

Milica Vesković Anđelković<sup>1</sup>

Faculty of Philosophy,  
University of Belgrade

Irena Petrović<sup>2</sup>

Faculty of Philosophy,  
University of Belgrade

Original scientific paper

UDK 316.64:314.151.3-054.72(4)“2015-“

Submitted: 31.8.2025.

Accepted: 2.12.2025.



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2298/SOC2504525V>

## ATTITUDES TOWARD THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN THE LAST DECADE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS<sup>3</sup>

### Stavovi prema imigrantskoj populaciji u evropskim zemljama u poslednjoj deceniji: komparativna analiza

**ABSTRACT:** *This study explores public attitudes toward immigrants across European countries over the past decade. The analysis is based on data from three waves of the European Social Survey (ESS). Its theoretical framework draws on ethnic competition theory, which suggests that perceptions of economic and cultural competition shape attitudes toward immigrants. Building on these theoretical assumptions, as well as on previous research – including earlier ESS findings – it is expected that respondents generally maintain negative attitudes toward immigrants, particularly regarding their perceived impact on the economy and cultural life. Moreover, it is assumed that individuals tend to hold stronger anti-immigrant attitudes toward those from different ethnic backgrounds, and that these attitudes are shaped by a variety of contextual and individual factors. The research results indicate that anti-immigrant sentiments remain widespread across European countries, though their intensity varies according to both national economic development and individual respondent characteristics.*

**KEY WORDS:** *attitudes, immigrant population, ethnic competition theory, contextual factors, individual factors*

**APSTRAKT:** *Rad se bavi analizom stavova stanovništva evropskih zemalja prema imigracionoj populaciji u poslednjoj deceniji. Zaključci o stavovima izvođiće se na osnovu rezultata tri talasa Evropskog društvenog istraživanja (ESS). Teorijsko*

---

1 mzandjel@f.bg.ac.rs; ORCID: 0000-0002-2513-8896

2 irena.petrovic@f.bg.ac.rs; ORCID: 0000-0002-7288-5034

3 This paper is the result of research carried out within a project financially supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia, under the scientific research funding scheme at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Philosophy (No. 451-03-137/2025-03/200163).

*polazište ove analize predstavlja teorija etničke konkurencije. Polazeći od ključnih pretpostavki ove teorije, ali i od rezultata prethodnih istraživanja, uključujući ranija istraživanja ESS-a, pretpostavlja se da su stavovi ispitivanih građana prema imigrantima i dalje negativni, naročito kada je reč o percepciji njihovog uticaja na ekonomsku i kulturnu sferu. Dodatno, pretpostavlja se da stanovnici evropskih zemalja izražavaju snažnije antimigracione stavove prema imigrantima koji nisu istog etničkog porekla, pri čemu su ovi stavovi uslovljeni brojnim kontekstualnim i individualnim prediktorima. Istraživački rezultati su pokazali da su antiimigracioni stavovi i dalje prisutni širom evropskih zemalja, iako njihov intenzitet varira u zavisnosti od ekonomskog razvoja država, ali i individualnih karakteristika ispitanika.*

**KLJUČNE REČI:** *antiimigracioni stavovi, imigraciona populacija, teorija etničke konkurencije, kontekstualni faktori, individualni faktori*

## Introduction

This paper aims to analyze the attitudes of the native population toward immigrants based on data collected in the European Social Survey over the past decade. Following the assumptions of ethnic competition theory, the analysis focuses on variations in the perceived strength of immigrants as a threat in the economic and cultural domains. Based on the available literature, it can be stated that many contextual and individual predictors influence the formation and intensity of these attitudes.

For understanding these attitudes, it is also important to recall the long immigration tradition of European countries, especially in the West. Since the post-World War II period, most European countries, especially in the north and west, have been destinations for immigrants, including ex-colonials, labor migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Migration was initially driven by labor needs in host countries and poor economic conditions in countries of origin. Later, even with restrictive policies, migration continued through family reunification and networks established by earlier migrants (Predojević Despić, 2009).

As the immigrant population grew, concerns arose among European citizens and politicians about the social, cultural, political, and economic impacts of immigration, as well as immigrants' rights and integration. The changing ethnic composition of many countries has fueled perceptions of competition and threat, contributing to widespread anti-immigration attitudes. Immigration thus shifted from being an economic issue to a social, cultural, and political concern, closely linked to national identity. This raises many questions and the need for a theoretical approach to this phenomenon, as well as for adapting existing government policies to the new situation.

## Europe as a destination – dynamics of population inflows into European countries

Since the end of the Second World War, the countries of Western and Northern Europe have become highly attractive to migrant populations<sup>4</sup>. Migration flows were strongly driven by differences in economic development between regions characterised by pre-industrial agrarian economies and those with highly industrialised economies, both internationally and nationally<sup>5</sup> (Bade 2003; Barou 2006, according to Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). With the end of the war, the countries in Western and Northern Europe experienced a real economic boom. Industrial production in these countries increased by 30% between 1953 and 1958 (Dietz and Kacymarczyk, 2008, according to Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). The local population became increasingly educated, which brought about high social mobility but also created the problem of filling lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs. As a result, the authorities began recruiting people from other countries. In the period from the 1950s to 1974 the main destinations were Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland, the member countries of the European Economic Community, which was the predecessor of the European Union. In that period, the largest number of migrants came from Algeria, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016: 32). At the same time, due to the development of favorable living conditions, there was also a return of people from the colonies. During this period, international migration in Western and Northern European countries was generally viewed positively due to its economic benefits (Bonifazi, 2008). However, it is worth noting that integration was easier for returnees from the colonies than for foreigners (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). On the other hand, in Western European countries (primarily France and Germany), the 'guest worker' policy also began, with the introduction of temporary labor programs that involved employment contracts and temporary residence for workers. It was believed that the arrival of immigrants from economically and socially deprived, mostly European countries, during this period would be temporary, and that their return to their country of origin would be expected after the end of their working lives (Bade, 2003).

The situation changed during the 1973–1974 oil crisis, which had a significant impact on the European economy. The demand for labour drastically

---

4 In the history of modern international migration, four significant periods can be distinguished (Massey, 2003; de Haas, 2009): the period of mercantile capitalism (1500–1800), the period of industrial capitalism in Europe (1800–1929), the period following the culmination of the Great Depression in 1929 and throughout the 1930s, and the period of post-industrial capitalism that began after the Second World War. Only in the last period was migration characterised by flows toward Europe, as earlier migrations predominantly involved the emigration of people from the wealthiest countries to their colonies and the newly discovered continents.

5 Interestingly, the disparity in development was also evident within individual countries, which stimulated internal migration. For example, the population of southern Italy migrated northward within the country.

decreased, leading to the development of migration policies aimed at controlling and reducing the volume of immigration. However, the fact is that the number of migrants continued to grow. Many immigrants began bringing their families to the destination countries, and despite governments initially prohibiting their arrival, this met with little success (Castles et al., 2014). During this period, there was a change in the ethnic structure of immigrants – while the previous period was mostly characterised by an influx of European populations from less developed regions, there was now an increase in population from Turkey and North Africa (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). At this time, there was also a rise in the number of asylum seekers<sup>6</sup>. The arrival of this type of emigrants, together with the ongoing economic crisis during this period, as well as the shortage of available jobs, led to a change in the attitude of the native population toward the immigrant population. Increasing unemployment levels due to the economic recession fueled hostility, racism, and xenophobia towards certain „visible“ groups of resident migrants. In several European countries, violent and anti-foreigner incidents occurred (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). This was also contributed to by the media propaganda of extreme right-wing parties, so that in France, for example, Le Pen's Front National acquired considerable political support for its simple message that „2 million unemployed = 2 million immigrants too many“ (Boyle et al., 1998: 27). Considering these negative attitudes towards the migrant population, as well as the assumption that not all immigrants will return home, the need for adequate integration policies arose, and such policies slowly began to develop (Doomerik and Bruquetas, 2016).

