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European Attitudes Towards Immigrants

Exploring Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and
Welfare Chauvinism in Contemporary Europe

Doctoral thesis

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Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

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Summary

This doctoral thesis investigates different aspects of attitudes towards immigrants in contemporary Europe. It explores welfare chauvinism, anti-immigrant attitudes, anti-Muslim attitudes and racist attitudes. This is done on several different levels across four peer-reviewed articles. It begins with an article investigating anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in 34 European countries across a 27-year time period. Following this, the next article explores welfare chauvinism across 19 European countries in 2016. Finally, the two remaining articles each explore welfare chauvinistic and racist attitudes, respectively, in what is often considered the most tolerant and intolerant parts of Europe, the Nordic countries and Central and Eastern Europe.

The main findings of this doctoral thesis provide insight into how individuals respond to immigration across countries and thereby contribute to the understanding of how to alleviate tension between immigrants and members of the majority populations. Several conclusions can be drawn. The first of these is that there is a worrying trend of intolerance towards outgroups in Eastern Europe, which has continued to grow since 1999. In Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, high levels of intolerance towards immigrants with a different skin colour can also be found across the political spectrum *before* the refugee crisis of 2015–2016. I explain that this is largely due to the low levels of immigration in Eastern Europe, which prevents intergroup contact to break some of the stereotypes majority populations have towards immigrants. In contrast, Western European countries have a long history of immigration, and another prevalent finding is that Western Europeans are becoming increasingly tolerant of immigrants.

This thesis also investigates welfare chauvinism in Europe and finds that the more objective macroeconomic conditions of a country are poor predictors of welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Individuals' perceptions of macroeconomic conditions, such as the economic situation of the country and the state of the health services, seem to be more relevant for understanding the phenomenon. This is important, as individuals often have flawed perceptions of reality. In the Nordic region, welfare chauvinism was found to be mostly directed towards culturally dissimilar immigrants. Additionally, the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism appears to be almost non-existent among countries in this region, whereas a more moderate form is very prevalent. It also needs emphasizing that these moderate forms of welfare chauvinism are more exclusionary than current policies are in all three of the countries sampled, which may indicate declining support for the Nordic universal welfare state.

Acknowledgements

It doesn't feel that long ago that I was struggling during my first year as a sociology student to understand what on earth p-values, standard errors and linear regression were. To now be writing the acknowledgements of my quantitative doctoral thesis just feels plainly absurd.

Many people have made this thesis possible, first and foremost among these are my two supervisors, Marko Valenta and Zan Strabac. Marko has been an excellent supervisor and, in many ways, has made me the researcher I am today. While giving great advice academically, continually emphasizing the holy grail of four articles and a "kappe", you also emphasized that academic life is something more than just sitting in an office writing your thesis, like, for example, attending seminars in Capri or drinking whisky on the rooftops of Morocco. Thank you. Likewise, Zan has been a major influence on me by being my supervisor for my bachelor's, master's and now doctoral thesis. I quickly learned that when Zan's comments "ok", this would mean "this is very good, David", and I have come to appreciate the more regular "oks". I am grateful for everything during these years, particularly having an answer to every statistical question that I've ever asked. You were the first one who planted the seed of doing a Ph.D. and I have thoroughly enjoyed these years.

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Finally, I would like to thank my mum and dad for simply being the best and for having always been there for me. Love you both!

Ann Arbor, January 2023.

David Andreas Bell

List of papers

Article 1: A Comparative Analysis of Changes in Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe: 1990–2017

Article 2: Perceptions and Realities: Explaining Welfare Chauvinism in Europe

Article 3: Nordic Welfare Chauvinism: A Comparative Study of Welfare Chauvinism in Sweden, Norway and Finland

Article 4: The Importance of Skin Colour in Central Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Racist Attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic

Contents

1. Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, Western Europe has experienced economic growth, decolonialization and the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC), later succeeded by the European Union (EU). These factors, along with many others, led to a general increase in migration to the continent. Migration also began increasing in Eastern Europe following the fall of communism in the 1990s. With an increased immigrant population, hostility towards these foreigners became prevalent, and can still be found in virtually every European country today (Bello, 2017; Semyonov et al., 2006). Several major events have taken place during the 21st century which have made immigration and the relationship between majority populations and immigrant minorities a central aspect of society. The terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq led to increased scrutiny and hostility to Muslim immigrants in Europe in the first decade of the new millennium (Allen, 2010; Esposito & Kalin, 2011). During the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, immigration again became highly politicized, particularly so in the more recent members of the EU from Eastern Europe (Hutter & Kriesi, 2022). *Anti-immigrant* attitudes in Europe are directed towards every type of immigrant group. Often, the more culturally dissimilar immigrants, like Muslim immigrants, tend to be subjected to more hostile attitudes (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020); however, anti-immigrant attitudes can also be found towards other European immigrants. Negative attitudes towards Eastern European immigrants were, for example, an important aspect of the Brexit referendum in 2016 (Ford & Goodwin, 2017; Sobolewska & Ford, 2020).

Additionally, arguments over how immigrants fit into the existing European welfare states with the benefits this entails, have been a key issue. Research has begun to explore prejudice towards immigrants in the realm of social policy by investigating the concept of *welfare chauvinism*. The term was originally developed to explain the structural changes and new cleavages in Western Europe in the 1990s, when right-wing nationalist parties became supportive of the idea that the welfare state should exist primarily for the native population and that immigrants should be excluded from receiving its benefits (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). It has since evolved to include welfare chauvinistic *attitudes*. This entails majority populations hesitation to award immigrants the benefits of the welfare state.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to investigate European attitudes towards immigrants in contemporary Europe. To accomplish this, the dissertation asks the research

question: *What are the central developments and drivers of majority populations' attitudes towards immigrants across Europe?* This is a sizeable and broad task; however, by exploring different nuances of the phenomenon in different European contexts, I believe the four articles that make up this dissertation will provide a good overview of European attitudes towards immigrants and thus answer the overarching research question. Using survey data, the dissertation consists of four individual articles that each have a clear quantitative and empirical focus. The first two articles explore these attitudes on a European level by investigating two related, but still different, dimensions of negative attitudes. The latter two concentrate on the Nordic and Central and Eastern European regions, two regions that are often considered to be at the opposite ends of the spectrum regarding their populations' attitudes towards immigrants (Bello, 2017; Strabac et al., 2012).

More specifically, article 1 investigates the changes in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes across Europe in the period 1990–2017 using data from the European Values Study. It particularly focuses on a comparison between Western and Eastern Europe and the development of these attitudes over time. The study also applies a pseudo-panel analysis to study what affects anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes on an individual level over time. Article 2 explores how various macroeconomic factors, with a particular emphasis on unemployment, affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes across 19 European countries. It also investigates how perceptions of macroeconomic conditions may be of more importance than the actual reality of a country's economic situation. Article 3 centres on the Nordic region and examines how strict and moderate forms of welfare chauvinism are important nuances for understanding the phenomenon in these countries. It also explores how factors such as socio-economic aspects, satisfaction with the country and attitudes towards both welfare benefits and immigrants may affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes in the region. Finally, article 4 explores how symbolic and realistic threats apply to racist attitudes in Central Eastern Europe. As the data was collected in the months before the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, it has provided a unique opportunity to investigate the existing attitudes that were prevalent *before* the refugee crisis in the countries that were among the most staunchly hostile to receiving refugees.

The attitudes of majority populations towards immigrant outsiders have garnered significant scholarly attention, and quantitative empirical studies in particular are common when studying the phenomenon in Europe. As several scholars have pointed out, almost all existing literature on the phenomenon has been conducted in either Western Europe or the US

(Dennison & Geddes, 2021; Gonnot et al., 2020).[1] Although I acknowledge the need to expand research on prejudice towards different outgroups beyond Europe, I still believe there is significant knowledge to be gained by exploring the development of these attitudes in Europe.

One of the main contributions of the dissertation is that both articles 1 and 4 have a clear focus on attitudes in Eastern Europe. Because of the lack of reliable cross-country data from Eastern Europe, there is relatively little understanding of the attitudes that can be found in this region. The region has seen rapid and large-scale changes over recent decades, and knowledge of these aspects is in particular demand. Recent studies have also found that the theoretical models for explaining negative attitudes towards immigrants in Western Europe are not as adequate for explaining the same phenomenon in Eastern Europe (Bell & Strabac, 2020; Vala & Pereira, 2018). This shows that there is still a significant knowledge gap in our understanding of what affects attitudes across the *whole* of Europe. These two articles will hopefully contribute to a greater understanding of the attitudes that can be found across the whole of the European continent and not just Western Europe.

The two articles regarding welfare chauvinism have a more Western European focus; however, studies regarding welfare chauvinistic attitudes are still a relatively new field of study that has only become prevalent during the last decade (Careja & Harris, 2022). Article 2 builds on existing research and tries to expand our understanding of welfare chauvinism in 19 European countries. The third article nuances the discussion surrounding the phenomenon, exploring how Nordic countries perceive immigrants by introducing what we distinguish as strict and moderate forms of welfare chauvinism.

The dissertation is divided into several interrelated parts. It begins with a review of anti-immigrant attitudes and welfare chauvinism. In this chapter, I explain why we should study attitudes and the development of the field of prejudice. Following this, I explain the two most prominent theoretical approaches for studying negative attitudes: intergroup contact theory and intergroup threat theories. The chapter ends with an explanation of the phenomenon of welfare chauvinism and how the study of attitudes towards immigrants relates to social work. What follows is a methods chapter in which I discuss the data sources used and explain the comparative method and its strengths and limitations. The chapter also includes a discussion

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[1] See especially Gonnot and colleagues' (2020) overview of the staggering number of studies conducted in the US, Germany, France and the UK when compared to other countries outside the "West".

of the key variables used in the dissertation and ends with an account of some biases that are of relevance. Next is a summary of the four articles and finally, a concluding chapter.

2. Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Welfare Chauvinism: A Review

2.1 Why Study Attitudes?

Attitudes as a scientific concept stems from the late 19th century, when the pioneers of modern psychology attempted to probe the elements of consciousness by exploring individuals' mental lives through a more systematic and scientific approach than had been used previously (DeFleur & Westie, 1963). However, the more modern definition of attitude as a term indicating the relationship between an individual and a socially significant object became more widespread with the development of social psychology in the early 1920s (DeFleur & Westie, 1963). For this dissertation, I shall take a starting point in Eagly and Chaiken's (1993, p. 1) definition of an attitude as "[…] a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour". These entities or objects can be physical objects (The Eiffel Tower, the local church), institutions (parliament, the university), policies (vaccine passports, abortion), events (the refugee crisis, the Arab spring) and, importantly for this dissertation, racial, ethnic or other groups (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

One major reason for studying attitudes is the assumption that attitudes affect behaviour. We expect that an individual who is sceptical towards vaccines would be less likely to get vaccinated. Furthermore, an individual who enjoys football is more likely to attend a football game. Likewise for our purposes, a central reason to study attitudes towards immigrants is the expectation that negative attitudes towards immigrants in a society will increase the likelihood of some form of discrimination and of support for discriminatory policies. The discussions surrounding how attitudes can influence behaviour is usually defined as the attitude-behaviour (A-B) relationship (Schuman & Johnson, 1976). Although perfect correlation between an attitude and a specific behaviour cannot be expected, we can expect a small, moderate or even large positive correlation between an expressed attitude and a specific behaviour. However, correlation between attitude and behaviour is not always clear, as shown in several studies from the 1930s to the 1960s that questioned the legitimacy of the notion that one could expect attitudes to lead to certain behaviours. The most prominent among these was probably Richard LaPiere's (1934) classic study in which he travelled across the US with a Chinese student and his wife for two years. They visited 66 hotels and 184 restaurants and were refused service only once. Six months later, he sent out a questionnaire to the establishments that they visited to investigate whether they would accept "members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment?" (LaPiere, 1934, p. 233). Among the 128 establishments that responded, more than 90 percent replied that they would refuse a Chinese guest, one responded

that they would accept and the rest were uncertain. In other words, there was almost zero correlation between the professed attitude and the behaviour. Although the study has received several valid criticisms (see Dockery & Bedeian, 1989 for a good overview),[2] it still showed that the relationship between an attitude and the subsequent behaviour is not necessarily straightforward.

In the subsequent years, several studies on the relationship between attitude and behaviour started to appear, and several of these studies found little to no relationship between attitudes and behaviour (see Schuman & Johnson, 1976 for a good summary). In particular, a review study by Wicker (1969) that questioned the relevance of attitudes towards behaviour led to a "crisis of confidence" in the field (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Nevertheless, in their review, Schuman and Johnson (1976) concluded that most A-B studies yield positive results and that these correlations are large enough to infer some kind of causal force. One of the mistakes that was previously made was that the attitudinal and behavioural variables were not measured at the same level of specificity. This is clearly shown in Fishbein and Ajzen's (1974) study assessing the effect of religiosity on religious behaviour. The participants were asked about their level of religiosity, while also answering 100 different religious behaviours that they did or did not do. While a general attitude of religiosity was a poor predictor of specific behaviours, there was a strong correlation between high religiosity and general religious behaviour. It does therefore seem to be that attitudes have at least a moderate positive correlation with behaviour.

For this dissertation, while I acknowledge that a negative attitude towards immigrants does not necessarily lead to a specific type of discrimination, such as for example hiring practices. Still, we can assume that a negative attitude towards immigrants would increase the likelihood of some form of discriminatory behaviour. Fiske (1998, p. 373) sums it up quite well in her discussion surrounding the role of stereotypes and prejudice on discrimination:

"In summary, although the data vary – across different measures, categories of raters and target groups – stereotypes clearly underperform in predicting behaviour toward outgroup

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[2] Some of these criticisms relate to that it may not be the same person who accepted the Chinese couple who responded to the questionnaire, the fact that the Chinese couple travelled with a white professor etc. Another good point is that the questionnaire was so ambiguous and different from the stimulus than the actual experience. Ajzen et al. (1970) makes this point well by speculating if the responses would be different if instead of asking the respondents "Would you accept members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment" they asked "Would you accept a young, well-dressed, well-spoken, pleasant, self-confident, well-to-do Chinese couple accompanied by a mature, well-dressed, well-spoken educated European gentleman as guests in your establishment?" (Ajzen et al., 1970, p. 270).

members; more gut-level types of prejudice may be stronger predictors. Two words, to the wise researcher should be sufficient: Study prejudice."

2.2 Theories of Prejudice

To understand contemporary debates surrounding negative attitudes, it is necessary to consider the historical development of the field, which has its foundations in the study of prejudice and the relationship between the white and black populations in the US. As journals operate with strict word limits, this chapter provides an opportunity for a more detailed explanation of the theoretical foundations and contemporary debates for understanding negative attitudes towards immigrants.

2.2.1 Negative Attitudes or Prejudice?

To begin with, we need to define the term *prejudice*, as it is often used interchangeably, including in this dissertation, with *negative attitude*. Most studies use some form of definition similar to Gordon Allport's (1954) definition provided in *The Nature of Prejudice.* Allport (1954, p. 9) defines ethnic prejudice as "[…] an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group". From this definition, it is clear that prejudice comes from flawed generalizations and that these flawed generalizations can lead to strong negative emotions towards both individuals and groups. Prejudice is often applied to different outgroups, and immigrants are often at the receiving end of these sentiments. A typical example is the myth of immigrants taking jobs away from the native majority population (see Greve, 2020 for a good discussion on this myth). Here, a negative attitude towards an immigrant can be based on the faulty generalization that immigrants steal the jobs of the majority population. This prejudice can be directed at a specific individual immigrant who applies to a job, as well as towards immigrants as a whole or the general phenomenon of immigration. (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Pager & Quillian, 2005; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008).

Following Allport, many theorists dropped the requirement that the belief about a group must necessarily be inaccurate. Eagly and Diekman (2005) proposed a dialectic principle in that the stereotype may be true on a group level but inaccurate on the individual level, which then elicits prejudice towards that individual. More minimalist definitions have become common, and prejudice is now often defined as an overall negative attitude towards a group

(Eagly & Diekman, 2005). As a negative emotion towards an individual or a group is at the core of prejudice, I believe that it is acceptable to use both *prejudice* and *negative attitude* interchangeably throughout this dissertation when discussing anti-immigrant attitudes.

Expressed prejudice has changed somewhat since Allport's (1954) original definition in the 1950s. Pettigrew and Merteens (1995) distinguished between two types of prejudice: blatant and subtle prejudice. Blatant prejudice is a more old-fashioned type of prejudice. It involves opposition to intimate contact and rejection of the outgroup. In its most racist form, it includes the belief of genetic inferiority of the outgroup. While blatant prejudice is "hot, close and direct, subtle prejudice is cool, distant and indirect" (Pettigrew & Merteens, 1995, p. 58). Subtle prejudice is revealed by three more covert components: (i) defence of traditional values, (ii) exaggeration of cultural differences and (iii) denial of positive emotions towards the outgroup. The authors argue that Western Europe has developed a norm against this blatant prejudice. More recent research also shows that the anti-racist norm is stronger in more established democracies and less powerful in weaker democracies (Ramos et al., 2020). Despite changes in how prejudice is expressed, the definitions presented previously are still applicable since the key function is still a strong negative emotion directed towards another group or individual. This is still central to more modern forms of prejudice, albeit often more difficult to detect in contemporary societies.[3]

2.2.2 Research on Racial and Ethnic Relations

Research on the relations between racial and ethnic groups began with scholars who were interested in biological racial differences. This research was steeped in the Social Darwinism of the 19th century, and theories of natural selection and survival of the fittest were interpreted to explain the natural superiority of the white race and used to justify the subjugation of non-white individuals (Bethencourt, 2015; Fairchild & Gurin, 1978). Racial conflict was simply considered inevitable by most social scientists at the beginning of the 20th century (Wark & Galliher, 2007). Nevertheless, there were exceptions to this, as some sociologists and social psychologists aimed to puncture holes in racist ideas, identifying them as biological myths and redefining the problem as deriving from the cultural conditioning of the white population's attitudes (Fairchild & Gurin, 1978). A good example of one of the earlier studies on relations between racial and ethnic groups is Bogardus' (1925) classical study, which investigated the acceptance or rejection of different racial groups in varying social intimacy situations. He

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[3] The social desirability bias will be discussed in more detail in the chapter concerning methods and methodology.

developed a seven-point scale based on the respondent's willingness to admit members of 39 different racial groups to various degrees of social intimacy. On the above-mentioned scale, 1 represented the respondent's willingness to have that member as a close kinship by marriage, whereas 7 indicated that the respondent would exclude them from the country.[4] The lower the score given for the racial or ethnic group, the greater the degree of intimacy a respondent would grant a member of that racial or ethnic group. Varying editions of this scale or its parts are still used in contemporary research on relations between ethnic groups (Parrillo & Donaghue, 2005; Strabac & Valenta, 2016).[5]

Following the horrors of the Second World War, it was clear what the ultimate consequence was of a society steeped in prejudice and racism. The search for explanations of the atrocities of the war led to significant scholarly interest in how these attitudes develop. This coincided with a rise in a psychoanalytical framework that emphasized personality dynamics in explaining prejudice (Fairchild & Gurin, 1978). One of the major influences of this period was Adorno et al.'s (1950) theory of the authoritarian personality. It described a personality dimension that determined the degree of likelihood that an individual would be generally prone to developing prejudice. Although this approach was very prominent at the beginning of the 1950s, by the mid-1950s mounting evidence of how insufficient personality-related explanations for prejudice had already started to appear. For example, anti-black prejudice was so widespread in the US that the authoritarian personality could not possibly apply to the entire American population (Fairchild & Gurin, 1978). Today, the theory of authoritarian personality is considered outdated, notably because of its inability to describe observed changes in prejudice and discrimination over time (Fibbi et al., 2021).[6] Research increasingly found that cultural, societal and contextual factors may be of more importance for understanding what could influence these negative attitudes.[7] This introduces the two main theoretical frameworks for this dissertation: intergroup contact theory and intergroup threat theory.

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[4] The remaining five categories were 2: To my club of personal chums. 3: To my street as neighbors. 4: To employment in my occupation in my country. 5: Citizenship in my country. 6: As visitors only to my country

[5] The dependent variables used in article 1 draw inspiration from the social distance scale, as it asks the respondents their willingness to have immigrants or Muslims as neighbours.

[6] Yet some of the core ideas of the theory of the authoritarian personality are important in Altemeyer's (1981) right-wing authoritarianism scale. However, as authoritarianism is not a central aspect of this dissertation, I will not be giving a detailed overview.

[7] See, for example, the early work of Thomas Pettigrew (1958, 1959) on differences in anti-black prejudice in northern and southern US.

2.3 Intergroup Contact Theory

Intergroup contact theory rests on a simple prediction: if contact occurs under reasonably favourable conditions between members of different groups, it will reduce intergroup prejudice. Allport (1954) first posited the contact hypothesis in his book, *The Nature of Prejudice*. It has been used in research for decades and continues to be of scholarly interest to this day. The theory is one of the strongest supported theories in social psychology and has inspired integration policies, peacebuilding and social cohesion programmes (Paolini et al., 2021).

Before there was empirical evidence surrounding the effect of contact, thinkers in the early 20th century speculated (based on the Social Darwinist thoughts of the time) that intergroup contact would inevitably lead to conflict between groups, as each group believed in its natural superiority (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Even under conditions of equality between groups, it was believed that contact would breed suspicion, fear, resentment, disturbance and sometimes open conflict (Pettigrew, 2021). However, following the Second World War, empirical research began to show opposite conclusions. Among these were Stouffer and colleagues' (1949) study of the American soldier during the war. During the war, a natural experiment occurred: the US army had all white, all black and mixed military units. This created an opportunity to compare the interracial attitudes of individuals who had been stationed in a mixed army group with those of a segregated army group. Both white officers and enlisted men stationed in mixed units reported that they got along well with a fellow black soldier. Similarly, 77 percent of the respondents reported that they had become more favourable than what they had been previously before serving with black soldiers.

Based on the earlier research, Gordon Allport (1954) formulated his contact hypothesis. The central premise is that contact with a member of another group would develop more positive attitudes towards that group as a whole. However, mere contact with the outgroup did not seem to be enough to reduce prejudice. Allport specified four key conditions that needed to be met for contact to have the optimal effect in reducing prejudice: (i) equal status between the groups, (ii) pursuit of common objectives, (iii) cooperation between the groups and (iv) institutional support. The military context provides a good opportunity to exemplify these conditions: a white and a black private would be equal in status (i); in a combat situation, they both have a common objective of defeating the enemy and staying alive (ii); and staying alive and defeating the enemy is dependent on cooperation (iii). Finally, by

desegregating the military units, they also have institutional support (iv). (Allport, 1954, pp. 274–281).

Writing in an era of racial tensions, Allport (1954) assumed that intergroup contact tended to fail to reduce prejudice; hence, he devoted his chapter on intergroup contact to explaining the positive conditions that were necessary for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice. This necessary-factors approach led to a problem in subsequent decades, as authors repeatedly kept adding necessary factors that they believed were essential for contact to have the desired effect, which, in turn, made the theory almost meaningless (Pettigrew, 2016, 2021). This first generation of intergroup contact researchers found diverging results, as contact could have both a negative and a positive effect on attitudes towards an outgroup, and there were questions concerning whether contact on an individual level could translate into reduced prejudice on a group or contextual level (Paolini et al., 2021). By the early 2000s, however, enough research had been conducted on the subject that it could be summarized for a meta-analytic test of the extent of the effect of intergroup contact on attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The study, which comprised 526 scientific papers from 1940 to 2000, was the first quantitative review of intergroup contact, as previous reviews tended to rely on subjective judgements of readings of a subset of the relevant studies. Three findings are important to comment upon here. The first is that contact between groups could be said to decrease prejudice. Although there were varying degrees of effect across the studies, 94 percent of the studies showed an inverse relationship between contact and prejudice. Second, the four conditions specified by Allport are not essential for contact to have a diminishing effect on prejudice. However, when these conditions are met, contact tends to have an increased effect in reducing prejudice. The authors therefore concluded that these conditions are not essential but that they do facilitate the tendency for contact to have an effect.[8] Another important finding was that individual contact with a member of an outgroup tended to lead to that individual becoming more positive towards that individual outgroup member, as well as towards the entire outgroup.

A potential issue with intergroup contact theory is determining the causal direction between contact and prejudice. Does contact decrease prejudice, or are non-prejudiced individuals simply more likely to seek out opportunities for contact? It seems clear that individuals who are prejudiced are less likely to seek out contact (Herek & Capitanio, 1996);

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[8] Institutional support seems to be the most relevant of Allport's four conditions.

however, this in itself does not necessarily mean intergroup contact theory is irrelevant. Even though prejudiced individuals are less likely to seek contact with an outgroup member, this does not necessarily mean that when contact happens, it does not have an effect. Several longitudinal studies have attempted to clarify the causal directions between contact and prejudice, and they trend towards the expected causality of contact reducing prejudice (Christ et al., 2014; Eller & Abrams, 2004; Powers & Ellison, 1995). Particularly interesting is Sidanius and colleagues' (2008) study, which investigated how having an ethnically dissimilar roommate in freshman and junior years of college affects prejudice levels in their senior year. Students were assigned random roommates throughout college, and students who had lived with an ethnically dissimilar roommate were found to become more favourable towards other ethnicities compared to students who had lived with ethnically similar roommates throughout college. It does, therefore, seem that the causal direction is that of contact affecting levels of prejudice. It must, however, be emphasized that despite the studies cited, there are still concerns surrounding whether there is enough clear evidence surrounding the causal directions of contact to settle the matter. It is still argued by some scholars that the commonly used statistical analyses for determining the causal directions are deficient (O'Donnell et al., 2021); however, a majority of evidence suggests that intergroup contact decreases prejudice. It will therefore also be a central assumption for this dissertation that prejudice can be reduced by intergroup contact.

2.3.1 Relevance of Intergroup Contact Theory for the Dissertation

The second generation of intergroup contact theorists began shortly after Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of the phenomenon (Paolini et al., 2021). Although there is a breadth of different aspects regarding the relationship of intergroup contact and prejudice that were central in this era,[9] I will focus in particular on three aspects that are of specific relevance to this dissertation: (i) contact and context, (ii) generalization of contact and (iii) the phenomenon of negative contact.

A central aspect that is significant for this dissertation is the notion that contexts that provide optimal contact conditions with ethnic minorities will reduce the average levels of prejudice in that context. Contact does not merely change attitudes on a micro level; it also affects prejudice on a contextual level. Positive contact on a contextual level creates more

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[9] See the March 2021 special issue on intergroup contact in the *Journal of Social Issues* for an up-to-date overview of the different aspects of intergroup contact that are currently being researched (introduction by Paolini et al., 2021).

tolerant social norms in these contexts, which, in turn, reduces prejudice as individuals who have no direct contact with the outgroups benefit from these social norms (Christ et al., 2014). Furthermore, prejudiced individuals might avoid individual contact, but they still benefit from people in their environment in general having more intergroup contact, i.e., the contextual effect (Christ et al., 2014). While not specifically investigating intergroup contact, Sobolewska and Ford (2020) made a similar argument when explaining that many individuals in Britain have been raised in a multicultural society and have therefore become more tolerant towards ethnic minorities.[10] This is also one of the proposed explanations for the more negative attitudes found in East Germany compared to West Germany, as West Germans historically had more opportunity for contact with foreigners than their East German counterparts (Wagner et al., 2003).

This understanding of how contact works on a contextual level is especially important in article 1, where the divergence between the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes found in Western and Eastern Europe is related to the different opportunities for contact between the two regions. This is especially poignant in countries with the highest levels of anti-Muslim attitudes, as they have virtually no Muslims living in the country who can challenge the stereotypes connected to Muslims.

The generalization of intergroup contact is another aspect of intergroup contact theory that is important for this dissertation. Boin and colleagues (2021) distinguish between primary, secondary and tertiary transfer effects of intergroup contact. For this dissertation, the primary and secondary effects are the most important transfer effects to consider.[11] The primary transfer effect concerns what has been discussed above, namely, how contact with an outgroup member can be generalized to the outgroup as a whole. The secondary transfer effect relates to how positive contact with an outgroup member not only leads to more positive attitudes towards that outgroup, but it is also generalizable to other outgroups. This means that when an individual has positive contact with a Chinese immigrant, that individual may become more tolerant towards an Iraqi immigrant. The secondary transfer effects are important for the development of positive intergroup attitudes, as it is not realistically possible to have contact with individuals belonging to all the different groups that exist. It is not quite clear as to why contact can have this secondary effect; however, a proposed explanation is that of

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[10] They also point towards a more highly educated population, combined with the levels of ethnic minorities in British societies as central reasons for the decrease in negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities.
[11] The tertiary transfer effect concerns how intergroup contact enhances cognitive flexibility, i.e., increased productivity, higher creativity, better problem-solving skills etc.

deprovincialization (Pettigrew, 1997; Verkuyten et al., 2010). Central to the deprovincialization effect is that contact with outgroups humanizes outgroups as a whole. By having contact with outgroups and effectively distancing oneself from their own in-group, individuals can learn that their own group's norms, traditions and values are not necessarily the only way to live. Still, there are studies that dispute the deprovincialization effect, since key variables have been measured and operationalized differently in different studies (see Vezzali et al., 2021 for a review). The secondary transfer effect is especially important for article 4, in which I use a variable that measures how often the respondents have any contact with people who are of a different race or ethnic group than the majority population. As the question is rather broad in that it does not specify the group of contact, a central assumption for including the variable is that, generally, contact with racial or ethnic outgroups has a generalizing effect to other ethnic or racial outgroups that the individual has not yet had contact with.

The third and final aspect of contact that is relevant for this dissertation is the phenomenon of *negative contact*. From the beginning of the theorizing of intergroup contact, it was acknowledged that contact may have a negative effect (Allport, 1954). However, it is only within the last decade that research on negative contact has gained scholarly attention (Paolini et al., 2010). It helps explain the social phenomenon as to why intergroup conflict still exists in diverse societies, despite intergroup contact being readily available (Barlow et al., 2012). Negative contact functions in the same capacity as positive contact, a negative contact experience with an individual from an outgroup, can "confirm" certain stereotypes and increase prejudice towards that outgroup. Negative contact can range from physical harm and verbal insults to denial of help or conflictual conversations (Schäfer et al., 2021). While positive intergroup contact may be more prevalent, it does seem that negative contact increases prejudice more than positive contact decreases it (Barlow et al., 2012), and negative contact makes individuals more aware of their group membership than positive contact does (Paolini et al., 2010).[12]

Negative contact is particularly important for article 4, as increased contact with a minority group was found to increase racist attitudes in Hungary. In this article, we relate this to the large Roma minority in Hungary, as previous studies have found that negative contact is more prevalent than positive contact when contact is established with Roma minorities (Kende

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[12] This is often referred to as *category salience* (Paolini et al., 2010).

et al., 2017; Visintin et al., 2017). Since Hungary has one of the largest Roma minorities in Europe, combined with a low immigrant population, we expect that the large majority of contact with an ethnic or racial minority will be with a Roma minority, which therefore may explain the effect of contact in Hungary. Negative contact with a minority may also increase feelings of threat (Stephan et al., 2002). This fittingly introduces the other theoretical framework for the dissertation – intergroup threat theories.

2.4 Intergroup Threat Theories

Intergroup contact theory proposes an explanation for reducing negative attitudes towards a group. By contrast, *intergroup threat theories*[13] describe how a feeling of threat from an outgroup can lead to more negative attitudes towards that outgroup. Intergroup threat is experienced when members of one group perceive that another group is in a position to cause harm to them. It is often regarded as a tribal psychological mindset that individuals display, as perceiving threats when none exists may be a less costly error than not perceiving threats when they do, in fact, exist (Stephan et al., 2016). There are several strains of theories that explain how individuals perceive other groups as threats to themselves or their own group. In this chapter, I will explain the most relevant ones for this dissertation, such as group position theory, social identity theory and intergroup threat theory.

As previously mentioned, explanations for prejudice following the Second World War tended to emphasize individual personality traits, such as the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950). One of the critics of this approach was Herbert Blumer (1958), who, in his *group position theory,* argued that prejudice involves more than an individual's stereotypes and feelings and that this kind of approach neglects the fact that a large part of prejudice is the product of the relationship between groups. He posited that when one compares another group with one's own, this involves a process in which one at the same time defines the position these two groups have in a social hierarchy. Four feelings are central to explaining prejudice between groups. The first is a feeling of superiority of their own group, which is often combined with a derogation of the subordinate racial group. The second feeling is that the subordinate racial group is intrinsically different and alien. This feeling justifies the social exclusion of the subordinate racial groups.[14] The third feeling involves a sense of one's own group having proprietary claims to certain areas of privilege. These privileges can be tangible, like jobs or

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[13] I use the plural form, intergroup threat theories, as an umbrella term for the number of different iterations of theories describing how individuals feel threatened by the outgroup and therefore develop prejudice.
[14] The language of "subordinate racial group" must be understood within the context of the United States in the 1950s.

welfare benefits, but they can also be more abstract in a cultural sense. The final feeling, which Blumer (1958) specifies as the most important for prejudice to occur, is that there is a fear that the subordinate group will *threaten* the position of the dominant group in the social hierarchy. This feeling of threat towards the outgroup is the central aspect of all of the intergroup threat theories that followed Blumer's group position theory. This theory is of particular relevance throughout the dissertation, especially in the articles discussing welfare chauvinism, since it is inherent in a welfare chauvinistic logic that the native population has the privilege of the welfare state and the benefits it entails, and that immigrants are a threat that will burden the welfare state and, in turn, the native population if they are given access to these benefits.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) plays on many of the same aspects as group position theory. It focuses on how individuals categorize themselves and other individuals into groups. This provides the individual with a way to systematize the world and consider how the individual fits into this world, while also giving the individual the opportunity to adopt the identity of the groups to which they feel like they belong. Central to this theory is that these groups are continually compared with other groups. This is where the prejudice component comes in: individuals tend to overestimate the attributes of their own group, while devaluating the attributes of the other outgroups (Sherif et al., 1961).

