (1996) developed the consolidation principle to conceive of polarization between socio-demographic and identity groups. Consolidation (Blau, 1977) describes a lack of intersections between abstract socio-structural parameters and is assumed to increase within-group interaction, decrease out-group interactions, and, most importantly, increase the likelihood of group mobilization. DiMaggio et al. (1996) extended this abstract notion of consolidation to describe the alignment of certain structural social positions with certain political attitudes. This alignment, in turn, is the structural cleavage component and is what we refer to as structural polarization.

Importantly, DiMaggio et al. (1996, p.698) argue that two conditions need to hold to speak of consolidation. First, there must be substantial attitudinal differences *between* sociodemographic groups. This is what we call between-group dissimilarity.¹ Second, the lower the attitudinal differences *within* a group, the more likely group mobilization is around this issue (see DiMaggio et al., 1996, 698). This is what we call within-group consensus. Within-group consensus is important because political actors can only mobilize large shares of a group if its members are in consensus, even if the dissimilarities between groups are high (DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson, 1996).

¹ We use the term dissimilarity instead ‘difference’ because researchers can use many different ways to measure dissimilarity, for example, using overlap coefficients or weighted versions thereof.

Figure 1: Hypothetical histograms of responses to three items on separate political issues on a 10-point Likert scale for two groups. For each issue, the mean difference between the two groups remains the same, but the consensus within groups differs.

Figure 1 illustrates that the consensus of responses within groups can change the interpretation of existing average differences between groups. It shows stylized histograms of responses to three hypothetical issues (panels 1–3) on a hypothetical 10-point Likert scale. Each facet shows a histogram of two classes. The difference in the average opinions was five scale points in all three panels. Thus, if we were to only consider mean differences, all panels in Figure 1 would suggest the same level of polarization. However, considering the shape of the response distribution within each class, we maintain that the two classes are most polarized about the first issue and least polarized about the third issue. In the first panel, opinion and class membership are aligned. Political actors or organizations can easily mobilize each group based on their opinions because both groups hold homogenous positions. Here, structure overlaps with opinion. In the second panel, the responses in each class are more spread out. Under these circumstances, greater effort would be required to unite entire groups under a political campaign. Finally, in the third panel, the red group is internally split in its opinion. Thus, even though the red group holds markedly different opinions towards the third issue than the blue group, political actors who wanted to mobilize the red group would have to bridge the internal attitudinal divide.

Our study focuses on the polarization of globalization-related issues between occupational classes. Accordingly, we speak of structural polarization if we observe (1) high differences in globalization-related issue positions between occupational classes (between-group dissimilarity), and (2) high homogeneity in globalization-related issue positions within occupational classes (within-group consensus).

Previous research on class-specific opinion trends

Survey research has largely demonstrated that attitudes towards immigration and immigrants have remained stable or shifted in a pro-immigration direction in Western European countries since the late 1990s (Caughey, O’Grady and Warshaw, 2019; Dennison and Geddes, 2019; Claassen and McLaren, 2022). Against this background of a liberalizing trend, existing empirical studies document that individuals in lower socioeconomic classes consistently show more restrictionist attitudes towards immigration relative to other classes (Langsæther and Stubager, 2019; Lindh and McCall, 2020; Ares, 2022; Lux and Gülzau, 2022) and are generally more conservative (Perrett, 2021).

However, the class differences found in these studies are usually medium-sized, even between the two most distant classes in the respective analyses. In terms of the extremity of opinions, working-class individuals do not express total opposition to immigration or extreme prejudice but tend to voice opinions at the center of response scales on average, whereas higher classes tend towards the pro-immigration ends of the response scales (Lindh and McCall, 2020; Lux and Gülzau, 2022, for Germany). Given these response patterns, introducing within-group consensus into our analysis of class polarization enables researchers to better ascertain the types of attitudes that are structurally polarized. This is because even if occupational classes do not express extreme antagonism in their opinions, the existing differences might be enough for political entrepreneurs to mobilize larger fractions of certain classes *if* these classes are homogeneous in their position.

In Germany in particular, two recent events directly related to the migration issue might affect class polarization. First, the refugee crisis in 2015 put a lot of pressure on German politics and was highly politicized for a sustained period. Second, the simultaneous rise of the right-wing populist party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) could be seen as an expression of class polarization (Adorf, 2018), or could, after its institutionalization and radicalization, contribute to class polarization.

With regard to trends in positions towards the EU, Down and Wilson (2008) find that the distribution of responses to an EU-support item got more dispersed among the general population of various countries after the Maastricht Treaty. In Germany, the distribution remained stable after an initial rise in dispersion (Down and Wilson 2008, p. 41). Furthermore, De Wilde (2021) points to the fact that the overall support of the EU among Europeans remains relatively stable, with approximately equal amounts in favor of and against the EU, despite decreases in support in the direct aftermath of EU crises.

While overall trends in EU support have been well documented, we know much less about the differences between occupational classes in EU positions over time. This is mostly because of the focus on education as a stratifying factor for EU positions. Existing research shows that disparities in EU positions between educational groups are stable or have increased over time (on EU support, see Hakhverdian et al., 2013; on EU identification, see Fernández and Eigmüller, 2018).

Hypotheses

Considering occupational class as a structural dimension of the globalization cleavage and building on previous research, we formulate three hypotheses.

First, as globalization pressures, such as immigration and Europeanization, have grown continuously since the 1990s until recently in Europe (see Gygli et al. 2019), we could expect an increase in antagonistic positions on the issues of immigration and the EU between occupational classes among the German population since the 1990s. Given the previous research on trends in immigration positions, there could be a universal trend towards more liberal positions in all classes. However, even if such a trend exists, we would expect stable, or increasing, and sizable relative differences in positions between classes on most issues related to immigration or the EU (*Hypothesis 1: between-class opinion dissimilarity hypothesis*).

Furthermore, under the assumption that the globalization cleavage is structurally rooted in the class structure, opinion consensus within occupational classes should also increase among the German population since the 1990s (*Hypothesis 2: within-class opinion consensus hypothesis*). about issues which show sizable class differences (according to Hypothesis 1). It is important to note that Hypothesis 2 is interesting only for issues where Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. Only under these circumstances will attitudinal shifts would work in a way that increases the likelihood of class polarization.

Data and Methods

Data sets

We only use high-quality German datasets that allow us to construct our class variable of interest and include immigrant- and EU-related attitudinal items over a longer period. We selected the General Social Survey of the Social Sciences (ALLBUS), European Social Survey (ESS), German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES), and International Social Survey Program – National Identity Module (ISSP). These datasets allow the construction of Oesch classes, as they include occupations coded as ISCO 4-digit codes. All analyses are weighted by survey weights to account for the sampling design and to adjust for marginal socio-demographic composition. The ISSP is the only survey that was not conducted through face-to-face interviews. Despite this methodological weakness, we still included the ISSP because its earliest National Identity Module was conducted in 1995 and thus covers the 1990s, which would otherwise only be covered by the ALLBUS. We calculate the median date of all the conducted interviews conducted within each wave for each survey. We use this date variable as a common time scale to compare trends across surveys.