During the 1980s, the return from former colonies continued, but there was an increase in the number of asylum seekers, as well as an expansion of the area of southwestern Europe, which now became a vital immigration zone. Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, associated members of the European Union, which had long been countries of emigration, due to economic growth and declining birth rates causing labor shortages, now became significant destination countries for non-European populations, mainly from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, also from Eastern Bloc countries (Castles et al., 2014). Additionally, populations that had earlier migrated westward due to economic disparities began returning to their countries of origin during this period<sup>7</sup>. The consequence of this change was the insufficient preparedness of these countries for the arrival of foreigners, particularly in terms of underdeveloped policies toward immigrants, especially regarding integration.

---

6 Between the early 1970s and the end of the last century the number of asylum applications in the EU increased from 15,000 to 300,000 annually. Germany was the largest recipient of asylum applications in Europe in all periods. From the 1980s onwards, significant increases were also observed in Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. During the 1990s, there was many asylum seekers from our region due to the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia (Hatton, 2004, according to Van Mol and de Valk, 2016).

7 During this period, about 450,000 citizens returned to Spain from Western Europe. In Portugal, mainly people from the colonies returned. Greece, meanwhile, remained the last country to which citizens who had previously left began to return (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016: 37).

Conversely, anti-immigration attitudes among the local population were still underdeveloped. On the other hand, the first national laws on foreigners and residence were introduced in Germany, France, and Sweden. Also, during this period, the EU began to consider harmonizing migration policy, but without concrete directives (Wiesbrock, 2016).

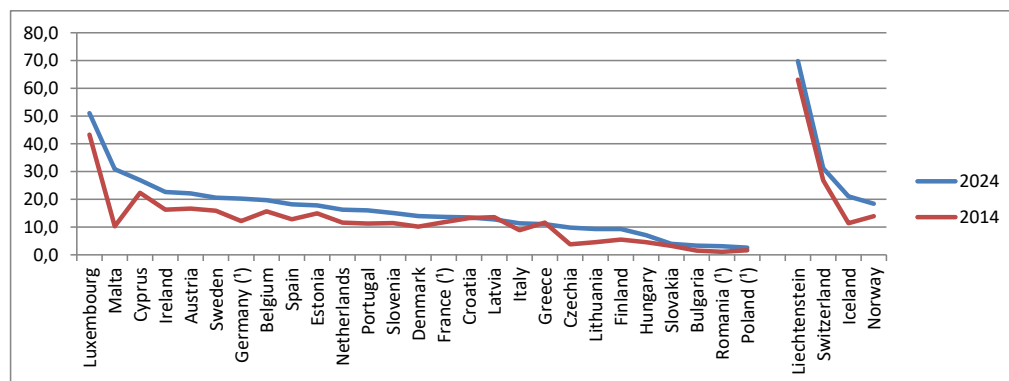
The last decade of the 20th century was marked by an increased number of asylum seekers, primarily from the former Yugoslavia, former socialist countries, as well as Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Between 1989 and 1992, the number of asylum applications increased from 320,000 to 695,000, then declined to 455,000 by the end of the century, only to rise again at the start of the new millennium to 471,000. Between 2002 and 2006, this number declined once more (Castles et al., 2014). However, with the Arab Spring, this number began to rise sharply, reaching, according to Eurostat data, its peak in 2015 at 1.2 million people seeking asylum in European countries. After that period, it gradually declined, and, according to Eurostat data from last year, it stood at 151,830 (Eurostat, 2025a). Asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, and Syria apply mainly for asylum in France, Germany, Sweden, the UK, and Belgium (Eurostat, 2025a). In recent years, refugees from Ukraine have also been among asylum seekers. This influx of immigrants from Middle Eastern countries revealed significant fragmentation and contradictions in the responses of European states: while some governments and civil society showed a humanitarian approach, others responded by closing borders, criminalising crossings, and tightening laws, which led to a notable increase in „resistance“ toward migrants in political and public discourse.

Two more changes regarding migration occurred since the end of the last century. First, the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 facilitated the movement of people within the European Union. Poorer member states thus faced a mass outflow of their population moving toward richer countries. Given the long-term low birth rates in these countries, which consequently led to labour shortages, the influx of European migrants with social characteristics similar to those of the local population did not raise questions about their acceptance. On the other hand, the countries they move to are generally not their permanent destinations; these are circular labour migrations, and their return is expected no later than upon retirement. Considering their origin as well as the temporary nature of their stay, the attitudes of the population in the destination countries were not particularly negative. But, at the same time, these countries introduced strict entry controls for non-European citizens and numerous restrictions, which, on the other hand, coincided with an increase in the rate of irregular migrants (Castles et al., 2014). During this period, the first EU directives on asylum and immigration were also adopted, and in 2001, the Temporary Protection Directive was introduced, which set out the rules for temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of refugees (Dalkiran and Lipman, 2025). Migrants arriving in this way in EU countries face strong resistance from the local population. However, the 2008 global economic crisis marked the end of “rapid economic growth, EU expansion and high immigration” (Castles et al., 2014: 103).

The second characteristic of emigration to European countries since the end of the last century is the policy of attracting highly educated populations from semi-peripheral countries (Doomernik and Bruquetas, 2016). The EU established its Blue Card Scheme, an EU-wide residence and work permit (Eurostat, 2025a). Additionally, these policies are reflected in numerous national programs targeting international students. Many governments of the wealthiest EU member states have actively recruited students with the intention of incorporating the “best and brightest” into their domestic labour market upon graduation (Lange, 2013). This is also supported by numerous scholarships provided by the governments of these countries. In this context, several European countries, including France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, have simplified procedures for international students to facilitate the transition from education to employment (Tremblay, 2005). On the other hand, international students report being very well received by the population of the destination countries (Vesković Anđelković and Jovanović Ajzenhamer, 2025).

Today, European countries remain very attractive to the immigrant population. According to Eurostat data (Eurostat, 2025b), a total of 44.7 million immigrants live in European countries, representing 9.9% of the total population. This represents an increase of 2.3 million compared with the previous year. In addition, 17.9 million persons living in one of the EU countries on 1 January 2024 were born in another EU country, representing an increase of 0.2 million compared with the previous year. In absolute terms, the largest numbers of foreign-born individuals living in EU countries on 1 January 2024 were found in Germany (16.9 million), France (9.3 million), Spain (8.8 million), and Italy (6.7 million). Foreign-born individuals in these four EU countries collectively represented 66.6% of the total number of foreign-born individuals living in the EU, while the same four EU countries had a 57.8% share of the EU's population. The highest relative share of foreign-born individuals within the total population was in Luxembourg (51.0% of the resident population), followed by Malta (30.8%), Cyprus (26.9%), Ireland (22.6%), Austria (22.1%), Sweden (20.6%), and Germany (20.2%). By contrast, foreign-born individuals represented less than 5% of the population in Poland (2.6% of its resident population on 1 January 2024), Romania (3.1%), Bulgaria (3.3%), and Slovakia (3.9%). As we can notice based on the data shown in Graph 1, the share of the immigrant population has increased compared to 2014 (immediately before the peak arrival of populations from North Africa and the Middle East) in all countries except Lithuania, Greece, and Croatia. Regarding Serbia, data in the Eurostat database does not exist, but according to data collected in the 2022 Census, the immigrant population accounted for 9.7% of the total population of Serbia (Lukić and Lovrić Obradović, 2025). In this case, it is difficult to make a comparison with the earlier period due to the absence of reliable data, but also because Serbia was a transit country for immigrants from the Middle East, so their stay was not even recorded.

**Graph 1.** *Share of foreign-born persons in the resident population, 1 January 2024 and 1 January 2014*



Source: Eurostat, 2025b.

(1) 2024 provisional/estimated

Despite the long-standing and extensive immigration to European countries, research indicates that immigrants who arrived several generations ago are not fully integrated into the host country. Even if they are second or third generation, many of them still live in segregated ethnic communities and neighbourhoods with limited daily interactions with native Europeans (Glikman and Semyonov, 2012). Besides this, according to public official statistics data (Eurostat, 2025a), we can conclude that their unemployment rate is higher than the rate among native Europeans, and based on conclusions drawn from research by other authors, they are less able to attain high-status occupations compared to natives, their earnings are lower than those of comparable Europeans, and their homeownership rates are lower than those of the host country (Gorodzesky and Semyonov, 2017; Davidov and Semyonov, 2017; Kovacheva and Hristozova, 2021). It is not surprising, thus, that considerable numbers of immigrants feel “discriminated against” or experience some form of discrimination and that, at the same time, native Europeans view immigrants as “foreigners” and “outsiders” (Davidov and Semyonov, 2017; European Commission).