Tajfel and Turner (1986) further argued that individuals who belong to subordinate groups have two choices: either leave the group or strive for their group to gain more positive attributes. The subordinate group can then reject the previously accepted status quo in the hierarchy and start working towards a positive group identity. The dominant group may then react to these developments by taking action (by any means possible) to maintain and justify the status quo, or they may attempt to find and create new differentiations in their own favour. This is where the connection can be seen to Blumer's (1958) group position theory, especially the fourth feeling of threat. Both theories emphasize that the dominant group is threatened by subordinate groups that are trying to better their circumstances. The nuance is that social identity theory explains how these groups develop, whereas group position theory provides more detail about how the feeling of threat develops. *Intergroup threat theory* (Stephan et al., 2016) is the theoretical approach that I believe integrates these perspectives and best links them to other relevant literature. It is also the theoretical approach that is used throughout most of the four articles when discussing threat perceptions towards immigrants. It is a revised version of the previously known *integrated threat theory* (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) that I find useful as it separates between two types of threat perceptions: realistic and symbolic threats.

Realistic threats are threats to a group's power, resources and general welfare. These types of threats are often also referred to as material threats (Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2015) or economic threats (Schmuck & Matthes, 2015). Typical examples of this type of threat are immigrants being perceived as an economic threat in the competition for jobs with the natives or as a burden for the welfare state, which would, in turn, reduce the benefits for the majority population. Blumer's (1958) fourth feeling again seems to be central to the development of these realistic threats, as immigrants are perceived as threatening the majority's proprietary claim to jobs or the welfare benefits of a country. Realistic threats do not necessarily always have to be in the economic realm; they can also concern an individual's fear of pain, torture or death. In this dissertation, this can be translated into a security dimension in the threat perceptions towards immigrants. Immigrants can, for example, be perceived as criminals or even terrorists, which elicits a perception of threat that, in turn, can increase prejudice towards that group (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018; Jacobs et al., 2017).

Importantly, while realistic threat theory has its origin in realistic group conflict theory (see Campbell, 1965; Jackson, 1993; LeVine & Campbell, 1972), which focuses primarily on competition for scarce resources between groups, it does differ significantly from its origins. Whereas realistic group conflict theory emphasizes real competition between groups, Stephan and colleagues' (2016) realistic threat emphasizes the *perception* of threat. The threat does not therefore have to be an actual threat, but it needs to be perceived as real by the individual. In other words, it does not matter if the threat is real or not; as long as it is perceived as real, it will be real for the individual experiencing this threat.

Like realistic threats, symbolic threats do not need to be real threats,; they only need to be perceived as such. Symbolic threats are threats to a group's religion, values, belief system, ideology, philosophy, morality or worldview. Compared to realistic threats, these threats are more fluid and abstract. They are often also described as *cultural threat* when studying anti-immigrant attitudes (Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2015). A typical example in a European context is Muslim immigrants, who are often perceived as the antithesis to "European culture" and "European values" (Helbling & Traunmüller, 2020; Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2020). Again, similar to Blumer's (1958) four feelings, there is a fear that foreign groups will threaten the position of the native culture. Symbolic threats are also argued to be more important than realistic threats in predicting anti-immigrant attitudes (Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012).

An important aspect to clarify is that an individual can feel threatened on both the group level and the individual level. If we take unemployment as an example, an individual who is unemployed can view immigrants as competitors for jobs and therefore develop an individual perception of threat. However, an individual who is employed can develop a similar type of threat on a group level. They may view immigrants as a threat to their group, perceiving them as having the ability to steal jobs from the native population, meaning that *their* group should be prioritized over immigrants when it comes to employment in society. While this dissertation focuses on majority attitudes towards immigrant minorities, it is important to note that threat perceptions are not wholly a feeling that the dominant groups develop. Both dominant and subordinate groups are susceptible to perceiving other groups as realistically and symbolically threatening. However, there are differences between groups. Low-power groups are believed to be more likely to *experience* threats, but high-power groups are believed to react more strongly to threats, i.e., are more likely to develop prejudice based on this perception of threat (Stephan et al., 2016). High-power groups have more to lose and, unlike lower-power groups, they have the power and resources to respond to these threats by for example legislative action.

2.4.1 Relevance of Intergroup Threat Theories for the Dissertation

Intergroup threat theories are used throughout all four articles to explain why hostility towards immigrants occurs. Two aspects will be explained in this subchapter: (i) how symbolic and realistic threats relate to immigrants and (ii) threat perceptions related to the size of the minority.

What makes intergroup threat theory specifically applicable for studying anti-immigrant attitudes in a European context is this differentiation between realistic and symbolic threats. Threat reactions towards immigrants can be rooted in both realistic and symbolic threats; however, some immigrant groups elicit a greater reaction of either realistic or symbolic threats. Ben-Nun Bloom and colleagues (2015) found that individuals who experienced a material (realistic) type of threat preferred allowing immigrants who were culturally *different* to themselves, whereas individuals who experienced a cultural (symbolic) threat preferred allowing immigrants who were culturally *similar* to themselves to come to their country. From this, we may assume that, in Europe, realistic threats are mainly connected to culturally similar immigrants, whereas symbolic threats are mainly associated with culturally dissimilar immigrants. This is also one of the findings from article 4, namely that symbolic threats are quite important for explaining the racist attitudes that can be found in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

A caveat to point out is how the relationship between these two types of threats and negative attitudes relate to welfare chauvinism. Welfare chauvinism can be connected to realistic threats. Majority populations believe that they have claim to certain privileges, among these, the benefits of the welfare state. Immigrants can then be viewed as realistic threats that place an excessive burden on the welfare state, which, in turn, can lead to welfare chauvinistic attitudes. However, welfare chauvinism tends to be more pronounced towards culturally *dissimilar* immigrants, as shown in Ford (2016) and Hjorth (2016), who both found that culturally dissimilar immigrants are viewed as less deserving of welfare benefits than more culturally similar immigrants. More culturally different immigrants can therefore face a twofold penalty in both realistic and symbolic threats. This is also explored in article 3 on Nordic welfare chauvinism.

In empirical research, intergroup threat theories have often been used for the selection of level 2 variables. These can be separated into two different categories: macroeconomic conditions and the size of the minority population (Quillian, 1995). This also applies to article 2 where we include several level 2 variables that measure different macroeconomic conditions and the size of the immigrant population. Regarding economic conditions, the basic assumption is that when economic conditions are tough, hostility towards immigrants will be greater. A higher unemployment rate would, for example, increase the feeling of realistic threat, as immigrants may be seen as competitors for jobs or as a scapegoat for the high unemployment rate. In an influential study, Lincoln Quillian (1995) found that the economic situation of particular countries could strongly influence the degree of prejudice expressed by dominant group members in Europe. He further found that precarious economic conditions combined with a higher immigrant population further increased prejudice towards the outgroup. This also introduces the other category of group-level variables that are often selected based on intergroup threat theories: the size of the minority populations. This often builds on Blalock's (1967) emphasis on the consequences of the relationship between prejudice and the size of the minority. With an increase in the size of the minority, there would be an increase in competition between the minority and the majority groups, whereas a large minority population could also be a resource for political mobilization, which would further threaten the dominant group.

Attentive readers may find the concept of a larger minority population with higher levels of prejudice strange, as this proposition would be in direct conflict with intergroup contact theory. As such, the size of the immigrant population and its relationship with anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe are not necessarily as clear as the theory states. In fact, several

studies have found no relationship between the size of the immigrant populations in Europe (Billiet et al., 2014; Evans & Need, 2002; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020; Rustenbach, 2010; Semyonov et al., 2004). However, as intergroup threat theory has shown, perceptions matter. This is also the case for the size of the minorities, as several studies suggest that perceptions, or, rather, misperceptions of the size of the immigrant population, matter more than the objective measure of the number of immigrants living in the country (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020). This is important, as individuals constantly overestimate the immigrant population that lives in their country (Citrin & Sides, 2008). This phenomenon can be found across countries as well; both Strabac (2011) and Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2020) found that in all of their sampled countries, citizens tended, on average, to overestimate the size of the foreign-born population residing in the country.

The perceived size is not totally detached from the actual size, but the more inflated it is, the more extreme the anti-immigrant sentiment tends to be (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020). In their meta-analysis of 55 studies exploring the effect of group size on prejudice, Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes (2017) found that group size had no significant effect in 60 percent of the published works. Of the remaining studies, 25 percent showed that group size increased prejudice, whereas 15 percent showed that group size decreased prejudice. From their analysis, they concluded that the relationship between the actual size of a population and the prejudice against it is rather weak and that if there is a relationship, it is probably only for a narrow set of cases. They also highlighted how perceived size seems to be a better predictor of prejudice than factual reality. When individuals perceive there to be high numbers of immigrants or other minorities, such as Muslims, when there are none, this will trigger a perception of threat towards that outgroup. This often occurs in situations where individuals do not have the opportunity to experience contact with that minority and thereby overcome certain stereotypes.

Włoch (2009), for example, uses the term "phantom Islamophobia" to describe the high levels of anti-Muslim attitudes in Poland, despite Muslims being virtually non-existent. This distinction between perception and reality in the size of the immigrant populations is particularly relevant for article 1. In article 1, we investigate the size of the immigrant and Muslim populations in the sampled countries. We argue that the high levels of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes that can be found in Eastern European countries may lie in the misperception of size towards the minority which induces a sense of threat, while at the same time have the opportunity to have contact with the minorities that could potentially negate the intolerant attitudes. Although we do not analyse the misperceptions of immigrant size in article

2, we explore how individuals' perceptions of macroeconomic conditions in their country may be more relevant than the real macroeconomic conditions.

Intergroup contact and intergroup threats also relate to each other. I have previously outlined how contact with an outgroup member may reduce prejudice, but this contact can also reduce the threat perception, which, in turn, reduces the intolerant attitude (Schlueter & Wagner, 2008). Analysing the relationship between economic vulnerability, threat perceptions and intergroup contact, Thomsen and Birkmose (2015) found that when intense contact is established, the impact of personal economic vulnerability on perceived outgroup threat disappears. Their analyses further showed that the impact of contact had its strongest effect among individuals who were the most likely to reject outgroup members.

To summarize, both intergroup contact and intergroup threat theories are essential for this dissertation, as they are both used in varying degrees throughout the four articles. However, threat theories, particularly realistic threat theories, were used more extensively than intergroup contact in the two articles that discuss welfare chauvinism.

2.5 Welfare Chauvinism

The term *welfare chauvinism* was coined to describe the structural changes and new cleavages of Western European party politics. Originally used by Andersen and Bjørklund (1990) to describe these new changes in the Norwegian and Danish radical right parties, describing their hostility to immigrants not as racist or prejudiced, but rather welfare state chauvinist, in that "the welfare services should be restricted to our own" (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990, p. 212). From this brief definition, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) expanded upon the concept in their investigation of the radical right in Western Europe. They emphasized that the welfare state is presented as a system of social benefits and services that belong to the ethnically defined community that contributed to it. Foreigners are perceived as freeloaders who don't contribute to the welfare state, but who still claim the benefits. Mudde (2007) also disputed previous claims that populist radical right parties in Europe had their basis in a neoliberal worldview. Instead, like Kitschelt and McGann (1995), he argued that they have a nativist interpretation of the welfare state in that generous social benefits are to be guaranteed to the native needy, whereas aliens are to be excluded (Mudde, 2007, p. 132).

More recent research into the social policy agenda of the populist radical right parties also confirms that they have a welfare chauvinistic social policy approach (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018; Ketola & Nordensvard, 2018). It is not only the populist radical right parties that have a

welfare chauvinistic agenda, as several mainstream parties have also taken a welfare chauvinistic turn; this is particularly true for the more conservative parties (Leruth & Taylor-Gooby, 2021; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016).

Around 20 years after the original term was introduced, research attention started to focus on welfare chauvinistic *attitudes*, trying to understand what affects majority populations' objections to granting immigrants the benefits of the welfare state. Crepaz and Damron (2009) used welfare chauvinism as a dependent variable in their study of how welfare state regimes and levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes relate. They found that more inclusive welfare states had lower levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes. This was further elaborated on by Van der Waal and colleagues (2013), who argued that there were two worlds of welfare chauvinism, as the citizens of social democratic welfare regimes were less welfare chauvinistic than the citizens of both conservative and liberal welfare regimes.

The research on welfare chauvinistic attitudes relies somewhat on the concept of deservingness. Described briefly, deservingness is related to redistributive justice and the public's opinion of who deserves what and why (Van Oorschot, 2000). The encompassing framework for deciding who is or is not deserving is based on five mechanisms: Control, Attitude, Reciprocity, Identity and Need. This is often referred to as the CARIN criteria (Van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017). Elderly individuals, for example, tend to score high on all of the criteria and are therefore perceived by the public at large as deserving of support from the welfare state, whereas unemployed individuals are seen as less deserving (Van Oorschot, 2000). Immigrants, in particular, are seen as being less deserving than several other groups in Europe. In his study, Van Oorschot (2006) found that immigrants were perceived to be the least deserving group across all European countries in his sample.[15] This tendency could also be seen across age groups, genders, educational level, occupation, income level and religious attachment, which means that immigrants are viewed as less deserving across all groups in Europe (Van Oorschot, 2006).

Furthermore, studies show that individuals also distinguish between deserving and undeserving immigrants (Reeskens & Van der Meer, 2017). More culturally dissimilar immigrants are often the target of welfare chauvinistic rhetoric (Edwards et al., 2021). As such, individuals also tend to find culturally similar immigrants to be more deserving than culturally dissimilar individuals (Ford, 2016; Hjorth, 2016). As such, Ford (2016) finds that foreign birth

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[15] In the study, immigrants were compared to the elderly, the sick/disables and the unemployed.

alone prompts a welfare chauvinistic attitude in the UK in that Irish immigrants receive less public support than native white claimants do. However, there was still significantly less support for redistribution towards the more culturally distant Muslim immigrant than the Irish immigrant.

The relationship between deservingness and threat perceptions should be quite clear. Majority populations believe that they have a proprietary claim to certain privileges, and among these privileges are the many services and benefits that they either receive or have the opportunity to receive from the welfare state. Immigrants are then viewed as a threat that may place an excessive burden on the welfare state, making it unaffordable. This, in turn, may reduce some of the benefits that the native population enjoys, which develops a feeling of threat. The threat perception can then lead to a welfare chauvinistic attitude. While threat perceptions can influence both welfare chauvinistic attitudes and more general anti-immigrant attitudes, it is important to emphasize that they are two distinct phenomena.

Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2009) investigate different forms of exclusionary attitudes in Europe, distinguishing between exclusion from the social system, i.e., denying foreigners residence in the country, and exclusion from equal access to rights. The former exclusionary form can be characterized as a typical anti-immigrant attitude, as several studies use this form of exclusion as an operationalization of their dependent variable measuring anti-immigrant attitudes (see among many; Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2015; Czaika & Di Lillo, 2018; Davidov et al., 2014; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020). Likewise, the latter may also capture a welfare chauvinistic attitude, as it captures individuals' preference for giving individuals the rights associated with being a native member of the country.

In their analysis, Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2009) find that the two are indeed somewhat related but can still be described as two distinct strategies of exclusion. They further conclude that when exclusion from the country fails, individuals who hold such an exclusionary attitude are likely to resort to working towards excluding immigrants from the social system. When applied to this thesis, this means that anti-immigrant individuals tend to be welfare chauvinistic individuals, but welfare chauvinistic individuals do not necessarily harbour an anti-immigrant attitude.

This dissertation focuses on the different types of attitudes that majority European populations have towards immigrants. By investigating welfare chauvinism, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and racist attitudes, it provides a good starting point for understanding the attitudes

that exist on the continent. Exploring these different attitudes on a European level, as well as on a more regional level in two very different contexts, also provides a thorough overview of the phenomenon.

This chapter has focused on the different aspects involved in the study of prejudice. Negative attitudes towards immigrants can manifest themselves through the behaviour of individuals or through policies that seek to restrict immigrants' rights in society. In fact, simply living in a society with high levels of prejudice can also have negative effects on immigrants' wellbeing and integration into the new society (Da Silva Rebelo et al., 2021; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Society at large and the social services will have to implement extensive measures to counteract the exclusion that immigrants face as a consequence of prejudice and discrimination in society. This is one of the many reasons why researching attitudes towards immigrants is relevant to social services and public policies. The final subchapter will explore why these types of studies are relevant to the field of social work.

2.6 Why are Attitudes Towards Immigrants Relevant to Social Work?

Social work is driven by the need to challenge and change the structural conditions that contribute to marginalization, social exclusion and oppression (International Federation of Social Work, 2022). It is therefore important to understand the extent of exclusionary attitudes and how these attitudes develop across Europe and in specific European countries. Social workers' exposure to coursework that relates to legal and socio-economic factors affiliated with immigrants has been found to predict more favourable attitudes towards immigrants (Bhuyan et al., 2012). The knowledge generated from this thesis is therefore needed for social workers to be able to promote social cohesion and social inclusion, as it provides information on the context in which immigrants live.

One of the central aspects for the successful integration of immigrants into a host society is the societal reception that the immigrants receive from the majority population when they arrive. If immigrants arrive to a society that harbours large levels of prejudice towards that immigrant group, their successful integration into the society can be hindered. In addition, immigrants can be integrated into different segments of society, which also has an effect on second-generation immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Living in a highly prejudiced social context also affects immigrants' wellbeing and resilience (Da Silva Rebelo et al., 2021) and their trust and willingness to seek support from public services (Da Silva Rebelo et al., 2018).

Additionally, politicians have a clear electoral incentive to take into account public opinion when developing social policy decisions, so it is also crucial to investigate attitudes towards immigrants in the realm of social policy through the lens of welfare chauvinism across Europe. Welfare chauvinism, namely the attitude that immigrants should either receive less or be totally excluded from the benefits and services of the welfare state, can be found across Europe. Originally, welfare chauvinism was associated with the radical right parties of Europe (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). However, more recently, mainstream parties have started to adopt a more welfare chauvinistic policy position (Leruth & Taylor-Gooby, 2021; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016). This may indicate diminishing support for existing social policies and thus a possible future stricter turn in social policy relating to immigrants and the benefits they are entitled to. This could result in the development of two systems within the same welfare states, where one set of policies is generous for the majority population, whereas the other set of policies is restrictive towards outsiders. As Noble and Ottmann explain, "If access to social services is no longer guided by needs, rights and social justice, and instead, by ethnicity, social status and economic virtue, social work no longer exists – at least not as a social critical, human rights-based profession" (Noble & Ottmann, 2021, p. 1).

If we extrapolate the above-mentioned factors to some of the results found in this dissertation, it would be increasingly difficult for a Muslim immigrant to integrate into a society where around 60 percent of the population would not want to have a Muslim as a neighbour. Living in such societies can lead to a feeling of powerlessness, mixed with strong emotional pain (Da Silva Rebelo et al., 2021). Immigrants in these contexts of reception would likely face discrimination related to housing, the labour market, education or the smaller day-to-day experiences of being treated with less respect (Lee, 2022). This has relevance for social workers, as they work in these contexts and have direct contact with many vulnerable immigrants.

Social workers are also not immune to the prevailing attitudes in their society, as studies have shown that the same predictors of hostile attitudes towards immigrants also influence social workers' attitudes (Park et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial for social workers to gain knowledge of the difficulties faced by many immigrants in their receiving countries (Bhuyan et al., 2012).

3. Methods and Methodology

This section will describe the methodological issues relevant to the four articles in the dissertation. All four articles have their own methodological sections, but these are often short and focus on a narrow set of issues due to the space limitations that journals operate with. The more elaborate discussion will therefore be presented in this chapter. This chapter begins with an overview of the data used in the dissertation. The comparative method is central to all four articles and will therefore be discussed in detail in this chapter. When covering the comparative method, other relevant issues will also be explored. Following this, there is a discussion of the measurement of key variables before the chapter concludes by addressing some of the relevant biases.

3.1 The European Social Survey and the European Values Study

Survey data form the main source for analysis in this dissertation. Article 1 uses survey data collected in 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017 from the European Values Study (EVS) to study anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes across that time period. Articles 2, 3 and 4 all use the European Social Survey (ESS) as their main data set for analysis. A simple overview of the four articles and the data used can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of the four articles

	Article 1	**Article 2**	**Article 3**	**Article 4**
Main data set	European Values Study (1990–2017)	European Social survey (2016)	European Social Survey (2016)	European Social Survey (2014)
Dependent variable(s)	Anti-immigrant attitude Anti-Muslim attitude	Welfare chauvinistic attitude	Welfare chauvinistic attitude	Racist attitude
Region of analysis	Europe (34 countries)	Europe (19 countries)	Nordic region (3 countries)	Central and Eastern Europe (3 countries)

The European Social Survey is an academically driven cross-national survey that was established in 2001. Every two years since 2002, the ESS team of researchers has gathered survey data on individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours across European countries. The European Values Study is similar to the ESS – it is a large-scale, cross-national and longitudinal survey of the values, attitudes and opinions of the European public – but it is only conducted

every nine years. However, because the first dataset was released in 1981, it is possible to carry out analyses over a longer time period than the ESS data allow, which is why I utilize the EVS dataset for article 1.

One of the major strengths of this dissertation is the use of these two data sources. The ESS and the EVS are widely regarded as first-class survey data and are continuously used for studies investigating attitudes towards immigrants (Careja & Harris, 2022; Dražanová, 2022). In both surveys, researchers developed a master questionnaire that was then translated to each respective country's language(s) that are spoken by at least 5 percent of their populations. The questionnaires were then pretested prior to random probability sampling, which was used to sample individuals over 15 (ESS) or 18 (EVS) years old to represent various populations across European countries.[16] Respondents who participated in the survey were then interviewed face to face by trained interviewers for about an hour.[17]

The major strength of these two datasets is the comparative nature of their designs. The same questions were asked across 20–30 different European countries to thousands of respondents across the demographic spectrum. This makes it ideal for studies that wish to examine social phenomena on an overall European level as well as to compare certain countries with each other. Both the ESS and EVS also use the same questions across time, which also makes it possible to conduct analyses across time periods. The ESS also has a rotating module, where every two years, the respondents are asked about their opinion on certain thematic topics, such as for example climate change, democracy or health. The 2014 module included questions on immigration-related issues and therefore contained several attitude-related variables to immigration and immigrants, and importantly a measure of a racist attitude. The 2016 module focused on different types of welfare attitudes and contained a measure of welfare chauvinism that could be used as a dependent variable. The relevance of these thematic questions is why I chose to use the 2014 and 2016 datasets despite the availability of more recent ESS surveys.

While both the ESS and EVS suffer from typical survey-related problems, such as nonresponse bias, the social reliability bias and respondents interpreting questions differently,

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[16] In 1990 and 1999, the EVS sampled individuals between 15 and 17; however since 2008, the minimum age was changed to 18 in most countries.
[17] For more details regarding the methodology of the ESS or EVS visit:
https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/
https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/evs-methodology/

I still believe that the ESS and EVS can be considered two of the best sources for survey data on public opinion across Europe.

3.1 The Comparative Method

In an era that saw the publishing of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and Louis Pasteur's work on germ theory, Edward A. Freeman (1873) boldly proclaimed that "The establishment of the Comparative Method of study has been the greatest intellectual achievement of our time" (Freeman 1873, p. 1). While this dissertation does not necessarily make such a bold claim, the comparative method is a powerful tool for investigating attitudes towards immigrants in Europe. By exploring differences and similarities between countries, I would argue that we can gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon as a whole.

All four articles in this dissertation have a comparative nature; however, they differ in their approaches. Articles 3 and 4 are comparative case studies; they both use the statistical method to study welfare chauvinistic or racist attitudes in three different cases. In article 3, these three cases consist of Sweden, Norway and Finland, while article 4 investigates racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. The three cases are then further compared with each other to explore the differences shown in the analyses. For these types of studies to succeed, it is important to have in-depth knowledge of the cases in order to explain the nuances that the analysis may show (Gerring, 2007). This was done through a detailed reading of the relevant sources regarding the political, historical and cultural contexts of the countries, which, in turn, was used to explain the variation between cases. In article 3, for example, we use Sweden, Norway and Finland's different migration history and immigrant populations to explain the variations in how anti-immigrant attitudes can explain welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Likewise, in article 4, our analyses show differences in the effect of contact in the three countries, as it is found to have the expected effect in Poland and the Czech Republic, while in Hungary, increased contact actually *increased* racist attitudes. We attempt to explain this by investigating who the individuals actually have contact with and the history in the relationship between the minority and majority populations in the three countries.

Articles 1 and 2 offer a more traditional comparative approach, which is often used in comparative politics. In particular, the approach in article 2 uses several aspects that would be familiar to a comparative political scientist (see Landman, 2003 for a good introduction into comparative politics), including that it tests hypotheses on the macro level to see if there are differences between countries with certain characteristics. For example, central to the article is

its exploration of how the different nuances of a country's unemployment levels may explain welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe. The comparative nature of the study comes from the exploration of these macro-level variables as we explore whether countries with high levels of unemployment are more welfare chauvinistic *compared* to countries that have lower levels of unemployment.

As the comparative method features heavily in all four articles, this chapter will explain the reasons for conducting comparative research, its strengths and limitations and issues to be aware of. This in-depth look at the method also provides an opportunity to critically reflect on the choices that have been made in all four articles.

3.1.1 How to Compare?

While there are those who contend that all science is comparative in nature (Almond, 1966), I follow Lijphart's (1971) explanation of the comparative method as *one* of the basic scientific methods, not *the* scientific method. It is often viewed as mirroring both the experimental and statistical methods in that they all involve variable analysis and they all try to establish general empirical relationships between at least two variables by means of control (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). Lijphart (1971) viewed the comparative method as an imperfect substitute for the experimental method because of its limitations. Nevertheless, both he and others have praised the use of the comparative method if one is aware of the potential drawbacks and is able to minimize the potential weaknesses of the method (Landman, 2003; Lijphart, 1971; Moses & Knutsen, 2019).

John Stuart Mill is often credited as the first formalizer of the comparative method as he identified five different comparative methods: the method of difference, the method of agreement, the indirect method of difference, the method of concomitant variation and the method of residues (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). However, Mill was quite sceptical of using these methods outside of the natural sciences, and applying them to the political sciences was "out of the question" (Mill, quoted in Moses & Knutsen, 2019, pp. 98–99). For this reason, I will not delve much deeper into Mill's comparative method. Instead, we will look at the two most common designs used in comparative politics: most similar systems design and most different system designs (Landman, 2003; Przeworski & Teune, 1970). This dissertation places its main emphasis on the former.

The most similar systems design builds on Mill's method of difference, as it seeks to identify key features that differ among similar countries. It compares political or social systems

that share a number of common features. Put simply, all cases share basic characteristics, such as common history, language, religion, politics, culture etc, but they may vary in terms of the explanatory variable (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). This method is often used in studies investigating certain geographical areas in the world, such as Europe or Asia (Landman, 2003). It is assumed that countries in the same geographic regions have so many significant variables in common that it is possible to focus on the key explanatory variables that separate them (Moses & Knutsen, 2019).

A good example of this would be article 1, where I compare anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe. Europe today is highly interconnected and the countries share several similarities; however, we find that Eastern European countries have considerably larger numbers of respondents exhibiting anti-immigrant attitudes than Western European countries. While several similarities can be found between European countries, there is a highly salient difference between Western and Eastern Europe: the size of the immigrant populations. I therefore propose the explanation that the variance in anti-immigrant attitudes between Western and Eastern Europe can, in part, be explained by the differences in immigrant populations, which, in turn, leads to different amounts of intergroup contact.

The previous example is often referred to as "large N" comparisons, where N refers to the number of countries (Landman, 2003).[18] Its name comes from the intuitive fact that it uses a larger number of countries for its analyses to draw inferences. However, the most similar systems design can just as easily be used in lower N studies, where a lower number of countries that are relatively similar are analysed to find the variance in key explanatory variables. An example of this would be Bohman's (2018) study on opposition to immigration in four of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. By having the opportunity to go into more detail surrounding the country's contexts, she argues that the larger amount of nativism in Denmark can be partly explained by Denmark's higher prevalence of nativist ideas in political rhetoric. This approach is also used in articles 3 and 4 in this dissertation, where exploring a lower number of countries allows us to go into more detail into the possible historical, cultural or political contexts that may explain the results from our analyses.

An important caveat to highlight is that the world is, of course, a lot more complicated than the method assumes. It is unlikely that a researcher would find cases so similar that their

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[18] It can also refer to observations, as we refer to the individuals in all four articles as N. However, for simplicity, in this section of the dissertation, N will refer to the number of countries.

variance in the dependent variable could be explained by the difference in variation between key explanatory variables. Although the size of the immigrant population may be a key variable in explaining the differences in anti-immigrant attitudes between Western and Eastern Europe, it is more than likely that the differences come down other complex factors as well. Therefore, there will always be more than one difference between cases, which is why Przeworski and Teune (1970, p. 34) contend that although some differences can be determined, the efficiency of the method in providing generalized knowledge is relatively limited. While I would agree that the findings in this dissertation, which are based most closely on the most similar systems design, are not necessarily generalizable in terms of explaining prejudice in Latin America or the Middle East, I do believe they produce valuable insights into and knowledge of the phenomenon in Europe.

In this sense, I follow Mjøset's (2009) contextualist approach, which places itself somewhere between the traditional naturalist and constructivist scientific approaches. The naturalist approach is often associated with both experimental and statistical methods (Moses & Knutsen, 2019), and this dissertation certainly has naturalist elements to it. However, the problem, as Mjøset (2009) correctly points out, is that findings based on patterns of correlations are not easily translated into a world that is rarely structured in a way that gives rise to natural experiments (Mjøset, 2009, p. 52). He is critical of the naturalist approach in the social sciences, where one strives for generalizable law-orientated theories based on as general regularities as possible. This is particularly relevant when discussing previous research on anti-immigrant attitudes, since much of the research in the field is based on quantitative approaches (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010; Dražanová, 2022), and often has a generalizing language surrounding the findings. The problem, as I briefly pointed out in the introduction, is that the vast majority of studies have been conducted in the US, Germany, France, the UK and other Western European countries (Gonnot et al., 2020). Several discussions in the field often seem to take for granted that the results found in Western Europe or the US are generalizable across other countries. For example, in chapter 2.4.1, I mentioned that a meta-analysis of 55 studies found that the size of the minority group had no significant effect on prejudice in 60 percent of the published works (Pottie-Sherman & Wilkes, 2017). However (without having read the 55 studies in detail), I have a strong suspicion that the vast majority of the sampled countries in the 55 studies are Western European or the US. It may, therefore, be accurate that the size of the minority has no real significant effect on prejudice; however, it could be that this conclusion holds true only in a Western European context. If Eastern European countries were added (as I do in article 1), or

if the West–East methodological bias was taken into account (to be discussed in chapter 3.3.2), the size of the minority may very well have an effect on prejudice in Europe.

The contextual approach to generalizing findings is to generalize within specified contexts, such as the Norwegian or the Nordic context, and then using these contexts for further understanding of a social phenomenon (Mjøset, 2009). These generalizations for specific contexts can also be used to generate accumulating knowledge at a higher level if the research is developed with reference to existing knowledge. For example, article 4 explores racism in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. While the findings may only be generalizable to this specific context, they also accumulate knowledge of these attitudes in *Europe* and, for example, intergroup contact theory, as some of the findings go against the theoretical assumptions in the article. Similarly, the findings in article 1 that show the diverging attitudinal trend in Western and Eastern Europe may be used as "contextualizing maps" (Mjøset, 2009, p. 62) for several sub frontiers of research on European society. In this sense, I do therefore believe that there are patterns of regularities that can be found in the world, but that these must be understood in a contextualized manner.

