

Erosion of Democratic Norms?

Descriptive and Substantive Minority Representation and Majority Group Members' Democratic Attitudes

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Research Question

If and how members of the ethno-racial majority group in a democratic society endorse anti-democratic penalties when confronted with minority politicians and politicians who promote ethno-racial justice policies?



Then-President Trump suggested that as individuals who “originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe,” these legislators had no authority to tell “the people of the United States...how our government is to be run” (Rogers & Fandos, 2019)

Theoretical Background

1. Candidate Ascriptive Traits & Platforms

(e.g., Gonzalez Juenke & Sampaio, 2010; Portmann & Stojanović, 2021; Stout, 2015; Sylvain & Brouard, 2011)

2. Political Tolerance

(e.g., Stouffer, 1955 ; Sullivan et al., 1982)

3. Norms of Social Equality

(e.g., Mendelberg, 2001; Tesler, 2016; Tesler & Sears, 2010)

Argument

Majority group members, especially prejudiced ones, would support restrictions on the civil liberties of ethno-racial minority politicians and advocates of pro-minority policies because they view descriptive and substantive representation of minorities as illegitimate and undemocratic.

Hypotheses

- H1a. The average majority-group respondent should penalize a minority politician relative to a majority-group politician by supporting restrictions on his civil liberties.
- H1b. Prejudiced majority-group members should penalize a minority politician relative to a majority-group politician by supporting restrictions on his civil liberties.
- H2a. The average majority-group respondent should penalize a minority politician who supports a diversity policy relative to a majority-group politician who supports a cross-cutting policy by supporting restrictions on the minority politician's civil liberties.
- H2b. Prejudiced majority-group members should penalize a minority politician who supports a diversity policy relative to a majority-group politician who supports a cross-cutting policy by supporting restrictions on the minority politician's civil liberties.
- H3. We expect majority-group members who have positive outgroup attitudes to treat all politicians and all proposals equally.

Data

Priming Experiments

Experiment I – United States

(N=2816, January-February 2021, Non-Hispanic Whites)

Experiment II – Switzerland

(N=2392, January-April 2021, German speaking Swiss Adults)

- Case selection: US vs. Switzerland
- Sample Provider: Lucid, opt-in online panel
- Gender within age quotas

Treatment

AP

U.S. STATE PROPOSES [AGE/DIVERSITY] QUOTAS FOR TEACHING JOBS

MINNESOTA (AP) — On Jan 22nd, a member of the Minnesota State Assembly, [Samuel Huntington/Halim Mohamed], introduced legislation seeking to impose [age/diversity] quotas in the teaching workforce. The proposal requires public schools to adopt quotas mandating a minimum number of teachers [young and older teachers to ensure age equity/with a racial and ethnic minority background] in their schools.

The discussion on increasing [the number of educators in all age groups/the number of minority educators] in the profession recently attracted substantial attention. “The teaching profession is currently dominated by [middle-aged/whites] and there are not enough teachers from [all age groups/racial and ethnic minorities] in our schools” said [Huntington/Mohamed], after introducing the bill.

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Rich Davis in Minnesota contributed to this report.

2x2: Policy issue (age vs diversity quota) & background of the politician (native vs immigrant)

Outcome: Support for anti-democratic norms

Key moderator: Anti-immigrant attitudes

Measures

DV: Anti-democratic norms

- *The parliamentarian/legislator should no longer be able to present his views in the media or social media*
- *The parliamentarian/legislator should be banned from running for office in the future*
- *The parliamentarian/legislator should be banned from introducing new proposals*
- *The public prosecutor should investigate the parliamentarian/legislator*
- *The parliamentarian/legislator should be banned from holding political rallies*
- *The legislature should reprimand the parliamentarian/legislator for his actions*
- *Journalists who support the parliamentarian/legislator should be investigated (agree/ disagree 4-pt scale)*

(Cronbach's Alpha Experiment I=0.94 , Experiment II=0.95)