The responsible actors are fully aware of the antagonism and dissatisfaction that exists between the migrant population and the native population. Therefore, efforts are also observed to create an appropriate policy towards the migrant population that would reduce antagonism and create conditions for integration. It is also important to note that at the EU level there are attempts to create unified migration policies, but so far everything is fragmented and varies from country to country. A consequence of this is also that European countries exhibit considerable variation in the implementation of migrant integration policies, as indicated by the scores of the MIPEX (Gregurović, 2021). Whereas some countries provide very supportive conditions for the successful integration of immigrants, others do very little to facilitate the integration and assimilation of migrants

into mainstream society (Davidov and Semyonov, 2017). In parallel with this, the results of the ESS survey confirm the same – the attitudes of the population toward the migrant population are not the same across all countries. However, unlike the MIPEX study, which focuses only on current integration policies, the ESS contains data on the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents and on contextual factors that are assumed to influence public attitudes toward the migrant population in their country. Therefore, the results of this survey, which in its most recent round included as many as 28 countries, can be considered a valuable input for attempts to create a unified policy of migrant integration in EU countries, one that would also relate to creating a favorable context for shaping the attitudes of the native population.

## Theoretical Background

Alongside the increasingly massive movement of populations on the global level that characterises the modern era as an age of migration (Castles et al, 2014), various theories have emerged aimed at understanding migration processes as well as the relations between groups. The problem has been approached from various perspectives, including anthropology, psychology, sociology, and the increasingly popular multidisciplinary research perspective. Given the observed tendency toward antagonism among groups, dominant theories focus on the perceived threats posed by immigrants; however, researchers also examine the influence of various contextual and individual variables that result in different degrees of resistance toward outgroups.

One of the theories frequently mentioned in the literature is the ethnic competition theory (Quillian, 1995; Sheepers et al., 2002; Schneider, 2008), which has boomed in recent years. This theory aims to explain a broad class of anti-immigrant attitudes, including anti-immigrant prejudice and ethnic exclusionism. It derives from realistic group conflict theory (Sheepers et al., 2002; Semyonov et al., 2006; Schneider, 2008) and social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Social identity theory posits that negative attitudes toward other groups stem from social comparison and a fear of threats to one's own group. As for realistic group conflict theory, it explains more situational differences between individuals and larger social units in such attitudes. The main assumption of this theory is that attitudes and behaviours between groups primarily serve to preserve the status, resources, and prerogatives of one group, as well as its culture in terms of identity and values. The intensity of competition for these goods—determined by their availability and the group's competence to acquire and maintain them—influences the conflict of interests between groups and is crucial for the attitudes individuals have toward outgroups (Schneider, 2008: 54). The intensity of competition for these goods and thus conflict of interest between groups is decisive for the attitudes individuals hold towards other groups and their members. This competition for resources can



give rise to perceptions of threat, which, regardless of whether they are real or imagined, become very real in their consequences and affect the attitudes of the local population toward immigrants. From the perspective of ethnic competition theory, we can say this primarily involves viewing immigrants as an economic threat in terms of competition over resources, and as a cultural threat in terms of tensions between cultural values and group identity. Evidence that these threats toward migrants do exist is provided by previous studies that tested the assumptions of ethnic competition theory using data collected in the ESS survey (Čačić Kumpes, 2024; Petrović and Vesković Anđelković, 2025). The degree of ethnic competition in a country is conceptualised as a contextual characteristic that, first, includes the quantitative demographic relationship between the internal group (ingroup) and the external group (outgroup), and second, the amount of resources over which different groups compete (Semyonov et al., 2006). A relatively larger external group increases intergroup competition (if resources are constant) and facilitates political mobilisation. Thus, the greater the number of immigrants in a country, the more economic and social competition increases, along with cultural conflicts over norms and values, identity issues, and concerns about the decline of national authority (Ivarsflaten, 2005). The first cross-national comparative study that tested the impact of the size of the immigrant group on attitudes toward immigrants in European countries was done by Quillian, who used Eurobarometer data (1988) and published in 1995 (Quillian, 1995; Schneider, 2008).

Contrary to ethnic competition theory, the intergroup contact theory posits that the size of the immigrant group does not necessarily lead to an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes. On the contrary, the larger the immigrant group, the greater the chance for personal, even friendly, contacts between the native population and immigrants, which reduces negative intergroup attitudes. However, to observe the impact of immigrant group size on the increase of positive attitudes, an individual's experiences in contact with immigrants must be considered as independent variables (Quillian, 1995: 596). This theory, therefore, assumes the existence of a habituation effect and, contrary to realistic group conflict theory, does not imply that a large share of the migrant population necessarily results in a high prevalence of anti-immigrant attitudes among the native population.

Along with the influence of the size of the immigrant group as a contextual effect, ethnic competition theory also states that belonging to specific social categories makes some people more prone to perceive ethnic threat and thereby develop exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants (Schneider, 2008). Specifically, the need to preserve individual status regardless of group status can lead to negative attitudes toward immigrants, especially if they are perceived as a threat to the individual's social status. This mostly happens when there is an overlap in the competition for group resources between the native population and immigrants. In particular, competition is stronger in lower-status jobs that

do not require a high level of formal education, as immigrants in European societies generally have a lower level of formal education compared to the average majority population and tend to occupy less prestigious jobs with lower incomes (Migration Data Portal, 2025). Cross-national research conducted by Scheepers (Sheepers et al, 2002) at the beginning of this century, as well as studies by a group of researchers from Croatia relying on ESS findings (Čačić Kupes et al, 2024), indicate a higher prevalence of anti-immigrant attitudes among individuals with lower levels of education. In line with the conclusions of these studies less-educated native populations may feel that their status and resources are more threatened by the arrival of immigrants than those of others. As for place of residence, although immigrants most often settle in urban areas, an analysis of ESS data collected in 2002 and 2003 conducted by Schneider (Schneider, 2008) shows that anti-immigrant attitudes most frequently appear among urban residents. However, an analysis of data referring to the population of Croatia (Čačić Kumpes et al, 2024) indicates that residents of rural areas are more inclined toward anti-immigrant attitudes. In any case, place of residence should be viewed as a factor significant for the formation of these attitudes.

In addition to place of residence and socio economic status, earlier analyses of cross-national research data through the lens of ethnic competition theory have shown the significance of several other socio-demographic characteristic and value-related attitudes of respondents (Semyonov et al., 2004; Schneider, 2008; Davidov and Semyonov, 2017; Čačić Kumpes et al, 2024). Researches also tested the impact of the political climate in the country (Semyonov et al., 2006), immigration integration index (Gregurović, 2021), state support of religious practices (Helbling and Traunmüller, 2016, according to Davidov and Semyonov, 2017), frequency of terrorist attacks (Legewie, 2013, according to Davidov and Semyonov, 2017), and media coverage of immigration-related news (Schlueter and Davidov, 2013). Taking into account all the aforementioned contextual characteristics of countries, as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and their value orientations, researches from Croatia conclude that more negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are most likely to be expressed by older respondents, those with lower levels of education, from rural areas, who reported being more religious, of lower socioeconomic status, politically oriented to the 'right', and those who are more inclined toward nationalism (Čačić Kumpes et al, 2024).

Lastly, it is worth noting that the socio-economic characteristics of the immigrant population also influence the attitudes of the domestic population. Thus, the public associates different types of migrants with different kinds of threats, and security fears influence attitudes toward migrants from other cultures and religions (e.g., Muslims in Western Europe), while economic concerns influence attitudes toward migrants from countries with the same culture and religion—for example, migrants from Eastern Europe in Western Europe (Hellwig and Sinno, 2016; Petrović and Vesković Anđelković, 2025).