3.1.2 Limitations and Opportunities of the Comparative Method

Lijphart (1971) described the comparative method as an imperfect substitute for the experimental method and highlighted several limitations. Nevertheless, these limitations can be minimized if the researcher is aware of them. A "conscious thinker […] should realize the limitation of the comparative method, but he should also recognize and take advantage of the possibilities" (Lijphart, 1971, p. 685). This subchapter will therefore explain the limitations of the comparative method and consider how they affect this dissertation and how they are minimized from the choices that have been made. As the comparative method is so central to the thesis, other methodological issues will also be weaved into the discussion.

Moses and Knutsen (2019) outlined two central limitations: (i) over-determination and (ii) selection bias. Lijphart (1971) also highlighted (iii) the fallacy of attaching too much significance to negative findings. Landman (2003) added several limitations to the list, but for our purposes, only one of these will be relevant to this discussion: (iv) establishing equivalence. These four limitations are pertinent to this discussion.

First is the issue of *over-determination*, which concerns our ability to generalize from the observations (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). What is often an issue in the comparative method is that there are too many variables and not enough countries to do a satisfactory analysis.

Landman (2003) explains how this problem arises when there are more variables than there are countries in an analysis and that this is often a problem associated with single-country studies or studies analysing only a few countries. However, this is also an important issue for conducting multilevel analyses, which I do in article 2 to analyse welfare chauvinism in Europe.

A multilevel analysis entails just what the name asserts: an analysis on multiple levels. In article 2, I use two levels: individual-level data and country-level data. At the country level, there are only 19 countries included in the analysis, which presents some issues in terms of sample size and overfitting. Overfitting occurs when the model fits the data well due to the inclusion of too many explanatory variables. This can lead to biased estimates in the R^2, the regression slope and prediction (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2022). In regression analysis, one therefore follows the *one-in-ten rule* which states that there should be a minimum of 10 observations per explanatory variable (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2022). Additionally, if there are fewer than 15–20 level 2 observations in a multilevel model, it can lead to unreliable confidence intervals, which makes it difficult to determine the statistical significance of the results (Stegmueller, 2013). With 19 level 2 observations, we should therefore be able to run a satisfactory multilevel model, as several other influential studies have used a similar number of level 2 variables to investigate European attitudes towards immigrants (see, among others, Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020; Quillian, 1995; Van der Waal et al., 2013). However, because of the *one-in-ten rule,* we are limited to a bivariate analysis on the country level. We are therefore unfortunately unable to control for other potential confounding or mediating variables in this analysis. The solution to this issue in comparative studies is often to try to "increase *N*" and include more countries in the analysis; however, I was limited to the data made available by the ESS and therefore constrained to 19 countries in a bivariate analysis using country-level variables. Still, bearing in mind the limitations of bivariate regression analysis, the comparative method often suffers from not having enough available data to conduct ideal multilevel analyses, and it is not uncommon for studies to only use bivariate analyses on the country level (see, for example, Mewes & Mau, 2012; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008).

The second limitation concerns selection bias. The experimental and statistical method bases its analysis on random sampling of individuals to draw inferences. In contrast, the comparative method carefully selects its cases and thus breaks one of the core principles that the statistical and experimental methods employ: selection based on the dependent variable (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). This is both the strength, but could also be severely limiting for

comparative research. The most blatant form of this bias happens when social scientists only select cases that support the theory in question; a more subtle form of selection bias concerns studies that choose their cases based on the values of the dependent variable (Landman, 2003).

From my reading of the literature, this limitation seems to be related to the generalization of findings based on the cases chosen for investigation. Geddes (1990) explained this quite well in her discussion of the nature of the problem of selection bias:

"Suppose a universe of developing countries A through G, where A and B are among the fastest growing. On the basis of an intensive study of A and B, one concludes that factor X is the cause of their success. In concluding this, one implicitly assumes that if countries C through G were examined they would turn out to have less of factor X than do A and B." (Geddes, 1990, p. 132)

The only thing that can actually be explained using a sample selected on the dependent variable is the differences among the selected cases. The issue of selection bias is primarily a concern for studies that compare relatively few countries, as studies using many countries tend to have enough observations to avoid this issue (Landman, 2003). We will, therefore, focus our attention on articles 3 and 4, which both analyse three countries each.

One of the most frequently used approaches for choosing cases is to examine the most extreme cases on the dependent variable (Seawright, 2016). Although I did not necessarily choose the countries based on the values of the dependent variable in their respective datasets, I did select the cases based on previous research, which led to certain assumptions being made. Article 1 provides much of our reasoning for the selection of countries and includes many different descriptive figures. One of these shows quite clearly how the four countries in the Visegrad group (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia) can be considered some of the most intolerant countries in Europe, whereas the Nordic countries were among the most tolerant countries.[19] This is also in line with what previous research has found, Eastern European countries tend to have much higher levels of intolerance than Western Europe. Furthermore, among the Western European countries, the Nordic countries tend to be among the most tolerant countries (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019; Strabac et al., 2012). So, although I did not necessarily choose the cases based on the scores of the dependent variable, I did expect them to be at the opposite spectrum of tolerance towards outgroups.

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[19] The exception being Finland, which had quite high levels of anti-Muslim attitudes.

This is also why I believe they are interesting cases to study. I believe that by investigating the attitudes in what is often considered the most tolerant and intolerant countries towards immigrants, we can learn more about the phenomenon of welfare chauvinism and racism as a whole. However, the cases were not based solely on their previous scores on different attitudinal variables. An important factor for choosing the three Nordic countries as cases is that they are all a part of the Social Democratic/Nordic Welfare state model, which is characterized by a high degree of generosity and universalism (Kangas & Kvist, 2018). It was therefore interesting to analyse the majority populations' willingness to grant immigrants access to the benefits of the welfare state in characteristically universal and generous welfare states. Additionally, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are all a part of the so-called "Visegrad Four" or "V4" who united against the EU during the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, refusing to admit a certain number of refugees. Widespread anti-Muslim and anti-migrant rhetoric flourished during the crisis, and the common front against the EU had previously been unseen (Kalmar, 2018), making the attitudes of these countries' populations towards immigrants very interesting case studies. Of particular interest is the time period when the data was collected, namely *before* the refugee crisis of 2015–2016 began. This introduces the second type of selection bias that is relevant to comment on for this dissertation, namely, that of a selection bias related to the time period that is analysed (Landman, 2003).

This kind of selection bias is more of an issue for scholars investigating social behaviour and phenomena that have a long history, such as war, state formation and trade, where there are often data that cover long time periods (Landman, 2003). This is not necessarily the case for our four articles, which, to a much greater extent, were limited to data collected at certain time points. It is, however, an important aspect to comment upon, as attitudes can fluctuate wildly in response to events happening at the time of sampling. Legewie (2013), for example, found that terrorist attacks committed during the sampling of data could have profound short-term effects on citizens' attitudes towards immigrants in some cases and under certain conditions. Most of the survey data that we used for our analysis were collected in the years 2014–2017. This period saw what is often referred to as the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, when more than a million refugees arrived by sea to Europe through the Mediterranean, taking the EU and national governments in Europe aback (Triandafyllidou, 2018). The period saw immigration become a highly salient issue among European publics and there was an increase in the politicization of the migration issue (Dennison & Geddes, 2019; Hutter & Kriesi, 2022).

It is therefore important to explain how this situation relates to the sampling of the survey data for the analysis.

As has been explained previously, one factor that makes Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic interesting case studies is that the survey data was collected in the months *before* the refugee crisis can officially be said to have "begun". Additionally, as Hutter and Kriesi (2022) showed, immigration was not a politicized issue in either Hungary or Poland before the crisis. This makes it even more compelling to try to understand the majority populations' attitudes towards non-white immigrants in three countries where immigration became a major issue during the crisis.

The data for articles 2 and 3 were collected by the European Social Survey during the last months of 2016 and the beginning of 2017. It may then be argued that the data may be biased, as the refugee crisis had only recently ended. However, as article 1 clearly shows, Western European countries have become more tolerant towards both immigrants and Muslims, and even the countries that received the highest share of immigrants during the crisis, like Sweden and Germany, saw no fundamental changes in these attitudes. Although Eastern European countries saw an increased amount of hostility, article 1 also shows that this had already been an ongoing process even before the crisis. I would therefore argue that the refugee crisis has not necessarily biased the data in the form that Legewie (2013) found in his study of terrorist events and anti-immigrant attitudes, as his findings relate to events that happened during the sampling process. Even if the refugee crisis did have an impact on majority populations' perceptions of immigrants and other outgroups, I would argue that these would be more stable, thus avoiding the bias outlined in Legewie's (2013) study.

As explained, Lijphart (1971) also emphasized the fallacy of attaching too much significance to negative findings as an issue that can occur in comparative studies. This happens when the hypothesis is rejected if one deviant case is found. Although not strictly an issue in this dissertation, I encounter a similar problem in article 2, namely that the hypotheses are *supported* in large part due to the deviant case of Spain. As journals operate with stricter word limitations, I was restricted to a limited explanation of why we removed the country from our regression analyses. As the removal of Spain did influence the results of the study, this chapter provides an opportunity for a more in-depth discussion as to the removal of the country from the analysis.

One of the aspects we wanted to explore in article 2 was how different nuances of unemployment could have an effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe. When Spain is included in the analysis, we find that general unemployment and foreign-born unemployment can explain welfare chauvinism in Europe. However, contrary to our expectations, we found that countries with higher levels of unemployment and foreign-born unemployment actually have *lower* levels of welfare chauvinism. This is largely due to the inclusion of Spain. Below, we can see a figure showing the average welfare chauvinism across European countries and the unemployment rates of those countries.[20]

Figure 1: Average welfare chauvinism and unemployment rates in Europe
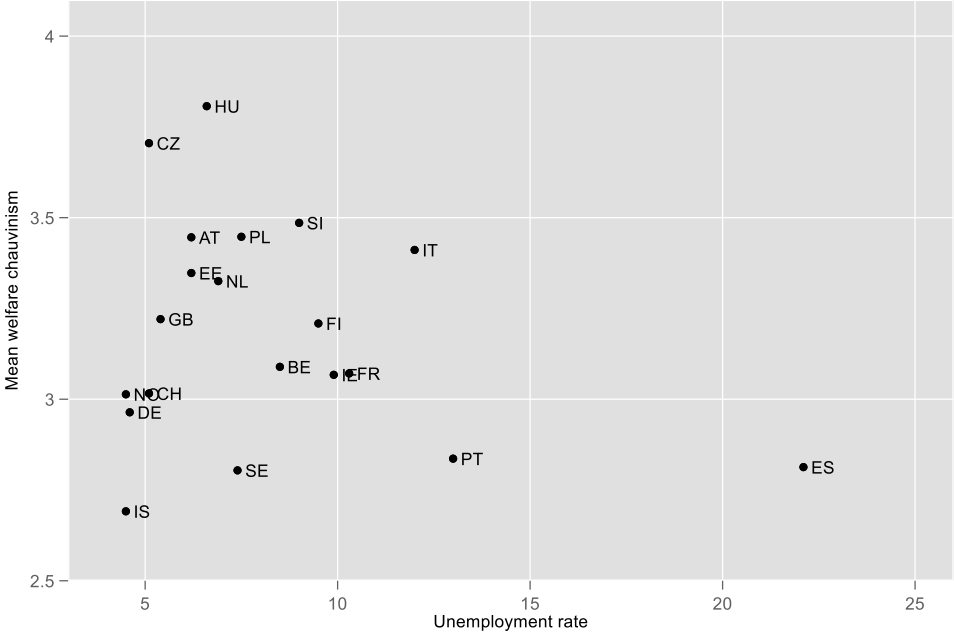
Spain has, by far, the largest unemployment rate among the countries included in the study. With an unemployment rate of 22.1 percent, it is 9.1 percentage points larger than the country with the second largest unemployment rate, Portugal. Comparatively, the difference between Portugal and the country with the lowest level of unemployment, Norway, is 8.5 percentage points. Spain is, therefore, quite an outlier in regards to unemployment. This same trend was also found in regard to native- and foreign-born unemployment rates. Additionally, Spain also has surprisingly low levels of welfare chauvinism despite our theoretical

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[20] For simplicity, I've chosen only to show the variable measuring unemployment rate; however, the same tendency can be found in both the native- and foreign-born unemployment rates as well.

expectations that countries with higher levels of unemployment would have higher levels of welfare chauvinism.

This problem can be seen clearly in Figure 1. If Spain is not included, there does not seem to be a significant relationship between unemployment and welfare chauvinism. This is also what we find in the regression analyses if Spain is not included. However, as we see in the figure, Spain is such an outlier that it influences the data to such an extent that it seems that countries with higher levels of unemployment actually have *lower* levels of welfare chauvinism. It is therefore questionable to include Spain in this analysis, when otherwise there does not seem to be a relationship between unemployment and welfare chauvinism. I also believe that, because we did not remove Spain in order to confirm our proposed hypotheses, as they are still rejected, it is less problematic to remove the country from the analysis. However, the regression analyses that included Spain were included in the article's supplementary material for clarity.

This is not to say that the relationship between unemployment and welfare chauvinism in Spain should be neglected. Seawright (2016) argues that selecting cases based on their values on the independent variable is often what makes for the best case studies. Spain would make for an excellent case study, but that case study is for another future dissertation to explore.

The fourth limitation is an important pitfall that comparativists can often find themselves in. It concerns establishing equivalence across contexts (Landman, 2003). Is it possible to analyse the same concepts and indicators across different countries? This is decidedly something that we have to contend with in this dissertation, in particular in articles 1 and 2, which investigate the concepts of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and welfare chauvinistic attitudes across several different countries. We begin with a discussion surrounding the measurement of the dependent variables used in the analysis of article 1.[21] We investigate anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in 34 European countries across four time points: 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017. There will therefore be great variation in what constitutes a Muslim or an immigrant in all 34 countries, and this can also vary between time periods. In the UK, for example, a Muslim might be associated with an immigrant background, whereas in Russia, a Muslim could be either an immigrant or an indigenous ethnic minority, and in

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[21] As a greater discussion surrounding the variables used in the four articles will be done later in chapter 3.2, we will limit this discussion to the comparative method.

Poland, Muslims are virtually non-existent. This also highlights some of the strengths of comparative case studies that involve a lower number of countries, as they can use the country's characteristics to a further extent to explain the results.

It is therefore clear that we are investigating different phenomena in different countries. However, I would argue that the consequences are similar across countries. It does not really matter for a Muslim if he or she is a recent immigrant, third generation-immigrant or an ethnic indigenous minority, since if large portions of the population inhabit an anti-Muslim attitude, some sorts of discrimination will most likely occur, no matter what type of Muslim that person would be. This could be individual-level discrimination or discriminatory policies.

Additionally, it is not only between countries that perceptions of what an "immigrant" or what a "Muslim" is. This also varies between individuals and is an issue faced by every scholar who researches attitudes towards minorities. For example, a sizeable group of the sample in Herda's (2015) study believed that Somalis form the largest immigrant population in Finland, despite Russians being the clear majority of Finland's immigrant population. Likewise, Blinder (2015) shows how the British public believes that asylum seekers and migrant workers are what characterize the largest immigrant groups in the UK, whereas the immigration statistics the state operates with, show that temporary migrants, particularly international students, are the largest immigrant groups. Blinder (2015) further explained how public opinion demanding lower levels of immigration led to restrictions for international students, despite the public most probably wanting to reduce the number of asylum seekers and migrant workers. This again highlights how a society with higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes has consequences for *all* immigrants and not necessarily just the immigrants the public views as "immigrants".

I do therefore believe that although we are analysing different phenomena across 34 countries, the consequences for those prejudiced against will be somewhat similar across countries, which means that this type of research that cuts across several countries is important for understanding the phenomenon as a whole.

Regarding welfare chauvinistic attitudes, similar problems can arise. However, I propose a similar interpretation as with anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes across countries. A potential issue is that we analyse welfare chauvinism in 19 different European countries, all of which have unique welfare policies. When the respondents are then asked: "Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they

should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here?",
they will have different imaginations of what the benefits and services entail. Nevertheless, as
with article 1, I believe that although individuals have different imaginations of the welfare
state across countries, the consequences of a prevalence of welfare chauvinistic attitudes will
have similar consequences for the immigrants, regardless of the existing policies in said
country. As previously mentioned, politicians have clear electoral incentives to take public
opinion into account when developing social policy. If large parts of a population wish to
remove or significantly reduce immigrants' opportunities to acquire the benefits of the welfare
state, this will have the same consequences for an immigrant living in a liberal welfare regime
as one living in a social democratic welfare regime.

3.2 Measurement of Key Variables

An important aspect of quantitative methods is the validity of the variables used. Are we
actually measuring what we believe we are measuring? Here, it is necessary to discuss the
validity of the most central variables in the four articles.

In article 1, I define the two dependent variables used in the study as a measure of an
"anti-Muslim attitude" and an "anti-immigrant attitude". They are both based on the same
question: "O*n this list are various groups of people. Could you identify any that you would not
like to have as neighbours?"* The respondents were then given a list of what can be considered
different outgroups, such as jews, homosexuals, drug addicts and, centrally for our purposes,
Muslims and immigrants/foreign workers. The answers were then coded into a dummy variable
where if an outgroup was chosen, it was given the value 1, and if it was not chosen, it was
given the value 0. Importantly, the respondents were not limited to choosing only a certain
number of groups.

I would argue that both variables can be categorized as a measurement of an anti-
Muslim and an anti-immigrant attitude. The question posed to the respondents was largely
inspired by the social distance scale developed by Bogardus (1925). In chapter 2.2.1, I
explained how the definitions of prejudice have developed into more minimalist and simple
versions than the more classic definition provided by Allport (1954); it is now often defined as
an overall negative attitude (Eagly & Diekman, 2005). If an individual does not want to have
another individual as a neighbour simply because that individual is either a Muslim or an
immigrant, I believe that it can be defined as an overall negative attitude towards either
Muslims or immigrants, and that it therefore satisfies our definition of prejudice. Anti-Muslim

and anti-immigrant are, therefore, appropriate labels to apply to the variable, as they both entail hostility towards either group.

There is an apparent weakness in the variable, as it is dichotomous. It is therefore not able to capture the strength of the negative attitude; it can only show whether an individual exhibits an intolerant attitude. This is regrettable, as a continuous variable or a Likert scale variable would be able to capture the strengths of these intolerant attitudes to a greater extent across countries. However, this variable has been used in several similar types of studies (Ribberink et al., 2017; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). It also has its strengths in that it is a relatively straightforward question, meaning that respondents most likely understand it. Another strength of the variable is that it allows us to explore the differences between anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes, as they are both a part of the same question.

Articles 2 and 3 use the same dependent variable to estimate welfare chauvinism. It is based on the question: "*Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here?"* The respondents could then choose between five different categories: (1) Immediately on arrival; (2) After living in [country] for a year, whether or not they have worked; (3) Only after they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year; (4) Once they have become a [country] citizen; and (5) They should never get the same rights. This variable is used very often in comparative cross-country studies on welfare chauvinism (see Careja & Harris, 2022 for review); however, it is often operationalized quite differently in different studies. I treat the variable as a continuous variable and therefore apply linear regression for articles 2 and 3. This is a different approach than most other studies, as some studies recode the variable into a dichotomous variable, where categories 4 and 5 represent welfare chauvinistic attitudes (Heizmann et al., 2018), whereas others use a multinominal approach (Mewes & Mau, 2012). Still, the most commonly used approach is ordinal logistical regression (see Mewes & Mau, 2013; Van der Waal et al., 2013; Ziller & Careja, 2022), which is used when the distances between categories are unknown (Hoffmann, 2016). Survey research often asks questions with the categories "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". The issue arises, as we cannot necessarily assume that the distance between "strongly agree" and "agree" is the same as between "agree" and "disagree" (Long & Freese, 2006). Ordinal logistical regression therefore seems to be the optimal choice for analysing our dependent variable, since it is an ordinal variable. However, we do not use this approach; instead, we apply linear regression in

both articles primarily because of the parallel regression assumption for ordinal logistical regression (Long & Freese, 2006).

The ordinal logistic model estimates the cumulative logit as a linear function of the explanatory variables (Hoffmann, 2016). Put simply, it entails the predictors having the same effect on the odds moving to the other category along the scale. To test the assumption of parallel lines, Long and Freese (2006) propose two tests: the first is an approximate LR test developed by Wolfe & Gould (1998) using the command *omodel* in STATA, and the second is a Wald test developed by Brant (1990), which tests the parallel lines for each variable using the command *brant* in STATA. We found that, for our data, the assumption of parallel regression was violated. When the assumption is violated, it is recommended that other models be considered (Long & Freese, 2006). Additionally, Hoffmann (2016) explains the rule of thumb that is often used in social sciences that it is possible to treat an ordinal variable as continuous if it has more than 5–7 categories. As our variable has five categories and the assumptions concerning parallel lines are rejected, I decided to treat the variable as a continuous variable. I therefore regard the variable as a measure of the respondents wanting to make it continuously more difficult for immigrants to receive the benefits of the welfare state.

Another option could have been either to dichotomize the variable or to use a multinominal approach. Both of these approaches have been used, but they are quite rare (Careja & Harris, 2022). I would regard a binary solution as problematic, as we lose too much valuable information when we force individuals into two groups. Multinomial logistic regression is applied when the categories are assumed to be unordered (Long & Freese, 2006). A typical example would be studies exploring what the respondents voted for in the last election: every answer is a different category and cannot be ordered. In our study, however, I would not regard the variable as multinominal as the variable categories become continuously more restrictive. There are also some substantial limitations regarding the use of the logistical regression method (see Mood, 2010), which will be discussed surrounding the dependent variable in article 4. Both an ordinal logistic approach and a linear regression approach have drawbacks for analysing the dependent variable; however, given that the parallel regression assumption was violated and the drawbacks connected to logistical regression, I regard a linear regression approach as the least problematic of the two and therefore chose to treat the variable as continuous.

For article 4, I investigate racist attitudes in Central and Eastern Europe. The ESS round 7 from 2014-2015 had a particular focus on migration-related issues and included several variables that measure different aspects of the respondents' attitudes towards immigrants and other outgroups in general. For our purposes, three variables could have been applied to measuring a racist attitude. Two of these were dichotomous variables that asked the respondents (i) "*Do you think some races or ethnic groups are born less intelligent than others*" and (ii) "*Do you think some races or ethnic groups are born harder working than others*"? The respondents can then answer either "*yes*" or "*no*" to the questions. The third variable is a continuous variable in which the respondents were asked (iii) "*Please tell me how important you think each of these things should be in deciding whether someone born, brought up and living outside [country] should be able to come and live here. Please use this card. Firstly how important should it be for them to… be white.*" The respondents were then able to answer on an 11-point scale whether they believed it to be extremely unimportant (0) or extremely important (10).

Central to a racist attitude is the belief that there is a hierarchization of human groups that is inherently biological (Vala & Pereira, 2018). To that end, one can argue that the first two variables are the best approaches for capturing a racist attitude, as they specifically ask the respondents whether some races or ethnic groups are *born* less intelligent or harder-working than others, thereby clearly stating that some human groups are born "better" than other human groups. Additionally, although there are few studies that investigate biological racist attitudes in Europe, the few that do have often used these two variables in their analysis (see Caller & Gorodzeisky, 2022; Ramos et al., 2020; Vala & Pereira, 2018). However, this can also be seen as a more "old school" type of racism, and I would argue that racism can also be seen as yet another form of intergroup prejudice that has an emphasis on physical appearance. I would therefore argue that the third variable, which is continuous, is more appropriate for analysing racist attitudes in Europe. Although it is not as straightforward of a question as the previous two, I would argue that individuals who believe that it is important for the immigrants who come to their country to be white implicitly rank human beings into a hierarchy based on skin colour. Immigrants who are biologically white are preferred to immigrants who are not biologically white. This is, therefore, inherently a ranking of immigrants based on their biological features.

Additionally, the strength of the variable lies in that it is a continuous variable, contrary to the two other variables, which are dichotomous. It therefore provides more nuance of the

respondents' attitudes across countries since the respondents have 11 different answers to choose from, as opposed to simply stating "*yes*" or *"no"* to quite a direct and controversial question. Moreover, if we were to use one of the two dichotomous variables, we would have to use a logistical approach, which presents certain problems. The two main issues for our purposes concern that it is problematic to compare the odds ratios (OR) or the log-odd ratios (LnOR) across models with different variables, as the unobserved heterogeneity is likely to vary across models (Mood, 2010). This is an issue for the article, as we used nested models to see how the variables related to symbolic threats may increase the explanatory power of the models.

Furthermore, using a logistical approach is also problematic when comparing OR or LnOR across samples, even when we use the same independent variables, since the unobserved heterogeneity can vary across the samples (Mood, 2010). This is particularly relevant for the article, as we compare different samples in different countries and investigate the differences and similarities.[22] Mood (2010, p. 79) sums this issue up quite well: "First, one should avoid collection of data in terms of dichotomies and qualitative variables if continuous (or at least ordinal) alternatives exist". As there does exist a variable that I would argue also captures a racist attitude, I have chosen to apply the continuous variable, which asks the respondents how important it is that the immigrants coming to their country should be white.

3.3 Sources of Bias

Finally, this chapter will focus on two sources of bias that are relevant to this dissertation. Each of the articles has its own methodological section where I address relevant shortcomings; however, this chapter will focus on the social desirability bias, which is a bias that occurs in all four articles, and the West–East methodological bias, which is of relevance when discussing the findings surrounding Eastern Europe.

3.3.1 The Social Desirability Bias

Individuals lie. It is a part of everyday life, and lying is often used to avoid negative emotions of shame, embarrassment and losing face in social interactions (Krumpal, 2013). Individuals not being truthful when asked questions is considered an important methodological issue in survey research. Tourangeau and Yan (2007) distinguished between three different aspects of sensitivity in cases where respondents may not answer survey questionnaires truthfully. The

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[22] Both of these issues are also applicable to article 3, which I believe strengthens the decision to conduct an OLS analysis instead of a logistical approach.

first concerns intrusiveness and refers to some questions being perceived by the respondents as too private or taboo. Typical examples include questions concerning health status and income. The second concerns what the authors refer to as "threat of disclosure" and relates to the respondents' concerns about the possible consequences if their answers were to be given to a third party (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007, p. 860). The third and most important dimension for this dissertation is that of the *social desirability bias*, which refers to apprehension about truthfully reporting an attitude or behaviour that conflicts with the social norms of a society. The problem with social desirability is therefore not related to the sensitivity of the question but is instead connected to the sensitivity of the answer that the respondent provides (Krumpal, 2013).

This is particularly relevant to this dissertation. As I have previously shown, Western societies seem to have developed an anti-racist norm (Ramos et al., 2020). This has entailed a shift from a more blatant form of prejudice to a more subtle form (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). This anti-racist norm has also been found to be more pronounced in well-established democracies (Ramos et al., 2020), which can be seen in several studies that have conducted list experiments that grant the respondents a greater degree of anonymity. These studies have found that respondents tended to mask their intolerance towards immigrants in several Western European countries, such as Ireland (Creighton et al., 2022), the Netherlands (Creighton et al., 2019), Norway (Creighton & Strabac, 2020) and the United Kingdom (Creighton & Jamal, 2022).

Additionally, how the data is collected can also influence the social desirability bias of the sample. Krumpal (2013) explains how the bias tends to be more pronounced when the respondents are interviewed in person by an interviewer, as feelings like shame or embarrassment are more likely to occur simply by having to answer to an actual individual. However, the social desirability bias still appears in data collection that avoids direct interaction between interviewer and respondent (Creighton & Strabac, 2020). For our purposes, both the European Social Survey and European Values Study collected their data through face-to-face interviews with respondents across countries. This may indicate that there is a stronger bias than in other datasets; however, as the same methodology for collecting the data is used across countries, we can expect a similar effect across the sample.

Although the social desirability bias is certainly a factor for the four articles, it is important to distinguish between situations where it is more or less of an issue. When analysing the intensity of an attitude in a single case, it may be a severe problem. We can use some of the

results from article 1 as an example to illustrate this. If we were only interested in the case of Sweden, for example, we would find that 96.65 percent of the sample exhibited a tolerant attitude towards immigrants. Based on this result, we might conclude that Swedes are incredibly tolerant of immigrants. In these types of conclusions, social desirability bias might be a serious problem. If large numbers of the respondents exhibit a tolerant attitude simply because of the prevailing anti-racist norm, the conclusion that Sweden is incredibly tolerant may be erroneous.

However, this dissertation compares countries by comparing the values of the same measure in two or more countries. The presence of the social desirability bias is less serious in such cases, as long as we can assume that the level of the bias is somewhat similar across different countries. If we return to article 1, we can see that the level of anti-immigrant attitudes in Norway is 4.81 and 7.73 in the United Kingdom. We can assume that the social desirability bias is prevalent in both countries (Creighton & Jamal, 2022; Creighton & Strabac, 2020). Furthermore, we can then assume that because the data collection in the two contexts is similar, there are similarities in the social desirability bias that can be found in the two countries. We can, therefore, still conclude that there are higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes in the United Kingdom than in Norway, even though there is likely a social desirability bias present.

The social desirability bias is a bigger issue when we compare Western and Eastern Europe, which we do in article 1. Due to the amount of intolerance towards both immigrants and Muslims that can be found in several Eastern European countries, it is worth considering whether the social norm against expressing these types of attitudes exists at all.[23] It may be that we are comparing countries where social desirability bias is present with countries where it is not present or is present to a much smaller degree. On the other hand, these differences in the social desirability bias between Western and Eastern Europe should not prevent us from concluding that Eastern European countries have higher levels of intolerance than Western European countries, given that there are such considerable differences in the strength of these attitudes between the two halves. However, we should still interpret the results with caution.

3.3.2 The West–East Methodological Bias

A central conclusion in in both articles 1 and 4 is that the high levels of intolerance towards immigrants and Muslims in Eastern Europe may be because of the short history of migration in this part of Europe. This lack of cultural diversity inhibits contact with minorities, which, in

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[23] This also applies to article 4

turn, then allows stereotypes of outgroups to flourish, as there is no opportunity for contact that could counter these stereotypes. In article 2, we also have a variable that measures the size of the immigrant population in the sampled countries, which include several Eastern European countries.

However, the *West–East methodological bias* is important to discuss in relation to the size of the immigrant populations in Eastern Europe (Gorodzeisky & Leytin, 2020, 2022). The West–East methodological bias relates to how we measure and quantify what constitutes an international migrant. The way major statistical databanks like Eurostat, OECD and the World Bank measure international migration is by defining an international migrant or a foreign-born individual as a person born in a country other than that in which she/he lives according to *present* territorial borders of independent nation-states (Gorodzeisky & Leytin, 2022). The World Bank uses the UN Population Division data in their measurement of an international immigrant, which is also what is used for this dissertation.

This definition has its basis in the political reality of Western Europe, which has had relatively stable borders that have changed only minimally since the end of the Second World War (Gorodzeisky & Leytin, 2020). This is problematic, as much of modern history has been about the development of new countries and borders and the dismantling of other countries and borders. Just in Europe, around 30 years ago, the dismantling of nation-states such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia saw the development of 23 new countries. This is where the West–East methodological bias becomes an issue, as several individuals may have migrated *internally* in these former nation-states but may now be defined as an international migrant because the geographical area he or she moved from may have become a sovereign nation-state. For example, if a person born in the geographical area of Slovakia internally migrated to the geographical area of the Czech Republic in the days of Czechoslovakia, they would simply have moved internally inside Czechoslovakia as Czechoslovakian citizens. Today, however, they would be categorized as "foreign-born" or "international" migrants because the international borders moved around them when new nation-states were established.

The consequence of these structural changes is that we often get inflated immigrant numbers in the post-communist space. This can severely bias migration analyses in this region. Gorodzeisky and Leytin (2020) exemplify this through the case of Estonia, which, according to the standard measure, had an international migrant population of 19.5 percent in 2014. However, of these 19.5 percent, they found that 17.4 were historically internal migrants, which

means that Estonia in reality only had an international migrant population of 2.1 percent in 2014 (Gorodzeisky & Leykin, 2020). This is a major bias inherent in our analyses of how immigrant populations and intolerance may be related in Eastern Europe. Still, I would argue that in many ways, it strengthens the argument that the considerable amount of intolerance that can be found towards immigrants and Muslims in Eastern Europe is largely because of the very low level of immigrant population. I would therefore argue that our conclusions still hold in article 1 and 4, despite the presence of the West–East methodological bias. This is a bigger problem in article 2, where we include the size of the immigrant population as a variable in our multilevel analysis of welfare chauvinism in Europe. However, it is not a central aspect of the article, and despite it being regrettable that the variable is quite flawed, it does not change the main conclusions of the study.

4. Summary of the Articles

Article 1: A comparative analysis of changes in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe: 1990–2017

(This article is co-authored with Marko Valenta and Zan Strabac. David Andreas Bell is the main author. The article is published in *Comparative Migration Studies*.)