Class position

We measure social class position using the five-class Oesch scheme (Oesch, 2006).² The scheme differentiates between ‘higher-grade service’ (e.g. managers, journalists, architects and owners of large businesses), ‘lower-grade service’ (primary education teachers, nursing professionals, small management), ‘small business owners’ (owning businesses up to 10 employees, restaurants and the like), ‘skilled workers’ (clerks, secretaries, plumbers, personal care workers) and ‘unskilled workers’ (cashiers, housekeepers, waiters, taxi drivers, manufacturing laborers). The scheme considers that jobs with service tasks can be prestigious and well paid or at the lower end of the labor income distribution. For example, jobs such as cashiers and housekeepers are viewed as working-class jobs, together with classical industry jobs in manufacturing.

The five-class scheme differentiates jobs mainly according to the vertical economic dimension of inequality. The advantage of this broad categorization is that it follows a clear theoretical logic (vertical inequalities in skill levels and market success) and results in groups that are sizable in number and thus politically relevant. However, more differentiated variants of the Oesch class scheme are often used to account for the horizontal inequalities between occupations (Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). In Online Appendix OA4, we show that distinguishing occupations based on horizontal occupational characteristics leads to similar conclusions about the overall patterns of class polarization as the five-class scheme (see also Ares 2022). Thus, we are confident that our coarse categorization allows for the detection of the most entrenched forms of cleavage between classes.

We use respondents’ current job as measured by ISCO88 and ISCO08 codes, their type of employment relation (employed, self-employed, working in family business), and the number of employees (if self-employed) to categorize them into one of the five classes. If respondents retired or did not provide a response when asked about their current job, we used information about their former job to construct the class scheme. If respondents did not have a job or did not provide information about their current and former job, we use their spouse’s job.³

Figure 2 shows how the percentage of individuals developed over time in all our single cross-sectional samples. In line with previous research (Oesch, 2015), we find that the share of skilled workers declined steadily, whereas the share of positions in the lower-grade service class rose. Unskilled workers and small business owners remained at a steady low level.

² We primarily relied on the scripts provided on Daniel Oesch’s website (<https://people.unil.ch/danieloesch/scripts/>) and the oesch ado for Stata (programmed by Simon Kaiser, <https://ideas.repec.org/c/boc/bocode/s458490.html>)

³ Since the first ISSP-National Identity Module did not ask for past jobs in 1995, we used only the current job for all waves of the ISSP to stay consistent within the ISSP.

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents belonging to the five classes in our analysis. Pooled data from ALLBUS, ESS, GLES and ISSP.

Opinions on immigrants, immigration and the EU

As is common practice in the polarization literature (Park, 2018), we include all available items that are in line with certain criteria to avoid cherry-picking single items that fit our hypotheses. We employed the following criteria to select the outcome variables. First, the items must match our thematical focus on immigration- and EU-related opinions. Second, we select variables that were at least measured in at least three survey waves to investigate trends. Finally, we only consider items that target immigrants as a general group and not specific ethnic groups.

Our overall pool of items consists of 32 items that meet these criteria. Later, we will focus on 16 of these 32 items that show the highest mean differences to keep the analysis concise. We provide the results for the remaining items in the Online Appendix OA2. Table A1 in the Appendix summarizes our main items, the respective wording of the survey questions, and the response scales. We categorize the selected items from the three surveys into different domains, among other things, to assign concise labels to each item. As for the immigration-related items, we found items that measure general xenophobia (XEN), effects of immigration on culture (CUL), economic effects of the presence of immigrants (ECO), effects on social welfare (WEL), assimilation (ASS), and immigration policy-related positions (IMP). For EU-related items, we found measures of personal attachment to Europe (EUA), and trust in

European institutions (EUT). If necessary, items were recoded such that higher values indicate more anti-immigration or anti-EU positions.

Statistics of between-class dissimilarity and within-class consensus

We define structural polarization on a single issue as an empirical state of society where *dissimilarities between classes* in stated positions towards a certain issue are high and *within-class consensus* in stated positions towards this issue is high. We report two statistics that characterize the distributions within classes and distributional differences between classes for each issue.

To measure between-class dissimilarity, we use time-specific *mean differences* in average responses between classes. Mean values are an effective way to investigate larger trends in the central tendency of distributions and provide a first indication of group polarization if there are sizable and stable (or even diverging) mean differences between groups. Furthermore, differences in group-specific mean values are widely used in the literature and therefore provide a valuable starting point for displaying between-class dissimilarities.

Within-class consensus is measured by the Van der Eijk agreement index (Van Der Eijk, 2001) (henceforth, *VDE agreement*), a measure of polarization that was designed for ordinal response scales. Consensus occurs when members of a single class overwhelmingly hold similar positions towards a certain issue, for example, if a large share of members of a certain class place themselves on the same response option on a Likert scale. VDE agreement ranges from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates perfect consensus (all members of a group choose the same response option), and -1 indicates a polarized distribution with 50 percent of cases on both extreme ends of the response scale. A unique feature of the VDE agreement measure is that the midpoint 0 has a sensible interpretation, indicating a flat distribution. However, the interpretation of values in the range between 0 and 1 (or -1 and 0) are not as straightforward when comparing between items of different scale lengths (Aeppli and Ruedin, 2022). This disadvantage is shared by most polarization measures (Aeppli and Ruedin, 2022). For this reason, a recent simulation study strongly advises to (a) analyze items individually and (b) rely on graphical depictions of the overall distributions to bolster the main conclusions (see Figure 6 and Online Appendix OA5) (Aeppli and Ruedin, 2022).

Presentation of results and descriptive strategy

Description is an essential but often overlooked task in the social sciences (Gerring, 2012) that leaves researchers with enormous degrees of freedom. Our aim is to provide an encompassing country-specific description that allows differentiation of trends in particular issues. Previous studies aggregate responses to different items from different surveys into a single measure of a latent trait of a higher-level unit of analysis, such as countries or groups within countries (Caughey, O’Grady and Warshaw, 2019; Claassen and McLaren, 2022), making far-ranging modelling assumptions. These aggregation methods are

essential when making concise country comparisons. However, our country-specific analysis allows us to screen all available items and thus detect instances of indicators that deviate from larger societal trends. We view responses to single items not as measurements of a latent trait but as an indication of how individuals respond to certain political statements in a specific social situation (i.e., an interview with a stranger in a time-specific societal context).

To focus attention on those issues with the most polarizing potential, we rank our findings for the single items according to their over-time standardized mean differences. This ensures that items with the highest class differences are shown at the top of each figure. The over-time differences are calculated in the following manner: For each item, we calculate the differences between higher-grade service class and unskilled workers for each available time point on a standardized scale (Online Appendix OA1 shows these differences over time and 95% confidence intervals), and then average these time-specific differences over time. Higher-grade service class and unskilled workers will consistently show the most distant responses, and thus provide a valid maximum yardstick to identify those issues that, based on mean differences alone, hold the most potential for class polarization.

Furthermore, we distinguish between two broader groups of high- and low-difference issues in the overall pool of items. High-difference items are those that show an over-time difference of more than or equal to 0.125, which corresponds to at least one point on an eight-point scale or half a point on a four-point scale. We mainly focus on the discussion of these items (see Figure 3, 4, and 5). The mean trends of the low-difference items are shown and discussed in Online Appendix OA2 and generally lead to similar conclusions to our main analysis.