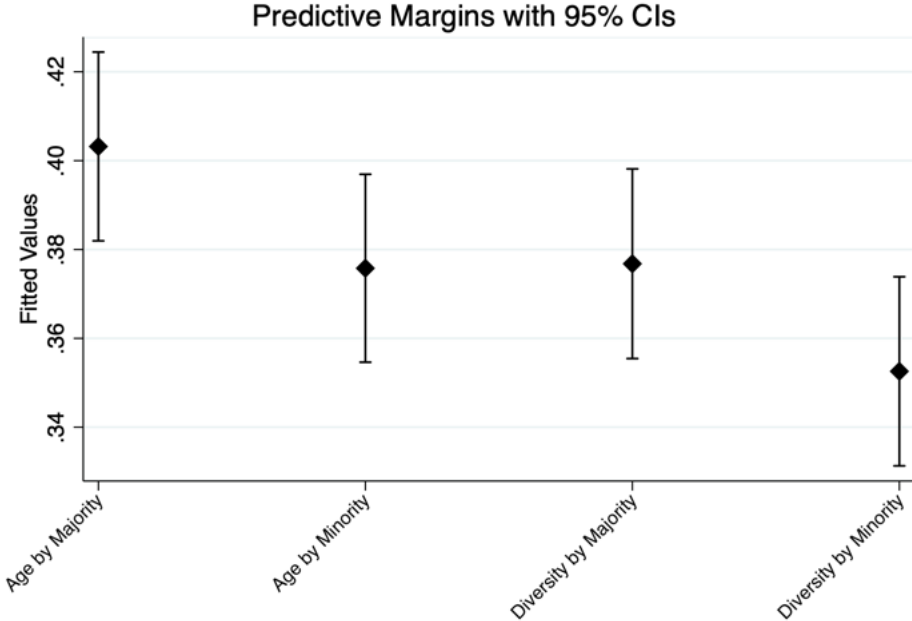
Measures

Moderator: Anti-immigrant attitudes

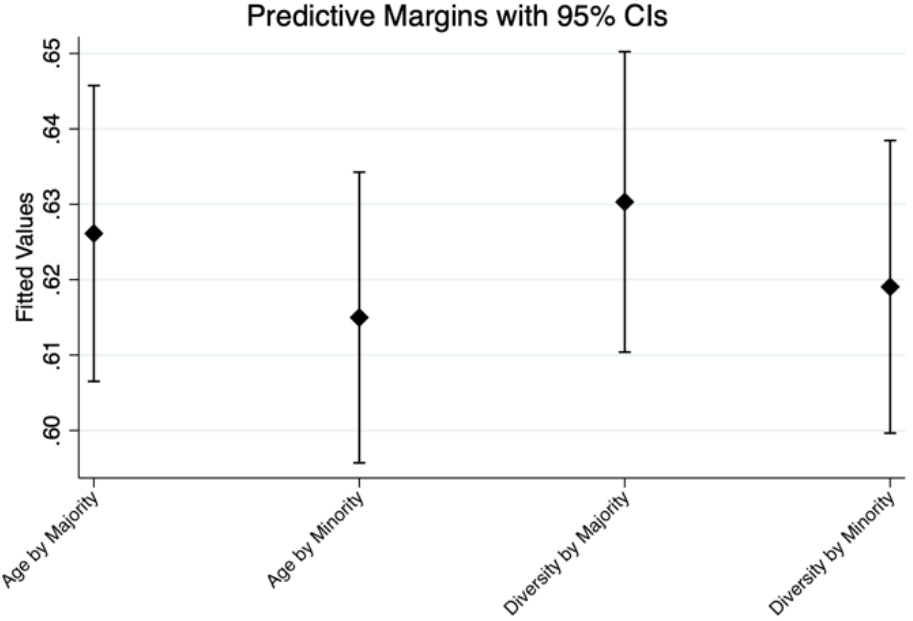
- *Immigrants cause crime rates to increase* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- *Immigrants are generally good for (country's) economy* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- *Immigrants take jobs away from (country nationality) people* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- *(Country's) culture is generally undermined by immigrants* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- *Legal immigrants who are not citizens should have the same rights as (country nationality) citizens* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- *(Country) should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigration* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- *The number of immigrants to (country) nowadays should be..." increase or decrease* (5-pt scale)

- (Cronbach's Alpha Experiment I=0.80 , Experiment II=0.76)