Using data collected by the European Values Study from 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017, we analyse how negative attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims have changed over a 27-year time period in Europe. As much research in the field of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes has previously focused on attitudes in Western Europe, there is relatively little understanding of how these attitudes have developed in Eastern Europe. The reason for this is twofold: one is that most immigrants and Muslims in Europe live in Western European countries, and the other is that there has been a lack of good and reliable cross-country data. This is why we emphasize the differences between Western and Eastern Europe throughout the study. We use the data from the European Values Study to analyse these attitudes, using 166,000 respondents across 34 countries, 19 Western European countries and 15 Eastern European countries. We also test to see whether the construction of pseudo-panel data can help explain what factors affect these attitudes across time in both Western and Eastern Europe.

Perhaps the most central finding in the article is how both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes have increased in Europe as a whole, but when they are split into a Western European set and an Eastern European set, it is clear that there has actually been a *decrease* in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Western Europe between 2008 and 2017. This also means that negative attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims have *increased* in the same time period in Eastern Europe to such an extent that it disguises the decreasing trend in Western Europe. The main finding from the pseudo-panel data analysis is that the typical variables that can explain negative attitudes in Western Europe are not applicable for explaining the same phenomenon in Eastern Europe.

Additionally, we provide relevant overviews of the data from 2017 and add data concerning the size of the immigrant and Muslim populations in each country, which makes it clear that it is in countries where Muslims are virtually non-existent that there are the highest levels of anti-Muslim attitudes and that countries with lower immigrant populations also exhibit higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes.

Article 2: Perceptions and realities: Explaining welfare chauvinism in Europe

(This article is co-authored with Marko Valenta and Zan Strabac. David Andreas Bell is the main author. The article is accepted for publication in the *Journal of European Social Policy*.)

This article uses data collected by the European Social Survey from 2016 to analyse welfare chauvinistic attitudes across 19 European countries. Its main focus is on how macroeconomic factors may affect how welfare chauvinistic attitudes are developed across Europe. The study employs multilevel linear regression to analyse both individual-level and country-level determinants of welfare chauvinism in Europe. It uses several familiar macro-level variables that have been found to influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes, but also introduces three new variables in the realm of unemployment: native unemployment rate, foreign-born unemployment rate and the gap between native- and foreign-born unemployment rate. It also introduces a variable measuring the strength of the radical right populist parties. At the individual level, it employs variables that measure respondents' perceptions of these macro-level factors.

The analysis begins with a simple distribution of how individuals in different welfare regimes have become more or less welfare chauvinistic between the data collected in 2008 and 2016. We find that the individuals in the Nordic and liberal welfare regimes have remained somewhat stable in regard to the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism, whereas there has been a moderate increase in these attitudes in the Southern and Central European welfare states. In the Central Eastern welfare regimes, however, there has been a considerable increase in these attitudes. This follows our findings in article 1, in that Eastern European countries have seen a substantial increase in intolerance towards foreigners. As of 2016, it is also clear that individuals in the Nordic regimes are the least welfare chauvinistic and that individuals in the Central Eastern regimes are seemingly the most welfare chauvinistic in Europe. In Central, Southern and Anglo-Saxon welfare regimes, there are relatively similar levels of welfare chauvinism; however, it is also worth pointing out that individuals in the Southern welfare regimes are the most inclusive in terms of giving immigrants access to the services of the welfare state across Europe.

The multilevel analysis shows, somewhat surprisingly, that the macroeconomic variables have little to no effect on explaining welfare chauvinism in Europe. Only GDP per capita showed an effect, with a p-level of under 0.05. *None* of the variables measuring the

different nuances of unemployment can be said to have a significant effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes across Europe. Interestingly, the *perception* of the economic situation of the country and the state of the health services can be said to have an effect in explaining welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Higher dissatisfaction with the economy or health services is therefore linked to welfare chauvinism. We conclude that objective measures of a country's economic situation seem to be of little relevance for explaining welfare chauvinistic attitudes; to a greater extent, it is individuals' (often flawed) perceptions of these macroeconomic factors that help explain welfare chauvinism in Europe.

Article 3: Nordic welfare chauvinism: A comparative study of welfare chauvinism in Sweden, Norway and Finland.
(This article is co-authored with Marko Valenta and Zan Strabac. David Andreas Bell is the main author. The article is published in *International Social Work*.)

This article also uses data collected from the European Social Survey from 2016. We introduce the concepts of *strict welfare chauvinism* and *moderate welfare chauvinism* to nuance our understanding of welfare chauvinism in what is often characterized as the most generous and tolerant welfare states: Sweden, Norway and Finland. We understand the strict form of welfare chauvinism as the attitude of *never* wanting immigrants to gain the same level of rights to the social benefits and services of the welfare state as the majority population. The moderate form of welfare chauvinism is understood as accepting that immigrants may gain the same levels of benefits and services as the native population; however, it should be quite difficult for them to achieve these benefits. We further propose four possible explanations for welfare chauvinism in the Nordic countries; these relate to socio-economic factors, scapegoat theory, attitudes towards welfare benefits and attitudes towards different immigrant groups.

We find that the strict form of welfare chauvinism is near non-existent in the Nordic countries, and when comparing the numbers to other European countries, the Nordic countries are among the most tolerant in terms of the strict form of welfare chauvinism. However, the moderate form of welfare chauvinism is very prevalent in all three countries, particularly in Finland. When comparing the results with those of other European countries, we find that all three Nordic countries are in the top half of the moderate form of welfare chauvinism.

The regression analyses show that socio-economic factors and variables related to scapegoat theory seem to be of little importance in explaining welfare chauvinism in the three countries. It is primarily Nordic individuals' attitudes towards both welfare benefits and immigrants that appear to be essential for understanding welfare chauvinism in the region. Individuals who are more sceptical of welfare benefits as a whole are also more against giving immigrants the benefits of the welfare state. It is also clear that in Norway and Sweden, it is primarily negative attitudes towards culturally different immigrants that is a predictor of welfare chauvinism. Both negative attitudes towards culturally similar and dissimilar immigrants are a predictor of welfare chauvinism in Finland; however, the strongest effect can be found in culturally dissimilar immigrants.

Article 4: The importance of skin colour in Central Eastern Europe: A comparative analysis of racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic
(This article is co-authored with Zan Strabac and Marko Valenta. David Andreas Bell is the main author. The article is published in *Central and Eastern European Migration Review.*)

The final article uses data collected from the 2014 European Social Survey to analyse racist attitudes in three countries of the Visegrád 4 (V4) group, namely Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, in the months *before* the refugee crisis of 2015–2016. Slovakia, the remaining member of the V4, was, unfortunately, not included in the dataset. We use the term *racist attitude*, as our dependent variable explicitly asks how important the respondents believe it is for new immigrants who come to their country to be white.

To analyse these attitudes in the three countries, we use common theoretical approaches for understanding prejudice based on ethnicity. We test how different threat perceptions may explain these racist attitudes by focusing on how symbolic (cultural) and realistic (economic and security) threats may enhance racist attitudes. We also apply intergroup contact theory, despite there being very few immigrants in these countries. We apply this theory, as we believe it to be important in determining the difference in outcomes between some contact and no contact.

Most striking in this study is the number of racist attitudes that can be found in both Hungary and the Czech Republic and, to some extent, Poland. Even more striking is that the data collection was done in the months *before* the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, showing that

hostile attitudes towards immigrants of a different skin colour were already quite prevalent in all three countries before the height of the refugee crisis, attitudes that several populist politicians used to their advantage during and after the crisis. We also find that these attitudes could be found across the political spectrum, as we did not find a significant difference in attitudes between voters of the right-wing populist parties and the other mainstream or more left-leaning political parties.

The regression analyses showed that it is largely symbolic threats that are important for understanding attitudes in all three countries. It therefore seems that despite our measuring negative attitudes towards a minority based solely on skin colour, a perceived symbolic threat is very much connected to a different skin colour. Aspects regarding whether non-white immigrants are viewed as a security or economic threat seem to be of little relevance to racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. The effect of contact is not in line with the above discussed theoretical assumptions, as it seems that more contact with an ethnic or racial minority leads to the expected decrease in racist attitudes in Poland and the Czech Republic but has the opposite effect in Hungary. We attribute this to the large Roma minority in Hungary and combine it with studies that have found that contact with a Roma minority in fact tends to increase hostility.

5. Main Conclusions

The main purpose of this doctoral thesis was to investigate European attitudes in contemporary Europe. By exploring the different nuances of intolerant attitudes across different parts of Europe, I have come to several conclusions. One of the most important of these is that the analysis highlights a worrying trend of increasing intolerance towards ethnic outgroups in Eastern Europe. Since 1999, there has been a trend of increased anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes, and from 2008 to 2017, the increase in intolerance in Eastern Europe reached such an extent that it disguises a dominantly decreasing trend in Western Europe. Welfare chauvinistic attitudes have also seen an increasing trend in the region. By concentrating on three of these countries: Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. I also found that there were high levels of racist attitudes prevalent in all three countries *before* the refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016, and that these attitudes could be found across the political spectrum, not just among populist radical right voters. This is particularly of interest, as Hutter and Kriesi (2022) found that immigration was not a politicized issue in Hungary and Poland before the refugee crisis.

The main explanation I provide for the considerable intolerance in the region is based on intergroup contact theory. Several of these countries have no history of large-scale migration and have quite low immigrant populations, and, as the West–East methodological bias (Gorodzeisky & Leytin, 2020, 2022) also shows, the immigrant populations are actually quite a lot smaller in several of these countries than what official statistics show. The low levels of immigrant populations also mean that there are very few opportunities for contact between majority and minority populations, contact that could counter some of the stereotypes directed towards immigrants. The hope is that the results found in this dissertation regarding attitudes in Eastern Europe can stimulate some much-needed research on the region, as it has seen a worrying development of anti-democratic tendencies, where hostility towards ethnic outgroups has been key.

Regarding welfare chauvinism in Europe, a central conclusion seems to be that objective macroeconomic factors, such as different nuances of unemployment, have little to no effect on explaining welfare chauvinistic attitudes across European countries, whereas individuals' perceptions of these macroeconomic factors seem to be more significant. This is important, as individuals often have flawed perceptions of reality. These perceptions can be swayed by populist politicians, who often effectively articulate and amplify fears about globalization and immigration, creating distorting views of reality and a sense of crisis among populations. Interestingly, these perceptions seem to be of little relevance for explaining

welfare chauvinism in Nordic countries, where we do not find this effect. What explains welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Sweden, Norway and Finland seems to be negative attitudes towards benefits in general and negative attitudes towards culturally different immigrants. Additionally, although a strict form of welfare chauvinism is nearly non-existent in all three Nordic countries, the moderate form of welfare chauvinism is quite widespread.

This doctoral thesis began with the overarching research question: *What are the central developments and drivers of majority populations' attitudes towards immigrants across Europe?*

I would argue that the central development is a current and ongoing divide between Western and Eastern Europe on the immigration issue. This is highlighted in both articles 1 and 4. It is clear that some of the disputes that were seen between Western and Eastern Europe during the refugee crisis of 2015–2016 have left lingering gaps between the two halves. This gap between how Western and Eastern Europeans view the impact of immigration and immigrants in their society is therefore a possible line of conflict that has the potential to ignite in the future. Another development worth highlighting is the levels of moderate welfare chauvinism that can be found in the Nordic countries. This shows that there may be more scepticism towards immigrants in these societies than previous studies have highlighted. Additionally, it is worth pointing out that our measure of moderate welfare chauvinism as granting immigrants the benefits of the welfare state once they become citizens is a lot stricter than the current policies in all three of the countries. This may indicate decreased support for the Nordic universal welfare state and may entail a future where two welfare systems could exist: one for the majority population and one for individuals born abroad.

The drivers of these attitudes seem to be more complex than previous research has highlighted. Several studies have pointed out that macroeconomic conditions may be important drivers of hostility towards immigrants or other ethnic groups (Dražanová, 2022; Quillian, 1995); however, when it comes to welfare chauvinism, I would argue that individuals' perceptions of these macroeconomic conditions are of much more importance than the objective reality, as I show in article 2. It is therefore not clear that macro-level crises and economic issues can be directly linked to negative attitudes towards immigrants. As I show in article 4, there were quite extreme levels of racist attitudes in East Central Europe *before* the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, and article 1 also highlights in the appendix that the increase in intolerance in Eastern Europe seems to have begun in 2012 and was not necessarily a

consequence of the financial crisis in 2008 or the refugee crisis in 2015–2016. Instead, as I argue in article 2, perceptions seem to be important drivers of these attitudes, and, importantly, these perceptions are often flawed. Perceptions can be shaped by populist political actors who can construct failure stories and spectacularize failures on the macro level to create a sense of crisis and discontent among the populations. This can also be done by playing on particularly symbolic threats, which this dissertation has also shown to be important drivers of intolerance.

Finally, this dissertation has mainly focused on the size and composition of the immigrant populations and economic, cultural and political issues. These are only some of the many things that can be used to analyse negative attitudes towards immigrants. I am a firm believer that context and history are important for understanding contemporary attitudes, particularly the differences between Western and Eastern Europe, as I would argue they have had two distinct post-war socializations. I have attempted to inject some of this history and context into the discussion of findings in the articles; however, as journals operate with strict word limits, they have not necessarily been as prevalent as one could have wished for. For future studies on European attitudes towards immigrants, the field therefore needs more focus on contextual and historical explanations, with a particular emphasis on Eastern Europe. Studies such as Hiers and colleagues (2017), who, through their geopolitical threat scale, argue that historical legacies are important for explaining hostility to foreigners, are welcome contributions for further understanding attitudes in contemporary Europe. I look forward to further investigating these issues in the future.

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Articles

Article #1

A Comparative Analysis of Changes in Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Muslim Attitudes in Europe: 1990-2017

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A comparative analysis of changes in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe: 1990–2017

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Abstract

Muslims and immigrants have both been subjected to negative attitudes over the past several decades in Europe. Using data from the European Values Study, this study analyses the changes in these attitudes in the period 1990–2017. We find that negative attitudes have been increasing on average in Europe as a whole, with anti-Muslim attitudes being more prevalent than anti-immigrant attitudes. However, when split into a Western European set and an Eastern European set, from 2008, there is a divergence between the two halves. Our findings reveal that negative attitudes towards Muslims and immigrants have decreased in Western Europe, whereas they have increased significantly in Eastern Europe. Further analyses find that there are large discrepancies between anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in different countries. These discrepancies are discussed in detail and related to several relevant factors, such as the differences in size of the Muslim and immigrant populations, variations in the refugee influx and other possible factors and developments.

Keywords: Anti-Muslim, Anti-Immigrant, Islamophobia, Prejudice, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, European Values Study, Attitudes

Introduction

Exclusionary attitudes towards both immigrants and Muslims can be found in virtually every European country (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). Muslim immigrants, in particular, face a twofold challenge: in addition to being the target of the prejudice and discrimination that exists towards all non-Western immigrants, Muslim immigrants are also subjected to specific prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination because of their religion. Examples of this can include negative attitudes towards Muslim women wearing headscarves or that people connect Muslims to crime or terrorism (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018; Strabac et al., 2016; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019).

Both Western and Eastern Europe have experienced a rise in right-wing populist parties over the last decade. Central to many of these parties is an emphasis on a supposed threat from Muslims and Islam (Brubaker, 2017). Despite prejudice towards minorities becoming more prevalent in Western Europe since the late 1980s (Semyonov et al., 2006), studies continually report higher levels of both anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant

attitudes in Eastern European countries (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Bello, 2017; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). This is somewhat a strange paradox, as there are significantly fewer immigrants and Muslims in Eastern European countries. The term "phantom islamophobia" was used to describe the situation in Poland, where there are high levels of anti-Muslim attitudes, despite there being a nearly non-existent population of Muslims (Włoch, 2009). As we will soon see, this term could easily be applied to several other Eastern European countries, including Lithuania, Czech Republic and Slovakia, where, despite Muslims making up a very low percentage of the population, there remains a high level of anti-Muslim attitudes.

Regarding the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Eastern Europe, there is relatively little understanding of how these attitudes have evolved over time. This is mainly due to a lack of reliable cross-country data from different time periods in Eastern Europe. Although some studies have explored anti-immigrant attitudes over time in Western Europe (Czaika & Di Lillo, 2018; Meuleman et al., 2009; Semyonov et al., 2006),[1] the lack of data from Eastern Europe means there is an incomplete picture of the changes in attitudes in Europe. Using data collected by the European Values Study (EVS) from more than 30 European countries during the period 1990 to 2017, this study we explores changes over time in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe. Our focus is twofold, exploring variations in attitudes that exist both in space and time. The first is to explore and compare the differences in anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in both Western and Eastern Europe, and the second is to scrutinise and compare developments over time in attitudes across the above-mentioned time period.

At this point, we may note that there are several other dimensions we could scrutinise instead of the above-mentioned differences between Western and Eastern Europe, such as North–South division, which could include a larger focus on Mediterranean region which have had unique historical contact with the Muslim Mediterranean world.[2] However, we have chosen to focus primarily on the East–West division as the divergence in attitudes between Western and Eastern Europe is the most prominent.

In addition to exploring the above-mentioned space–time dimensions, we will also explore and discuss the potential and limitations of EVS for explaining attitudes over time. We believe that EVS has relatively high potential for a macro-level analysis of attitudes across time. However, when analysing changes across time on a micro level, panel data is the most optimal analytical strategy. Unfortunately, the EVS collects data from different individuals in each survey round, rendering the data unfit for panel-data analysis and for analysing individual-level effects on attitudes across time. However, it is suitable for a potentially promising approach using the construction of what Deaton (1985) introduced as a *pseudo-panel analysis*.[3] We therefore construct a pseudo-panel dataset from the EVS data to investigate whether some of these shortcomings may be addressed and compensated for via the construction of a *pseudo-panel*.

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[1] Some studies have included Eastern European countries. However, they often make up too small of a sample to yield any substantial claims.

[2] In addition to the historical connections, the countries in the region are also in a unique geographical position as they are the first countries of arrival for refugees and migrants from the Middle East and North Africa. As we will soon see, many of these countries also have relatively high levels of anti-Muslim sentiments. However, anti-Muslim attitudes in Southern Europe are significantly lower than those we may find in Eastern Europe.

[3] For studies using the pseudo-panel approach, see for example Liu and Tan (2009) and Jæger (2013).

Previous research on prejudice towards outgroups

Negative attitudes towards immigrants are largely understood to be a consequence of a perceived notion of threat. In his group position theory, Blumer (1958) highlighted that in a stratified system, the dominant ethnic/racial group has a feeling of superiority and proprietary claim to certain rights and privileges. The subordinate groups are viewed by the dominant group as being intrinsically alien. Furthermore, the dominant group fears that the subordinate group will threaten their position. It is further suggested that the above-mentioned threat perceptions can be split into either symbolic or realistic threat (Stephan et al., 2015). Symbolic threat is often associated with the in-group's religion, beliefs, values or ideologies,[4] while realistic threat is linked to economic and security concerns. Different dimensions of threat perceptions have been found to be connected to different immigrant groups (Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2015; Gorodzeisky, 2019).

For example, Ben-Nun Bloom and colleagues' (2015) study found that culturally threatened individuals tend to prefer allowing immigrants who are ethnically more like themselves, whereas economically threatened individuals tend to prefer immigrants from different racial, ethnic or geographical backgrounds, whom they perceive as being less likely to compete with them for economic resources. Furthermore**,** Blalock (1967) postulated that when the relative size of a minority outgroup increases, there would be increased fear of competition between groups, which in turn would lead to intolerant attitudes. However, the notion that an increase in the size of the outgroup leads to an increase in intolerant attitudes has empirically received mixed results in Europe (see Pottie-Sherman & Wilkes, 2017 for meta-analysis). Misperceptions of the size of a minority on the contrary have been found to have a strong influence on shaping anti-immigrant attitudes. The size of the minority is often grossly overestimated, and these misperceptions are found to play a more important role in increased intolerance than the factual reality (Citrin & Sides, 2008; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020).

A competing theoretical perspective about the effect of a minority size comes from intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954). Positive contact with a minority outgroup has generally been found to have a positive effect on attitudes towards outgroups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Verkuyten et al., 2010). A larger minority size might therefore actually improve anti-minority attitudes, because an increase in the size of the minority is associated with an increased chance for personal and positive intergroup contact with the minority (Schlueter & Wagner, 2008).

A central aspect of our study is analysing both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes across time. To our knowledge, due to a lack of data, there are few international comparative studies that have analysed changes in anti-Muslim attitudes over time. There are, by contrast, several international comparative studies that analyse changes in attitudes towards different immigrant groups (Meuleman et al., 2009; Pichler, 2010; Semyonov et al., 2006).

Semyonov et al (2006) show that in the period 1988 to 2000, there was a significant rise in anti-foreigner attitudes in 12 Western European countries, highlighting a steep increase from 1988 to 1994 and a levelling off from 1994 to 2000 (Semyonov et al., 2006). However, Meuleman and colleagues (2009) found mixed results in 17 European

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[4] It is worth mentioning that Blumer (1958) would suggest that the feeling of superiority may be rooted in ethnic/racial differences and antagonism and not necessarily dependent on differences in real values or beliefs.

countries between 2002 and 2007.[5] Pichler ([2010](#)) observed similar results in an exploration of different threat perceptions in 24 European countries from 2002 to 2006, finding that the overall perceived threat had remained stable, while economic threat perceptions had a curvilinear effect, increasing between 2002 and 2004, but then decreasing to the levels of 2002 in 2006. The cultural threat perception, on the other hand, steadily increased from 2002 to 2006. More recently, Czaika and Di Lillo ([2018](#)) found that negative attitudes towards most immigrants have decreased, except for towards immigrants from poorer countries outside of the EU. Dennison and Geddes ([2019](#)) showed that anti-immigrant attitudes decreased in 12 Western European countries in the period between 2014 and 2017, despite an increase in support for anti-immigrant parties.

To summarise, an overview of the relevant studies on changes over time in anti-immigrant attitudes shows mixed results in a broad sense. On the one hand, some studies show a stagnation or a modest decrease in negative attitudes, whereas on the other hand, there have been signs of increased intolerance towards immigrants from poor countries outside of the EU and culturally dissimilar immigrants. It should, however, be noted that most of these studies have samples that tend to overrepresent Western European countries. The lack of representation of Eastern European countries may result in an incomplete picture being offered of the attitudinal trends in the whole of Europe. In this article, we provide a more balanced sample. We contribute to the field by including the Eastern European dimension in discussions of changes in anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe over time and show the importance of splitting European datasets into a Western and Eastern European sample when analysing trends across time.

Anti-Muslim attitudes

The phenomenon of anti-Muslim attitudes has deep historical and cultural roots in Europe. However, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe can, in many ways, be seen as a watershed moment in terms of the rise of anti-Muslim attitudes in the twenty-first century (Esposito & Kalin, [2011](#)).[6] Saeed ([2007](#)) showed that from 2001 to 2002, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, there was a dramatic increase in articles containing the word "Muslim" in British newspapers. It has further been suggested that Muslims are especially prone to negative media representations, as they are frequently viewed as alien and "other" in the media (Saeed, [2007](#)).

Media representations have long been hypothesised to shape public opinion, as mass media represents an important source of information (Blumer, [1958](#)). This would especially be the case in many Eastern European countries, where Muslim populations are nearly non-existent and where face-to-face interactions between the majority population and Muslims are very rare. In such contexts, the only source of information people would have about Muslims would be the mass media or politicians' hostile rhetoric towards Muslims (Czymara, [2020](#)).

While there are several studies showing how Muslims are negatively portrayed in the media (De Cock et al., [2018](#); Saeed, [2007](#)), there is limited empirical support for the hypothesis that

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[5] Three countries witnessed an increase in exclusionary attitudes, whereas seven countries experienced a decrease in negative attitudes. The remaining seven countries saw no significant changes in attitudes in the time period (Meuleman et al., 2009).

[6] Preceding the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Iranian revolution, a significant influx of Muslim immigrants, and hijacking, hostage-taking and terrorist attacks in the 1980s and 1990s all led to an increased scepticism towards Muslims and Islam leading up to 2001 (Esposito & Khalin 2011).

media shapes anti-Muslim attitudes as it is difficult to measure quantitatively due to the lack of quality data on the subject. There are some studies trying to empirically discover this link, but their results are inconclusive (Das et al., 2009; Schlueter et al., 2020).

Several studies suggest that there are higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes than generalised anti-immigrant attitudes across Europe (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Bello, 2017; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). However, while these studies reveal differences between Western and Eastern Europe, they reveal only static differences at a point in time, and not differences in trends which we highlight in this study. For example, in an earlier cross-country study of 30 European countries, Strabac and Listhaug found relatively similar effects of independent variables on anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). They concluded that the underlying mechanisms of anti-Muslim attitudes resemble the mechanisms underlying anti-immigrant attitudes**,** suggesting that Muslims constitute a new target group for prejudice which had come into the spotlight at the time of the study. This follows what Savelkoul and colleagues (2011) found in that general theories explaining prejudice, such as threat perceptions and intergroup contact theory, can be applied to studying anti-Muslim attitudes.

Several other studies suggest that prejudice towards Muslims can be distinguished from the general form of anti-immigrant attitudes. A study amongst university students in Belgium found that anti-Muslim attitudes could be distinguished from blatant racism, cultural prejudice, economic prejudice and negative attitudes towards asylum seekers (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2014). What differentiates Muslims from many other outgroups is that they are a religious group as well as often being an immigrant group. Finding that Britons are more opposed to fundamental religious immigrants, be they either Christian or Muslim, Helbling and Traunmüller (2018) conclude that Muslims are not in general viewed more negatively than Christian immigrants. But that individuals are more sceptical to fundamentally religious individuals as it may collide with liberal and secular values. This is further evidenced by studies finding a pronounced difference between Muslim women in general and Muslim women wearing a headscarf (Hellbling, 2014; Strabac, 2016).

Comparative studies that explore developments in the attitudes in different parts of Europe are also of relevance for this article (Brubaker, 2017; Simonsen & Bonikowski 2020). Rogers Brubaker (2017) points toward the repositioning of populist parties in the last 15 years where Western and Northern European populist parties have shifted from nationalism to "civilizationalism" by combining discourses of Christian culture, secularism and liberalism. While East-Central European countries present themselves as more nationalist, criticising the liberalism of the west and defending the Christian values against the threat of Islam. This follows a recent study finding that civic nationalism has taken an exclusionary turn towards Muslims in North-western Europe in that Muslims are perceived as the antithesis to universalist and liberal ideas (Simonsen & Bonikowski 2020). Other studies have also shown that individuals have a perception of threat from Muslims and link them to both crime and terrorism (Wike & Grim, 2010, Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). More recently, less restrictive integration policies, stronger state support for religious practices and a larger relative size of Muslim minority groups have all been associated with lower levels of anti-Muslim attitudes (Schlueter et al., 2020).

Data and methods

This study uses data from the European Values Study (EVS), a large-scale, cross-national and longitudinal survey research program based on basic human values. The EVS has collected data every nine years for the period of 1981 to 2017. Due to various data limitations (to be identified in this section), we have chosen to analyse the periods 1990 to 2017 and 1999 to 2017. The main part of the analysis focuses on macro-level changes in attitudes towards both immigrants and Muslims. Additionally, we explore how EVS and pseudo-panel data may be used to analyse attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims over time.

Dependent variables

Our dependent variables for this analysis are based on a "social distance" question that explores which outgroups respondents find undesirable as neighbours. The question is worded as follows: *"On this list are various groups of people. Could you identify any that you would not like to have as neighbours?"* The number of groups from which the respondent could choose is different depending on the survey year. Since the 1990 survey, the list has included the five groups: "People of a different race", "Jews", "Gypsy", "Muslims" and "immigrant/foreign worker". The responses to the question were then coded into sets of dummy variables with a value of 1 if the group was mentioned and a value of 0 if the group was not mentioned. For our purposes, we used a dummy variable if the respondent mentioned Muslims for our dependent variable measuring an anti-Muslim attitude. If the respondent mentioned immigrants/foreigners, we used this dummy to measure an anti-immigrant attitude for our other dependent variable. The operationalisation of the variable has a strength in that it is a fairly simple and straightforward question, meaning that it can be assumed that all respondents understand the question. Another strength is that it allows us to explore the differences between anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes, as they are both part of the same question. The weakness of the variable is that it is dichotomous and therefore cannot express the strength of the negative attitude; it can only show how widespread the attitude is in each particular country.[7] However, the variable has been used in several other studies (see for example Strabac & Listhaug, 2008 or Ribberink et al., 2017). Additionally, to test the robustness of the macro-analysis we used data from the European Social Survey which includes a likert-scale variable to measure anti-immigrant attitudes and received similar results as presented later in this study.

Data and methods macro analysis

As our dependent variable for measuring anti-Muslim attitude was first introduced to the questionnaire in the 1990 survey, for the macro analysis, we use data collected at four time points: 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017.[8] The combined datasets for these four surveys include approximately 202,000 individuals across 47 countries. We have removed Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia from the dataset, as our focus is on Europe. Due to the

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[7] An important note for the dependent variable in the pseudo-panel analysis is that because we collapse the data, the dependent variable has several values between 0 and 1, meaning that we will conduct linear probability models instead of logistic regression models.

[8] A possible limitation is that attitudes can fluctuate wildly in response to events happening at the times of sampling (see for example Legewie 2013) which can pose a challenge to the validity of analysis as it uses relatively few time points across a rather long time period. However, because of the number of countries added to the analysis, this should be less of an issue.

study's focus on changes in attitudes over time, we also cut countries that only appear in one of the four surveys. This includes Bosnia, Cyprus, Northern Cyprus, Moldova, Montenegro and Kosovo. In addition, Muslims (around 11,000 individuals) and respondents born outside of the country (around 9800 individuals) were removed. A consequence of this was a drastic decrease in the sample sizes of Albania and Turkey, so we decided to remove these two countries as well. This left approximately 166,000 individuals across 34 countries for inclusion in this study.[9] Despite these reductions, Western and Eastern European countries are both well-represented in our sample. The Western European set consists of around 98,000 individuals across 19 countries, and the Eastern European set has around 67,000 individuals across 15 countries. Population weights are applied for the macro-analysis.

In light of our theoretical discussion, we have also included data showing the size of the immigrant population and the size of the Muslim population of the countries involved in order to determine possible connections between the size of the minorities and the attitudes in the country in the most recent survey of 2017. The size of the immigrant population was calculated by the authors by comparing it to the relative size of the population using data from the UN international migrant stock, which offers estimates of the foreign-born population in the receiving countries.[10] The percentage of the Muslim population is based on estimates from a report by the Pew Research Center. The estimates show the percentage of the Muslim population in various countries in 2016. Countries estimated to have fewer than 10,000 Muslims were assigned a percentage of 0.1%. Russia, Belarus, Serbia and Iceland were not included in the report; therefore, the estimates for Russia, Belarus and Serbia are based on a separate Pew Research Center report on religious affiliation in Central and Eastern Europe.[11] An important point to consider is that Muslims can be understood as different groups in different European countries. For example, in several Eastern Europe, such as Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria, Muslims may be viewed both as immigrants and an indigenous ethnic minority, while in most Western European countries Muslims are almost exclusively associated with an immigrant background.

Data and methods pseudo-panel data

An additional aim of this study was to test whether the construction of pseudo-panel data can be used for studying attitudes across time on a micro level. As the data collected by EVS were not collected from the same individuals at the four different time points selected, ordinary panel data cannot be used to analyse the data. Deaton (1985) suggested the creation of pseudo-panel data to counter this issue. Pseudo-panels are created by grouping similar individuals into cohorts. The key concept is that individuals who share

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[9] The countries included in the analysis were: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Belarus (BY), Croatia (HR), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Iceland (IS), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Russia (RU), Serbia (RS), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Switzerland (CH), Ukraine (UA), United Kingdom (UK). Data retrieved from https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/, where more information on procedure and methodological documentation is provided.

[10] Data can be downloaded from: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp

[11] Data can be downloaded from: https://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/n
Data from Russia, Belarus and Serbia can be downloaded from: https://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-affiliation/. We could not find a reliable estimate of the Muslim population of Iceland and have therefore excluded the country from this part of the analysis.

the same sociodemographic criteria face similar social experiences and therefore may harbour similar attitudes. Based on this technique, we used the EVS data to construct panel data at the level of sociodemographic groups. Each of these groups was coded with the mean value on each variable measured for the group. Therefore, instead of analysing individuals over time, we are analysing cohorts over time (Liu & Tan, 2009).[12]

In the literature on prejudice, gender, age and education can be seen to influence attitudes towards ethnic minorities (see Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010 for review). In stratifying our sociodemographic groups, we used these three sociodemographic variables. The respondents' gender comprises two groups (male or female). Age was classified into eight groups using the respondents birth year: (1) Pre 1929, (2) 1930–1939, (3) 1940–1949, (4) 1950–1959, (5) 1960–1969, (6) 1970–1979 (7) 1980–1989 and (8) individuals born post 1990. Educational level was classified into three groups: (1) lower educational level, (2) middle educational level and (3) higher educational level.[13] The variable measuring education was first introduced to the questionnaire in the 1999 survey. Consequently, the pseudo-panel analysis uses the data from 1999, 2008 and 2017.