Results

Mean trends in positions towards immigration and the EU

Figure 3: Trends in the mean response for each occupational class. Restricted to items showing high average class differences over time (see Presentation of Results). Sorted by average over-time class

*difference. For items marked with *, the response scale was reverse coded such that higher values imply more negative sentiments.*

We first investigate the average trends in responses to both immigration- and EU-related items for each class in Figure 3. The facets in Figure 3 are ordered by average between-class differences, starting with items that displayed the highest class differences.

A first observation worth highlighting in Figure 3 is that we rarely find trends towards more negative sentiments towards immigrants or less EU-friendly positions. Higher values on the y-axis in Figure 3 indicate a higher aversion towards immigration or the EU on the respective item-specific scales. Across most issues displayed in the respective panels, average positions remained relatively stable across all groups or became more positive towards immigration (downward slopes). For example, xenophobic statements (XEN1, XEN3, and XEN2) find less and less appeal in all classes. Similarly, the idea that immigration is bad for the economy or for native jobs develops in a more immigration-friendly direction (ECO3 and ECO1). As a final example, there is also a general trend towards the wish for more European unification in all classes in Figure 4 (EUU1). The relative stability, or even turn towards more positive immigration attitudes, is impressive because the virulent 2015 European refugee debate did not reverse these trends. This is in line with previous research (Dennison and Geddes, 2019; Claassen and McLaren, 2022).

However, Figure 3 also shows that the higher-grade and lower-grade service class consistently hold more favorable positions towards immigration and one EU-related issue than skilled and unskilled workers. Furthermore, class differences in mean positions remained relatively stable over time and are statistically significant (Online Appendix Figure A1). The empirical regularity of this attitudinal hierarchy across the range of political issues towards immigration and the EU is striking and even more impressive when more fine-grained horizontal class differences are considered (see Online Appendix OA3).

These results allow us to reiterate that our notion of class dissimilarity is based on relative differences between classes, not the extremity of opinions in these classes. Most panels in Figure 3 show that even among unskilled workers, the mean values indicate either a neutral response or even a slight disagreement with anti-immigrant statements. For example, obvious xenophobic statements, as in panel 3 (XEN3), did not receive agree in all classes in the 2010s. However, medium-sized class differences might still be indicative of class polarization if both classes are largely in consensus (see next section). Consider the items on xenophobia (XEN) in Figure 3. While unskilled workers might not actively support xenophobic political campaigns, they might still not favor active measures to combat xenophobia. However, for these opinion differences to be politically mobilizable, there must be a certain extent of opinion homogeneity within classes.

There are single instances of issues where mean differences between classes converge (in particular, XEN3, IMP1, ECO1, and WEL1). However, these trends towards diminishing differences are an

exception, as shown in Figure 3. It is undeniable that stable dissimilarities exist between classes. Therefore, we continue under the assumption that Hypothesis 1 (between-class dissimilarity) is confirmed, particularly for the contrast between higher-grade service class and unskilled workers. While an overall assessment of what counts as politically relevant mean differences on a Likert scale is difficult, we note that this assessment is shared by most authors in the literature (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Langsæther and Stubager, 2019; Ares, 2022).

In the following, we assess whether investigating within-group consensus adds meaningfully to our interpretation of average opinion differences as structural polarization. We proceed in two steps. First, we investigate instances of class polarization graphically in those years in which single indicators showed the highest average response differences between the two most distant classes (Figure 4). In the second step (Figure 5), we measure VDE agreement and mean differences over time to detect issues that show polarizing dynamics.

Structural polarization and working-class heterogeneity

Figure 4 shows the distribution of the responses of unskilled workers and the higher-grade service class in the form of histograms. From our previous analysis, we know that these two classes consistently showed the highest differences, and thus present the most likely cases for structural polarization. Each panel shows two histograms for the year in which both classes displayed the highest average differences.

Figure 4: Histograms for higher-grade service class and unskilled workers. Shown are only items with high between-class differences over time at the time point the between-class differences on the respective items were. For items marked with *, the response scale was reverse coded such that higher values imply more negative sentiments.

The main result in Figure 4 is that workers have substantially more heterogeneous positions towards most issues, whereas the higher-grade service class holds substantially more homogeneous positions. Particularly, in the responses to items that showed the highest differences at the top of Figure 4 (CUL1,

XEN1, XEN3, XEN2), we can see that working-class responses are spread out over the whole range of possible response options, at times almost taking a trimodal or bimodal shape. In contrast to unskilled workers, higher-grade service class responses are more concentrated at the lower end of the scale on these items, indicating consensual pro-immigration sentiments. A similar tendency is also visible in ECO3, ECO1, CUL3, CUL2, and ECO4, and thus holds for eight out of the 16 item-year observations shown in Figure 4. This finding of homogeneity in the higher-grade service class is also supported by higher values of the VDE agreement index (see our discussion of Figure 6 below).

Investigating consensus within classes is also a sensible approach to narrow down the issues that are actually polarized in certain years. Indeed, single distributions in Figure 4 suggest structural polarization. Responses to IMP4 in panel 5 show that workers are overwhelmingly in favor of immigration restrictions during the refugee crises in 2017, whereas higher-grade service-class members tend towards the middle and more liberal poles. Similar sentiments measured by a similar item were already visible in the responses to IMP3 before the refugee crisis. We can see similar tendencies in the position of immigration as being good for the economy (ECO1) in 2014, respondents' subjective attachment to Europe (EUA1) in 2018, and wanting foreigners to adopt German customs (ASS1) in 2016. We discuss these items in more detail below:

The main insight from Figure 4 is that mean differences can show only one aspect of group polarization: the aggregate dissimilarity between classes. However, while it is true that the two classes hold markedly different positions on average, we can also find a wide range of positions towards the respective issues in the working class. This has substantial implications for the assessment of class polarization. A class-based cleavage would require that a large fraction of both classes can be mobilized by different political actors. However, if one class holds very heterogeneous positions, mobilization attempts that cover the entire socioeconomic strata are likely to fail. Furthermore, responses to issues such as whether foreigners strain the welfare system (WEL1) or whether European unification has gone too far (EUU1) are spread out for both classes. In these cases, we would also not expect conflicting class mobilization around these issues.

Trends in structural polarization and item-specific analysis

Figure 4 provides an impression of the response distribution at one point in time. However, we are also interested in the potential trends towards structural polarization over the last few decades. The results are shown in Figure 5. It shows over-time trends (connected line) in time-specific measurements of mean differences (x-axis) and VDE agreement scores (y-axis) for both classes (blue: higher-grade service, yellow: unskilled workers). Thus, a trend towards structural polarization would be visible in a movement towards the upper right corner of *both* blue and yellow lines, or a movement towards the right at a constant high value of agreement. Given that VDE agreement values are only indicative of

class polarization when group differences are high, Figure 5 is a concise way of illustrating the three dimensions of time, mean differences and VDE agreement in one graph.

Figure 5: Time trends in both mean differences and agreement scores. For items marked with *, the

response scale was reverse coded such that higher values imply more negative sentiments. Dashed red line is intended to facilitate comparisons between facets and distinguishes between class-specific response distributions below and above VDE agreement values of .2.