## Objectives and hypotheses

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the attitudes of the European population toward immigrants. This will be done through specific dimensions that are contained in the assumptions of ethnic competition theory – including perceptions of economic and cultural threats, posed by immigrants, willingness to accept various types of immigrants into the country, and preferred criteria for their acceptance. Additionally, the study examines how attitudes toward migrants have changed over the past decade which changed depending on the number of immigrants, especially asylum seekers, which also varied, identifying trends and shifts in public opinion across different European countries. Finally, according to assumptions of ethnic competition theory and results of previous researches, it aims to explore the individual and contextual factors that influence these attitudes. In line with previous research (Hellwig and Sinno, 2016; Gregurović, 2021; Petrović and Vesković Anđelković, 2025), as well as the theoretical background that we depicted above, we hypothesize that:

1. In accordance with the assumption about the perception of different threats, primarily in terms of identity and cultural norms, posed by immigrants, European citizens will show negative attitudes toward them, particularly those belonging to ethnically or racially different groups, compared to migrants from the same or culturally similar backgrounds.
2. Despite the long history of immigration in European countries and the real need for population due to persistently low fertility rates, labor shortages, and rapid economic development, citizens' attitudes toward immigrants remain largely negative.
3. Regarding the influence of individual and contextual factors, the following is expected:

**3.1.** Citizens' attitudes toward migrants are likely to be shaped by age, gender, education, activity status, political orientation, place of residence, and personal experiences with immigrants, which influence the perception of economic or cultural threat and the overall evaluation of migrants. According to the results of previous research, we can say it more specifically: older individuals and men are expected to hold more negative attitudes, while less-educated or unemployed individuals may also exhibit stronger negative attitudes, particularly when they perceive competition for resources. In terms of place of residence, urban residents are expected to show more pronounced attitudes due to higher local exposure to migrants.

**3.2.** Economic, social, and political conditions that constitute contextual differences between countries significantly influence citizens' attitudes toward immigrants. Specifically, GDP is expected to play a crucial role, with citizens from countries with higher GDP per capita generally holding more positive views about immigration. Additionally, the size and proportion of the immigrant population can affect attitudes, as larger immigrant communities may facilitate intergroup interactions that help reduce negative perceptions.

## Data and methodology

The analysis of attitudes towards immigrants draws on data from the European Social Survey, using the 8th (conducted in 2016), 9th (conducted in 2018/2019), and 11th (conducted in 2023/2024) rounds. We chose these rounds because years of realization are when the number of immigrants (especially asylum seekers) changes significantly. Regarding sample size, the 8th round included 44,387 respondents, the 9th round 52,245 respondents, and the 11th round 46,162 respondents. Data from all three rounds were used to test our first and second hypotheses – to analyze changes in attitudes toward immigrants about their perceived impact on all aspects of life in the country, as well as to analyze variations in perceived cultural and economic threats, which we assume occurred with different intensities depending on the size of the immigrant population. Finally, data from all three rounds were also used in analyzing respondents' attitudes toward the possibility of immigration from different population groups. For the third hypothesis aimed at assessing the impact of individual and contextual predictors of attitudes toward immigrants, we constructed a Hierarchical Linear Model and used solely data from the most recent, 11th round, which is the focus of our analysis.

Some additional clarification on the data sources used to examine attitudes toward immigrants from different ethnic and racial groups is warranted. For this analysis, results are shown in aggregate form. This dimension was operationalized through the question: "Would you accept the arrival of immigrants from different groups?", and respondents indicated their answers on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 was "Allow many to come and live here", 2. Allow some of them, 3. Allow a few and 4. Allow none. Similarly, for the Hierarchical Linear Model, results are presented in an aggregated format. Contextual predictors were operationalized using GDP and net immigrations, while individual predictors were operationalized using age, gender, place of residence, education, migration experience (whether the respondent was born in the country of residence and where their parents were born), as well as political orientation measured on a left–right scale. When examining perceptions of different types of threat (economic or cultural), cross-country differences were analyzed. These types of threats were operationalized through questions: for cultural threats "*Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants*" and for economies treats "*Immigration bad or good for country's economy*".

Regarding the application of statistical methods and techniques, we used both descriptive and analytical approaches. As for analytical methods, we applied one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine differences between countries and a Hierarchical Linear Model to assess the influence of individual and contextual predictors.

## Results and discussion

We begin the analysis by presenting and comparing the respondents' answers to questions concerning their willingness to accept immigrants — first from the same ethnic group, then from a different ethnic group, and finally immigrants

from poor countries. The results show that anti-immigration attitudes toward all three groups of immigrants have gradually declined, which can be seen as a consequence of the long-standing tradition of immigration in European countries, and thus as a result of habituation to the immigrant population. On the other hand, this is not surprising, given that in recent years the number of immigrants from non-European countries—especially asylum seekers—has decreased significantly.

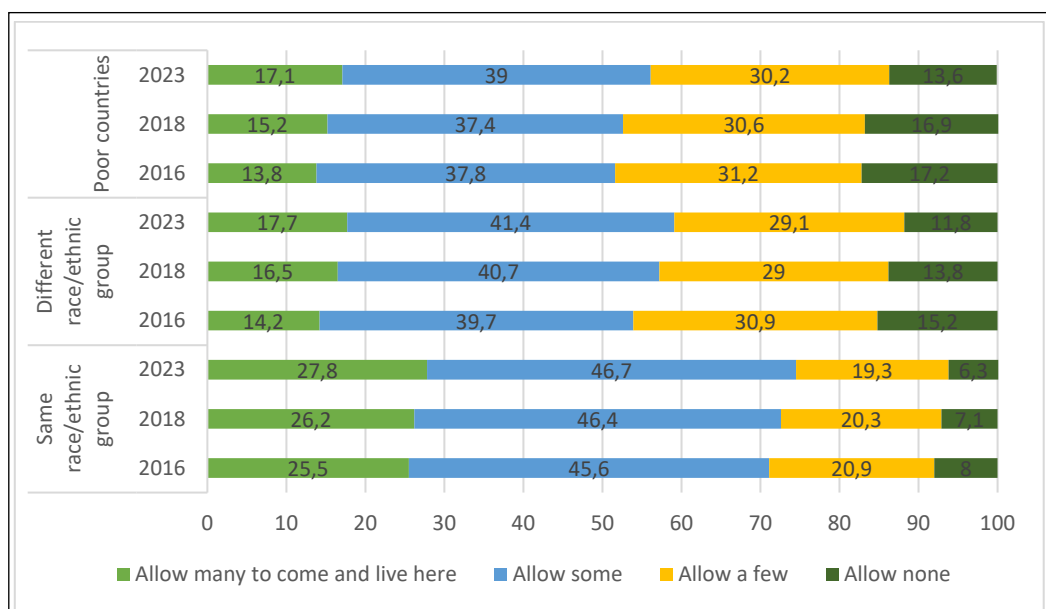
As expected, the data indicate a significant difference in respondents' willingness to accept different groups of immigrants, which is clearly visible in Graph 2. We observe that in all three years analyzed (2016, 2018, and 2023), more than a quarter of the population is willing to accept immigrants who belong to their own ethnic group. In addition, nearly half of the respondents in all years stated that some individuals from the same racial or ethnic group should also be allowed to enter and reside in their countries. Examining these two groups together, we can see that more than 70% of respondents from all countries which were included in ESS researches hold a positive attitude toward immigration from their own racial or ethnic group, while fewer than 10% reject immigrants from this group altogether. We assume that the resistance toward them stems from prejudices and the perception of threats posed by the immigrant population, primarily regarding the economic vulnerability of the native population (Hellwig and Sinno, 2016).

In contrast to their attitudes toward members of the same ethnic group, residents of European countries tend to distance themselves from groups of immigrants belonging to other ethnic and racial backgrounds. Unlike the previously considered population, which does not pose a threat to cultural practices or identity reshaping, ethnically different immigrants are perceived mainly as a threat in this regard, as well as a security threat (Hellwig and Sinno, 2016). Based on the analysis of data from the most recent wave of research, we can state that fewer than one-fifth of residents in European countries in all observed years would allow many ethnically different immigrants to come and live in their countries, while the share of those who would permit the arrival of some of them stands at around 40%. On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who would allow only a small number of immigrants of different ethnic origins has remained steady at around 30%. Finally, although the share of those who would allow no one to enter and reside has been declining year by year, it still remains above 10%.