Results – Treatment Effects



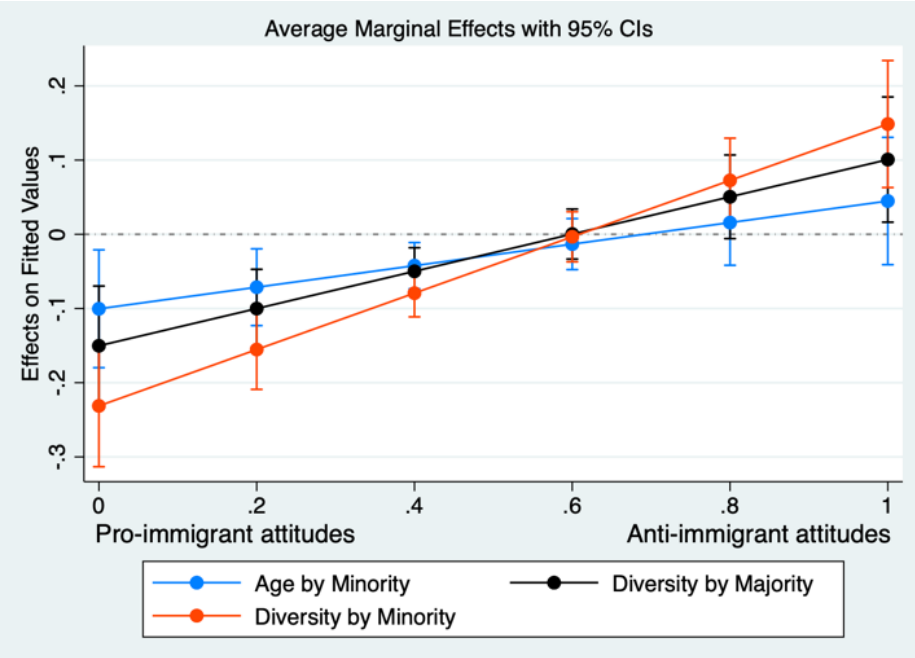
United States



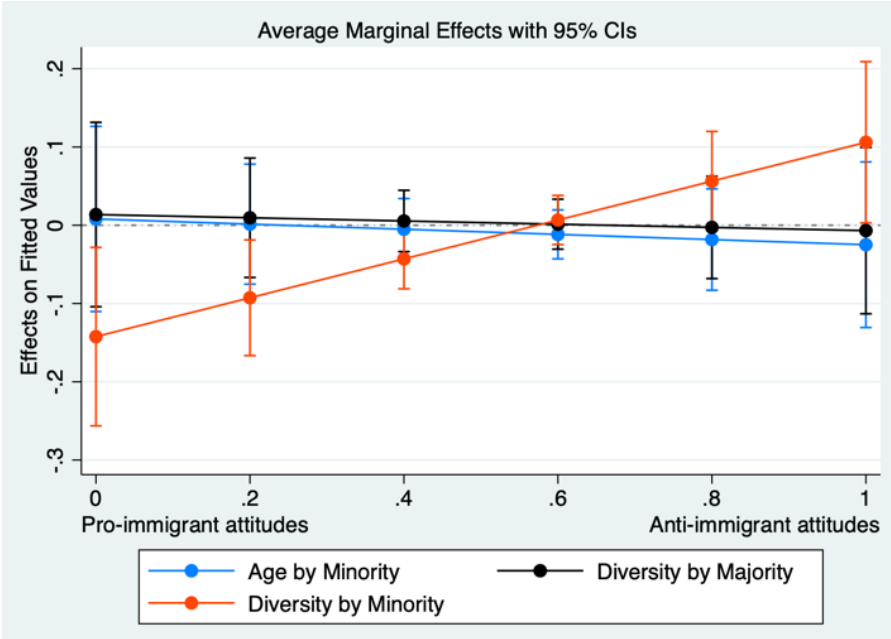
Switzerland

Results – Interaction Effects

Marginal Effect of the Treatment on Support for Anti-Democratic Penalties
Conditional on Attitudes toward Immigrants



United States



Switzerland

Findings

- First, our experiments suggest that on average respondents in both the U.S. and Switzerland **are not more likely to** penalize minority politicians or those who propose ethno-racial inclusion policies in a way that violates democratic norms.
- Support for anti-democratic penalties against the minority politician and the proposer of a diversity policy **increases** as respondents' negative attitudes towards immigrants go up.
- Individuals with **pro-immigrant views** are more likely to respond with a backlash against penalizing the politician and reaffirm democratic norms especially in the diversity by minority condition.