Generally, Figure 5 supports the main finding from Figure 4 about working-class dissensus: in 8 out of 16 panels, we can see that the yellow dots are clearly positioned below the blue dots, indicating more heterogeneity of opinion within workers (see CUL1, XEN1, XEN3, XEN2, ECO3, ECO1, WEL1, CUL3, CUL2, and ECO4).

In the final part of our analysis, we ask a more specific question about trends: Are there issues that have become continuously more polarized over the last decades? Our results in Figure 5 lead us to categorize item-specific trends into five sets, with only one set showing trends towards structural polarization. To arrive at this categorization, we not only draw on Figure 5 but also include knowledge from Figure 3 and Figure 4, the direct test of mean differences in Online Appendix OA1, and the histograms over time in Online Appendix OA4.

The first set of globalization-related issues shows a constant division within unskilled workers with agreement values close to 0, whereas the higher-grade service class was constantly or grew increasingly homogeneous (higher numbers on the y-axis for the blue dots). The VDE agreement for workers stays well below (or falls back to) 0.2 for these issues. This can be seen in the question of whether one feels like a stranger because of immigrants (panel 1, CUL1), foreigners should be sent home when jobs are scarce (panel 2, XEN1), the political participation of immigrants (panel 4, XEN2), and, to a lesser extent, the question of whether foreigners enrich culture (panel 12, CUL3).

Second, we observe issues where rising agreement in both classes is accompanied by a decrease in the mean differences. This can be seen in the movement towards the (upper) left part of Figure 5 of both the blue and yellow lines in XEN3 and IMP1. This pattern signals convergence between groups over longer time horizons. Notably, the working class maintains its lower consensus position despite these trends. To understand how a simultaneous shift towards lower mean differences and higher agreement indicates a profound shift towards less class polarization, we refer the reader to the over-time histograms in Appendix Figures OA4.

These first two sets of items do not indicate trends towards more structural polarization over the last few decades. This is also the case for the loose third set of items. WEL1 not only show declining mean differences but also a very low level of agreement in both classes. This is similar to EUU1, which show constant low agreement scores in both classes.

The fourth set comprises items measuring the economic influences of immigration, which were polarized between classes in the past, but the trend reversed. Responses to ECO1 were polarized in 2014 (see also Figure 4), but the mean differences declined in 2016 and 2018 (see also Figure 3). This fits into a greater observation of positions on the influence of immigrants on the economy, which was

structurally polarized between 2005 and 2014 (ECO1, ECO3, ECO4). This indicates that the issues which are structurally polarization can shift over time. In later waves, a consensus on the economic benefits of immigration seems to be emerging across class lines.

The final group of issues show a rise in mean differences, accompanied by stable high agreement or rising agreement in *both* groups during the final measurement periods. These are candidates for *current* structural polarization. These are IMP4, IMP3, EUA1, and ASS1. Interestingly, these items are the only ones that elicit responses from working class members, which are more in agreement than the responses in the higher-grade service class (but the higher-grade service class also has substantive agreement scores). Well before the refugee crisis, unskilled workers held the position that the number of immigrants should decrease (IMP3), whereas the higher-grade service class accepted a medium-sized inflow of immigrants. This contrast was sharpened by the refugee crisis (see IMP4 in 2017, also in Figure 4). The same can be said about attachment to the EU and its population, where the two classes grew increasingly apart from 2000 to 2018. On the issue of whether foreigners should adopt German customs, the two classes are more aligned because both overwhelmingly place their responses above the mid-point, but higher-grade service class members situate themselves in the middle to upper part of the scale, whereas the majority of unskilled workers choose the response that shows full agreement.

Taking together our interpretations of Figure 4 and 5, we do not find evidence of unity among the two classes. This is evidence against Hypothesis 2 (within-group consensus hypothesis). Furthermore, time trends over the last decades either show de-polarizing trends or stable opinion heterogeneity among unskilled workers. However, there are single-issue deviations that show class polarization, which we discuss below.

In Online Appendix OA2, we show the results for the items that we categorized as “low-difference” and excluded from our main analysis. These trends are similar to those presented here. In Online Appendix OA3, we further differentiate occupational classes along a horizontal dimension of work logic, singling out socio-cultural jobs among the upper classes and manual jobs among the working class. The main result of this analysis is that the overall hierarchy along the vertical axis expresses the most pronounced differences in opinions.

Discussion and conclusion

This article presents an encompassing study of structural polarization of immigration- and EU-related opinions for the German case. Structural polarization is the divergence of political opinions between groups in comparable social positions, an alignment of political preferences with social realities shaped by material circumstances that goes well beyond mere disagreement on politics. We argue that structural polarization should be conceptualized as high dissimilarity between groups and high consensus within the respective groups (see, DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996). Existing differences can only be mobilized along group lines if consensus is high within groups.

Our results paint a multifaceted picture of class polarization of globalization-related issues. Overall, they provide evidence in line with previous research that there are substantial class differences in opinions towards immigration and the EU. However, our study also cautions against overstating the overall class-based conflict. This is because of three main reasons.

First, across a majority of items related to immigration and the EU, we found evidence of working-class dissensus: the working class holds more heterogeneous opinions on political matters than the higher service classes. This pattern is most pronounced for responses to items with the largest standardized group differences. By contrast, higher service classes hold substantially more unified opinions. An example of concerns xenophobic statements. If a random person is confronted with a xenophobic statement in an everyday social situation, she would likely voice disagreement if she belonged to a higher-grade service class. If the person is an unskilled worker, there is an almost equal chance that they disagree, agree, or take a neutral position. Thus, individuals in the working class are likely to interact with people with different views in their workplace, family, and wider social circles. The finding of attitudinal divides within the working class is in line with Oesch and Rennwald (2018), who argue that left and radical right parties compete for working-class votes, with more traditional workers voting for the radical right and more liberal workers voting for the left. Thus, while radical right-wing parties might be able to attract a certain share of the working class, this voter potential is also limited. The absence of a consensual position on political issues also match with the idea that of the working class as a ‘demobilized class’ (Westheuser and della Porta, 2022).

Second, we were unable to detect clear trends towards increasing structural polarization for the majority of issues. In contrast, most items show a stable or converging pattern. Interestingly, the perception of immigration as good or bad for Germany’s economy was polarized from 2010 to 2014, but between-class differences decreased afterwards. This implies that structural polarization might be a transitory phenomenon, manifesting as deviations from larger time trends over several decades. Detecting such societal patterns highlights the advantage of fine-grained trend analyses over cross-sectional analyses of opinion polarization.

Finally, the classes in the middle of the status hierarchy (lower-grade service class, small business owners, and skilled workers) occupy a centrist political position regarding globalization-related issues between higher-grade service professions and unskilled workers. Thus, these classes might act as brokers between the two most distant classes: an unskilled worker might not have personal connections to a university professor but maybe to a trained, skilled office worker, and this office worker might in turn share much of his political views with a teacher (lower-grade service). The presence of such interconnected networks strongly limits the potential siloed transmission of anti-globalization sentiment among unskilled workers.