After the groups were created, each sociodemographic group was coded with the mean value of each variable. With a total of 34 countries and 48 sociodemographic groups ($2 \times 8 \times 3$), we could have theoretically ended up with a total of 1632 groups (34×48); however, the actual number of real groups was 1622, with a mean of 87 individuals in each group. The group sizes vary from one individual in eleven groups to 560 individuals in three groups. The size of each group was then weighted against the number of people in each group which tells us that we end up with a total of 3913 individuals in 1622 groups across three time periods.

With the data having been transformed into a pseudo-panel, we were then able treat it as ordinary panel data, with the benefits such a method entails. The only difference is that instead of looking at how a *specific* individual changes over time, we are seeing how an *average* individual in a sociodemographic group changes over time. For example, this means that we can investigate how increased trust in the press over time may have affected the anti-Muslim attitudes of an average highly educated Italian male born between 1970 and 1979 in the period of 1999–2017.

Independent variables

An issue when working with cross-sectional data collected at three different time periods is that identical variables need to be included in all three datasets. EVS has several good variables that can be used to analyse for the use of analysing what may affect people's attitudes. However, many of these variables are either not included in all three of our datasets, or the wording of the question is different in one of the datasets, making the variable unsuitable for our purposes. We are, therefore, limited to a smaller set of adequate independent variables for the analysis than would be optimal.

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[12] It should be noted that pseudo-panel analysis is a different approach to age-period-cohort models. We measure how average individuals change their attitudes across time, while the latter approach measures how generational shifts affect attitudes across time.

[13] Lower educational level includes individuals with no education or those who attained primary and lower secondary education. Middle educational level includes individuals with upper secondary and post-secondary education. Higher educational level includes bachelor's level and master's or higher.

In total, there are 9 independent variables that measure different aspects that may affect the attitudes towards either immigrants or Muslims. From the variable *Proud of nationality* (1 = Not very proud, 4 = Very proud), we may explore whether more pride in one's nationality equates to individuals being more intolerant, as a greater extent of national pride may enhance the feeling of being in a dominant in-group and may cause people to view both Muslims and immigrants as exterior threats to their nationality. Two occupational categories are also included, as unemployed (0 = not unemployed, 1 = unemployed) individuals may view immigrants as competitors for jobs (Blumer, 1958), and students (0 = Not student, 1 = Student) as education can be seen as a socialisation arena for more liberal values (Hello et al., 2002). *Left/right* measures the respondents' placement on the political spectrum on a 10-point scale where 1 = Left and 10 = Right. We include this variable to see whether more right-leaning individuals are connected to more prejudice, as several previous studies have indicated. Furthermore, we also explore whether there may be differences in the effect of this variable between Western and Eastern Europe.

We also included two variables representing different facets of social trust: *Trust in press* (1 = None at all, 4 = A great deal) and *Trust in others* (0 = Can't be too careful, 1 = Most people can be trusted). As the media may play a role in shaping the perceptions of both immigrants and Muslims, and because Muslims are often portrayed stereotypically in the media, it may be relevant to explore whether more trust in the press indicates a higher level of intolerance. Social trust has also been found by some studies to influence attitudes towards ethnic outgroups (Herreros & Criado, 2009). Therefore, it is relevant to analyse whether *Trust in others* may have an effect on how immigrants and Muslims are perceived. Furthermore, we have included a variable measuring how satisfied the respondent is with their life as a whole (0 = Dissatisfied, 10 = Satisfied), as individuals who are dissatisfied with their life are hypothesised to be more likely to blame outgroups for their negative personal condition (McLaren, 2003).

The variable *Political system: Democratic* (having a democratic system—1 = very bad, 4 = very good) is included, based on an assumption that individuals who are less satisfied with a democratic system will be more hostile towards immigrants and Muslims, as they will be more prone to identifying with authoritative political leaders' anti-immigrant rhetoric.[14]

Finally, as Muslims are a religious minority, we have also added a measurement of the respondents' level of religiosity. To measure this, we have chosen to include a variable measuring how important God is to the respondent (0 = Not at all important, 10 = Very important). It is pertinent to explore whether Muslims are viewed by religious individuals as a religious threat. Results regarding the effect of religiosity on prejudice are rather mixed, with previous studies finding that religiosity can have a positive, negative and no effect on attitudes towards ethnic outgroups (Laythe et al., 2002; Bell, & Strabac, 2020).

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[14] For more on the rationale behind this assumption see Ágh (2014).

Fig. 1 Average anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes (1999–2017)
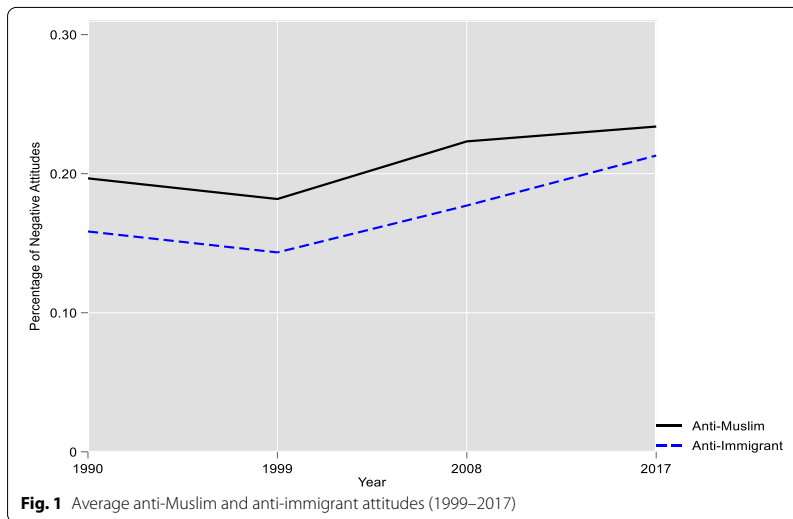
Results

In what follows, we explore changes over time in the attitudes towards Muslims and immigrants, both at the macro and micro levels. We first present results from the changes in attitudes across time, before proceeding with an analysis on the current levels of intolerance in 2017. Figure 1 shows the average anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe in the period from 1990 to 2017.

As can be seen in Fig. 1, there does appear to have been a rise in intolerance towards the two outgroups across Europe from 1999 to 2017. We can see that in the whole period covered by our data, anti-Muslim attitudes remained higher than anti-immigrant attitudes. Anti-Muslim attitudes increased at the highest rate in the period 1999 to 2008. In this period, we observe an increase in the share of respondents stating that they would not like to have Muslims as neighbours (from 18.3 to 22.2%). Yet, in the period from 2008 to 2017, there was somewhat of a smaller increase of respondents stating that they would not like to have Muslims as neighbours.

Anti-immigrant attitudes have also been rising across Europe. From 1999 to 2008, there was a rise from 14.4 to 17.6% of respondents stating that they would not like to have immigrants as neighbours, increasing further to 21.3% in 2017, and slowly gaining on the levels of anti-Muslim attitudes. In sum, Fig. 1 shows us that in 2017, more than one-fifth of Europeans harboured negative attitudes towards Muslims and immigrants.

Previous studies have found that there is a significant difference in attitudes towards minorities between Western and Eastern Europe (Bello, 2017; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). To further investigate this, we split the data into an Eastern Europe set and a Western Europe set, showing the average anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in the two halves of Europe. Figure 2 shows developments in Eastern and Western Europe in the period from 1990 to 2017.

Figure 2 shows several interesting findings. The first is that contrary to the general trends presented in Fig. 1, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes have actually *decreased* in Western Europe in the period from 2008 to 2017. This is an interesting

Fig. 2 Average anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Western Europe and Eastern Europe (1990–2017)
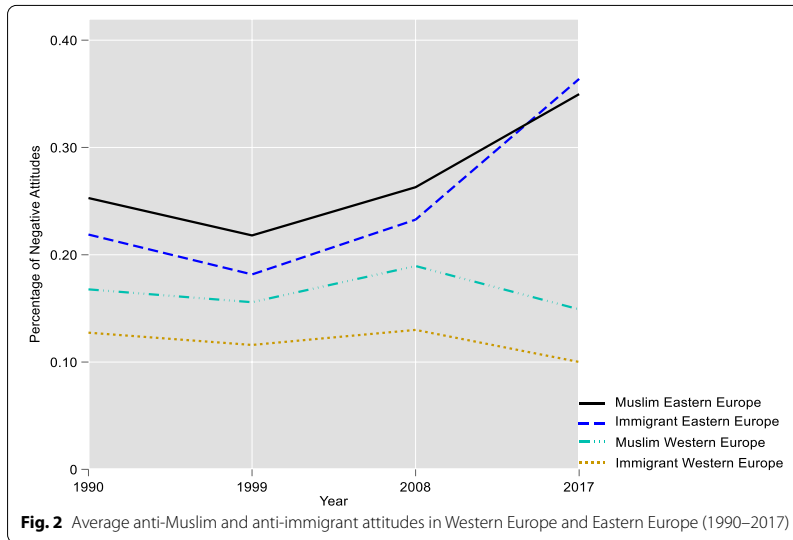
finding, especially if we take into consideration that support for right-wing populist parties went up in the period from 2008 to 2017 in several Western European countries; the negative attitudes actually decreased in this period to levels similar to those in 1999.[15] However, the figure shows the opposite trend in Eastern Europe. Indeed, negative attitudes have increased considerably in Eastern Europe, with anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes going from an average of 21.8% and 18.6% respondents stating that they would not like to have immigrants and Muslims as neighbours in 1999 to a staggering 35% and 36.4% in 2017, showing that over one-third of Eastern Europeans harboured negative attitudes towards Muslims and immigrants. This high level of negative attitudes in Eastern Europe actually disguises the trend of decreased negative attitudes in Western Europe in the combined European graphs in Fig. 1. The later pseudo panel analysis also suggests that there is a strong time trend in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes that is constant across Eastern European countries.

We have further analysed the time-trends by breaking down the data into two different age-groups; Individuals born before and after 1975 to see if there are any differencing regarding individuals coming of age pre/post cold war and communist rule (See Appendix: Figs. 5, 6). Here, we found a similar trend to Fig. 2 in Eastern Europe. The trend in Western Europe shows that the post-1975 generation have higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes than the pre-1975 generation.[16] This is in line with researchers who assert that Muslims are increasingly perceived as not harbouring liberal and universalist values, which in turn

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[15] Dennison and Geddes (2018) also found similar results regarding decreased anti-immigrant attitudes. They point to *immigrant saliency* being the major factor for the rise of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe, *not* anti-immigrant attitudes.

[16] This is especially interesting as younger generations tend to be less intolerant than older generations (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010).

may lead to more intolerance in the more liberal and secular younger generation in North-western Europe (Helbling & Traunmüller, 2018, Simonsen & Bonikowski 2020).

As the most intriguing aspect of Fig. 2 takes place between 2008 and 2017, we also replicated the figure using data from the European Social Survey which covers the same period, but with more time points with similar variables (see Appendix: Fig. 7). The figure shows the same trend as Fig. 2, with decreased intolerance in Western Europe and increased intolerance in Eastern Europe. ESS data also indicates that the decreasing trend in Western Europe began from 2010. In Eastern Europe, the trend began to increase seriously in the period between 2012 and 2014. In other words, the trend was already well on the way *before* the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, which we will discuss in more detail later in the article.

Another surprising finding is the relationship between anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in both Western and Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, the relationship has been rather stable across time, following what previous studies have found in that negative attitudes towards Muslims tend to be more pronounced than negative attitudes towards immigrants more generally (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). This seems to be the case in Eastern Europe from 1990 to 2008; however, in 2017, both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes are around the same level.

In addition to the macro analysis of changes in attitudes, we have explored the potential of the pseudo-panel approach for analysing individual attitudes over time. Table 1 shows our results using the pseudo-panel data, with model 1 exploring anti-immigrant attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe and model 2 exploring anti-Muslim attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe.

We start the pseudo-panel analysis with the findings from Western Europe before moving on to the Eastern European model and end the analysis with a comment on the effect of the year dummies. Our findings show that in Western Europe, if a group on average becomes more satisfied with their life, the less intolerant towards both immigrants and Muslims the group will become. The more pro-democracy a group on average becomes is also associated with a more positive attitude towards both immigrants and Muslims. As it was expected, models 1 and 2 also show that, in Western Europe, the more right-leaning on the political spectrum a group becomes, the more intolerant towards both immigrants and Muslims they will be. The findings in Western Europe are interesting as they show that the same independent variables have similar effects for both anti-immigrant attitudes and anti-Muslim attitudes. These results confirm findings from previous studies on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Savelkoul et al., 2011).

There is only one variable that has an effect in explaining the attitudes in Eastern Europe. The more religious a group on average becomes in Eastern Europe, the more intolerant they will become towards immigrants. Interestingly, it does not have the expected effect on anti-Muslim attitudes, as it was expected that Muslims may be viewed as a religious threat. None of the independent variables has a significant effect on anti-Muslim attitudes in Eastern Europe. That only one variable has an effect on the attitudes in Eastern Europe may mean that there is need for updated theoretical models for this region, something previous studies have also suggested (Vala & Pereira, 2018).

While the micro-analysis yields few significant effects for understanding the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Eastern Europe, the year dummies show interesting effects, which should be commented on. Year dummies are included in fixed effects

Table 1 Pseudo-panel analysis of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe

	Model 1: Anti-immigrant		Model 2: Anti-Muslim	
	Western Europe	**Eastern Europe**	**Western Europe**	**Eastern Europe**
	Fixed effects	Fixed effects	Fixed effects	Fixed effects
Satisfied with life	− 0.023**	− 0.004	− 0.030**	− 0.021
	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.015)
Trust in Press	− 0.035	− 0.008	0.003	− 0.054
	(0.021)	(0.067)	(0.021)	(0.065)
Trust in others	− 0.008	0.014	− 0.061	0.124
	(0.027)	(0.072)	(0.037)	(0.071)
Left/right spectrum	0.015*	− 0.009	0.015**	0.006
	(0.005)	(0.014)	(0.005)	(0.016)
Politcal system: Democratic	− 0.058*	0.022	− 0.066*	− 0.023
	(0.027)	(0.045)	(0.026)	(0.042)
Proud of nationality	− 0.027	0.078	− 0.033	0.081
	(0.018)	(0.045)	(0.016)	(0.042)
How important: God	0.001	0.024*	0.005	0.002
	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.011)
Unemployed	0.054	− 0.073	0.020	− 0.087
	(0.041)	(0.077)	(0.046)	(0.101)
Student	0.022	− 0.028	0.029	− 0.055
	(0.018)	(0.043)	(0.018)	(0.040)
Year dummy (1999 as reference)				
2008	0.021	0.033	0.053**	0.036
	(0.014)	(0.028)	(0.017)	(0.029)
2017	0.038*	0.157**	0.058**	0.145*
	(0.016)	(0.049)	(0.018)	(0.066)
N	2095	1727	2094	1727
Within R^2	0.110	0.397	0.163	0.307

Standard errors in parentheses

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$

models to capture effects that are constant across countries but vary over time (Stock & Watson, 2012). In Table 1, we can see that the 2017 dummy has an effect in all four models, however there is a much stronger effect in both of the Eastern European models. It may therefore be that there is a strong Eastern European time trend in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes that is constant across countries, which we are not able to capture in our models.

Cross-country variations in anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes

As the results from the time-analysis found diverging attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe, it would be of interest to look at the attitudes that can be found in each individual country. In Fig. 3a, b, we see the country-specific averages for anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in 2017.[17]

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[17] We focus on the data from 2017 as it provides us with the most updated information on the attitudes. A table showing the country-specific anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes from all time periods can be found in Appendix: Table 2.

Fig. 3 a Country-specific anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe (2017). **b** Country-specific scatterplot of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe
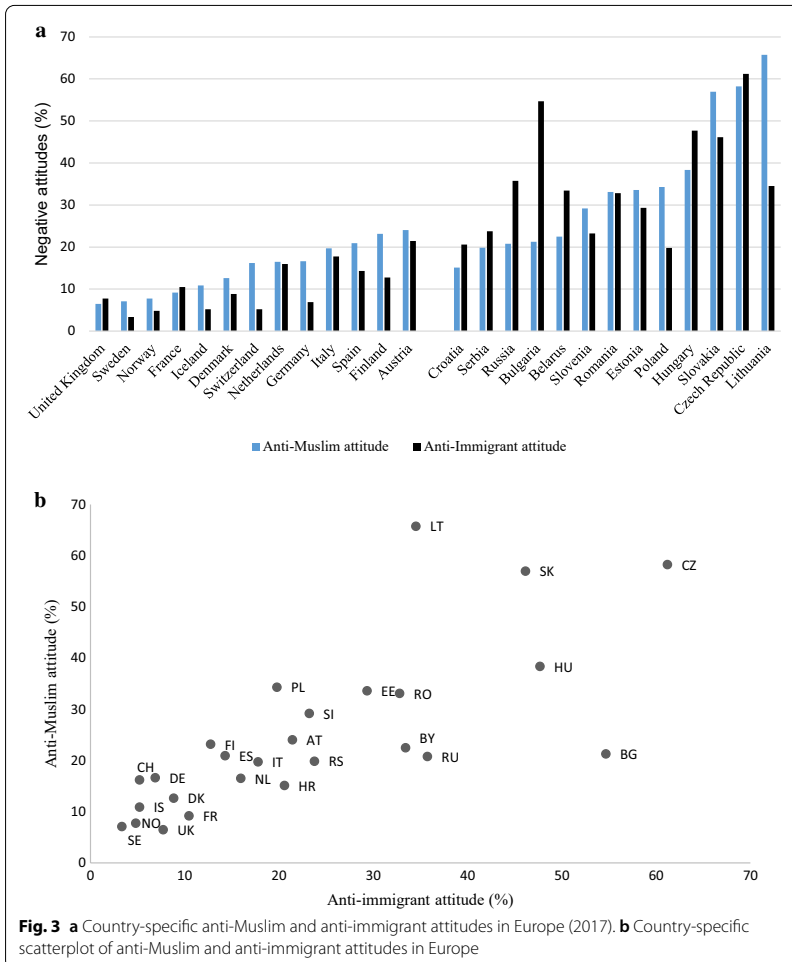
Figure 3a shows that there is a large discrepancy in attitudes amongst the countries, both in Western and Eastern Europe. Amongst the most tolerant countries in Western Europe are Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom, where fewer than 10% of respondents state that they would not like to have immigrants and Muslims as neighbours.[18] These countries are much more tolerant than Austria, Italy, Finland and Spain, where between 15 and 20% of respondents would not like to have immigrants and Muslims as neighbours.

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[18] As more institutionalized democracies have a stronger anti-racist norm (Ramos et al., 2020), it is important to keep in mind the social desirability bias when examining the results in several Western European countries.
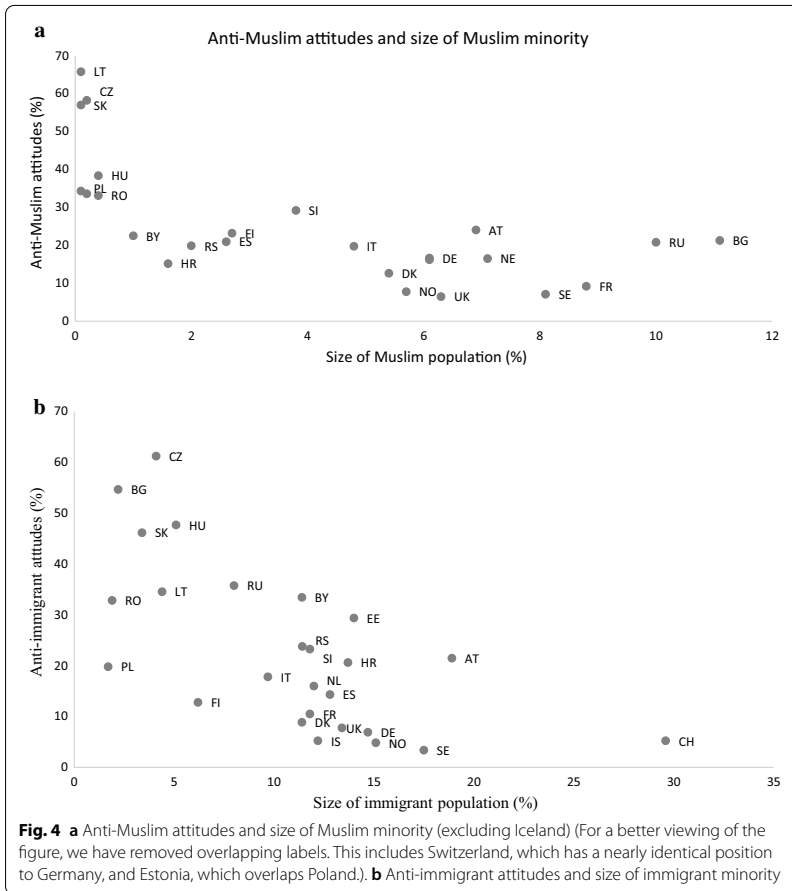
In Eastern Europe, there are also very large differences between the countries, with Bulgaria, the Czech Republic,[19] Hungary and Slovakia having extremely high levels of intolerance. By contrast, Croatia is nowhere near these levels of intolerance. Comparatively, Croatia is amongst the most tolerant countries when compared to its Eastern European counterparts. Yet, when compared to the Western European countries, it fits amongst the most intolerant Western countries, alongside Austria, Italy, Finland and Spain. It is a rather fitting example of the differences in intolerance between Western and Eastern Europe that the most *tolerant* Eastern European country would be one of the more *intolerant* countries if compared to the Western European countries.

Figure 2 gives the impression that there were similar levels of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Eastern Europe in 2017. However, when examining Fig. 3b, we can see that this may be more the case in Western Europe, as there is a clustering in the bottom left corner of several Western European countries. There are, however, discrepancies between the prominence of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in several Eastern European countries, with the most prominent examples being the cases of Lithuania and Bulgaria. The case of Lithuania shows us that 34.53% of the respondents exhibit an anti-immigrant attitude, while a staggering 65.72% exhibit anti-Muslim attitudes. By contrast, Bulgaria shows a different pattern, with the average level of anti-Muslim attitudes being 21.27% and the average level of anti-immigrant attitudes in the country being 54.67%. A possible explanation for these variations may be the differences in the size of the immigrant and Muslim populations in the countries. As already noted, Muslims in Bulgaria are primarily an ethnic minority and not primarily associated with migrants which seems to influence attitudes. Other Eastern European countries that also have non-immigrant Muslim minorities such as Russia, Serbia and Croatia, exhibit lower levels of anti-Muslim attitudes than other Eastern European countries. Previous studies also suggest that a larger size of a Muslim minority may reduce prejudice towards Muslims (Schlueter et al., 2020). This is in line with Fig. 4a, which shows that Bulgaria has a large Muslim population, and has relatively similar levels of anti-Muslim attitudes to many Western European countries.

Figure 4a also shows that the countries where Muslim populations are virtually non-existent are the countries where there are the highest levels of anti-Muslim attitudes. Figure 4b also shows similar trends, in that a larger immigrant population is generally related to a lower level of anti-immigrant attitude. In many ways, these figures confirm what Renata Włoch (2009) termed "phantom islamophobia". Indeed, countries such as Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have extreme levels of anti-Muslim attitudes, despite there being near non-existent Muslim populations in all three countries. The figure also shows support for Schlueter and colleagues' finding that a larger Muslim population is associated with decreased levels of anti-Muslim attitudes (Schlueter et al., 2020).

During the communist period, immigration to several Eastern European countries was marginal. This has led to several Eastern European countries having small immigrant populations and some countries having virtually no Muslim minorities. Several scholars

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[19] The case of the Czech Republic is somewhat astonishing when examining the change in attitudes across time; anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes were around 15 and 19 percent in 1999, rising to around 30 percent for both in 2008 and finally reaching around 60 percent in 2017. See Appendix: Table 2 for the country-specific intolerance from 1990 to 2017.

Fig. 4 a Anti-Muslim attitudes and size of Muslim minority (excluding Iceland) (For a better viewing of the figure, we have removed overlapping labels. This includes Switzerland, which has a nearly identical position to Germany, and Estonia, which overlaps Poland.). **b** Anti-immigrant attitudes and size of immigrant minority

believe that a possible explanation for the higher levels of intolerance in Eastern European countries is the lack of intergroup contact between the majority population and ethnic outgroups (Pickel & Öztürk, 2018). Both Fig. 4a, b provide indirect support to this argument, showing that the Eastern European countries with fewer immigrants or Muslims have higher levels of intolerance. According to this argument, a lack of contact with the two ethnic groups means there is little opportunity to reduce negative attitudes (Włoch, 2009; Pickel & Öztürk, 2018).

Another important external factor, which has sometimes been related to changes in attitudes over time, is the refugee crisis of 2015–2016 (Stockemer et al., 2020). It should be noted that the EVS data from 2017 were collected right after the large influx of refugees in 2015 and 2016, when Europe received more than one million refugees from Syria and other countries (Valenta & Jakobsen, 2020). We have already shown that intolerance has increased in Europe in the last decades. However, it was also noted that the high levels of negative attitudes in Eastern Europe disguise the trend of decreased negative attitudes in Western Europe.

Indeed, it seems that the influx of refugees did not result in increased intolerance in most Western European countries, not even in Germany and Sweden, the countries that received in the largest share of the refugees in 2015 and 2016 (Valenta & Jakobsen, 2020). As already noted, in 2017, these countries exhibited some of the lowest levels of intolerance towards immigrants and Muslims in the whole sample. Furthermore, in the period 2008–2017, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes declined in Western Europe, including in the above-mentioned countries that were the two major receiving nations of refugees.[20]

In contrast, Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania exhibited the highest levels of intolerance in 2017 in the whole of Europe. Anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes increased significantly in these countries in the period 2008–2017, but this can hardly be explained by the refugee influx, as these countries received negligibly low numbers of refugees in 2015 and 2016. However, we cannot exclude indirect effects of the refugee influx on attitudes in Eastern European countries, such as the increased media focus on the refugee crisis, "imported islamophobia", populations' anxiety regarding a possible influx of refugees and other aforementioned factors and misconceptions (Włoch, 2009; Pickel & Öztürk, 2018; Stockemer et al., 2020).

Concluding discussion

Studies of prejudice have continued to find higher levels of intolerance in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe, despite most immigrants and Muslims residing in Western Europe. We therefore outlined two main aims for this study. The two main aims were to explore the differences in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe and to explore these differences over time. We found that the great increases in both anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in Eastern Europe disguises the trend of decreased intolerance in Western Europe. Additionally, the relationship between anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes has remained rather stable in Western Europe between 1990 and 2017, with Muslims being continually more exposed to negative attitudes than immigrants.

Furthermore, our findings show that, on average, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes have reached similar levels in Eastern Europe. However, when looking at the country-specific data, there are large discrepancies between the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in several Eastern European countries. A possible explanation for this may be the relationship between the size of the minority and the intolerant attitudes, as has been proposed by previous studies.[21] Indeed, our findings show that the larger the proportion of immigrant or Muslim populations, the lesser the degree of intolerant attitudes.[22] Previous studies have also shown that it is the perceived size of the minority and not the factual size that may increase the levels of threat perceptions, which in

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[20] Countries in Southern Europe were also strongly affected by the refugee crisis in 2015, and anti-Muslim and anti-migrant sentiments have recently increased in Italy, Spain and Croatia, but they are still considerably lower compared to those in Eastern Europe. Recall table 2 in Appendix.

[21] See Schlueter & Wagner (2008); see also Pettigrew & Tropp (2006), Verkuyten et al (2010).

[22] Lack of contact to counter stereotypical representations of Muslims or immigrants may therefore explain the differences between Western and Eastern Europe. This may explain why a country like Lithuania has extreme levels of anti-Muslim attitudes, despite the Muslim population making up around 0.1 percent of the population.

turn increases negative attitudes (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020). Indeed, it is evident that Muslims and immigrants are perceived to make up a greater size of the population than in actuality in Eastern Europe (see, amongst others, Ipsos, 2016; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2020).[23] This misperception of the size and threat of the minorities and no intergroup contact opportunities could therefore be a possible explanation for the higher levels of intolerance in Eastern Europe. We were, however, unfortunately not able to test this in this analysis.

The most pressing question after this analysis is related to the sudden divergence in trends from 2008. We found that the decreasing trend in Western Europe began in 2010, while it began to increase steeply in Eastern Europe between 2012 and 2014, continuing to climb from 2014 to 2016.[24] Two crises hit most of Europe between 2008 and 2017, the first being the 2008 financial crisis, the second being the refugee crisis of 2015–2016. It is evident that countries hit hard by the financial crisis also tended to have an increase in hostility towards immigrants (Isaksen, 2019). The decreasing trend from 2010 may be the aftermath after high levels of intolerance collected from samples during the crisis. Interestingly, the initial rise of intolerance in Eastern Europe began *before* the refugee crisis of 2015, and does not seem to have changed initially from the 2008 financial crisis.

The numbers of irregular migrants increased in some of the Eastern European countries before 2015. For example, Bulgaria and Hungary experienced a significant increase in influx a few years before numbers of asylum seekers peaked in Western Europe in 2015–2016. This may explain some of the indicated increase in intolerance, but not the increase in intolerance in Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania and other Eastern European countries that hardly experienced the refugee crisis. The continuing increase from 2014 in these countries is therefore more likely the result of the refugee crisis seeing the proximity of several of the countries to the main migration route and the increased in politicization and saliency of immigration in Eastern European countries (Hutter & Kriesi, 2021).[25]

We have indicated that average levels of intolerance are lower in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the average levels of intolerance towards immigrants and Muslims are decreasing in Western Europe, including in the countries that received the largest numbers of migrants during the refugee crises of 2015 and 2016. It should, however, be noted that although Western European countries have lower levels of intolerance towards immigrants and Muslims, this does not necessarily mean that "all is well" in Western Europe. There are high levels of intolerance in several Western European countries, including Austria, Finland, Spain and Italy. Although these levels are lower than in the most intolerant cases in Eastern Europe, they are not negligible.

This article has also explored the potential and limitations of EVS in micro-level explorations of changes in attitudes over time. EVS does not provide panel data. We have therefore constructed a pseudo-panel with the data to see if it could be used to analyse changes over time in average individuals' attitudes towards Muslims and

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[23] With some Eastern European countries having virtually no Muslim minority population, there is no opportunity for intergroup contact to counter the images people receive from media outlets (Saeed 2007; Wloch 2009).
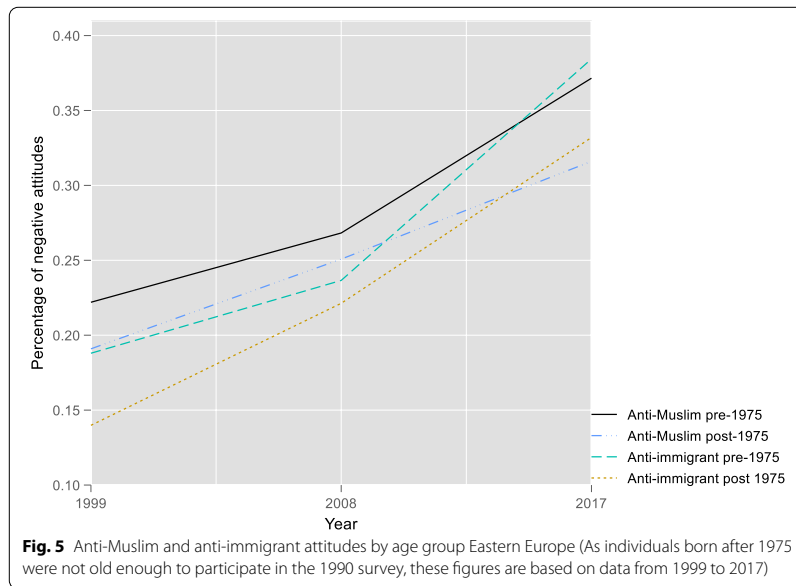
[24] See the Appendix: Fig. 7 using ESS data.

[25] Hutter and Kriesi (2021) found that in some Eastern European countries, immigration went from not being politicized at all, to be very politicized following the increased influx of irregular migrants.

immigrants. We found that although some variables have an effect, the main finding from the pseudo-panel analysis is the effect of the year dummies, as they show that there is a strong Eastern European trend towards intolerant attitudes that is stable across the countries and which our models were not able to capture.

To summarise: For our purposes, the EVS provides a good foundation for macro analysis of changes over time in attitudes of people in Europe. However, it does not provide a sufficient frame for the analysis of changes in individual attitudes, and the shortages embedded in the EVS can be only partly amended via a pseudo-panel analysis. Nevertheless, we believe that future studies should focus more on the worrying trend of negative attitudes that can be found, especially in Eastern Europe. Comparative case studies of individual countries, using both historical and cultural factors to explain the attitudes in the countries, may enhance our knowledge of the reasons behind the development of very high levels of intolerance in several of these countries. Studies exploring the relationship between lack of contact and intolerance in Eastern Europe would also be a welcome addition to the research field of prejudice.

Appendix

See Figs. 5, 6, 7 and Table 2.