Similar findings are recorded in the case of attitudes toward immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe, as more than 40% of respondents maintain a negative view of this group of immigrants. These results can be interpreted through the lens of ethnic competition theory, given that the population expects poorer groups of immigrants to place an additional burden on the society's economic system and thereby reduce resources available to the resident population. At the same time, the availability of cheap and abundant labor generally alters working conditions, which is why the inflow of this group of immigrants is often associated with their deterioration. In addition, immigrants

from poorer countries are often associated with different lifestyles that can influence the appearance and character of the cities to which they migrate. However, since the inflow of this population into Europe cannot be stopped—and from the perspective of the labor market and demographic decline is, in fact, necessary—these prejudices are gradually diminishing, as confirmed by these findings: the prevalence of negative attitudes toward this group of immigrants is steadily decreasing.

**Graph 2.** *Attitudes of European citizens towards immigrants from different groups, 2016-2023. (in %)*



Although not dominant, it is evident that anti-immigration attitudes are present among the population of European countries. According to the postulates of ethnic competition theory, such attitudes are formed based on prejudices that members of the native population hold toward outgroups, which in turn generate a sense of threat to their position and access to resources. An analysis of average values related to the perception of all three types of threat—economic, cultural, and overall living conditions—shows that over the past decade, there has been a decline across all three dimensions (Graphs 3–5). These results can, on the one hand, as already noted, be explained by the increasingly visible consequences of depopulation in European countries, which are most clearly manifested in labor shortages, thereby raising the real need for immigrants. Alongside labor deficits in low-skilled sectors—arising in parallel with the improved educational structure of the native population—long-term low fertility rates have also altered the age structure, with the share of older people in these countries steadily increasing. This further generates the problem of elderly care, which is again

largely addressed through immigration, predominantly of women (Vesković Anđelković, 2024).

On the other hand, despite the steadily growing number of immigrants overall, the number of asylum seekers has drastically declined over the past decade. Since asylum seekers are the most vulnerable group and usually culturally and ethnically very different from the European population, this has further contributed to a reduced perception of threat, particularly in the cultural and economic domains. In fact, increased immigration from European countries that meets labor market needs, combined with the reduced inflow of people from Africa and the Middle East in the last decade, has led to a decline in anti-immigration attitudes among the populations of European states. This is also confirmed by the average values regarding perceptions of different types of threat, which consistently decrease over time. The findings point to small variations in perceptions of immigration's consequences across different dimensions—namely, culture, economy, and overall living conditions. In nearly all the years observed, the mean values for all three dimensions consistently hovered around 5.

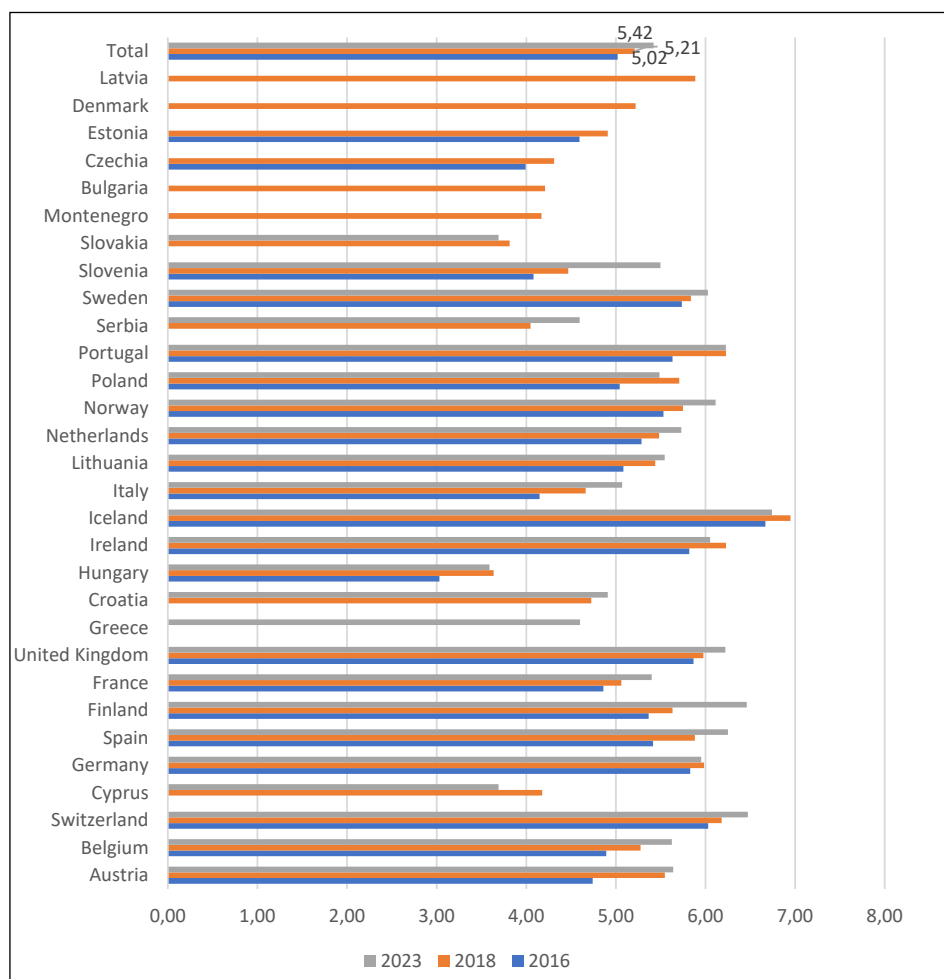
Concerning the perceived effects of immigration on the economy (Graph 3), the results of the one-way analysis of variance for 2016<sup>8</sup> show that the lowest mean values were recorded in Hungary and the Czech Republic (below 4), followed by Slovenia, Italy, and Estonia. In contrast, anti-immigrant attitudes were least pronounced in Switzerland and Iceland, where mean values exceeded 6. A decade later<sup>9</sup>, however, the picture looks somewhat different. Hungary again recorded the highest levels of anti-immigrant attitudes, but Cyprus and Slovakia also displayed very low results (below 4). Slightly higher, though still relatively low values (below 5), were observed in Greece, Serbia, and Croatia. Italy presents a notable shift: unlike in 2016, when it belonged to the group of countries with strongly negative attitudes toward immigrants, it now records values above 5, indicating a more favorable perception of immigration's economic impact. Switzerland and Iceland remain the countries where immigration is viewed most positively in economic terms. Hungary's unchanged result can be explained by the Orbán regime's consistent public advocacy of anti-immigration policies. This stance came to prominence after the construction of the border wall in 2015, which altered the so-called Balkan route (Stojić Mitrović, 2019). These findings suggest that the perception of immigration as an economic threat is shaped primarily by public discourse rather than by the actual flow of immigrants. Since this discourse has not changed, it is unsurprising that Hungary's anti-immigration values concerning the economy have also remained stable. By contrast, values in Greece, Serbia, and Croatia have shifted, reflecting their role as primarily transit countries for migrants en route to Western and Northern Europe.

---

8 Brown-Forsythe=215.495: sig=0,000

9 Brown-Forsythe=213.042: sig=0,000

**Graph 3.** *Attitudes of European citizens towards the statement Immigration bad or good for country's economy<sup>10</sup> – Mean (2016-2023)*



Significant cross-country differences are also evident when assessing the impact of immigration on cultural life (Graph 4). A decade ago<sup>11</sup>, the perception that immigration undermines cultural life was widespread among residents of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, and Austria. This can be understood as a consequence of the migration flows during the so-called 2015 migration crisis. Similar attitudes were also recorded in Lithuania and Slovenia. By contrast, the highest mean values at that time were observed in Sweden, Finland, and Iceland, with no statistically significant differences among them. The results of the 11th round<sup>12</sup> reveal that Hungary, together with Cyprus, continues to hold the

10 Values range from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates *bad for the economy* and 10 *good for the economy*.