However, it should be noted that there are single issues that suggest a more divisive. Opinions about the economic consequences of immigration were polarized between classes before 2014, and immigration

restriction, subjective EU attachment, and assimilation continue to be polarized issues between social classes. For example, a large share of unskilled workers state that ‘immigration opportunities to Germany should be restricted’ in the course of the refugee crisis. Whether these differences in opinion indicate outright conflicts requires further research. It is safe to assume that a lot depends on the strategies of the political actors. For example, there is widespread discussion about working-class party realignment (Oesch, 2008; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018) and Germany, as well as a right-wing populist party that seeks the support of parts of the working class (Adorf, 2018). What is the potential for this attempt? Mobilizing workers by emphasizing immigration restrictions may pull them away from the upper classes, establishing a stable class-based conflict. However, outright xenophobic rhetoric or disregard for the role of immigrants in the economy will split the working class more than it unites them. When asked whether Germany should allow many, some, a few or no immigrants, we can see a rising consensus across all classes that ‘some’ amount of immigration should be allowed. This indicates that members of all classes know about the benefits of immigration but that under specific circumstances, unskilled workers view it as too much of a burden. Thus, our research suggests the existence of fleeting and context-dependent class divisions that occur as smaller deviations from larger societal trends.

Our study has several limitations. First, Germany may be a special case for two reasons. First, it did not have a strong right-wing radical populist party until 2013, which is relatively late compared to other European countries. Second, Germany fared relatively well during the financial crisis and European debt crisis (Hopkins, 2020). However, note that these are not a priori reasons to assume that there is no class polarization of globalization-related issues. As a creditor country, Germany should be susceptible to anti-system politics from the right (demonstrated by the sudden and forceful rise of the right-wing populist party AfD), particularly by those who do not perceive themselves to benefit from immigration and European integration (Hopkins, 2020).

Second, our study ignores potential structural parameters other than class. In particular, there might be value in researching the particularities of the structural position of the small but relatively stable radical anti-immigrant parts of the working class. Are these radical opinions occurring in geographic clusters, or are they present in specific occupations? Third, our approach does not rely on measurement models to consider differential item functioning or measurement errors. It is important to not interpret responses to single items as individuals’ stable attitudes. Essentially, our approach views responses to specific items not as indications of a latent attitude, but opinions expressed towards specific issues in specific time-dependent social contexts. This may explain some of the variations observed over time.

Despite these shortcomings, our study highlights the importance of fine-grained assessment of structural polarization trends to enrich both the empirical debate on opinion polarization and the theoretical debate on globalization cleavage. We hope that future studies will employ a similar fine-grained approach to other countries. In this way, an encompassing picture of class polarization can emerge that allows us to assess the future potential of conflicts entrenched in the social structure of societies.

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Appendix

Appendix Table A1: Items used in this study.

Original variable name	Label used in our analysis	Wording of item	Response scale	Reverse coded?
Positions towards Immigration and Immigrants				

ma02	XEN1 Foreigners home when jobs scarce (ALLBUS)	When jobs get scarce, the foreigners living in Germany should be sent home again	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'
ma03	XEN2 Foreigners should have no political participation (ALLBUS)	Foreigners living in Germany should be prohibited from taking part in any kind of political activity	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'
ma04	XEN3 Foreigners should marry other for. (ALLBUS)	Foreigners living in Germany should choose to marry people of their own nationality.	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'
ma09	CUL1 Feel like stranger b/c of immigrants (ALLBUS)	With so many foreigners in Germany, one feels increasingly like a stranger in one's own country	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'
imueclt	CUL2 Immigr. undermine/enrich Germany's culture (ESS)	And, using this card, would you say that Germany's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?	0 Cultural life undermined to 10 Cultural life enriched yes
mp03	CUL3 Foreigners enrich cultural life (ALLBUS)	What about the following statements about the foreigners who live in Germany? They enrich the cultural life of Germany.	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'
v45	CUL4 Disagree w/ immigrants bring new ideas (ISSP)	Immigrants enrich Germany through new ideas and cultures	1 'Agree fully', 2 'Agree', 3 'Neither', 4 'Do not agree', 5 'Do not agree at all' yes
imwbcnt	CUL5 Immigr. make Germany worse/better place to live (ESS)	Is Germany made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?	0 Worse place to live to 10 Better place to live yes
imbgeco	ECO1 Immigr. is bad/good for Germany's economy (ESS)	Would you say it is generally bad or good for Germany's economy that people come to live here from other countries?	0 Bad for the economy to 10 Good for the economy yes
pa17	ECO2 Disagree w/ immigrants good for economy (ALLBUS)	People may have different opinions about various political issues. What about you? What do you think of the following statements? Immigrants are good for Germany's economy.	1 Completely Agree 2 Tend to agree 3 Neither ... nor ... 4 Tend not to agree 5 Do not agree at all

v43	ECO3 Disagree w/ immigrants good for economy (ISSP)	Immigrants are generally good for the Germany economy	1 'Agree fully', 2 'Agree', 3 'Neither', 4 'Do not agree', 5 'Do not agree at all'	yes
mp06	ECO4 Foreigners take away jobs (ALLBUS)	What about the following statements about the foreigners who live in Germany? They take jobs away from Germans	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'	
v44	ECO5 Immigrants take away jobs (ISSP)	Immigrants take away jobs from those who are born in Germany	1 'Agree fully', 2 'Agree', 3 'Neither', 4 'Do not agree', 5 'Do not agree at all'	Yes
mp08	ECO6 Disagree w/Foreigners create jobs (ALLBUS)	What about the following statements about the foreigners who live in Germany? The foreigners who live in Germany create jobs.	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'	yes
v72a	ASS1 Imm. should be obliged to assimilate (GLES)	There are various opinions on different political issues. What do you think of the following statements? Please use the list. Immigrants should be obliged to assimilate into the German culture.	(1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (4) Disagree (5) Strongly disagree	yes
ma01	ASS2 Foreigners should slightly adopt German lifestyle (ALLBUS)	The foreigners living in Germany should adapt their way of life a little more closely to the German way of life.	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'	
pa09	ASS3 Oblige immigrants to assimilate (ALLBUS)	Immigrants should be required to adapt to German customs and traditions.	1 Completely Agree 2 Tend to agree 3 Neither ... nor ... 4 Tend not to agree 5 Do not agree at all	yes
impctr	IMP1 Allow many/some/few/no immigrants from poor countries (ESS)	To what extent do you think Germany should allow people from the poorer countries outside Europe to come and live here?	1 Allow many to come and live here 2 Allow some 3 Allow a few 4 Allow none	

v47	IMP2 Harsher measures against illegal immigrants (ISSP)	Germany should implement harsher measures to fight illegal immigrants	1 'Agree fully', 2 'Agree', 3 'Neither', 4 'Do not agree', 5 'Do not agree at all'	Yes
v48	IMP3 Number of immigrants should be increased or decreased (ISSP)	Do you think that the number of immigrants to Germany should be...	1 'should be increased substantially', 2 'increased slightly', 3 'should stay as it is', 4 'reduced slightly', 5 'reduced substantially'	
v88	IMP4 Restrict opportunities to immigrate (GLES)	And what position do you take on immigration for foreigners? Please use the scale.	1 'immigration for foreigners should be easier' to 11 'immigration for foreigners should be more difficult'	

mp07	CRI1 Foreigners commit more crimes (ALLBUS)	What about the following statements about the foreigners who live in Germany? They commit crimes more often than Germans	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'	
v42	CRI2 Immigrants increase crime (ISSP)	In how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Immigrants increase the crime rate?	1 'Agree fully', 2 'Agree', 3 'Neither', 4 'Do not agree', 5 'Do not agree at all'	yes

mp02	WEL1 Foreigners strain social net (ALLBUS)	What about the following statements about the foreigners who live in Germany? The foreigners who live in Germany are a burden on the social welfare system.	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'	
mp05	WEL2 Foreigners bolster pension system (ALLBUS)	What about the following statements about the foreigners who live in Germany? They help to secure old age pensions.	1 'completely disagree' to 7 'completely agree'	