Fig. 5 Anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes by age group Eastern Europe (As individuals born after 1975 were not old enough to participate in the 1990 survey, these figures are based on data from 1999 to 2017)

Fig. 6 Anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes by age group Western Europe

Fig. 7 Time trends for attitudes towards immigrants of the same race towards immigrants from poor countries outside of Europe. Data from European Social Survey

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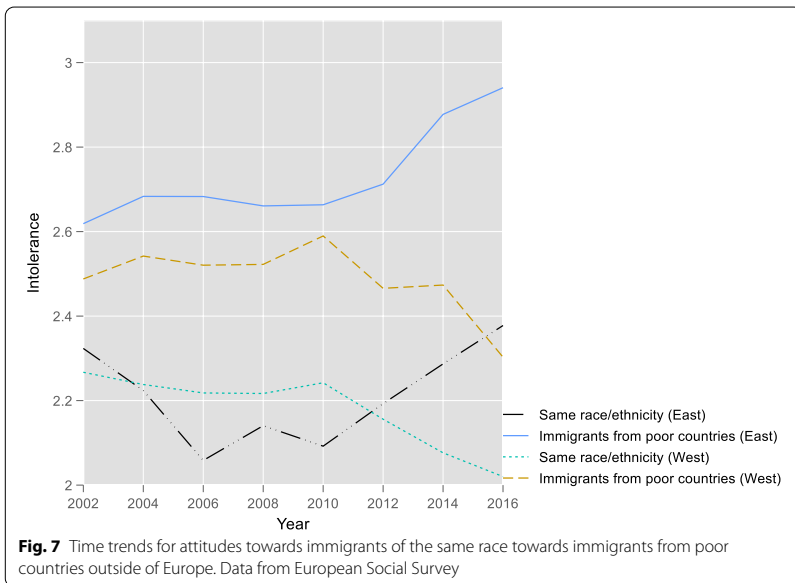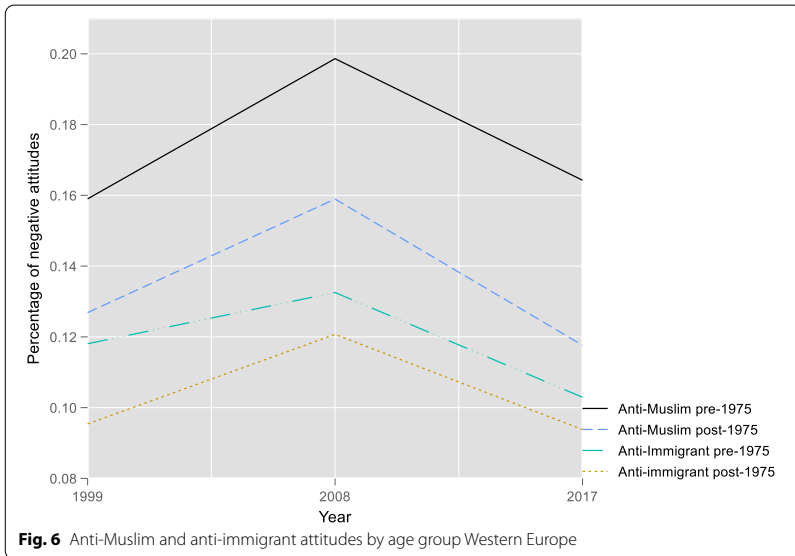
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Table 2 Country-specific anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes (1990–2017)

Country	Muslim 1990	Immigrant 1990	Muslim 1999	Immigrant 1999	Muslim 2008	Immigrant 2008	Muslim 2017	Immigrant 2017	Muslim average	Immigrant average
Austria	14.18	20.21	15.21	12.71	31.94	24.49	24.02	21.44	23.41	19.31
Belgium	26.71	20.31	20.23	16.02	15.48	6.60			18.25	12.11
Bulgaria	41.88	34.44	22.60	23.80	21.18	17.74	21.27	54.67	21.60	32.43
Belarus			26.65	17.13	24.56	27.27	22.48	33.43	24.36	26.79
Croatia			23.78	19.28	17.43	13.37	15.12	20.59	18.40	17.66
Czech Republic	22.38	22.66	15.41	19.08	30.88	30.33	58.21	61.20	33.48	35.54
Denmark	15.50	11.60	16.37	10.65	13.32	6.83	12.63	8.84	13.50	8.74
Estonia	20.66	17.08	22.01	20.72	35.17	34.08	33.58	29.35	30.61	28.44
Finland	9.86	4.59	18.69	12.72	23.38	15.96	23.15	12.75	21.83	13.78
France	17.54	12.90	16.11	12.14	7.94	4.45	9.16	10.47	11.27	9.28
Germany	19.99	17.11	12.65	11.14	27.58	12.31	16.63	6.89	18.45	9.47
Greece			20.93	13.66	18.31	16.67			19.51	15.29
Hungary	18.32	22.2	11.59		11.10	15.50	38.36	47.68	24.62	31.40
Iceland	11.68	7.69		3.00	8.10	3.63	10.88	5.21	10.51	4.28
Ireland	13.40	5.10	14.41	12.52	23.37	14.80			18.33	13.52
Italy	14.32	13.43	17.20	16.50	22.78	16.46	19.71	17.78	19.58	16.87
Latvia	25.94	30.82	14.53	9.78	30.47	21.73			23.29	16.36
Lithuania	34.00	14.80	30.55	22.69	47.71	28.64	65.72	34.53	49.33	29.04
Luxembourg			15.45	9.14	19.56	15.89			17.17	11.98
Malta	11.96	8.91	28.04	15.67	32.36	34.84			30.54	26.75
Netherlands	14.13	8.99	12.30	5.04	19.75	16.01	16.50	15.96	16.60	13.66
Norway	21.28	15.86			13.93	6.56	7.74	4.81	10.89	5.70
Poland	19.55	9.98	24.68	24.86	25.17	17.68	34.28	19.79	28.00	20.45
Portugal	19.24	10.13	7.60	2.60	15.41	8.08			12.17	5.83
Romania	34.51	30.25	31.41	21.12	22.89	20.76	33.09	32.81	29.29	25.50
Russia			14.10	11.30	21.72	33.72	20.78	35.74	18.00	24.19

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Table 2 (continued)

Country	Muslim 1990	Immigrant 1990	Muslim 1999	Immigrant 1999	Muslim 2008	Immigrant 2008	Muslim 2017	Immigrant 2017	Muslim average	Immigrant average
Serbia					28.17	23.72	19.85	23.77	23.84	23.74
Slovakia	26.14	23.42	24.42	22.84	23.20	16.73	56.95	46.15	35.05	28.68
Slovenia	37.86	40.00	22.81	16.18	29.45	28.83	29.17	23.23	27.28	23.19
Spain	10.47	7.55	10.86	9.36	13.56	4.67	20.92	14.29	14.82	9.09
Sweden	17.00	8.88	9.20	2.87	16.10	6.79	7.09	3.35	10.83	4.35
Switzerland					12.59	4.06	16.19	5.21	15.22	4.90
Ukraine			24.24	14.85	24.84	18.40			24.55	16.67
United Kingdom	15.14	10.22	15.07	17.08	15.67	17.20	6.47	7.73	12.82	14.46

Declarations

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Publisher's Note

Article #2

Perceptions and Realities: Explaining Welfare Chauvinism in Europe

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Perceptions and realities: Explaining welfare chauvinism in Europe

Welfare chauvinism is largely understood as the view that the benefits of the welfare state should primarily be given to the native population, and not shared with the immigrant populations. Using a multilevel approach, we analyse welfare chauvinism in Europe and test to see how different contextual and macro-economic conditions may influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe, with a particular focus on different nuances of unemployment. We also test how individuals' subjective perceptions of the economic development in their society may influence welfare chauvinism in Europe. The analysis finds that welfare chauvinistic attitudes have increased in strength in Central-Eastern European welfare states, whereas the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism is near non-existent in the Nordic welfare regimes. We further find that it is the subjective perceptions of the macro-economic conditions and the strength of far-right populism, rather than the actual objective reality of a society's economic situation that drives welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, as several European welfare states have seen increases in their immigrant populations, debates surrounding immigrants and their place in society have, in many ways, become entrenched in the European welfare states (Dennison & Geddes 2019; Green-Pedersen & Otjes 2019). A central point in these debates is the question of when immigrants are to be afforded the benefits and services that living in a welfare state entails. This has seen the development of what Andersen & Bjørklund (1990:212) termed 'Welfare Chauvinism', defining it rather briefly as the idea that 'the welfare state should be restricted to our own'. Originally, the term was used to explain the structural changes and new cleavages of Western European politics in the 1990s, when right-wing nationalist parties became supportive of the idea that the welfare state should exist primarily for the native population, but that it should exclude immigrants from receiving its benefits (Andersen & Bjørklund 1990; Kitschelt & McGann 1995).

The link between left-wing economic positions and right-wing value and cultural positions have become a staple of populist radical right parties throughout Europe (Schumacher & Van Kersbergen 2016). In response, some of the scholarship on welfare chauvinism has shifted in part from focusing on political parties to focusing on the development of welfare chauvinistic *attitudes* (Crepaz & Damron 2009; Van der Waal et al. 2010; Careja & Harris 2022). Although other terms have been used to describe the exclusion of immigrants from receiving the benefits and services of the welfare state (see, for example, Koning's (2013, 2019) work on selective solidarity), throughout this study, we will refer to the phenomenon as *welfare chauvinism*.

Research on welfare chauvinistic attitudes has increased manyfold since its conceptual establishment in the 1990s (Ziller & Careja 2022). With increased research attention on welfare

chauvinism, several contextual factors have also been explored. These factors often explore, for example, how the size of different minority populations influences welfare chauvinistic attitudes in European societies (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov 2009; Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2012; Cappelen & Peters 2018; Heizmann et al. 2018). Moreover, economic factors, such as GDP per capita (Mewes & Mau 2012), social inequality (Van der Waal et al. 2013), social expenditure (Reeskins & Van Oorschot 2012) and globalisation (Mewes & Mau 2013), have all been found to influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe. Furthermore, individuals' subjective feelings of economic security are found to play a much larger part in explaining welfare chauvinistic attitudes than the objective reality of an individual's economic situation (Heizmann et al. 2018; Kros & Coenders 2019). One aspect that has not received as much attention is how these subjective feelings relate to macroeconomic aspects of a country may play a part in the development of welfare chauvinistic attitudes. This is particularly of interest as individuals often have a flawed perception of reality (Citrin & Sides 2008, Bussolo et al. 2021). Europe has seen a considerable rise in populist far right-parties in the preceding decades, and as Caiani and Graziano (2019) explain, these parties often construct specific failure stories in line with the public's sentiment and transform them into a perceived crisis. The distortion of reality by these parties and with individuals flawed perceptions of reality may then be important drivers for European welfare chauvinism. This will be one of the main aspects this study investigates.

Several of the former studies have used data from the 2008 European Social Survey (ESS) as it was one of the few datasets that included a measure on welfare chauvinism. In 2016, the ESS released a similar dataset containing the same measure of welfare chauvinism. From 2008 to 2016, there have been several salient crises, including the 2008 financial crisis and the so-called refugee crisis in 2015–2016. These crises may have significantly changed perceptions towards immigrants (See for example Talò 2017; Isaksen 2019). It is therefore of relevance to

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test whether several of these contextual factors still have an effect for explaining welfare chauvinism in European societies and how subjective perceptions regarding these economic aspects may also be of influence.

Additionally, an economic factor that has received somewhat ambiguous results is how the unemployment rate of a country affects welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Some studies have found that a higher unemployment rate leads to a higher level of welfare chauvinism (Mewes & Mau 2012; Goldschmidt & Rydgren 2018; Ziller & Careja 2022), whereas several others have found no relationship between the two (Mewes & Mau 2013; Van der Waal et al. 2013; Eger & Breznau 2017; Heizmann et al. 2018). Noteworthy changes in unemployment since 2008 combined with inconclusive results means that it is also pertinent to focus on different aspects of a country's unemployment with a more in-depth analysis of its effect on welfare chauvinism. This study therefore aims to explore, on both a macro and a micro level, how different factors may influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes, with a particular emphasis on economic factors and different nuances of unemployment. Another contribution this study does is that it includes how individuals' perception of these macro-level aspects may affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

This paper is divided into several interrelated parts, beginning with an explanation of realistic threat theories before reviewing previous studies of welfare chauvinism and looking at how different contextual factors have played a part in affecting welfare chauvinism. This is followed by an explanation of the data and methods used in this study before we present the results and concluding discussion.

2. Theory and previous research

Most studies on welfare chauvinistic attitudes tend to rely on aspects of intergroup threat theory (see, among others, Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Quillian 1995; Stephan et al.

2016), with particular emphasis on the realistic threat aspect of the theory. Intergroup threat is experienced when members of one group perceive that another group is in a position to cause harm toward them. Realistic threats can be described as threats to a groups power, resources and general welfare (Stephan et al 2016). These types of threat are also often referred to as material (Ben-nun Bloom et al 2015), or economic threats (Schmuck & Matthes 2015). A typical example of realistic threat can be the perception that immigrants are stealing the jobs of the native population, thus inducing a feeling of realistic threat, which in turn can lead to prejudice towards immigrants. An essential part is that realistic threat does not have to be a *real* threat, but it needs to be perceived as real by the individual. Individuals can then perceive these threats where none exists. This is important, as perceived threats have actual consequences, regardless of whether the perception of threat is accurate or not.

Another important aspect to clarify is that an individual can experience these realistic threat perceptions at both a group, and an individual level (Stephan et al 2016). An individual who is unemployed, can perceive immigrants as competitors for jobs or welfare benefits, and therefore develop an individual perception of realistic threat. However, an individual who is employed, can also develop a similar type of threat perception, but on a group level. They may view immigrants as a threat to *their* group as they could perceive immigrants to take the jobs or benefits that should be awarded to the native population, meaning that *their* group should be prioritized over immigrants when it comes to unemployment benefits and jobs in the society (Blumer 1958, Stephan et al 2016).

2.1 Economic determinants of welfare chauvinism

It is argued that when there is a more precarious economic situation in a society, majority populations will feel more threatened by immigrants, as they fear that their own economic advantage will be damaged through increased competition with the minority group (Quillian 1995). With welfare chauvinism, different economic factors have been found to have an influence. Economically weaker countries (measured by GDP per capita) tend to be more welfare chauvinistic (Mewes & Mau 2012), and more social inequality in a country also leads to higher levels of welfare chauvinism. Magni (2020) found that social inequality leads to higher support for redistribution, but not redistribution towards immigrants, and Van der Waal and colleagues (2013) also found that inequality enhances welfare chauvinism, arguing that in more unequal societies, the wealthy are more likely to perceive minority groups as deviant and therefore less entitled to welfare.

Moreover, countries with a higher social protection expenditure tend to have lower levels of welfare chauvinism (Mewes & Mau 2013; Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2012). This may be a consequence of what Larsen (2008) calls the institutional logic of welfare attitudes. He empirically argues that the line between 'us' and 'them' melts away as universal benefits help define everyone within the nation state as belonging to one universal group rather than a recipient group and a contributor group. Therefore, the deservingness criteria are more lenient in social democratic regimes than in liberal regimes. Further research has also found that this applies to immigrants. Citizens of more encompassing welfare states are more welcoming to immigrants and less welfare chauvinistic (Crepaz & Damron 2009).

Using Esping-Andersen's (1990) three welfare regimes as units of analysis, Van der Waal and colleagues (2013) found two different 'worlds of welfare chauvinism': social democratic welfare chauvinism and conservative/liberal welfare chauvinism. They further find

that these regime differences in welfare chauvinism can be fully attributed to the differences in social inequality between the regimes. On the individual level, Kros and Coenders (2019) found that in the Netherlands and Great Britain, individuals who subjectively felt more financially secure were less welfare chauvinistic, and that individuals who were recipients of welfare benefits and therefore experienced a more objective economic risk were *not* significantly more welfare chauvinistic than individuals who were not receiving welfare benefits. This follows Heizmann and colleagues (2018), who found clear support that subjective perceptions of deprivation are important predictors of welfare chauvinism. Subjective perceptions therefore seem to be more important for understanding welfare chauvinism than real or objective factors.

Against this background, we investigate how the objective economic risk of being unemployed may affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Furthermore, we also investigate subjective perceptions in the form of satisfaction with one's own income and how an individual's welfare chauvinistic attitudes are linked to his or her *perceptions* of the economic situation in the country. As several studies have found, individuals often blame immigrants for the problems and issues that arise on a macro-level (Bello 2017, Cecchi 2019, Isaksen 2019). Therefore, individuals who are dissatisfied with the state of their society may regard immigrants as a cause for these issues and have a higher likelihood to develop a feeling of realistic threat. In turn, they may therefore believe that granting immigrants the benefits of the welfare state will further exhaust the welfare state. Based on the previous studies we develop our first hypothesis.

H1: *Individuals who are dissatisfied with the economy and health services of their country, will exhibit a more welfare chauvinistic attitude.*

An important aspect to also highlight in how these perceptions may be shaped is by populist politicians. European populism is predominantly exclusive in its form. As Mudde and

Kaltwasser (2013) explain, European populists primarily focus on protecting the conditions of the welfare state, which they consider under threat from outside forces, often immigrants. Several scholars also argue that populist political actors can construct failure stories and "spectacularise" failures on the macro level so as to create a sense of crisis and discontent (Moffitt 2015, Caiani & Graziano 2019). The exclusionary nature of European populism and their framing of a society in crisis may therefore increase welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe. In line with this argument, our second hypothesis investigates whether the strength of far-right populists in a country indeed can be connected to welfare chauvinism.

H2: *Countries with a stronger presence of far-right populist parties will be more welfare chauvinistic.*

2.2 Unemployment and welfare chauvinism

On the contextual level, unemployment rates have been found to influence attitudes towards the welfare state and redistribution (Blekesaune & Quadagno 2003; Blekesaune 2007; Burgoon 2014; Eger & Breznau 2017). It has also been found to influence anti-immigrant attitudes (Hjerm 2009; Meuleman et al. 2009; Kunovich 2017; Hoxhaj & Zuccotti 2021). As welfare chauvinism has its basis in both attitudes towards redistribution and attitudes towards immigrants, it is not inconceivable to reason that unemployment rates may influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Still, the effects of unemployment on welfare chauvinism are somewhat contentious, as several studies have found no significant effects on welfare chauvinism (Mewes & Mau 2013; Van der Waal et al. 2013; Eger & Breznau 2017; Heizmann et al. 2018). There are, however, studies that have found this link. Mewes and Mau (2012) found that a higher unemployment rate leads to more welfare chauvinism, and they argue that higher levels of unemployment trigger perceptions of economic uncertainty, which in turn increases the desire to exclude immigrants from the benefits of the welfare state. Ziller and Careja (2022) also

found this link, arguing that citizens are acutely aware of broad economic developments in their country, rendering economic conditions (i.e., unemployment) as relevant explanations for the development of welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

Several classical social psychology studies reveal ingroup favouritism and the tendency to show greater concern and favour one's own group's wellbeing when resources are allocated (Tajfel 1970, 1982; Tajfel et al. 1979). Immigrants may also be perceived as competitors for resources (Blalock 1967; Greve 2020). In this study, we therefore test whether native populations in countries with higher levels of *native unemployment* will be more welfare chauvinistic. Following realistic threat theory, we may expect that individuals, when many of their own native group are unemployed, will not want immigrant outgroups to have the same opportunity to receive the benefits of the welfare state as this may threaten the level of unemployment benefits for the native population. These sentiments are addressed in our third hypothesis.

H3: Countries with higher levels of native unemployment will have higher levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

Another aspect of unemployment that may be crucial is the level of foreign-born unemployment. When there is a higher level of foreign-born individuals who are unemployed, immigrants may be seen more as a burden for the welfare state than in countries with lower foreign-born unemployment. Immigrants in these contexts may to a greater extent be viewed as threats to the welfare state. High foreign-born unemployment may also fuel stereotypes of the 'lazy unemployed immigrant' (on stereotypes and welfare chauvinism, see Hjorth 2016), which in turn would make native populations less willing to give immigrants the benefits of the welfare state. Goldschmidt and Rydgren's (2018) study is, to our knowledge, the only other investigation of how foreign-born unemployment affects welfare chauvinistic attitudes;

however, their unit of analysis is on a neighbourhood level, whereas our study focuses on differences between countries. They found that neighbourhoods with a higher level of foreign-born unemployment do indeed have higher levels of welfare chauvinism. We explore whether a similar effect may be detected on country level as expressed in our fourth hypothesis.

H4: Countries with higher levels of foreign-born unemployment will have higher levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

The final aspect of unemployment that may be of interest is how the gap between the foreign-born and native unemployment rates may influence welfare chauvinism. We borrow from Burgoon's (2014) study of how different gaps between native and foreign-born populations affect attitudes towards redistribution. One of these gaps was in unemployment, finding that economic non-integration, including a higher gap in unemployment, more so than sociocultural values, helps explain the negative effects of immigration on support for redistribution and the welfare state. A measure on this gap helps contextualize the relationship between native and immigrant population in regards to unemployment. A higher gap between native and foreign-born unemployment may lead to feelings of discontent as the native population believes that their group in large part finances an unnecessary burden on the welfare state. Because of the higher number of immigrants who are unemployed compared to the native population, this may induce a feeling of realistic threat towards immigrants as a burden to the welfare state. The answer to the higher gap would therefore be to limit immigrants' opportunity to acquire the benefits of the welfare state. These sentiments are addressed on the country level in our fifth hypothesis.

H5: Countries with a higher gap in unemployment between the native and foreign-born population will have higher levels of welfare chauvinism.

3. Data and methods

Our main data source for this study is the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2016.[1] The assumption of the study is that individuals' preferences about immigrants' access to welfare benefits and services can be explained by different economic aspects on a macro and micro level in a society. We therefore employ a multilevel regression model to analyse economic effects captured on both a country and an individual level.[2] The dataset includes around 44,000 respondents distributed across 23 countries.[3] However, as our main focus of study is welfare chauvinism in European countries in the EU along with countries who cooperate closely with the EU, Israel and Russia were cut from the analysis. Due to data limitations on several of the contextual independent variables, Lithuania was also cut from the regression analyses, and Spain was such an outlier with regard to unemployment that it too was removed from the regression analyses. The omission of Lithuania and Spain will be commented on in more detail in the section describing the country-level variables.

Foreign-born individuals were also removed from the analysis (around 4,000 individuals). Consequently, we ended up with 27,633 respondents across 19 countries. For the large majority of countries, the respondents numbered between 1,000 and 2,000, with the minimum number being 825 (Iceland) and the largest number being 2,555 (Germany). As the sample sizes are not the same in each country, we generate a weight by dividing the mean by the N of each country; this is further multiplied by the ESS design weight so that each country contributes equally to the final analyses. We also begin the analysis with a comparison of the

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[1] Data can be downloaded from
https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/download.html?file=ESS8e02_2&y=2016
[2] Intraclass correlation for the null model amounted to 8.6 percent,
[3] The original 23 countries included in the dataset are: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Switzerland (CH), the Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), France (FR), Great Britain (GB), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Israel (IL), Iceland (IS), Italy (IT) Lithuania (LT), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT) Russia (RU), Sweden (SE), Slovenia (SI).

ESS data from 2008 with the ESS data from 2016 to illustrate if European attitudes have changed regarding the question of welfare chauvinism since 2008.

3.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable used in this study is based on the question *'Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here?'*[4]. The respondents could then choose between five different answers: 1) Immediately on arrival; 2) After living in [country] for a year, whether or not they have worked; 3) Only after they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year; 4) Once they have become a [country] citizen; 5) They should never get the same rights. We use linear multilevel regression to analyse the variable, as we regard it as measuring the degree of welfare chauvinism (i.e., making it continually more difficult for immigrants to receive the benefits of the welfare state). The variable is often used in studies of welfare chauvinistic attitudes (see Careja & Harris 2022 for review).

3.3 Country-level variables

For the analysis, we use nine country-level variables. A rule of thumb when using country-level variables is to use the year prior to when data was collected on the individual level to allow for a time lag in the effects of macro-level factors on individual attitudes. We therefore use numbers from 2015 to get more reliable results. The main focus on the contextual level is on the nuances of unemployment and its effects on welfare chauvinism. The four measures of unemployment are: *unemployment rate* (OECD 2021a), *native unemployment rate* (OECD 2021b), *foreign-born unemployment rate* (OECD 2021c),[5] *gap between native- and*

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[4] Descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study can be found in Appendix A1

[5] Data from OECD 2021a can be downloaded from https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm
Data from OECD 2021b can be downloaded from https://data.oecd.org/migration/native-born-unemployment.htm#indicator-chart
Data from OECD2021c can be downloaded from https://data.oecd.org/migration/foreign-born-unemployment.htm

foreign-born unemployment rate. It is measured as the percentage of unemployment among the labour force. *Gap in unemployment* is calculated by the authors as the ratio between *native-and foreign-born unemployment rates*. A higher number indicates a greater proportion of foreign-born unemployment when compared to the native-born population. A point to note is that one may expect that countries with a high level of foreign-born unemployment would also have a high level of native unemployment, rendering the differentiation of the variables unnecessary, however as can be seen in the appendix A2 this seems not to be the case.

There are a few caveats required in connection with the unemployment data from the OECD. There are missing data on the native- and foreign-born unemployment in Lithuania and as the introduction of these two variables, along with the gap between them, is one of the aspects that makes this study novel, we decided that Lithuania should be cut from the regression analysis. Finally, there is the issue of Spain. Spain has by far the largest unemployment rate of the countries included in this sample. With an unemployment rate of 22.1 percent, it is 9.1 percentage points larger than the country with the second-largest unemployment rate, Portugal. Comparatively, the difference between Portugal and the country with the lowest level of unemployment, Norway, is 8.5 percentage points. This ratio can also be found in the native- and foreign-born unemployment figures.[6] This makes Spain such an outlier that it severely influences the regression analysis. We therefore decided to exclude Spain from the regression analyses.[7]

Additionally, we include a variable measuring the strength of populist far-right parties in the countries. To classify which parties that can be defined as populist and far-right we use the PopuList dataset (Roodujin et al. 2019) which classifies political parties in 31 European

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[6] Spain has a foreign-born unemployment rate of around 29.8 percent; the second-largest foreign-born unemployment rate can be found in Finland with around 17.5 percent. The native unemployment rate in Spain is around 20.7 percent, and Portugal has the second-largest with 12.7.

[7] However, we have included the regression models, which include Spain, in Appendix A3

countries into populist, far-right, far-left and/or Eurosceptic. Once the far-right populist parties were identified, we calculated the percentage of votes that far-right populist parties received in the most recent election before the ESS data was collected.[8] The strength of far-right populist parties in each country is measured at the basis of the percentage of far-right populist party votes. A full overview over the percentage of votes for the far-right populist parties can be found in Appendix A4

Furthermore, we include four contextual variables that were all previously found to have an influence on welfare chauvinistic attitudes in 2008 (Mewes & Mau 2012; Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2012; Mewes & Mau 2013; Van der Waal et al. 2013).[9] These are *GDP per capita* ($)*, which is downloaded from the World Bank and is divided by 1,000 to make the results more readable. A higher number indicates a higher GDP per capita. We also measure the size of the immigrant population, as realistic threat theory posits that a higher number of immigrants would increase the perception of competition and threat (Blalock 1967). However, previous studies have found weak links between immigration and welfare chauvinism (Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2012). A higher immigrant population may also lead to lower levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes, as contact with a minority can also be associated with more positive attitudes towards that outgroup (Allport 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). We use data from the UN International Migrations Stock and calculate the percentage for immigrants of each country.

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[8] Data on voting percentage in each country can be downloaded from http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/countries.html
[9] The additional contextual data can be downloaded from
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?view=chart
https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?view=chart
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/spr_exp_sum/default/table?lang=en

Furthermore, we measure social inequality by using the Gini coefficient from the World Bank, where a higher number indicates that a country has more social inequality. The last contextual variable is collected from Eurostat and measures how much a country spends on social protection benefits (per capita), as a higher expenditure of social protection benefits has been found to decrease welfare chauvinism (Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2012; Mewes & Mau 2013).

The analysis begins with an overview of the dependent variable across different welfare regimes, in this part Spain and Lithuania are included. That means that this part of the analysis consists of 21 countries, while in the regression analyses, we use separate models to analyse the effects of the country-level data in 19 countries. We separate the models as the general rule of thumb requires ten level-2 units per level-2 variable (Stegmueller 2013; Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen 2016).

3.2 Individual-level variables

For individual-level variables, we use several variables that have previously been explored. Gender (female =1), age (in years), urbanisation (1= farm/countryside 5=A big city) and education (in years) have all been found to influence attitudes towards immigrants (see Ceobanu & Escandell 2010 for review) and are therefore included in the analysis. As immigrants may be viewed as economic threats (Stephan et al. 2016), we include satisfaction with income (4= Living comfortably on present income) and a dummy variable to measure whether the individual is unemployed and actively looking for a job (1= Unemployed).

 Attitudes towards redistribution have also been found to influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes (Grdešić 2019, Bell et al. 2022). We therefore create a scale for measuring attitudes towards welfare benefits using four questions where the respondents were asked if they disagree strongly (=1) or agree strongly (=5) with the following statements concerning social

benefits/services: 1) Social benefits/services cost businesses too much in taxes/charges; 2) Social benefits/services make people lazy; 3) Social benefits/services make people less willing to care for one another; 4) Social benefits/services place too great a strain on the economy. The scale has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.74.

Additionally, we include two measures on satisfaction with the state of the country. As immigrants are often used as scapegoats for issues arising on the macro-level (Bello 2017; Cecchi 2019), we expect individuals who are more dissatisfied with the state of the country will be more likely to blame immigrants for the problems of the welfare state and therefore be less willing to share the benefits of the welfare state with immigrants. The two variables included are satisfaction with the state of the economy (10 = extremely satisfied) and their view of the state of the health services in the country (10 = extremely good). Importantly, this provides additional information, as it measures the subjective perception of the economic situation of the country. We therefore control for the *objective* macro-economic conditions, while at the same time examining how the populations *subjectively* perceive the economic conditions of their country.

4. Results: Welfare chauvinism in different welfare regimes

We begin the analysis with some simple distributions, as we believe it is important to also investigate the level of welfare chauvinistic sentiment that can be found across Europe. We have grouped the countries according to their welfare regimes to simplify the interpretation. The same figures using the countries instead of the regimes can be found in Appendixes A5 and A6. We group them into Nordic, Central European, Anglo-Saxon, Southern and Central-

Eastern welfare state regime[10] (for detailed overview of the regimes, see Kangas & Kvist 2018; Clegg 2018; Bochel 2018; Petmesidou 2018; Saxonberg & Sirovátka 2018).

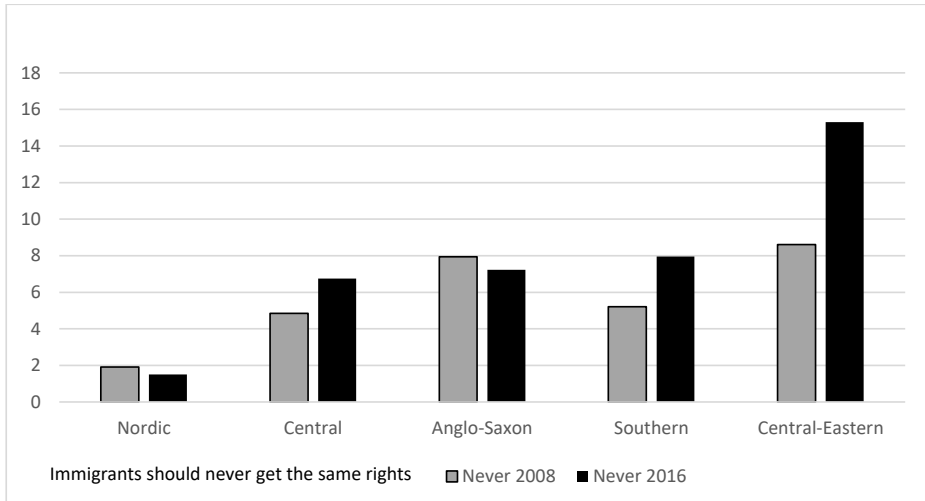**Figure 1a. Welfare chauvinism in different European welfare regimes.**[11]

Figure 1a shows the difference between the levels of the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism in 2008 and 2016. The two main takeaways from Figure 1a are the relative stability in the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries and that there was a moderate increase in southern and central Europe. The largest difference can be seen in the Central-Eastern countries, where the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism almost doubled from 8.6 to 15.3 percent.

Figure 1b shows both the most inclusionary and exclusionary values for 2016, and it confirms quite clearly that Central-Eastern European welfare chauvinism is a separate phenomenon. The figure resonates with several previous studies, *inter alia*, Grdešić's (2020) study of welfare chauvinism in Eastern Europe. He found that the typical explanations for welfare chauvinism in Western Europe have less of an effect in Eastern Europe. Several other

[10] Nordic: Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Central European: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, France, Netherlands. Anglo-Saxon: Great Britain and Ireland. Southern: Spain, Italy and Portugal. Central-Eastern: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia.
[11] Only includes countries that participated in both ESS4 and ESS8.

studies also indicate that exclusionary attitudes in Eastern Europe are much more prevalent than in Western Europe (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov 2019; Bell et al. 2021).