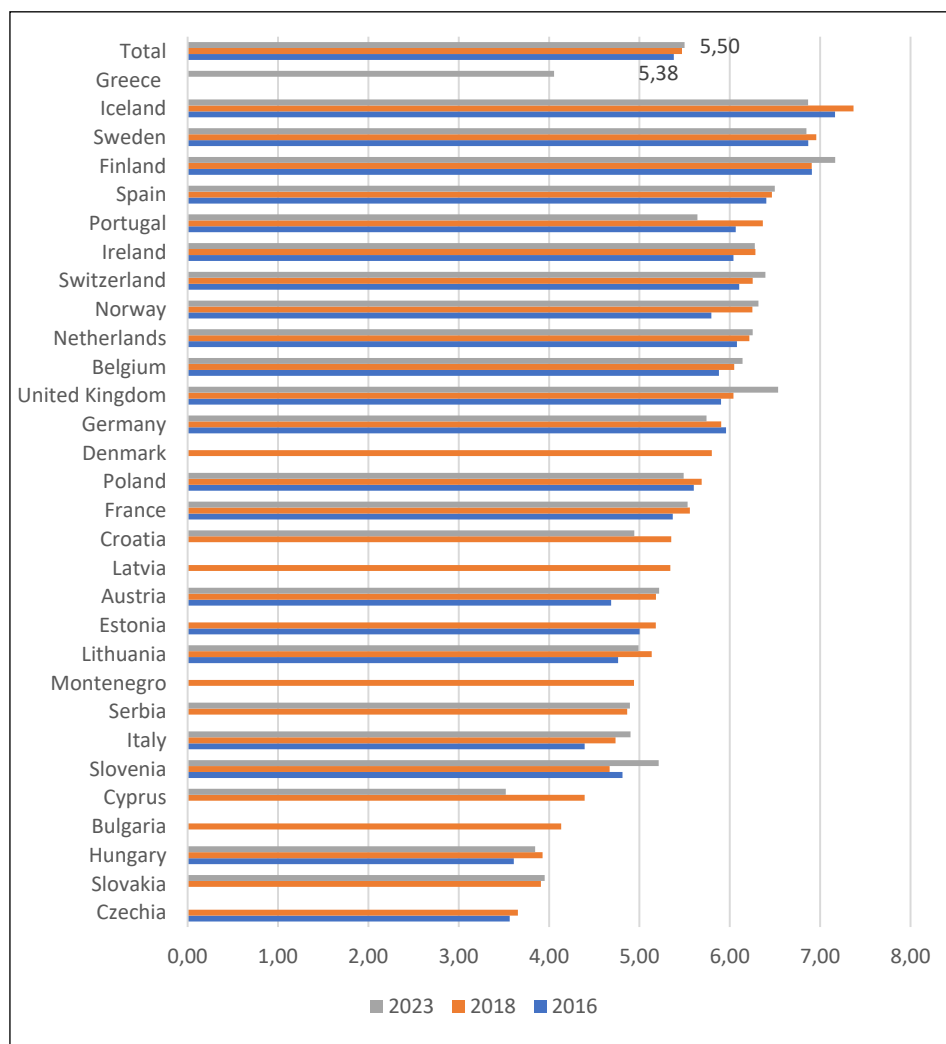
11 Brown-Forsythe=338.116; sig=0,000

12 Brown-Forsythe=260.184; sig=0,000



most pronounced negative views regarding the cultural impact of immigration, followed by Slovakia, Greece, Serbia, Italy, and Croatia. At the other end of the scale, Sweden, Iceland, and Finland maintain the perception that immigration enriches a country's cultural life. Given that the share of immigrants originating from non-European countries is relatively high in Sweden, Iceland, and Finland (Eurostat, 2025a), these findings can also be interpreted through the lens of intergroup contact theory—that is, as a consequence of direct contact and habituation to immigrant populations.

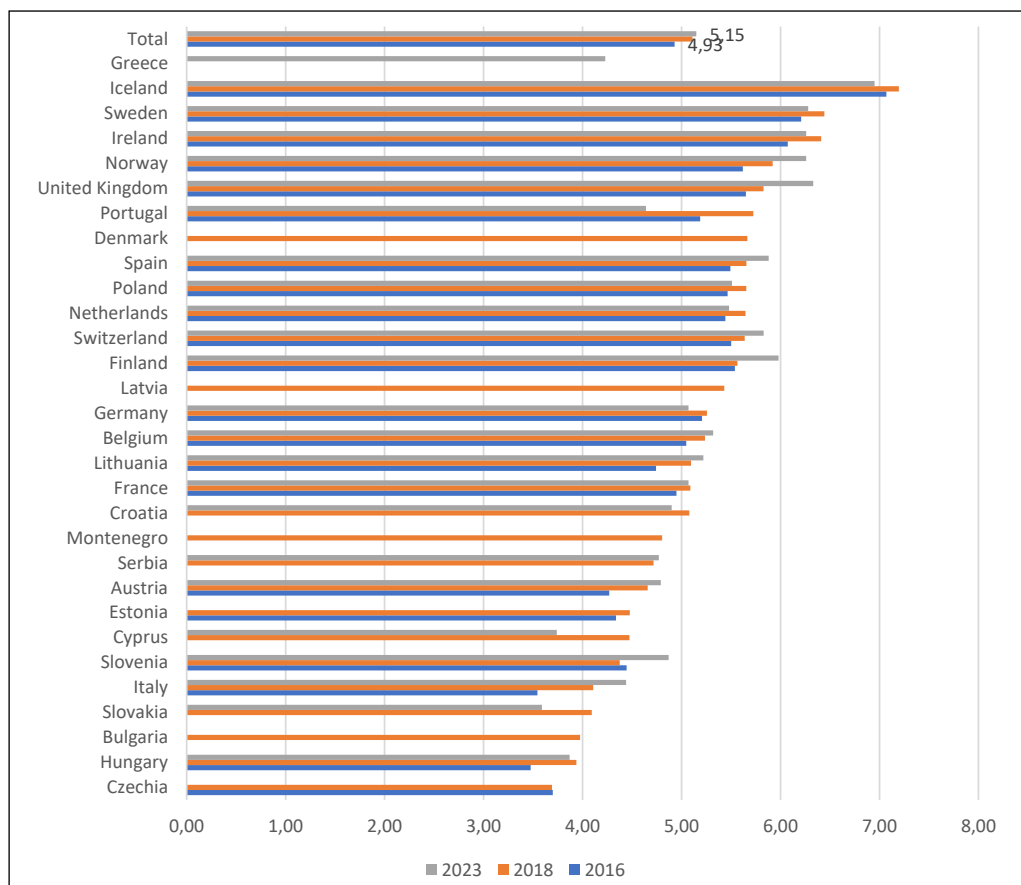
**Graph 4.** *Attitudes of European citizens towards the statement Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants<sup>13</sup>, Mean (2016-2023)*



13 Values range from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates *cultural life undermined* and 10 *cultural life enriched*.

Finally, the analysis of variance based on 2016 data<sup>14</sup> showed that Hungarians, Italians, and Czechs expressed the most negative assessments of the impact of immigrants on living conditions, with mean values below 4 (Graph 5). Once again, it is evident that uncertainty combined with negative media portrayals of refugees from North Africa and the Middle East during the “migration crisis” contributed to the formation of negative attitudes, particularly in countries located along established migration routes. Slightly higher, though still below 5, scores were recorded in Austria, Estonia, and Slovenia. In contrast, as with the previous two dimensions, respondents in Ireland, Sweden, and Iceland perceived immigrants as making their countries better places to live, with values exceeding 6 in all three countries. The most recent research findings (11th round) indicate that residents of Slovakia, Cyprus, and Hungary largely believe that immigrants make their countries worse places to live, with mean

**Graph 5.** *Attitudes of European citizens towards the statement Immigrants make country worse or better place to live<sup>15</sup>, Mean (2016–2023)*



14 Brown-Forsythe=315.394; sig=0,000

15 Values range from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates *worse place to live* and 10 *better place to live*.

values below 4. This is attributable either to public anti-immigration policies or to geographic positions that place them along major transit routes. Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Serbia follow with slightly higher, but still low, scores, all below 5. Conversely, the impact of immigrants on living conditions is once again assessed most positively in Iceland.

In addition to understanding the above results, which indicate cross-country differences in the intensity of anti-immigration attitudes regarding the impact of immigrants on culture, the economy, and overall living conditions, as consequences of geographic and demographic factors, previous research suggests that both individual and contextual factors also influence these differences. Based on data from the last round of research, Table 1 presents the results of a Hierarchical linear model constructed to examine the effects of these factors on the perceived strength of various threats. First, the ICC values show that, across all three dimensions of the perceived impact of immigration on various domains (culture, economy etc.), citizens' attitudes toward the impact of immigration depend far more on their individual characteristics than on the country in which they live.