Findings (country contexts)

- This polarizing effect is **stronger in the United States**, where democratic norms are currently contested, and less pronounced in Switzerland
- Further evidence shows that prejudiced U.S. respondents characterize policies that benefit minority groups as **undemocratic**, whereas inclusive respondents reject the anti-democratic characterization
- In contrast, Swiss respondents **refrain** from characterizing either minority politician or proposal in (anti-)democratic terms

Conclusion

- Democratic norms are more resilient than expected
- Democratic ideals emphasizing consensual deliberation (Switzerland) over majoritarian contestation (US) play a central role in accommodating increasing ethnic-racial diversity in contemporary democracies

Next Steps

- Qualitative data on what is considered democratic or not in the two countries by the majority population
- What about the Global South?
- Role of emotions
- Impact of perceived threat (Covid-19 pandemic) on this polarization

Thank you!

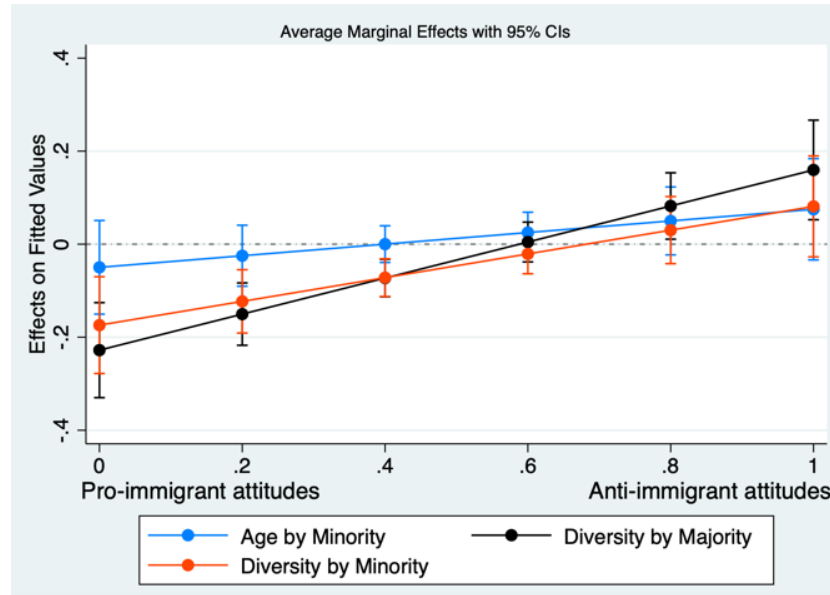
The role of other factors?