Positions towards European Union

pn17	EUA1 Attachment to EU and its population (ALLBUS)	Now we would like to know how strongly you identify with your own town (community) and its inhabitants. And what about the European Union and its population?	1 Very strong attachment 2 Pretty strong attachment 3 Only weak attachment 4 No attachment at all	
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atcherp	EUA2 How emotionally attached to Europe (ESS)	And how emotionally attached do you feel to Europe?	0 Not at all emotionally attached to 10 Very emotionally attached	Yes
v4	EUA3 Close to Europe (ISSP)	In how far do you feel attached to Europe?	1 Very strongly attached to 4 Not at all attached	
trstep	EUT1 Trust in European Parliament (ESS)	Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly... ..the European Parliament?	0 No trust at all to 10 Complete trust	Yes
pt19	EUT2 Trust in EU commission (ALLBUS)	I am now going to read out a number of public institutions and organisations. Please tell me for each institution or organisation how much trust you place in it. What about the European Commission?	1 Absolutely no trust at all 2 .. 3 .. 4 .. 5 .. 6 .. 7 A great deal of trust	Yes
pt20	EUT3 Trust in EU parliament (ALLBUS)	I am now going to read out a number of public institutions and organisations. Please tell me for each institution or organisation how much trust you place in it. What about the European Parliament?	1 Absolutely no trust at all 2 .. 3 .. 4 .. 5 .. 6 .. 7 A great deal of trust	Yes
euftf	EUU1 Eur. Unification gone too far/go further (ESS)	Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position?	0 Unification already gone too far to 10 Unification go further	Yes

Supporting Information: Online Appendix to ‘Opinion
heterogeneity within the working class limits polarization between
occupational classes – evidence for opinions on immigration and the
European Union from Germany’

Online Appendix OA1: Mean differences for high and low-difference items

OA1.1: Trends in mean differences between groups with 95% confidence intervals for high-difference items.

Online Appendix OA2: Main figures for low-difference items (analogue to Figures 3, 4 and 5)

In the main part of our analysis, we only focused on items that showed mean differences between the higher-grade service class and unskilled workers of more than $1/8$ (averaged over time, on a standardized scale). This was mainly a way to keep our main results focused on the items that constantly show high class differences, and thus have a priori the highest chance of being polarized.

We acknowledge that our cut-off of $1/8$ is arbitrary. This is why we discuss our findings for the low-difference items here. We ask whether the results for these items largely contradict our main results. This question particularly arises for items that fall shortly below our threshold because some researchers might consider one point on a eight point scale as quite substantial.

The mean trends in Figure OA2.1 are again sorted according to the over-time average differences between higher-grade service class and unskilled workers. The lower part of Figure OA2.1 shows that there are items where there are almost no differences between classes (see also Online Appendix Figure OA1.2). Thus, it is safe to assume that we cannot speak of class polarization in the case of the lower two rows. Thus, we focus our discussion here on the two upper rows.

Figure OA2.2 shows the corresponding histograms to Figure 4 of the main text. We can see patterns that are very much in line with the patterns we saw in Figure 4 of the main text: In CUL5, CUL4 and ECO2, the higher-grade service class is more homogeneous in their opinion than unskilled workers. WEL4, ASS3 and WEL2 show distributions where both classes are heterogeneous in their responses. Thus, most of the panels in Figure OA2.2 do not show structural polarization, either because group differences are extremely low (lower two rows) or because of opinion heterogeneity in at least one class.

As a potential exception, IMP2 shows a polarized pattern akin to the immigration policy items in our main analysis: workers are uniformly in favor of harsher measures against illegal immigration, whereas the higher-grade service class takes a centrist stance. However, the two distributions overlap to a larger extent than in the case of the 10-point item of IMP4.

Figure OA3.1 shows trends analogue to Figure 5 from the main paper. To be able to compare it to Figure 5 of the main text, we restrict the x-axis to the same range as in Figure 5 (which means that some data points that have very small x-values are missing). The red line shows our cut-off of $1/8$.

CUL5 follows a trend with initial polarization and subsequent depolarization. While it was quite polarized between the two extreme classes in 2014, the yellow and blue line move leftward, indicating a lowering of mean differences.

ECO2 shows a polarizing trend until 2013, a movement to the right at high levels of agreement. This is in line with what we observed for ECO1, ECO4, ECO3 in the main analysis. However, we know that other indicators of the economic aspect of immigration, namely ECO3 and ECO1, that this trend in economic attitudes towards immigration likely followed a de-polarizing trend after 2014 (see main text).

Finally, we can observe some polarizing tendencies that are important to investigate further in future studies. CRI1 shows increasing mean differences in the crime issue with simultaneous relatively high levels of agreement until 2013. Similarly, IMP2 (akin to the IMP variables in the main analysis) and CUL4 show increasing mean differences. Overall, these results suggest that items related to crime, assimilation and immigration policy should be at the center in future attempts to assess class cleavages in immigration attitudes. It may well be that these issues will develop into more major conflicting opinions in the future.

ASS3 and WEL2 follow a slight polarizing trend with increasing mean differences, but accompanied with very low consensus in both classes. Thus, we would not speak of structural polarization in these cases.

OA2.1: Trends in the mean response for each occupational class. Restricted to items showing low average class differences over time (see Presentation of Results). Sorted by average over-time class difference. For items marked with *, the response scale was reverse coded such that higher values imply more negative sentiments.

OA2.1: Overlaid histograms for higher-grade service class and unskilled workers. Shown are only items with low between-class differences over time at the time point the between-class difference was highest. For items marked with *, the response scale was reverse coded such that higher values imply more negative sentiments.

OA2.1: Time trends in both mean differences and agreement scores. For items marked with *, the response scale was reverse coded such that higher values imply more negative sentiments. To ensure comparability to Figure 5 in the main text, we restrict the x-axis to the same range as in Figure 5. This means that some data points with very small x-values are not visible.

Online Appendix OA3: Using an alternative, more fine-grained class scheme

A sensible criticism of our paper is that we distinguish classes mainly along vertical characteristics (i.e., skill level and marketability), ignoring potential horizontal distinctions in work logic. The most important benefit of the five-class scheme employed in our main analysis is that it allows us to show time trends in group differences in a concise way because of its few categories. Furthermore, the five-class scheme follows a strict theoretical distinction based on vertical skill levels. However, we are aware of the fact that much of the literature stresses horizontal divisions between workers. Indeed, political divisions along workers in different work logics are one of the primary reasons why Daniel Oesch developed his widely used eight-class scheme.