**Table 1.** *Predictors of the Perceived Impact of Immigration on Various Domains: Results of a Hierarchical Linear Model, 2023 (11<sup>th</sup> round)*<sup>16</sup>

	<i>Immigration bad or good for country's economy</i>		<i>Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants</i>		<i>Immigrants make country worse or better place to live</i>	
Predictors	Estimate	Sig.	Estimate	Sig.	Estimate	Sig.
Intercept	5.651	<b>0.000</b>	6.015	<b>0.000</b>	6.005	<b>0.000</b>
Z score_gdppc	0.479	<b>0.002</b>	0.526	<b>0.002</b>	0.489	<b>0.001</b>
Z score immg_total	0.203	0.191	0.186	0.275	0.056	0.688
Age – continuous variable	0.002	<b>0.022</b>	-	0.955	-0.000	0.465
Gender – Male	0.115	<b>0.000</b>	-0.197	<b>0.000</b>	-0.098	<b>0.000</b>
Years of education – continuous variable	0.088	<b>0.000</b>	0.091	<b>0.000</b>	0.070	<b>0.000</b>
Big city	0.187	<b>0.000</b>	0.302	<b>0.000</b>	0.208	<b>0.000</b>
Towns ( <b>village – ref</b> )	0.050	0.106	0.113	<b>0.000</b>	0.054	0.066
Main activity – paid work	0.048	0.190	0.108	<b>0.003</b>	0.094	<b>0.006</b>
Main activity – education	0.458	<b>0.000</b>	0.507	<b>0.000</b>	0.489	<b>0.000</b>
Unemployed ( <b>inactive – ref</b> )	0.019	0.778	0.136	0.049	0.023	0.716
Left – right orientation	-0.143	<b>0.000</b>	-0.191	<b>0.000</b>	-0.165	<b>0.000</b>
Citizen of country	-0.580	<b>0.000</b>	-0.469	<b>0.000</b>	-0.529	<b>0.000</b>
Born in country	-0.298	<b>0.000</b>	-0.188	<b>0.006</b>	-0.381	<b>0.000</b>
Father born in country	-0.222	<b>0.000</b>	-0.405	<b>0.000</b>	-0.285	<b>0.000</b>
Feel part of same race or ethnic group as most people in country	-0.028	0.525	0.024	0.594	-0.015	0.721
Intraclass correlation coefficient – ICC	<b>0,121</b> (12,1%)		<b>0,138</b> (13,8%)		<b>0,123</b> (12,3%)	

16 The dependent variable is represented by the statements *Immigration is bad or good for the country's economy*, *Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants* and *Immigrants make country worse or better place to live*.

When analyzing the impact of contextual factors such as GDP per capita and the total number of immigrants on attitudes toward the economic effects of immigration, the results of the hierarchical linear model show that GDP per capita has a statistically significant effect, and it in a positive direction with the findings of previous studies (Quillian, 1995). Respondents from countries with higher GDP per capita tend to hold more positive views regarding the economic effects of immigration, consistent with other research. This finding, in addition to aligning with the assumptions of ethnic competition theory, also supports earlier insights in this study, which show very low levels of anti-immigration attitudes among the populations of Switzerland, Ireland, and Iceland —countries that stand out for their high GDP. In contrast, the share of immigrants, controlling for the effects of other variables, does not have a statistically significant impact on the perception of economic threat from immigrants, which is contrary to theoretical expectations.

Based on the analysis of respondents' sociodemographic characteristics and their attitudes toward the economic impact of immigrants, we observe that, in line with initial assumptions, most variables have a statistically significant effect. Gender shows a statistically significant effect: men are more likely than women to perceive immigration as having a positive impact on the country's economy. Age also has a statistically significant impact, although the effect is somewhat weaker: older respondents believe that immigration can have a positive impact on the economy. Further analysis of individual variables reveals that education, measured in years of formal schooling and considered a key indicator of modernization, has a significant impact. Respondents with higher levels of education are more likely to emphasize the positive impact of immigration on the overall economic flows of the country. This can be attributed to resource competition, as immigrant populations are often less educated and have fewer resources. Place of residence also shows a similar effect: urban residents are more likely to view immigration as benefiting the country's economy (although their jobs are the most at risk) than those living in rural areas. Economic activity status also has a statistically significant impact on attitudes toward immigration. The findings indicate that only respondents who are currently in education show greater openness toward immigration. In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found between employed, unemployed, and inactive individuals, which are the reference category.

Values and political orientation also emerge as significant correlates of acceptance and attitudes toward immigrants. The research indicates that political orientation, measured on a left–right scale, has a significant impact on attitudes toward immigrants: respondents identifying as right-leaning are more likely to hold negative views. This finding aligns with the results of other studies (see Davidov and Semyonov, 2017). Finally, we analyzed the impact of respondents' place of birth, their father's place of birth, and citizenship status as indicators of potential migration experience, as well as the influence of their perceived belonging to the same ethnic and racial group as the majority population.

The results show that all variables, except perceived group membership, are statistically significant predictors of anti-immigration attitudes and rank among the strongest indicators of these attitudes. Specifically, respondents born in the country where they currently live, those holding its citizenship, and those whose fathers were born there are more likely to perceive immigration as harmful to the national economy. In contrast, respondents who are immigrants themselves, or whose origins lie in another country, feel less threatened by new groups of immigrants. This result is expected, as experience fosters elements of identification with outgroups (Schneider, 2008).

The results of the statistical analysis of individual and contextual factors on the strength of attitudes toward immigrants as a threat to the country's culture reveal a somewhat similar picture. The results of the hierarchical linear model show that GDP per capita has a statistically significant effect, while the share of immigrants, does not have a statistically significant impact. Regarding individual characteristics, age shows no statistically significant effect, while most other predictors are significant. Gender has a statistically significant impact, but the direction differs: men are more likely than women to perceive immigration as negatively affecting the country's cultural life. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that men are more likely to endorse conservative values (Schneider, 2008). The findings regarding the influence of the remaining predictors indicate a conclusion that aligns closely with that of the previous model<sup>17</sup>.

Finally, regarding predictors of general attitudes toward immigrants—measured by the statement “Immigrants make the country a worse or better place to live”—the results summarize the findings for the previous two dimensions. Among contextual factors, GDP per capita has a statistically significant effect: residents of countries with higher GDP are more likely to believe that immigrants make the country a better place to live. In contrast, the share of immigrants, contrary to theoretical expectations, again does not have a statistically significant effect. Regarding individual factors, the results align with those for attitudes toward economic and cultural threats. Men, who are generally more conservative than women, are more likely to perceive immigrants as worsening overall living conditions. Conversely, respondents with higher education and those living in large cities more frequently highlight the positive impact of immigrants. As with cultural attitudes, employed respondents and those currently in education are more likely to emphasize the positive effects of immigration than inactive individuals. No statistically significant difference was found between unemployed and inactive respondents. Political orientation also influences this perception in the expected way: right-leaning respondents are more likely to assert that immigrants make the country a worse place to live. Finally, respondents born in the country where they currently reside, those holding its citizenship, and those whose fathers were born there are more likely to perceive immigrants as making the country worse overall.

17 Unlike the previous model, the results show that employed respondents perceive immigrants as enhancing cultural life.

## Conclusion

The long tradition of immigration to European countries has led citizens to be at least partially open to immigrants, particularly when they belong to the same ethnic group. However, it is evident, as we assumed with our second hypothesis, that a certain segment of the population continues to hold strong anti-immigration attitudes, stemming from a persistent fear of potential threats posed by the arrival of a significant number of foreigners. Immigrants are perceived as a threat to all societal subsystems, with the degree of perceived threat varying according to the ethnic, age, and educational composition of the immigrant population. Moreover, the structure of the respondents themselves, expressed through their individual characteristics, influences their perception of threat from immigrant populations. Finally, the availability of resources, which depends on the national wealth of the country, measured in this study by GDP, largely affects the intensity of prejudice. In line with the postulates of ethnic competition theory, we can conclude that competition over resources indeed exists, with the quantity of resources and the competencies of competing groups significantly shaping the intensity of intergroup competition.