Figure 1b. Inclusionary and exclusionary attitudes in different regimes in Europe[12]
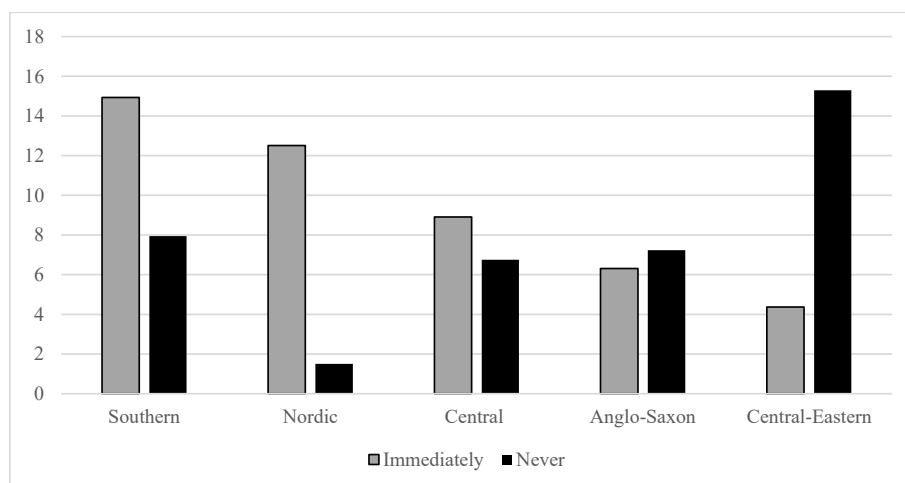
However, Figure 1b shows, somewhat surprisingly, that it is in Southern Europe where one can find the most individuals believing that immigrants should receive the benefits of the welfare state immediately upon arrival. Such attitudes increased considerably from 2008 to 2016 (see Appendix A7). This increase in inclusionary attitudes is combined with the above-mentioned moderate increase in exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism, which may indicate a possible polarisation developing in the Southern European countries.

When it comes to the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism, the Anglo-Saxon, Central and Southern European welfare regimes all seem to be rather similar. This exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism is near non-existent in the Nordic countries, showing that although the Southern European countries may be slightly more open to giving immigrants access to the same rights immediately, the lack of exclusionary welfare chauvinism in the Nordic countries

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[12] Distribution of the percentage of individuals that answered either that immigrants should 1) immediately 2) never get the same rights.

does separate them from the rest of the European countries. We would also wish to emphasise that there are differences within each of these regimes in terms of the level of welfare chauvinist attitudes, which can be viewed in Appendix A5.

Multilevel Regression of Welfare Chauvinism in Europe

Moving to the regression analyses, we begin by analysing the variables on the contextual level. It is clear that a higher GDP per capita significantly makes a country less welfare chauvinistic, confirming the previous research (Mewes & Mau 2012). Our analysis also suggests that a large immigrant population and a higher expenditure on social protection benefits both correlate with lower levels of welfare chauvinism. This corroborates findings from previous studies (Mewes & Mau 2013; Reeskens & Van Oorschot 2012). However, both the size of the immigrant population and the level of expenditure on social protection benefits are only significant at the 0.1 level (both variables having a p-value of 0.052), so we therefore caution the interpretation of these two variables in our models.

The social inequality of a country, as measured by the Gini coefficient, seems to have no significant influence on welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Furthermore, despite the strong theoretical assumptions of how different forms of unemployment can affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes, *none* of the variables measuring any form of unemployment seem to have a significant effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe. Additionally, being unemployed also has no effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

Table 1: Multilevel regression of welfare chauvinism in Europe.

	Model 1:	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Individual-level variables									
Female	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**	-0.059**
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Age	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***	-0.027***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Satisfaction with income	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*	-0.041*
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Unemployed	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008	-0.008
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Satisfied with state of the economy	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Satisfied with state of health services	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Attitude towards benefits	0.201***	0.201***	0.202***	0.201***	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***	0.201***	0.201***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Country level variance	0.294	0.251	0.217	0,278	0.202	0.159	0.234	0.211	0.374
Country observations	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Individual observations	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633

Standard errors in parentheses: † p < 0.01

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 1 continued

	Model 1:	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Country-level variables									
GDP per capita	-0.006* (0.003)								
Immigrant size		-0.016† (0.009)							
Gini			-0.021 (0.015)						
Social protection benefits (Euro per inhabitant)				-0.022† (0.011)					
Unemployment rate					-0.029 (0.028)				
Native Unemployment rate						-0.016 (0.028)			
Foreign born unemployment							-0.023 (0.015)		
Gap between native- and foreign born unemployment rate								-0.026 (0.019)	
Strength of far-right populist parties									0.009*** (0.003)
Country level variance	0.294	0.251	0.217	0,278	0.202	0.159	0.234	0.211	0.374
Country observations	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Individual observations	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633	27633

standard errors in parentheses: † p < 0.01
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

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To further examine whether the different forms of unemployment may have an effect, we tested the same statistical models without the Central-Eastern European countries , as some scholars have argued that attitudes to immigrants in Eastern Europe should be analysed separately from Western European countries since the theoretical models do not necessarily have the same effects in both parts of Europe (Vala & Pereira 2018; Grdešić 2020; Bell et al. 2021). This yielded the same results, in that none of the unemployment variables had an effect. Additionally, we tested an interaction effect between being unemployed and the different forms of unemployment, as we expected that being unemployed in a country with high unemployment, including the general unemployment rate, as well as the native- or foreign-born unemployment or the gap between the two, would amount to becoming more welfare chauvinistic. This also had no statistically significant effect.[13] Hypotheses 3-5 are therefore, to our surprise, rejected. However, one contextual variable that seems to have an effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe is *the strength of far-right populist parties*. A stronger presence of far-right populism is associated with higher levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes which confirms hypothesis 2.

For the individual-level analysis, we begin by focusing on background variables, such as gender, age and education. At this point, our findings are again in line with previous studies. Females and individuals with more education can be said to have significantly less welfare chauvinistic attitudes, whereas older individuals and individuals who are more sceptical of welfare benefits are significantly more welfare chauvinistic.

Finally, we wish to focus particularly on the economic variables. As previously mentioned, being unemployed cannot be said to significantly impact a welfare chauvinistic attitude. Yet, the subjective satisfaction of one's own income does indeed have an effect on welfare

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[13] As both the Western European models and the interaction effects showed no significant effects, we have not included the statistical models in this study. The results can be acquired upon request.

chauvinism, as being more satisfied with one's own income indicates being less welfare chauvinistic. This indicates, like in previous studies before us, that it is an individual's subjective perception of economic risk, rather than the objective economic risk, that determines welfare chauvinistic attitudes (Heizmann et al. 2018; Kros & Coenders 2019).

Where this study goes one step further is that it analyses how individuals' subjective perceptions of the state of the economy and health services may affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Our findings suggest that on a macro level, the objective economic variables have weak, dubious or no effects for explaining welfare chauvinism; however, the *perception* of how things are going in the country is more important. This can be clearly seen in Table 1, which indicates that being satisfied with the state of both the economy and the health services indicates lower levels of welfare chauvinistic attitudes. This confirms hypothesis 1. It therefore seems that the economic indicators for possible real and objective risks, threats and competition are not necessarily of importance for understanding how welfare chauvinistic attitudes develop. It is of more importance how populations perceive their country to be doing.

Concluding discussion

There are several aspects surrounding our results that are intriguing. Across Europe, the most exclusionary form of welfare chauvinism, which expresses a desire to *exclude* immigrants from the welfare state, has remained somewhat stable. The exception is in the Central-Eastern countries, which have seen a substantial rise since 2008 in the number of individuals who wish to exclude immigrants from the welfare state which may be related to the strength of the populist far right parties in Central-Eastern Europe. As our analysis shows, the strength of far-right populism in a country is significantly associated with higher levels of welfare chauvinism. Ágh (2016) explains that populism has been a "megatrend" in the region since the onset of systematic changes in 1989. He further argues that that especially since the 2008 global

financial crisis the region has seen a transformation from "soft" to "hard" populism which has threatened some of the fundamental principles of liberal democracy, such as for example the protection of minority rights. The increasing trend of hard exclusionary populism in the region may therefore to some extent explain the more welfare chauvinistic attitudes in these countries. Additionally, other studies have also found that there has been an increasing trend in hostility towards immigrants in Eastern Europe (Bell et al. 2021)

The lack of results from the other contextual-level variables can also tell us some important aspects surrounding welfare chauvinism. The first of these is that unemployment simply cannot be seen as a measure of realistic threat theory for explaining welfare chauvinistic attitudes. This is clear, seeing as *none* of our measures of unemployment can be said to have a significant effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Europe. This also shows that welfare chauvinistic attitudes comprise a distinct attitude that is separate from both attitudes towards redistribution and anti-immigrant attitudes, which have both been found to be influenced by the contextual unemployment rate (Blekesaune & Quadagno 2003; Burgoon 2014; Kunovich 2017; Hoxhaj & Zucotti 2021.

This study has also highlighted the important difference between objective risks and subjective perceptions, and their influence on welfare chauvinism. Out of eight measures of objective economic risks on a macro and a micro level, only GDP per capita had a significant effect, with a p-value of under 0.05, whereas all three of the measures of subjective economic risk were found to influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes. This indicates that if a country were to develop economically, it would not necessarily lead to a decrease in welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Instead, it is how individuals perceive these economic conditions that play a part in the development of welfare chauvinism. This is important, as individuals often have a flawed perception of reality, and can be swayed by populist politicians to believe false information. The results regarding these perceptions therefore need to be viewed along with our findings on

the strength of far-right populism in countries, as we have shown that a stronger presence of far-right populism in countries have a significant effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes. These parties often effectively articulate and amplify fears about globalization and immigration (Brusis 2016), creating distorted views of reality and a sense of crisis among populations (Caiani & Graziano 2019).

To our knowledge, this is the first study to point out how the perception of economic conditions may be more important for understanding welfare chauvinistic attitudes than the more objective macro-economic situation. We would therefore welcome further research into the relationship between how populist actors shape these perceptions and how these perceptions relate to welfare chauvinism.

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Appendix A1: Descriptive overview of variables used in the study

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Chauvinism	1	5	3,23	1,02
Female	0	1	0,52	0,5
Age	15	100	49,68	18,76
Education	0	54	12,99	3,81
Income	1	4	3,15	0,79
Unemployed	0	1	0.04	0,19
Satisfied with state of the economy	0	10	5,2	2,27
Satisfied with state of health services	0	10	5,69	2,43
Attitude towards benefits	1	5	3,05	0,79
GDP per capita	12,6	84,8	38,95	18,43
Immigrant size	2	29,3	11,53	5,5
Gini	25,4	39,5	31,29	3,91
Social protection benefits (Euro per inhabitant)	2,1	18,7	8,82	4,55
Unemployment rate	4,5	13	7,57	2,5
Native Unemployment rate	3,2	12,7	6,93	2,59
Foreign born unemployment	6,4	17,5	11,4	3,9
Gap between native- and foreign-born unemployment rate	0	10,7	4,47	2,95
Strength of far-right populist parties	0	61,1	14,98	15,31

Appendix A2: Distribution of unemployment variables across countries (%)

Country	Unemployment	Native unemployment	Foreign born unemployment	Gap in unemployment
Austria	6.2	4.6	10.7	6.1
Belgium	8.5	6.8	17	10.2
Czech Republic	5.1	5.1	6.8	1.7
Estonia	6.2	6.1	7.8	1.7
Finland	9.5	9.1	17.5	8.4
France	10.3	9.5	17.3	7.8
Germany	4.6	4.1	7.7	3.6
Great Britain	5.4	5.2	6.4	1.2
Hungary	6.6	6.8	6.8	0
Iceland	4.5	3.9	7	3.1
Ireland	9.9	9.1	11.4	2.3
Italy	12	11.5	15.7	4.2
Netherlands	6.9	6.2	12.1	5.9
Norway	4.5	3.4	10.4	7
Poland	7.5	7.6	10.6	3
Portugal	13	12.7	14.8	2.1
Slovenia	9	8.8	11.9	3.1
Spain	22.1	20.7	29.8	9.1
Sweden	7.4	5.5	16.2	10.7
Switzerland	5.1	3.2	7.9	4.7

Appendix A3 Multilevel regression of welfare chauvinism including Spain

	Model 1:	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Individual-level variables									
Female	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***	-0.059***
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Age	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.026***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Satisfaction with income	-0.038*	-0.038*	-0.039*	-0.038*	-0.039*	-0.039*	-0.039*	-0.038*	-0.039*
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Unemployed	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Satisfied with state of the economy	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**	-0.017**
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Satisfied with state of health services	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.019***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Attitude towards benefits	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***	0.211***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Country level variance	0.235	0.237	0.213	0.223	0.263	0.218	0.293	0.239	0.393
Country observations	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Individual observations	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880

Standard errors in parentheses: † p < 0.01 * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Appendix A3 continued

Country-level variables	Model 1:	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
GDP per capita	-0.005 (0.003)								
Immigrant size		-0.017 (0.009)							
Gini			-0.023 (0.015)						
Social protection benefits (Euro per inhabitant)				-0.019 (0.012)					
Unemployment rate					-0.027* (0.011)				
Native Unemployment rate						-0.022 (0.012)			
Foreign born unemployment							-0.022** (0.008)		
Gap between native- and foreign born unemployment rate								-0.032 (0.018)	
Strength of far right populist parties									0.010*** (0.002)
Country level variance	0.235	0.237	0.213	0.223	0.263	0.218	0.293	0.239	0.393
Country observations	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Individual observations	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880	28880

Standard errors in parentheses: † $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix A4: Overview of far-right populist parties and vote percentage

Country	Election year	Far right populist parties	Vote percentage of party	Overall Percentage of votes for far-right populist parties
Austria	2013	FPÖ	20,5	24
		BZÖ	3,5	
Belgium	2014	VB	3,7	3,7
Czech Republic	2013	Dawn	6,9	6,9
Estonia	2015	EKRe	8,1	8,1
Finland	2015	Ps	17,6	17,6
France	2012	Fn/Rn	13,6	13,6
Germany	2013	AfD	4,7	4,7
Great Britain	2015	UKIP	12,6	12,6
Hungary	2014	Fidesz	44,9	61,1
		JOBBIK	20,2	
Iceland	2013	-	0	0
Ireland	2016	-	0	0
Italy	2013	FDL	2	6,1
		LN	4,1	
Netherlands	2012	PVV	10,1	10,1
Norway	2013	FrP	16,3	16,3
Poland	2015	PiS	37,6	46,4
		Kukiz 15	8,8	
Portugal	2015	-	0	0
Slovenia	2014	SDS	20,7	22,9
		SNS	2,2	
Sweden	2014	SD	12,9	12,9

Appendix A5: Respondents believing immigrants should never get the same rights, ESS4 and ESS8.

	Never 2008	Never 2016
Austria	-	17.33
Belgium	7.08	7.13
Switzerland	3.27	4.33
Czech Republic	15.4	24.21
Germany	6.72	2.46
Estonia	3.75	5.97
Spain	6.54	4.54
Finland	2.92	2.52
France	5.28	7.49
Great Britain	9.17	7.25
Hungary	13.36	30.78
Ireland	6.23	6.6
Iceland	-	0.64
Italy	-	14.95
Lithuania	-	16.58
Netherlands	3.18	2.5
Norway	2.32	1.96
Poland	2.42	7.97
Portugal	3.38	4.93
Sweden	0.75	0.76
Slovenia	7.23	7.79

Appendix A6: Inclusionary and exclusionary attitudes in European countries (2016)[14]
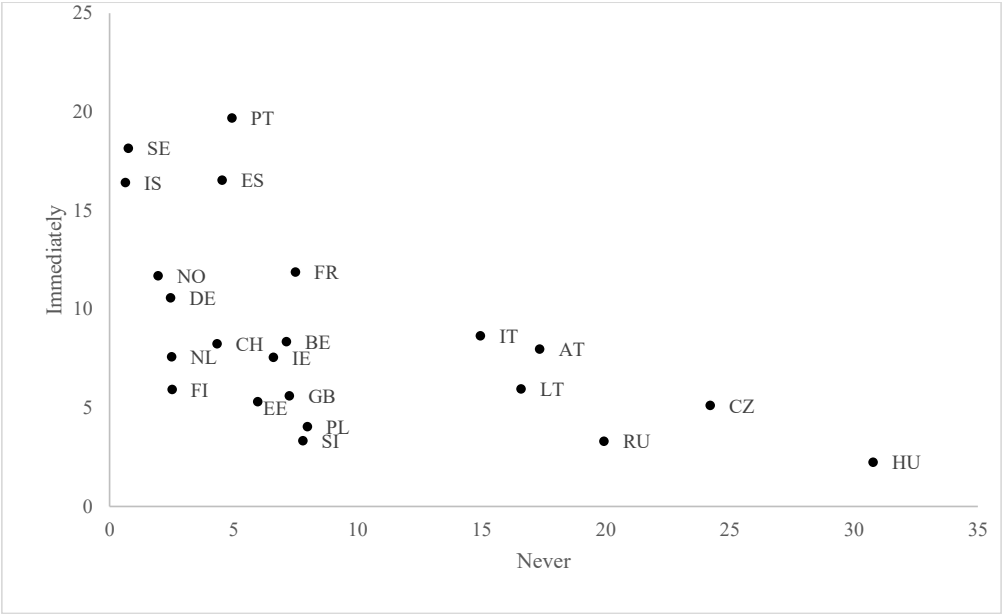
Appendix A7. Inclusionary attitudes in different European regimes

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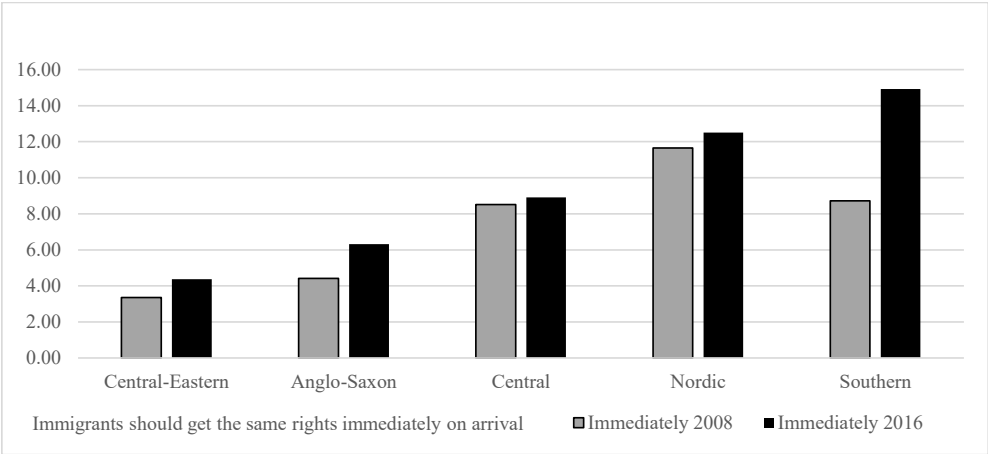
[14] Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Switzerland (CH), the Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), France (FR), Great Britain (GB), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Israel (IL), Iceland (IS), Lithuania (LT), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Russia (RU), Sweden (SE), Slovenia (SI)

Article #3

Nordic Welfare Chauvinism: A Comparative Study of Welfare Chauvinism in Sweden, Norway and Finland.

Bell, D. A., Valenta, M. & Strabac, Z

Nordic welfare chauvinism: A comparative study of welfare chauvinism in Sweden, Norway and Finland

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Abstract

This study analyses welfare chauvinist attitudes in the generous welfare states of Sweden, Norway and Finland. We find that strict forms of exclusionary welfare chauvinism are near non-existent. However, Finland, Norway and Sweden are in the top tier in Europe when it comes to beliefs that immigrants need to obtain citizenship before being given equal rights to social benefits. This may indicate a future turn in social policy when it comes to inclusion of non-citizens, with significant implications for social workers. We further analyse welfare chauvinism by exploring socio-economic factors, satisfaction with the country, and attitudes towards both benefits and immigrants.

Introduction

The European welfare state has become an entrenched institution in modern European society. Europeans continually show strong support for the welfare state, and no political party would dare to propose a full dismantling of it (Greve, 2019). The Nordic welfare states in particular have a

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strong emphasis on universalism. Although other welfare regimes may be more generous, the Nordic welfare regime is considered unique in combining generosity with universalism (Kangas and Kvist, 2018). In a universal system, all citizens are endowed with similar rights irrespective of class or market position, thus promoting equality of status (Esping-Andersen, 1990). A more comprehensive and universal welfare state also limits a widespread feeling of 'us' and 'them', which, in turn, can be associated with a higher tolerance towards immigrants (Crepaz and Damron, 2009). This may explain why the Nordic countries continually exhibit more tolerant attitudes towards immigrants than most other European countries (Bell et al., 2021; Bello, 2017).

However, immigration has become more salient in recent years in the Nordic countries and all these countries have prominent right-wing populist parties who are highly critical of immigration and immigrants (Jungar and Jupskås, 2014). It was these parties who, in many ways, pioneered what is often regarded as *welfare chauvinism*, the concept that welfare services should be restricted to 'our own' people and not to foreigners (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990; Van der Waal et al., 2013). Studies on welfare chauvinism maintain that it is not only a political strategy, but it can also be a particular form of anti-immigrant attitude placed in the context of social policy (Careja and Harris, 2020).

Welfare chauvinistic attitudes have become more salient in welfare states across the world (Koning, 2021). The common welfare chauvinist view is that immigrants place an excessive burden on the welfare state, making it unaffordable. The solution to this problem is either to totally exclude immigrants from the welfare benefits, or to minimise immigrants' opportunity to acquire these welfare benefits (Schumacher and Van Kersbergen, 2016). This distinction between totally excluding and making it very difficult for immigrants to gain the same level of benefits as the majority population is an important one to emphasise to fully understand the particular Nordic welfare chauvinism that will be presented later in the analysis of this study.

This study uses the European Social Survey round 8 (ESS8) collected in 2016–2017 to analyse and test four different explanations for understanding the causes of welfare chauvinism and explain how stricter and moderate forms of welfare chauvinism may be important for understanding the phenomenon in three of what is often regarded as the most generous and tolerant welfare states, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Unfortunately, Denmark was not included in the dataset and Iceland had too few respondents to conduct a satisfactory analysis, so we have limited our study to three out of the five Nordic countries. The four proposed explanations relate to socio-economic factors, satisfaction with the state of the country, general attitude towards welfare benefits and attitudes towards different immigrant groups. The main aim of this study is therefore to investigate these four explanations, while also examine the nuances of welfare chauvinism in a Nordic context.

The welfare chauvinist attitudes we explore in this article are of significant relevance to social work and social welfare policy. These sentiments are in stark contrast to public support for universalist welfare policies. It is maintained that social work and social welfare policies in Nordic countries are based on universalist values and each social worker is expected to challenge inequalities and discrimination in all its forms (International Federation of Social Workers, 2021). However, these values are often contested by different exclusionary policies, especially in cases regarding certain categories of immigrants and refugees (Valenta and Strabac, 2011). Social workers and service providers implement welfare policies considering who deserves various welfare benefits. Diminishing support for universalist welfare state policies may therefore have long-term consequences for social work practice in Nordic countries, forcing service providers to be more complacent to the differential inclusion of marginalised immigrant groups (Könönen, 2018).

These attitudes can also have repercussions for the health care sector, which is especially relevant during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Immigrants may be faced with a second rate health care assistance when compared with the majority population. Larsen and Schaeffer (2021) found

in their vignette-study of health care chauvinism in Denmark that immigrants, particularly immigrants with a Muslim sounding name, were seen as less deserving of health care than native citizens. If large portions of the population wishes to roll back welfare services for immigrants until they become citizens, there may be dangerous repercussions for the immigrant populations both in the Nordic countries, and on a global level if this tendency is to be found outside of the Nordic countries.

Literature review

The term 'welfare chauvinism' was created to explain the structural changes and new cleavages of Western European politics of the 1990s. Right-wing nationalist parties became supportive of a welfare state that should primarily exist for the native populations (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990). It has since become a staple of right-wing populist parties' social policy agenda (Fenger, 2018; Ketola and Nordensvard, 2018), and has influenced mainstream political parties to be more sceptical of multiculturalism (Leruth and Taylor-Gooby, 2021; Schumacher and Van Kersbergen, 2016). Around the 2010s, more research interest was established towards welfare chauvinistic *attitudes* (Crepaz and Damron, 2009; Van der Waal et al., 2010). This has coincided with a significant increase in media attention towards focussing on the burden immigrants place on the welfare state (Koning, 2021). As Koning points out, a newspaper reader is now around 50 percent more likely to read about the burdening of immigration on welfare states than 30 years ago (Koning, 2021).

Several factors have been found to influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes. It is argued that economic insecurity and other socio-economic factors increase welfare chauvinism (Ford, 2016; Hjorth, 2016; Mewes and Mau, 2012). Group belonging is also an important predictor of welfare chauvinism, as some immigrant groups are more prone to be stereotyped as a burden for the welfare state (Edwards et al., 2021; Ford, 2016; Reeskens and Van der Meer, 2017). These factors will be explained further in the next section.

When comparing welfare chauvinism across welfare regimes, Van der Waal and colleagues (2013) found that the social democratic welfare regimes are distinctly different from both conservative and liberal welfare regimes when it comes to welfare chauvinism. The authors attribute this to the lower levels of social inequality that are common to the social democratic welfare regimes. However, as they find that there is a distinct form of welfare chauvinism in this region, we believe it is important to further explore the welfare chauvinism that can be found in the Nordic countries. In what follows, we therefore present four possible explanations for understanding the welfare chauvinism that can be found in the Nordic region.

Theoretical framework: Explanations for welfare chauvinism

We expect socio-economic factors such as education, income level and unemployment to have an effect on an individual's welfare chauvinistic attitude. We base this largely on intergroup threat theories (see, for example, Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958; Stephan et al., 2016), which posit that anti-immigrant attitudes can be explained by a feeling that the immigrant poses a perceived threat towards the majority ethnic group. According to Blumer (1958), members of the dominant group feel that they have a proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege, and they fear that the subordinate group will threaten their position. These threat perceptions may have a symbolic or a realistic dimension (Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2015; Stephan et al., 2016). We are primarily interested in the realistic threat perceptions, as they are related to concerns of the loss of material resources (Stephan et al., 2016). Here, it is posited that natives may perceive immigrants as competitors for jobs, benefits, affordable housing and so on. Central to this explanation is that individuals with a lower

socio-economic status will perceive immigrants as economic threats, as they often occupy the same socio-economic status (Greve, 2020). Competition for welfare benefits is therefore perceived as a zero-sum game where one group wins at the other's expense (Heizmann et al., 2018; Mewes and Mau, 2012).

The second possible explanation regards individuals' satisfaction with society. This explanation follows the logic of the scapegoat theory. The implication is that some outgroups innocently attract the aggression generated by the frustrations suffered by members of the ingroup (Allport, 1954). It is not 'we' who are responsible for the misfortunes; it must be someone else's fault. Historically, Jews have often been subject to blame for the problems in society (Allport, 1954; Bethencourt, 2015), whereas more recently, immigrants are often blamed for problems and issues which arise on a macro level (Cecchi, 2019). Bello (2017) argues that decreased public expenditure in several OECD countries in the 1990s and 2000s combined with an increase in immigration made immigrants an easy scapegoat. She asserts that vulnerable groups saw deteriorating living standards combined with a rising immigrant population in their neighbourhoods and concluded it had to be the fault of the immigrants that living standards deteriorated (Bello, 2017). This process can also be described as 'Neoliberal Multiculturalism' (Kymlicka, 2020). Following the 2008 financial crisis, immigrants also became a convenient scapegoat in countries that were most affected by the crisis (Isaksen, 2019).

Based on the scapegoat theory, we expect that individuals who are more dissatisfied with the state of the country will be more likely to blame immigrants for the problems of the welfare state and therefore be less willing to share the benefits of the welfare state with immigrants. As with the socio-economic explanation, individuals who are dissatisfied with the state of the country may regard immigrants as a cause of resource scarcity and believe that increased benefits and rights to immigrants may further exhaust the welfare state.

We also assume that individual attitudes towards benefits in general may affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes. We build on the notion that neoliberalism and welfare chauvinism share a similarity, as their core idea is to constrain solidarity and to separate the 'deserving' from the 'undeserving' (Grdešić, 2019). Here, we follow the explanation that neoliberalism is linked to a general position that market forces are beneficial, and that it glorifies individualism, competition and private initiative (Grdešić, 2019).

To support the welfare chauvinistic logic, neoliberalism is often combined with cultural othering (Keskinen et al., 2016). To our knowledge, few quantitative empirical studies have explored this link (Careja & Harris 2022). Yet, it has been found that neoliberal attitudes are correlated with welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Germany, even overriding the effect of education, which tends to be the most consistent factor in decreasing negative attitudes towards immigrants (Grdešić, 2019). Based on the above-mentioned studies, we assume that an individual who is negative towards benefits in general would be more likely to be negative towards giving immigrants the benefits of the welfare state.

The fourth and final explanation we posit in this study is that anti-immigrant attitudes are likely to influence an individual's attitude to whether immigrants should be excluded from or receive fewer welfare benefits than the majority population. This follows research that indicates that individuals distinguish between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' immigrants (Ford, 2016; Keskinen et al., 2016). Reeskens and Van der Meer (2017) find in their Dutch sample that individuals feel that certain nationalities 'deserve' welfare benefits more than other nationalities; for example, a Surinamese immigrant is considered more deserving of welfare benefits than an Afghan or a Moroccan immigrant.

Similarly, Ford (2016) posits that majority group voters in Great Britain are less willing to help claimants from minority groups. Furthermore, he finds that foreign birth alone prompts a hostile

response in that Irish immigrant claimants receive less public support than a white native claimant. However, there is still significantly less sympathy for the more culturally distant Muslim immigrant than the more culturally similar Irish immigrant (Ford, 2016). More culturally dissimilar immigrants are also often the target of welfare chauvinistic rhetoric (Edwards et al., 2021). As we will soon see, explorations of these links are relevant to our comparisons of Nordic countries, whose immigrant population is of different sizes and compositions, and thus perceived differently regarding the use of welfare benefits and the distinctions between deserving and undeserving recipients of the welfare services.

The Nordic context: Universalism and welfare chauvinism

The idea of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland constituting a Nordic group of democratic welfare capitalist countries is widely accepted and can be traced back to the 1930s (Pedersen and Kuhnle, 2017). Universalism is central to their welfare model, and they are all characterised by a high degree of equality, an active labour market policy with high levels of employment for both genders, a low level of wage differentiation and a high level of taxes (Greve, 2007). Other welfare states may be more generous and benefits may be higher than in the Nordic welfare states; yet, the combination of generous welfare benefits and universalism is considered unique (Kangas and Kvist, 2018).

Both naturalised immigrants and foreign citizens with permanent residence in Norway, Sweden and Finland have access to the same social protection system and welfare benefits as the native population (Ahlén and Palme, 2020; Brochmann and Grødem, 2013; Kalliomaa-Puha, 2020). However, granting immigrants the same benefits as the general population is something that the right-wing populist parties in all three countries have exploited and heavily criticised to gain support among voters (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990; Jungar and Jupskås, 2014). The Sweden Democrats and the Finns Party have, despite different historical legacies, converged ideologically, as they embrace an authoritarian position on socio-cultural policy while being economically rather centrist (Jungar and Jupskås, 2014). The Norwegian Progress Party are also anti-immigrant and anti-establishment, but they differ somewhat, as they are more right-wing economically and more aligned with a neoliberal view than the two other parties. However, all three parties focus much of their attention on refugees and the Muslim population, specifying ways that they strain the welfare state and highlighting their alleged cultural incompatibility with the national core values (Demker and Odmalm, 2022; Jungar and Jupskås, 2014; Widfeldt, 2018; Ylä-Anttila and Ylä-Anttila, 2015).

There are also both similarities and differences between the three countries when it comes to their immigrant populations. The immigrant numbers we present in this study are based on the UN international migrant (2017) stock. We use the numbers from 2015 as the data we analyse is from 2016. Probably the most obvious difference between the three countries is that Finland has a considerably smaller immigrant population than Sweden and Norway. Large-scale immigration to Finland is a relatively recent phenomenon, as until the 1980s it was a country of emigration (Kalliomaa-Puha, 2020). The immigrant population makes up around 5.8 percent of the population, with the majority coming from Estonia and Russia. Finland also has several smaller immigrant communities from countries in Asia and Africa, such as Iraq and Somalia. The Russian population is often subjected to prejudice and tends to be perceived as an economic threat to the majority population (Nshom and Croucher, 2014). The Somalis are, however, the main target of intolerance from both media and populist politicians (Ylä-Anttila and Ylä-Anttila, 2015). They are also perceived as making up a much larger share of the population than they actually do (Herda, 2015).