In the following, we want to assess in how far taking into account horizontal differences within the five classes changes the overall conclusions of the main analysis. In particular, we use a class differentiation that splits up each of our five classes into two more fine-grained categories that capture differences in the work logic. The two main aims of our alternative class variable is to differentiate (a) manual workers from other types of working class jobs (clerks/service) among skilled and unskilled workers; and (b) socio-cultural professions from managerial and technical professions in lower-grade and higher-grade service class. Both manual workers and socio-cultural professions have been found to be particularly important for class divisions.

In particular, we split up the higher-grade service (HGS) class into

- socio-cultural professionals
- technical experts/high-grade managers.

We split up the lower-grade service class (LGS) into

- socio-cultural semi-professionals
- technicians/low-grade managers.

We split up skilled workers (SW) into

- skilled clerks/service workers
- skilled manual workers.

We split up unskilled workers (UW) into

- unskilled clerks/service workers
- unskilled manual.

We leave out owners of large businesses and high-grade self-employed professionals. This group only amounts to 2362 respondents in our sample (over all surveys and all years). We also leave out the group of small business owners because they are already portrayed in our main analyses and would reduce readability of the following figures.

Before going into the details, the most important results from Figure OA5.1 and Table OA5.1 is that that the highest differences can be found across classes differentiated along the vertical dimension. Thus, the comparison of higher-grade service (HGS) with unskilled workers (UW) that makes up a large part of our main paper adequately captures the main division between classes in terms of globalization attitudes.

A further finding from Figure OA5.1 and Table OA5.1 is that it would be possible to re-group the sub-classes into larger groups which would maximize mean differences. However, this potential grouping does not imply that differences in work logics are the main dividing line either. In particular, socio-cultural professionals (HGS) stand out as the most liberal sub-class. Then, we find that technical experts/high-grade managers (HGS) and socio-cultural semi professionals (LGS) have similar positions on many issues. This cuts across horizontal differences in work-logic. Finally, the most anti-globalization sentiments can be found among skilled manual workers, unskilled clerks/service workers and unskilled workers. Here again, this attitudinal class coalition cuts across differences in the work logic. As we want our analysis to be guided by a concise class scheme with a clear conceptual logic, we decided to keep the coarse five-class in our main analysis, which stresses the differentiation along skill levels. In any case, the additional results shown here imply that by doing so we do not miss a major class division in German society.

Figure OA5.1 shows the total standardized mean differences across all items and time-points between socio-cultural professionals and each remaining sub-class. For example, the first number in the second row tells us that technical experts and higher-grade managers (from the higher-grade service class) hold 0.05 points higher anti-immigrant views than socio-cultural professionals (on the standardized scale from 0 to 1).

Several larger observations emerge from Figure OA5.1 that speak against horizontal differentiation as a major stencil for class polarization. First, while socio-cultural professionals (HGS) hold more liberal views than technical experts/high-grade managers (also HGS), socio-cultural semi-professionals (LGS) also hold similar opinions to technical experts/high-grade managers (HGS). Thus, horizontal differentiation within the service classes allows to detect socio-cultural professionals as particularly liberal, but the socio-cultural semi-professionals -who work in the same work logic as socio-cultural professionals- have similar opinion to technical experts from the HGS. In other words, technical experts/high-grade managers and socio-cultural semi-professionals, who have jobs with very different work logics, have similar political opinions

Second, skilled manual workers have similar positions to unskilled clerks and service personnel and unskilled clerks/service workers. Again, while we might miss the more anti-immigrant positions of the skilled manual workers by pooling them with skilled clerks/service, we do not miss a major cleavage by doing so because skilled manual workers are not more extreme in their opinion than unskilled workers.

Finally, technicians/low-grade managers (LGS) and skilled clerks/service personnel (SW) are positioned in the middle of the attitudinal difference spectrum. Further research might investigate the opinion differences within these two sizable groups in more detail.

Table OA3.1 shows item-specific class differences and agreement scores for single items, pooled across all years of the respective surveys. It shows that the pattern in Figure OA3.1 can be seen in an item-by-item comparison as well.

OA3.1 Average mean differences in positions towards immigrants and immigration between 8 fine-grained classes across all items and all time points. HGS=higher-grade service class, LGS=lower-grade service class, SW=skilled workers, UW=unskilled workers.

Table OA3.1: Item-wise mean differences between classes of the more fine-grained classes. Mean differences (not in brackets) between socio-cultural professionals in the higher-grade service class with the other classes. Agreement values are in brackets.

Variable label	HGS socio- cult. prof.	HGS technical experts/high- grade manag.	LGS socio- cult. semi- prof.	LGS tech- nicians, low-grad manag.	SW skilled clerk/service	SW skilled man- ual	UW un- skilled clerk/service	UW un- skilled man- ual
1) Feel like stranger b/c immigr. (CUL1)	0 (0.64)	0.09 (0.46)	0.11 (0.4)	0.18 (0.27)	0.24 (0.13)	0.31 (- 0.05)	0.3 (-0.13)	0.36 (0.03)
2) Foreign. home when jobs scarce (XEN1)	0 (0.64)	0.05 (0.54)	0.08 (0.48)	0.12 (0.39)	0.17 (0.24)	0.23 (0.08)	0.26 (0.05)	0.25 (0.01)
3) Foreign. marry other for. (XEN3)	0 (0.83)	0.03 (0.74)	0.08 (0.67)	0.09 (0.64)	0.14 (0.49)	0.2 (0.35)	0.24 (0.25)	0.24 (0.25)
4) Foreign. no political participation (XEN2)	0 (0.63)	0.06 (0.48)	0.09 (0.43)	0.15 (0.29)	0.19 (0.18)	0.24 (0.04)	0.25 (0.03)	0.27 (0)
5) Facilitate/restrict immigr. (IMP4)	0 (0.32)	0.07 (0.28)	0.09 (0.21)	0.15 (0.25)	0.2 (0.3)	0.21 (0.33)	0.23 (0.34)	0.25 (0.38)
6) Foreign. take away jobs (ECO3)	0 (0.55)	0.05 (0.45)	0.08 (0.4)	0.11 (0.33)	0.17 (0.17)	0.19 (0.07)	0.22 (0.03)	0.23 (0)
7) Immigr. bad/good for economy (ECO1)*	0 (0.47)	0.02 (0.42)	0.09 (0.41)	0.09 (0.42)	0.14 (0.39)	0.17 (0.31)	0.17 (0.3)	0.18 (0.26)
8) Attachment to EU and population (EUA1)	0 (0.51)	0.05 (0.47)	0.11 (0.48)	0.11 (0.43)	0.15 (0.47)	0.18 (0.48)	0.18 (0.42)	0.21 (0.45)
9) Increase/decrease number of immigr. (IMP3)	0 (0.42)	0.05 (0.4)	0.1 (0.33)	0.15 (0.46)	0.17 (0.53)	0.2 (0.58)	0.2 (0.51)	0.2 (0.56)
10) Foreign. adopt German customs (ASS1)	0 (0.19)	0.05 (0.24)	0.06 (0.31)	0.12 (0.41)	0.15 (0.45)	0.17 (0.49)	0.18 (0.53)	0.19 (0.53)
11)	0	0.06	0.08	0.12	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.19