Analyzing the impact of contextual factors on respondents' attitudes toward the effects of immigrants on life in the country, as well as on the culture and the economy, we found that a country's wealth—measured by GDP per capita—significantly shapes public attitudes. Reduced competition, in the sense of greater resource availability, lowers the perceived threat from outgroups. Notably, contact with immigrant populations, contrary to expectations, did not affect respondents' attitudes. Specifically, the immigration rate in a country proved to be an insignificant predictor of anti-immigrant attitudes among citizens, which is in opposite with the theoretical background and results of other research (Quillian, 1995; Schneider, 2008). This is likely due to the still-limited integration of immigrant populations in European countries, meaning that the general population has had little opportunity for closer contact with them. These findings underscore the need for more effective migration policies in European societies, particularly given that such policies can positively influence public attitudes toward immigrant populations (Gregurović, 2021).

In addition to contextual factors, the results regarding the influence of individual factors on these attitudes are also noteworthy. The results showed that men are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward migrants, whereas a higher level of education is associated with greater openness toward them. When it comes to place of residence, it has been shown that residents of large cities are less likely to develop aversion toward the immigrant population. In the same way, respondents' ideology, in terms of both value systems and political orientation on the left-right scale, proved to be highly significant. In accordance with the statistical results, the responses of certain countries during the "migration crisis" clearly showed that right-leaning individuals—and, in many cases, the regimes governing them—tend to display strongly anti-immigrant attitudes.

In contrast to the EU's fundamental value of freedom of movement, anti-immigrant attitudes remain present in European countries. Efforts to develop affirmative and integration policies for immigrant populations have only made limited progress in improving relations between native and immigrant communities. The promotion of the positive effects of immigration on society—and even the necessity of immigration due to persistently low fertility rates—has not had the same impact across all countries. What this research and analysis do not address is the influence of media discourse on the formation of these attitudes, which could help explain differences in citizens' views across countries despite, at least theoretically, similar public policies (Chouliaraki and Stolić, 2017). Additionally, inherited or historical discourse has not been considered. Therefore, the results presented here open avenues for future research aimed at a deeper understanding of the formation and variation of anti-immigrant attitudes in European states.

## Literature

- Bonifazi, C. (2008). "Evolution of regional patterns of international migration in Europe", In Bonifazi, C., et al (ed.), *International migration in Europe: New trend and new methods of analysis*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Boyle, P., Halfacree, K. & Robinson, V. (1998). *Exploring contemporary migration*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Castles, S., De Haas, H. & Miller, M. J. (2014). *The age of migration: International Population Movements in the modern world*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chouliaraki, L. & Stolić, T. (2017). Rethinking media responsibility in the refugee 'crisis': a visual typology of European news. *Media, culture and society*, 39(8): 1162 – 1177.
- Čučić Kumpes, J. Kumpes J., Klempić Bogadi S., & Podgorelec, J. (2024). Evropska "migracijska kriza" I stavovi prema imigrantima I imigraciji u Hrvatskoj. *Migracijske i etničke teme*, (40): 217 – 252.
- Dalkiran, M. & Lipman, J. (2025). 'But we have to be realistic': examining the origins of temporary protection in the USA and European Union. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 38(1):181-196.
- Davidov, E. & Semyonov M. (2017). Attitudes toward immigrants in European societies. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 58(5): 359-366.
- Doomernik, J. & Bruquetas-Callejo M. (2016). National Immigration and Integration Policies in Europe Since 1973. in G. Garcés-Mascreñas and Penninx, R. (ed.). *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe: Contexts, Levels and Actors*. IMISCOE Research Series. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 57 – 76.
- Gorodzeisky, A. & Semyonov M. (2017). *Labour force participation, unemployment and occupational attainment among immigrants in West European countries*. PLoS ONE, 12(5).

- Gregurović, M. (2021). Integration Policies and Public Perceptions of Immigrants in Europe: ESS Meets MIPEX in the Aftermath of the European "Migration Crisis". *Croatian Sociological Review*, 51(3): 347-380.
- Eurostat (2025a). *Migration and Asylum*, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration\\_and\\_asylum](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_asylum)
- Eurostat (2025b). *EU population diversity by citizenship and country of birth*, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU\\_population\\_diversity\\_by\\_citizenship\\_and\\_country\\_of\\_birth](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_population_diversity_by_citizenship_and_country_of_birth)
- European Commission (2025). *Migrant integration hub*, available on: [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub\\_en?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub_en?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Hatton, T. (2004). Seeking asylum in Europe. *Economic Policy*, 19(38): 5-62.
- Hellwig, T. & Sinno, A. (2016). Different groups, different threats: public attitudes towards immigrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 3:1-21.
- Ivarsflaten, E. (2005). Threatened by diversity: why restrictive asylum and immigration policies appeal to western Europeans? *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 15(1): 21-45.
- Kovacheva, S. & Hristozova, D. (2021). Work careers of Bulgarian migrants in the European Union. *Sociologija*, 63(4): 603-623.
- Labour migration. (2025) Migration data portal, <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration-statistics>
- Lange, T. (2013) Return migration of foreign students and non-resident tuition fees, *Journal of population Economics*, 26(2), 70 – 718.
- Lukić, V. & Lović Obradović S. (2025). *Srbija kao odredište: ko se doseljava, a ko se vraća?* Beograd: RZS.
- Petrović, I. & Vesković Anđelković M. (2025) Immigration between needs and fears: Attitudes of Serbian citizens toward immigrants. In Backović, V. & Marković A. (ed.). *New Divisions, Struggles and Solidarities in South East Europe*. Belgrade: SNDS.
- Predojević Despić, J. (2009). Migrantske mreže – nezaobilazna perspektiva u proučavanju savremenih međunarodnih migracija. *Sociološki pregled*, 2(43): 209-229.
- Schneider, S. (2008). Anti-immigrant Attitudes in Europe: Outgroup Size and Percieved Ethnic Threat. *European Sociological Review*, 1(29):53-67.
- Semyonov M, Raijman R. & Yom-Tov, A (2004). Population size, perceived threat and exclusion: A multiple-indicators analysis of attitudes toward foreigners in Germany. *Social Science Research*, 33(4): 681-701.
- Semyonov, M., Raijman, R. & Gorodzeisky, A. (2006). The Rise of Anti-Foreigner Sentiment in European Societies, 1988-2000. *American Sociological Review*, 71(3):426-449.
- Scheepers, P. Gijsberts, M. & Coenders M. (2002). Ethnic exclusionism in european countries. Public opposition to civil rights for legal migrants as a response to percieved ethnic threat. *European Sociological Review*, 18: 17-34.



- Schlueter, E., Meuleman, B. & Davidov E. (2013). Immigrant interaction policies and perceived group threat: A multi-level study of 27 Western and Eastern European Countries. *Social Science Research*, 42: 670 – 682.
- Stojić Mitrović, M. (2019). *Migration, Informality and the State in the Balkans*. Routledge.
- Tremblay, K. (2005). Academic mobility and immigration“. *Journal of Studies in International Educations*, 9(3): 196-228.
- Quilian, L. (1995). Prejudice as a response to perceived group threat: population composition and anti-immigrant and racial prejudice in Europe. *American Sociological Review*, 60: 586 – 611.
- Van Mol, C. & H. de Valk (2016). Migration and Immigrants in Europe: A Historical and Demographic Perspective, In B. Garcès-Mascarenas & Penninx R. (ed.). *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe*, IMISCOE Research Series, 31–55.
- Vesković Anđelković, M. & Jovanović Ajzenhamer, N. (2025). International Education in Serbia: Chances and Challenges. Backović V. & A. Marković (ed.) *New Divisions, Struggles and Solidarities in South East Europe*. Beograd: Sociological Scientific Society of Serbia.
- Vesković Anđelković, M. (2024). *Međugeneracijska solidarnost kao odgovor na savremene demografske izazove*, Beograd: ISI.
- World Bank (2024) *Open data, GDP per capita*, available on: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>, accessed: 27.8.2025.
- Wiesbrock, A. (2016). The Evolution of EU Migration Policies: Toward a Balanced, Comprehensive, and Common Approach? Besharov, D. (ed.) *Adjusting to a World in Motion: Trends in Global Migration Policy*. Oxford University Press.