- Economic Anxiety
- Partisanship
- Ideology
- Ingroup Identity

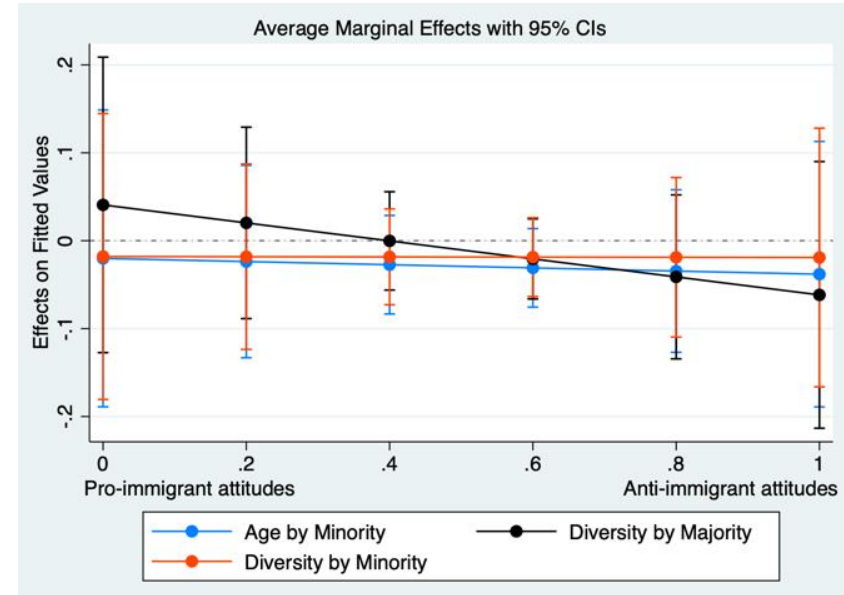
Table 1. Experimental Results - Support for Anti-democratic penalties						
	US		Switzerland		US (Replication)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<i>Treatment</i>						
Age by Minority	-0.035 ** (0.01)	-0.100 ** (0.05)	-0.011 (0.01)	0.023 (0.07)	-0.013 (0.01)	-0.065 (0.04)
Diversity by Majority	-0.034 ** (0.01)	-0.139 *** (0.05)	0.004 (0.01)	0.040 (0.07)	0.001 (0.01)	-0.108 *** (0.04)
Diversity by Minority	-0.053 *** (0.01)	-0.211 *** (0.05)	-0.007 (0.01)	-0.034 (0.07)	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.196 *** (0.04)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.405 *** (0.03)	0.215 *** (0.06)	0.289 *** (0.04)	0.238 *** (0.08)	0.443 *** (0.02)	0.335 *** (0.05)
Partisanship	-0.076 *** (0.02)	-0.061 (0.04)	-0.032 ** (0.01)	-0.033 (0.03)	-0.055 *** (0.01)	-0.036 (0.03)
Ideology	-0.010 (0.02)	-0.042 (0.05)	0.397 *** (0.03)	0.372 *** (0.05)	-0.016 (0.02)	-0.084 ** (0.03)
Economic insecurity	-0.087 *** (0.02)	-0.001 (0.04)	0.054 *** (0.02)	0.026 (0.04)	-0.051 *** (0.02)	-0.064 ** (0.02)
Ingroup identity	0.266 *** (0.02)	0.265 *** (0.04)	0.130 *** (0.03)	0.220 *** (0.06)	0.241 *** (0.02)	0.241 *** (0.03)
<i>Interaction</i>						
Age by Minority * Anti-immigrant		0.145 * (0.08)		-0.042 (0.11)		0.086 (0.06)
Diversity by Majority * Anti-immigrant		0.251 *** (0.08)		-0.025 (0.11)		0.164 ** (0.07)
Diversity by Minority * Anti-immigrant		0.380 *** (0.08)		0.243 ** (0.11)		0.185 *** (0.07)
JointSig Test			Prob > F = 0.1		Prob > F = 0.00	
Age by Minority * Partisanship		-0.037 (0.05)		0.005 (0.04)		-0.020 (0.04)
Diversity by Majority * Partisanship		0.042 (0.06)		-0.010 (0.04)		-0.044 (0.04)
Diversity by Minority * Partisanship		-0.059 (0.06)		0.004 (0.04)		-0.007 (0.04)
Age by Minority * Ideology		0.035 (0.06)		-0.052 (0.07)		0.102 ** (0.05)
Diversity by Majority * Ideology		0.015 (0.07)		-0.046 (0.07)		0.082 (0.05)
Diversity by Minority * Ideology		0.066 (0.07)		0.191 *** (0.07)		0.097 ** (0.05)
JointSig Test			Prob > F = 0.01		Prob > F = 0.00	
Age by Minority * Econ		-0.023 (0.05)		0.095 (0.05)		-0.047 (0.04)
Diversity by Majority * Econ		-0.074 (0.05)		0.017 (0.05)		0.023 (0.04)
Diversity by Minority * Econ		-0.051 (0.05)		-0.007 (0.05)		0.070 * (0.04)
JointSig Test					Prob > F = 0.00	
Age by Minority * Ingroup		0.018 (0.06)		-0.051 (0.08)		-0.038 (0.04)
Diversity by Majority * Ingroup		-0.012 (0.06)		0.000 (0.08)		-0.011 (0.04)
Diversity by Minority * Ingroup		-0.007 (0.06)		-0.304 *** (0.08)		0.046 (0.04)
JointSig Test			Prob > F = 0.00			
Constant	0.250 *** (0.02)	0.333 *** (0.04)	-0.119 *** (0.03)	-0.120 ** (0.05)	0.156 *** (0.02)	0.243 *** (0.03)
N	2816	2816	2069	2069	3946	3946
Adj R ²	0.235	0.243	0.370	0.380	0.296	0.300

Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors
 All predictors are coded on a 0-1 scale, so all coefficients can be thought as maximum effects.
 Controls include age, gender, education, income.
 ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1 (two-tailed)

Evaluation of the proposal

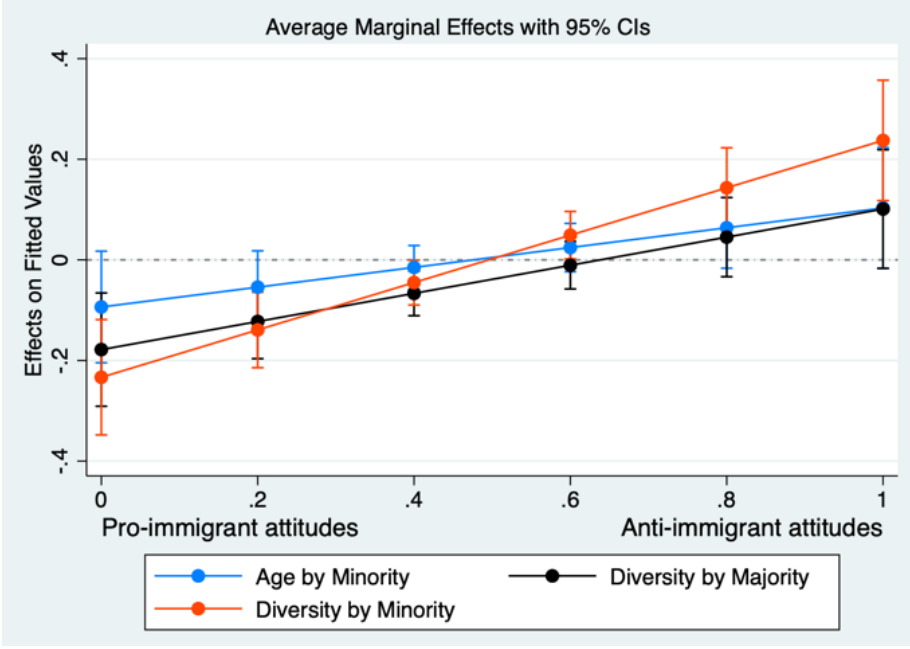


United States

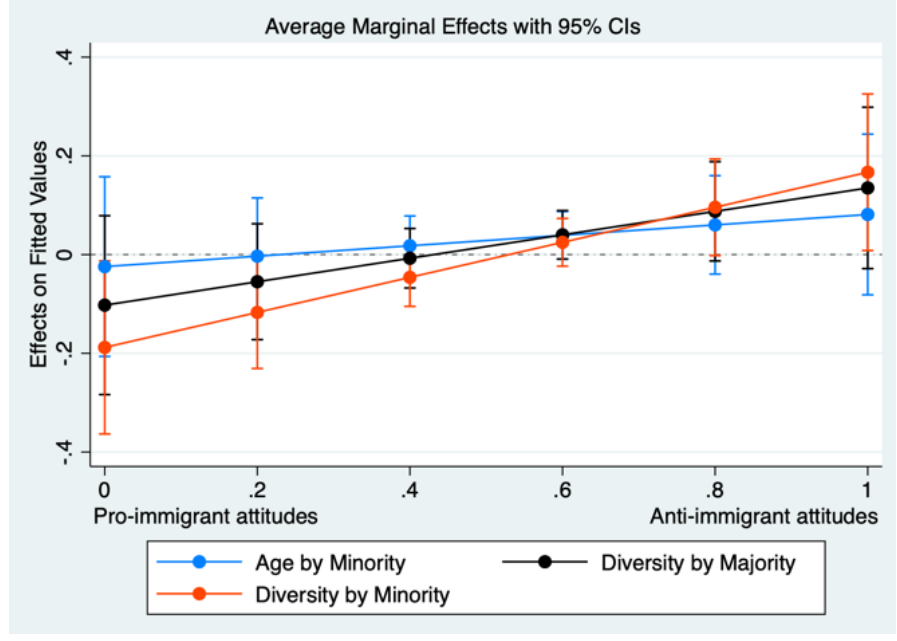


Switzerland

Evaluation of the politician



United States



Switzerland

Replication

Experiment III: United States
N= 3,946 non-Hispanic White Americans
Sample Provider: Lucid, opt-in online panel
Lucid - February 2021