Variable label	HGS socio- cult. prof.	HGS technical experts/high- grade manag.	LGS socio- cult. semi- prof.	LGS tech- nicians, low-grad manag.	SW skilled clerk/service clerk	SW skilled man- ual	UW un- skilled clerk/service clerk	UW un- skilled man- ual
Foreign. strain social net (WEL1)	(0.29)	(0.24)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.09)	(0.04)	(0.06)
12)	0	0.04	0.04	0.11	0.15	0.19	0.15	0.18
Foreign. enrich culture (CUL3)*	(0.3)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.21)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.12)
13)	0	0.06	0.06	0.11	0.13	0.2	0.16	0.2
Immigr. under- mine/enrich culture (CUL2)*	(0.49)	(0.44)	(0.42)	(0.4)	(0.37)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.32)
14)	0	0.11	0.11	0.13	0.17	0.26	0.23	0.2
Immigr. take away jobs (ECO4)*	(0.53)	(0.49)	(0.39)	(0.43)	(0.34)	(0.31)	(0.23)	(0.29)
15)	0	0.07	0.06	0.12	0.15	0.21	0.16	0.19
Many/some/few/no immigr. from poor countries (IMP1)	(0.5)	(0.44)	(0.41)	(0.44)	(0.42)	(0.38)	(0.35)	(0.31)
16)	0	0.03	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.14	0.14	0.15
Eur. Unification go further/gone too far (EUU1)*	(0.35)	(0.25)	(0.27)	(0.21)	(0.25)	(0.16)	(0.22)	(0.16)
17)	0	0.06	0.07	0.1	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.18
Immigr. make Germany worse/better place (CUL5)*	(0.51)	(0.5)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.42)	(0.37)	(0.38)
18)	0	0.09	0.09	0.1	0.15	0.17	0.18	0.18
Disagree w/ immigr. good for economy (ECO2)	(0.65)	(0.58)	(0.6)	(0.52)	(0.47)	(0.42)	(0.37)	(0.46)
19)	0	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.11	0.1	0.14	0.13
Foreign. cause housing market problems (WEL4)	(0.24)	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.13)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(- 0.01)
20)	0	0.08	0.01	0.08	0.11	0.19	0.14	0.18
Immigr. increase crime (CRI1)*	(0.36)	(0.43)	(0.24)	(0.37)	(0.38)	(0.47)	(0.35)	(0.42)
21)	0	0.12	0.07	0.17	0.18	0.21	0.18	0.21
Allow communal voting right (ASS3)*	(0.22)	(-0.15)	(0.03)	(-0.06)	(-0.03)	(0.01)	(-0.03)	(- 0.03)
22)	0	0.07	0.03	0.11	0.13	0.17	0.15	0.17

Variable label	HGS socio- cult. prof.	HGS technical experts/high- grade manag.	LGS socio- cult. semi- prof.	LGS tech- nicians, low-grad manag.	SW skilled clerk/service clerk	SW skilled man- ual	UW un- skilled clerk/service clerk	UW un- skilled man- ual
Harsher measures against illegal immigr. (IMP2)*	(0.37)	(0.44)	(0.33)	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.61)	(0.5)	(0.59)
23) Disagree w/ immigr. bring new ideas (CUL4)	0 (0.69)	0.03 (0.71)	0.02 (0.61)	0.06 (0.67)	0.08 (0.59)	0.14 (0.49)	0.12 (0.49)	0.12 (0.43)
24) Foreign. bolster pension system (WEL2)*	0 (0.14)	0.01 (0.23)	0.06 (0.11)	0.07 (0.16)	0.1 (0.09)	0.12 (0.05)	0.08 (0.03)	0.12 (0.04)
25) Foreign. commit more crimes (CRI2)	0 (0.28)	0.09 (0.1)	0.04 (0.14)	0.11 (0.06)	0.14 (0.06)	0.18 (0.03)	0.15 (0)	0.16 (0)
26) Same social benefits for foreign. (WEL3)*	0 (0.33)	0.07 (0.23)	0.05 (0.25)	0.13 (0.06)	0.14 (0.03)	0.16 (0)	0.12 (0.06)	0.16 (0.01)
27) Allow dual citizenship (ASS2)*	0 (-0.01)	0.14 (-0.04)	0.04 (-0.09)	0.16 (-0.08)	0.18 (0.03)	0.24 (0.14)	0.16 (-0.11)	0.2 (0.01)
28) Trust in European Parliament (EUT1)*	0 (0.41)	0.05 (0.38)	0.06 (0.4)	0.08 (0.38)	0.08 (0.38)	0.12 (0.34)	0.08 (0.29)	0.12 (0.28)
29) Foreign. do jobs that Germans won't (ECO5)*	0 (0.29)	0 (0.26)	0.02 (0.17)	0.04 (0.16)	0.02 (0.16)	0.07 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.11)	0.04 (0.06)
30) Trust in EU parliament (EUT3)*	0 (0.41)	0.03 (0.39)	0.01 (0.44)	0.03 (0.43)	0.03 (0.43)	0.05 (0.37)	0.01 (0.35)	0.05 (0.33)
31) Close to Europe (EUA2)	0 (0.62)	0.03 (0.59)	0 (0.57)	0.03 (0.59)	0.06 (0.49)	0.09 (0.4)	0.02 (0.36)	0.03 (0.48)
32) Trust in EU commission (EUT2)*	0 (0.45)	0.03 (0.4)	0 (0.46)	0.03 (0.46)	0.02 (0.44)	0.03 (0.38)	0 (0.35)	0.04 (0.35)
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Online Appendix OA4: Ridgeline histograms of the distribution of positions towards immigration and immigrants

Note: Blue lines indicate .2 and .8 quantile, respectively. Red line indicates the mean.

**Feel like stranger b/c immigr.
(CUL1)**

**Foreign. home when jobs scarce
(XEN1)**

Foreign. marry other for.
(XEN3)

Foreign. no political participation (XEN2)

**Facilitate/restrict immigr.
(IMP4)**

Foreign. take away jobs (ECO3)

**Immigr. bad/good for economy
(ECO1)***

Attachment to EU and population (EUA1)

**Increase/decrease number of
immigr. (IMP3)**

**Foreign. adopt German customs
(ASS1)**

**Foreign. strain social net
(WEL1)**

Foreign. enrich culture
(CUL3)*

Immigr. undermine/enrich
culture (CUL2)*

Immigr. take away jobs (ECO4)*

Many/some/few/no immigr. from
poor countries (IMP1)

**Eur. Unification go
further/gone too far (EUU1)***

Immigr. make Germany worse/better place (CUL5)*

Disagree w/ immigr. good for economy (ECO2)

Foreign. cause housing market
problems (WEL4)

Immigr. increase crime (CRI1)*

Allow communal voting right (ASS3)*

Harsher measures against
illegal immigr. (IMP2)*

Disagree w/ immigr. bring new ideas (CUL4)

Foreign. bolster pension
system (WEL2)*

**Foreign. commit more crimes
(CRI2)**

**Same social benefits for
foreign. (WEL3)***

Allow dual citizenship (ASS2)*

Trust in European Parliament (EUT1)*

Foreign. do jobs that Germans
won't (ECO5)*

Trust in EU parliament (EUT3)*

Close to Europe (EUA2)

Trust in EU commission (EUT2)*