Sweden and Norway have a several times larger immigrant population than Finland. Although both Norway and Sweden have a relatively similar percentage of immigrant populations, with

immigrants making up around 14.4 and 16.4 percent of the population, the composition of immigrant groups differs quite a lot. The largest immigrant groups in Norway are, for the most part, other EU-migrants, with Poles, Swedes and Lithuanians making up the three biggest immigrant groups. Many of these are migrant workers who temporarily work in the country (Cappelen and Midtbø, 2016). Norway also has a sizable Muslim population that originates from different countries in Asia and Africa. Studies show that the Norwegian majority population has stronger negative attitudes towards non-European and Muslim immigrants than towards Nordic and European immigrants (Brekke et al., 2020).

Sweden also has a sizable European immigrant population from Finland, Poland and other Scandinavian and European countries. However, contrary to Norway and Finland, some of the largest immigrant groups in Sweden are from outside of Europe, with Iraqis, Iranians and Syrians being among the largest immigrant groups in the country. Since the early 1990s, Sweden has had a comparatively more generous admission and settlement policy towards refugees and asylum-seekers than any other Nordic country (Valenta and Bunar, 2010; Valenta and Thorshaug, 2013; Garvik and Valenta, 2021). This may explain why Sweden has a larger number of immigrants coming from countries outside of Europe than Norway and Finland (Ahlén and Palme, 2020).

Swedes have been known to be supportive of immigration of refugees and of the generous state-assisted integration programmes (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). They were among the largest receivers of Syrian refugees during the European refugee crisis of 2015 (Valenta M and Jakobsen J, 2020). However, studies on attitudes towards refugee migrations in Sweden show that people are becoming more in favour of restricting refugee migration (Ipsos, 2015). It has also been detected that welfare chauvinist sentiments are on the rise (Ahmadi et al., 2016) and that welfare chauvinist attitudes are stronger towards culturally dissimilar immigrants (Hjorth, 2016).

Data and methods

This study uses data from the eighth wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) collected in 2016–2017. The dependent variable for this study is based on the question from the survey: 'Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here?' The respondents had five different answers to choose from: (1) Immediately on arrival; (2) After living in [country] for a year, whether or not they have worked; (3) Only after they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year; (4) Once they have become a [country] citizen; and (5) They should never get the same rights. This variable is often used as a dependent variable in studies analysing welfare chauvinism (Greve, 2019; Heizmann et al., 2018; Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012).

To analyse the data, we use linear regression models in the three selected countries. We use nested models based on our proposed explanations to better explore how the variables affect welfare chauvinistic attitudes and to investigate the increased strength of the models when adding variables. The sample size is a total of 4366, of which there were 1282 respondents from Norway, 1131 respondents from Sweden and 1753 respondents from Finland. Individuals who were born in another country have been excluded, and post-stratification weights are applied throughout the analysis.

For the analysis, we have also added variables often used to explain attitudes towards immigrants as control variables; these variables include *gender*, *age* and *urbanisation* (see Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010 for review). For the socio-economic explanations, we include variables measuring *education* (in years), if the respondent is *unemployed* (1 = unemployed) and the respondents' *satisfaction with their household's income* (1 = very difficult on current income; 4 = living comfortably on current income). For satisfaction with society, we include two variables: the respondents'

satisfaction with the economy (0 = extremely dissatisfied; 10 = extremely satisfied) and *satisfaction with state of health services* (0/10) in the country. We expect that individuals who are either less satisfied with the state of the economy or the health services in the country will harbour a more welfare chauvinistic attitude. To measure the attitude towards benefits, we created a scale variable based on four questions where the respondents were asked if they disagree strongly (=1) or agree strongly (=5) with the following statements concerning social benefits/services: (1) Social benefits/services cost businesses too much in taxes/charges; (2) Social benefits/services make people lazy; (3) Social benefits/services make people less willing to care for one another; and (4) Social benefits/services place too great a strain on the economy. The four variables have a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.71, 0.74 and 0.76 in Norway, Sweden and Finland, respectively.

The final possible explanation posits that welfare chauvinism can be explained by anti-immigrant attitudes. As we showed previously, individuals often distinguish between 'deserving' immigrants and 'undeserving immigrants' (Keskinen et al., 2016). We therefore explore how negative attitudes towards two different immigrant groups may elicit different levels of welfare chauvinism. Previous studies suggest that these so-called 'undeserving immigrants' are often the more culturally dissimilar immigrants (Ford, 2016; Hjorth, 2016). We therefore use two different variables that distinguish between attitudes towards a more culturally similar immigrant group and a more culturally dissimilar immigrant group. These variables measure whether respondents are willing to allow many or few immigrants of the same race/ethnicity as the majority group (1 = allow none; 4 = allow many) or immigrants from poor countries outside of Europe (1–4) to come and live in the country.

The use of these variables is not necessarily unproblematic. There is a possibility that welfare chauvinism and general anti-immigrant attitudes might be two aspects of the same phenomenon. Although they both are a form of discriminatory attitude towards immigrants, Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2009) argue based on their findings that they are two distinct strategies of exclusion. They further argue that attitudes towards exclusion from the social system are viewed as dependent on attitudes towards exclusion of foreigners from the country and not vice versa. Other studies such as Hjorth (2016) or Magni (2021) have also included various forms of exclusionary attitudes as independent variables in their analysis of welfare chauvinism. We therefore continue with the proposed strategy of including two anti-immigrant attitudes in our models.

Results

Nordic welfare chauvinism in a European context

We begin our analysis with a simple distribution of the dependent variable measuring welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

We have previously explained the distinction between a strict and a moderate form of welfare chauvinistic attitudes (see Van Oorschot and Roosma, 2017). Table 1 indicates that the strict form of welfare chauvinism, such as the stance that immigrants should never get the same rights as the majority population, is near non-existent in the three countries. The moderate form of welfare chauvinism posits that it should be very difficult to gain the same level of social benefits as the majority population. This moderate form of welfare chauvinism is represented in the table by the category 'once they have become a citizen'. This form of welfare chauvinism is very prevalent in all three countries, with Sweden having the lowest level of the moderate form of welfare chauvinism. In Norway, around a third of the respondents believe that immigrants should obtain the same rights to social benefits only once they become citizens. Finland stands out among the three countries, with around 42 percent harbouring this moderate form of welfare chauvinism.

Table 1. Distribution of welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Collected by the European Social Survey (round 8) in 2016–2017.

When should immigrants obtain the same rights to social benefits/services? (%)

	Norway	Sweden	Finland
Immediately on arrival	11.70	18.16	5.93
After a year, whether or not they have worked	14.75	19.63	14.71
After worked and paid taxes for at least a year	34.82	33.81	34.46
Once they have become a citizen	36.77	29.65	42.39
They should never get the same rights	1.96	0.76	2.52
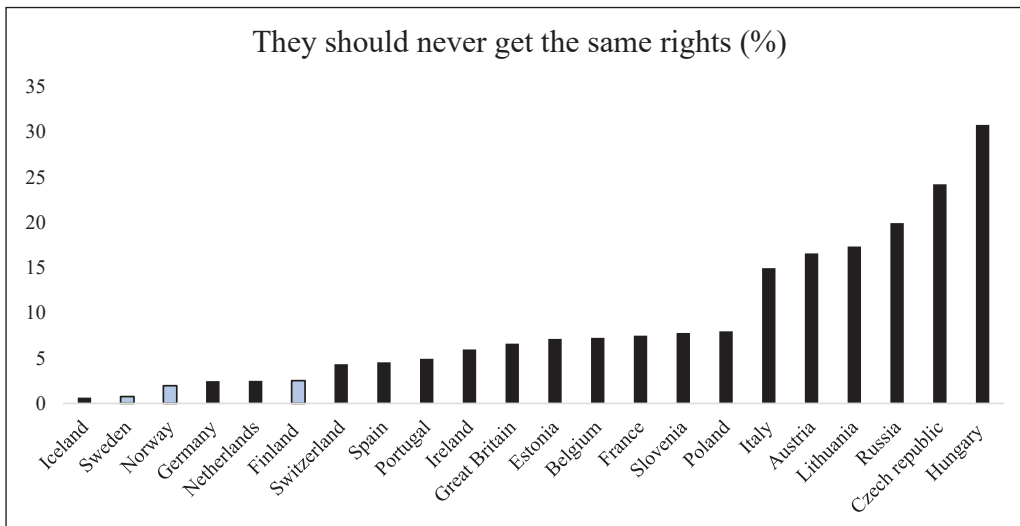
Figure 1. Respondents believing that immigrants should never get the same rights as the majority population across Europe (%). Data collected from 22 European countries by the European Social Survey (round 8) in 2016–2017.

We further contextualise our results in Figures 1 and 2 by showing how the Nordic countries are compared with the other European countries in our dataset.

Figure 1 conveys a familiar trend, with the Nordic countries being among the most tolerant countries in Europe. Figure 2, however, nuances this picture somewhat, showing that respondents in the three Nordic countries are not necessarily as tolerant as Figure 1 suggests. As we may see in the figure, the respondents require citizenship as a precondition for social benefits, which is a much more restrictive stance than is currently prescribed in the existing policies in the three countries. As already mentioned, both naturalised immigrants and foreign citizens with permanent residence in Norway, Sweden and Finland have access to the same social protection system and welfare benefits as the native population. Yet, all three Nordic countries are in the top half of the moderate form of welfare chauvinism, with Finland ranking third among the European countries. We also examined the 2008 ESS dataset, and the levels of welfare chauvinism in the Nordic countries are remarkably stable, with virtually no change in the levels. This is particularly surprising
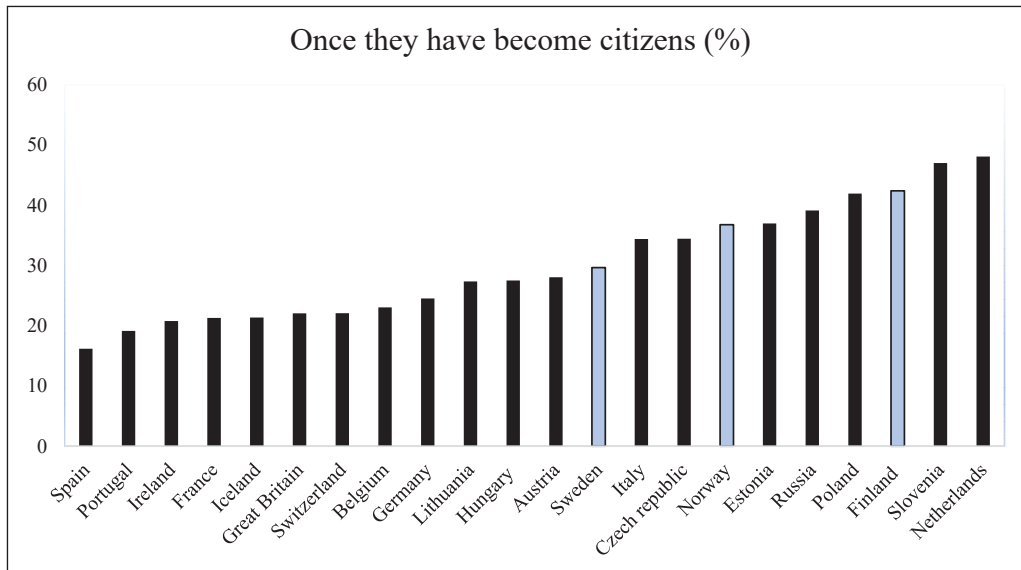
Figure 2. Respondents believing that immigrants must have citizenship before gaining the same rights as the majority population across Europe (%). Data collected from 22 European countries by the European Social Survey (round 8) in 2016–2017.

in the case of Sweden, as the country was one of the main refugee destinations during the refugee crisis in 2015–2016.

Socio-economic factors and satisfaction with the state of the country

Having shown and contextualised the welfare chauvinistic attitudes in the three countries, we move on to Table 2, which shows the linear regression models for these countries. We have nested the models according to the possible explanations we outlined earlier in the article. Therefore, Model 1 includes the socio-economic variables and control variables, Model 2 adds the two variables measuring satisfaction with society, Model 3 includes the variable measuring attitude towards benefits and finally, Model 4 introduces the variables measuring different forms of anti-immigrant attitudes. The analysis will mainly be based on Model 4, which includes all variables, unless there are specific aspects of the previous models that are of interest.

As we can see from the ordinary least squares analysis in Table 2, the socio-economic variables represented by *education*, *satisfied with income* and *unemployed* are found to have little to no effect for welfare chauvinistic attitudes in the three countries. When all variables are added, education can only be found to have an effect in Sweden, whereas whether an individual is unemployed or dissatisfied with their current income has no effect across all three countries. By examining the R^2 in Model 1 across the three countries, it is also clear that socio-economic factors are not the most important for understanding welfare chauvinism in the Nordic countries. This is especially the case in Finland, where the socio-economic variables and the control variables together only have an explanatory power of around 1.5 percent. Although economic explanatory variables have varying results in regard to their effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes (see, for example, Heizmann et al., 2018; Van der Vaal et al., 2013), it is surprising that education only has an effect in Sweden, as education is known to be one of the more robust variables for explaining both attitudes towards

Table 2. Ordinary least squares analysis of welfare chauvinism in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Collected by the European Social Survey (round 8) in 2016–2017.

	Norway				Sweden				Finland			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Female	-0.203***	-0.225***	-0.171**	-0.132*	-0.154	-0.157*	-0.111	-0.061	-0.077	-0.079	-0.063	0.004
Age	0.006***	0.006***	0.006***	0.004*	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.002	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002	-0.004***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education	-0.026**	-0.023**	-0.014	-0.011	-0.073***	-0.072***	-0.055***	-0.044***	-0.013	-0.014*	-0.009	0.003
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Urban	-0.069**	-0.066**	-0.057*	-0.045	-0.021	-0.017	-0.014	-0.002	-0.043**	-0.041*	-0.035*	-0.017
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Satisfied with income	-0.050	-0.034	-0.048	-0.042	-0.004	0.011	-0.008	0.011	-0.044	-0.011	-0.027	-0.024
	(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.057)	(0.054)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Unemployed	0.158	0.171	0.196	0.103	-0.152	-0.163	-0.135	-0.104	0.132	0.109	0.144	0.084
	(0.185)	(0.183)	(0.182)	(0.172)	(0.251)	(0.254)	(0.256)	(0.259)	(0.124)	(0.123)	(0.122)	(0.114)
Satisfied with state of economy		0.010	0.014	0.023		-0.024	-0.016	0.006		-0.033**	-0.032**	-0.020
		(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)		(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Satisfied with state of health services		-0.073***	-0.058**	-0.038*		0.002	0.006	0.008		-0.020	-0.020	-0.011
		(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)		(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.018)		(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Attitude towards benefits			0.326***	0.244***			0.316***	0.236***			0.165***	0.095**
			(0.043)	(0.040)			(0.057)	(0.058)			(0.031)	(0.029)
Attitude towards culturally similar immigrants				0.045				-0.137				-0.077*
				(0.061)				(0.096)				(0.038)
Attitude towards culturally dissimilar immigrants				-0.382***				-0.288***				-0.327***
				(0.057)				(0.083)				(0.037)
N	1282	1282	1282	1282	1131	1131	1131	1131	1753	1753	1753	1753
R²	0.047	0.061	0.107	0.161	0.070	0.072	0.109	0.160	0.015	0.027	0.040	0.121

Standard errors in parentheses.
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

immigrants and welfare chauvinism (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010; Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012; Van der Waal et al., 2013). Education also has an effect in Norway before we control for attitudes towards benefits and different immigrant groups.

Model 2 includes the variables that measure satisfaction with society, which is captured by the two variables *satisfaction with the state of the economy* and *health services*. These variables have no effect in Sweden, whereas reduced satisfaction with the state of the health services has an expected negative effect across all models in Norway. In Finland, reduced satisfaction with the economy has the expected negative effect until the anti-immigrant variables are added. However, the explanatory power of the models barely increases in both countries with the inclusion of these variables, showing that, although it has an effect in Norway, and to some degree in Finland, satisfaction with society is of relatively little importance for understanding welfare chauvinism in the Nordic countries.

Discussing scepticism towards social benefits and immigrants

In contrast to the two previously proposed explanations, individuals' attitudes towards benefits has an effect in all three countries. There are several interesting aspects regarding this finding. With a coefficient of 0.244 in Norway and 0.236 in Sweden, it has a similar effect in both these two countries. The effect is much weaker in Finland, where it has a coefficient of 0.095. This difference between Finland and the two Scandinavian countries is also pronounced when it comes to the explanatory power represented by the R^2. In Norway and Sweden, it rises to almost 11 percent when the variable measuring attitudes towards benefits is added, while it rises to only 4 percent in Finland. This may appear surprising, since Finns are just as supportive of the welfare state and of different welfare benefits as other Northern citizens (Jæger, 2012). However, it may be argued that the detected variations relate to differences in the size of the immigrant populations in the three countries. This is in line with Eger (2009), who shows that increased immigration at the regional level has negative effects on support for the welfare state and attitudes towards universal spending. As already mentioned, Finland's immigrant population is considerably smaller than in the other two countries, and it consequently occupies a less prominent place in debates on public spending and welfare benefits.

The strongest effects can be seen in how attitudes towards different immigrant groups affect welfare chauvinism. There is a substantial rise in the explanatory power of the models represented by R^2 when these two variables are included. However, the effects of these variables differ in the three countries in an interesting way. In Norway, attitudes towards culturally similar immigrants have no effect on welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Attitudes towards culturally different immigrants have a very strong negative effect, showing that Norwegians view immigrants who are more culturally different than themselves as less deserving of welfare benefits. The two largest immigrant groups from outside of Europe are from Somalia and Iraq and are, coincidentally, the two immigrant groups with the lowest employment rate (Strabac and Valenta, 2015). These groups are also often exposed to negative attitudes (Brekke et al., 2020), which may explain the strong effect of the variable in Norway.

As already noted, the largest immigrant groups in Norway are migrant workers from the European Union and Scandinavian countries. Some studies have found both welfare chauvinistic attitudes and more general anti-immigrant attitudes towards some of these migrant workers (Cappelen and Midtbø, 2016). Researchers have also detected that Norwegians have considerably fewer negative sentiments towards European immigrants than towards non-European immigrants (Brekke et al., 2020).

We did not expect that these sentiments among respondents in our study would not have any effect on welfare chauvinist attitudes towards culturally similar immigrants. However, it may be argued that this indeed relates to Norway's rather large population of EU-migrant workers and immigrants from Scandinavian neighbouring countries, who are usually perceived as hard workers and contributors to the maintenance of the Norwegian welfare state (Brekke et al., 2020).

The results in Sweden are similar to what we find in Norway. Negative attitudes towards culturally dissimilar immigrants indicate a more welfare chauvinistic attitude, while attitudes towards culturally similar immigrants do not have a statistically significant effect. This lack of statistical significance is, to a large degree, a consequence of larger standard errors in the Swedish sample (the Swedish sample being the smallest of the three). We nevertheless observe the same pattern as in the two other Nordic countries. The effect of attitudes towards culturally dissimilar immigrants is much stronger than the effect of attitudes towards culturally similar immigrants. This may partly be explained by Sweden experiencing the largest influx of refugees from Asian and African countries compared with any other Nordic country shortly before the data used in this study were collected. Furthermore, Swedish studies assert that immigrants from Muslim countries are the most exposed to negative attitudes and that individuals in Sweden have different preferences towards different immigrant and racial groups (Hjorth, 2016).

The results in Finland differ somewhat from the Norwegian and Swedish results, as welfare chauvinism is connected to attitudes towards both culturally similar and culturally dissimilar immigrant groups. However, there is a clear difference in the strength of the two variables, as attitudes towards culturally dissimilar immigrants have a more than four times stronger effect than those towards culturally similar immigrants. This is in line with previous studies that indicate that Finns take differential positions on different immigrant groups (Bohman, 2018). The Russian population in Finland is often perceived as a realistic threat (Nshom and Croucher, 2014), which may explain why attitudes towards culturally similar groups have an effect in Finland. However, the attitude towards culturally dissimilar immigrants has a much stronger effect. This may be because the Somali population is greatly overestimated by many Finns (Herda, 2015). The overestimation of the Somali population is often combined with media and populist politicians continuously labelling them as a burden for the welfare state and welfare misusers (Ylä-Anttila and Ylä-Anttila, 2015), which, in sum, may explain the strong effect that the above-mentioned variable has on welfare chauvinistic attitudes in Finland.

Discussion: Consequences for social policy and social work

This study has found that the strict form of welfare chauvinism is near non-existent in the Nordic countries, whereas a moderate form of welfare chauvinism is very much alive in Norway, Sweden and, particularly, Finland. Comparisons of the moderate form of welfare chauvinism in Europe show that all three Nordic countries are in the top half, with Finland ranking as number three among European countries. We may only speculate as to why so many people in Nordic countries are demanding that immigrants should gain citizenship before they obtain the same social benefits and services as the native population. However, we may note that in Nordic countries, the state is seen as the ultimate provider of welfare services. Indeed, the links between the state and welfare are known to be considerably stronger in Nordic welfare states than in many other countries where the public relies strongly on civic society, non-governmental organisations and family support. This in turn may explain why large segments of the Nordic population connect welfare benefits with citizenship.

If then, as our study suggests, a large proportion of the population wishes for stricter control of the services of the welfare state, this has clear consequences for social policies and social work.

These sentiments are in clear contradiction to the universalist principles of the generous Nordic welfare states. As Schumacher and Van Kersbergen (2016) show, mainstream parties adapt to the right-wing populist parties' stance on welfare chauvinism. A recent study also shows that in the Norwegian case when the voters of the two largest political parties, the Labour party and the Conservative party, were granted a higher degree of anonymity, their hostility towards Muslim immigrants increases considerably (Creighton and Strabac, 2020). As politicians have a strong electoral incentive to take into account public opinion when deciding social policy decisions (Brooks and Manza, 2006), our findings surrounding the considerable amount of the moderate form of welfare chauvinism in the Nordic region may suggest diminishing support for existing policies. This could indicate that future social policy may take a stricter turn when it comes to the inclusion of non-citizens, which would have significant implications for social workers who would have to deal with differential inclusion of non-citizens (Könönen, 2018). This would in reality mean the development of two systems within the same welfare states, where one set of policies are generous for the majority population, while the other set of policies are restrictive towards outsiders, that is, immigrants. Service providers in Nordic welfare states often react and oppose these tendencies (Valenta and Strabac 2011) and some scholars even argue that it is the responsibility of social work and social workers to uncover, confront and resist these changing political realities (see Anand et al., 2021 for a good discussion on this).

Conclusion

To summarise, in the Nordic countries, it is primarily the moderate form of welfare chauvinistic attitudes that is prevalent. The proposed explanations connected to socio-economic factors and scapegoat theory seem to be of little importance for understanding welfare chauvinism in the three countries. Attitudes towards welfare benefits and different forms of anti-immigrant attitudes, however, seem to be important for predicting welfare chauvinism in all three countries. Despite the link between neoliberalism and welfare chauvinism having often been commented on (Keskinen et al., 2016; Kymlicka, 2020), the empirical link that is found in this study is quite a novel finding, as, to the best of our knowledge, the only other study to empirically confirm that attitudes towards welfare benefits influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes is Grdešić's (2019) study of neoliberal attitudes on welfare chauvinism in Germany.

The link between neoliberal attitudes and welfare chauvinism may be of relevance to studies focussing on welfare chauvinism in other welfare regimes, such as, for example, the liberal welfare regimes which are not as universal or as generous when it comes to welfare benefits and services. Furthermore, there are nuances in welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Whereas the results in Norway and Sweden show that welfare chauvinism is primarily associated with culturally dissimilar immigrants, the results in Finland differ from both Norway and Sweden, showing that welfare chauvinistic attitudes are connected to both culturally similar and dissimilar immigrants. There are, however, much stronger welfare chauvinistic attitudes towards culturally dissimilar immigrant groups. In all three countries, we therefore find that welfare chauvinism is primarily associated with culturally dissimilar immigrant groups. This can be quite relevant internationally for other welfare regimes as well, as public demand for higher spending on health care following the pandemic risks cuts in other parts of the welfare state (Greve, 2021). This can be particularly worrying for the immigrant populations. Welfare chauvinistic attitudes are prominent in all surveyed countries, which, in turn, can put pressure on politicians to cut certain rights, benefits or services which benefit immigrants in return for higher expenditure on health care services for the native population. Especially culturally dissimilar immigrant groups are at risk, seeing how welfare chauvinistic attitudes seem to be particularly attributed to these immigrants, as we have shown in the Nordic

context. This phenomenon also applies to other welfare regimes (Edwards et al., 2021; Ford, 2016; Reeskens and Van der Meer, 2017).

Our findings also have clear relevance to social work as one of its core responsibilities is to fight the exclusion of marginalised groups. However, we cannot take it for granted that social workers are entirely immune to some of the mentioned attitudes. This reminds us how important it is to advocate equality and keep promoting cultural competence and empathy to the different others in their social work education, and to train social workers to address and deal with deepening welfare chauvinist sentiments against culturally dissimilar immigrant groups.

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Article #4

The Importance of Skin-Colour in Central Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Racist Attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

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The Importance of Skin Colour in Central Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Racist Attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic

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The importance of skin colour is often neglected in empirical studies of negative attitudes towards minorities. In this study we use data from the 2014/2015 wave of the European Social Survey to analyse explicitly racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. The data was collected before the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, which gives the study a unique opportunity to analyse these attitudes in three of the countries that were among the most hostile to migrants in the EU. The study demonstrates how theoretical perspectives commonly used in explorations of negative attitudes based on ethnicity may be effectively used to analyse racist attitudes. The results show high levels of racist attitudes in both Hungary and the Czech Republic, despite there being very few non-white immigrants in these countries, while, in Poland, the racist attitudes are less widespread. Realistic threats seem to be of little importance for understanding racist attitudes – in contrast, symbolic threats appear to be very important for understanding them. There is also the surprising result that voters for more moderate political parties are no less racist than voters for the more radical political parties in any of the three countries.

Keywords: racism, prejudice, Eastern Europe, attitudes, symbolic threat

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Introduction

Ethnicity and race can be viewed as two intertwined concepts, as they are both a form of social categorisation of human beings. They are socially constructed concepts which, at times, have been used interchangeably while, at other times, have been strongly differentiated (Spencer 2014). Max Weber (1978: 389) defined ethnic groups as '(…) those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both'. Contemporary definitions of ethnicity have changed somewhat from Weber's original definition, with ethnic groups now largely being seen as groups of individuals distinguished by a common culture, often including language, religion or other patterns of behaviour or belief (Cornell and Hartmann 2007).

In Europe, race has very much taken a back seat to ethnicity, as race – and consequently racism – is strongly linked to the atrocities of the Hitler regime and the Holocaust (Lentin 2008). Race is difficult to define briefly as there is an absence of commonly agreed conceptual tools or a common framework for understanding the parameters of race (Murji and Solomos 2015). For this study, however, we use Cornell and Hartmann's (2007) definition of race, understanding it as a group of human beings socially defined on the basis of their physical characteristics such as skin colour. We employ this definition as the core of our analysis is how majority populations perceive an outgroup based solely on skin colour.

It is important to note that race is far more complex than simply physical characteristics, as both cultural and religious aspects are important factors for the racialisation process of outgroups (see, for example, Garner and Selod 2015). There is a large number of quantitative studies exploring negative attitudes towards immigrants and minorities in Europe (Adnan 2020; Harris, Gawlewicz and Valentine 2019). However, there are surprisingly few quantitative empirical studies on explicitly racist attitudes in Europe.[1] Instead, empirical studies exploring racial prejudice or race in Europe tend to use a dependent variable that measures attitudes towards minorities of a different race *or* ethnicity (Creighton, Schmidt and Zavala-Rojas 2019; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2015; Quillian 1995).

Another aspect relating to the issue of negative attitudes towards minorities in Europe is that studies tend to focus on the attitudes that can be found in Western European countries. This is not in itself surprising, seeing as the vast majority of immigrants live in Western European countries; it may therefore be of interest to focus on the dynamics between the majority population and the immigrant minority. However, although there are more immigrants in the Western half of Europe, higher levels of intolerance have been reported in the Eastern half (Bello 2017; Kunovich 2004, Strabac, Listhaug and Jakobsen 2012). There are different explanations for why this may be. Seeing that there are far fewer immigrants in Eastern Europe, one explanation may be that there is a lack of opportunity for contact with immigrants. In addition, these countries have had different historical experiences to Western Europe in regard to immigration and racism since the end of the Second World War (Humphreys 2000; Kunovich 2004; Law 2012).

We use the European Social Survey Round 7 (ESS7), collected in 2014–2015, to explore two major aims. The first is to explore whether the most common theoretical apparatus for studying prejudice based on ethnicity can advance explorations of racist attitudes based on an individual's skin colour. The second is to explore the differences and similarities regarding factors that affect racist attitudes between Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. All three countries are members of the group known as the 'Visegrad Four'[2] or 'V4', who united against the EU during the refugee crisis of 2015–2016, refusing to admit a certain number of refugees. During the refugee crisis, Islamophobic and anti-migrant rhetoric was widespread and the display of a common front against the EU was previously unseen in European politics (Kalmar 2018). Interestingly, Hutter and Kriesi (2022) show that the refugee crisis was the first time that immigration was widely politicised in both Hungary and Poland. This makes the three V4 countries very interesting cases, as our data was collected before

the crisis 'hit' Europe. It gives us a unique opportunity to explore the racist attitudes that we believe were already prevalent before the crisis and before the politicisation of immigration in the three countries.

Describing the contextual frames: The cases of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic

In order to understand the racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic before the refugee crisis, it is relevant to explain the contextual situation of the three countries; we therefore outline the political developments and the politics of immigration there. Furthermore, it is pertinent to identify potential outgroups in the three countries. Since the fall of communism, *Hungary* can be said to have experienced two phases: from 1990 to 2010, it was considered a liberal democracy while, after the landslide electoral victory for Fidesz in 2010, where the party gained over a two-thirds majority, it became what Prime Minister Viktor Orbán described as an illiberal democracy, where political power was increasingly centralised and the freedom of the people was being eroded (Biro-Nagy 2017). Since taking power in 2010, the right-wing party Fidezs, with Viktor Orbán as its leader, have been adamant that they will not 'repeat the errors of the Western nations in setting their immigration policies' (Korkut 2014: 624). Hungary, therefore, had a strict immigration policy and their immigrant share of the population at the time was around 5 per cent.[3]

Although Hungary did not have a large immigrant population, it did and still does have one of the largest Roma communities in Europe. Estimates of the size of the Roma population vary as it is difficult to measure but they are estimated to number somewhere between 300,000 and 700,000 (Ram 2014). Previous research on social distance shows that the Roma have traditionally been the most stigmatised minority group in Eastern Europe (Strabac *et al.* 2012) The Roma have also been discriminated against for decades in Hungary, including the deportation and killing of massive numbers of the Roma minority during World War II and the ongoing failure to recognise the Hungarian government's involvement in this atrocity (Law 2012). Discrimination continued under communist rule, with the Roma being regarded as 'brown' Hungarians (Law and Zakharov 2019). The radical right party Jobbik were particularly harsh towards the Roma population (Kovács 2013).

In contemporary Hungary, racism and hate speech have also been incorporated into the discourse of the political elite. More recently, Muslims and refugees have been portrayed as the threatening 'Other' to Hungary's identity, very much resembling the anti-Roma rhetoric previously used (Hafez 2018). Differentiating between ethnic Hungarians and the different outgroups is central to Orbán and Fidesz' rhetoric, where the political messages which focus on the idea of an ethnically and culturally homogenic nation serve to unify the conservative support base of Fidesz (Bozóki and Simon 2019). While Fidesz took ownership of the migration issue during the refugee crisis, it was still considered a mainstream right-wing party at the time, while Jobbik was considered the more extreme and radical right-wing party (Bíró-Nagy 2022). This is an important distinction for the later discussion where we compare voters of the more radical right parties and the more moderate parties to see if there are any differences in racist attitudes between the voters of the radical parties and the voters of more mainstream political parties.

As with Hungary, *Poland* has also taken illiberal steps following the electoral victory of the right-wing populist Law and Justice Party (PiS). Both Fidesz and PiS use nationalist rhetoric and have been highly critical of EU integration, promising to defend their nation against the EU (Brusis 2016).

Before the refugee crisis, negative attitudes towards the different outgroups were prevalent in Poland (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2019). At the forefront were negative attitudes towards Muslims (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2019), despite the Muslim population in Poland making up less than 0.1 per cent in 2016 (Ipsos 2016). In fact, Poland was a highly ethnically homogenous society, with only 1.6 per cent of the population consisting of immigrants at the time. As with Hungary, these immigrants were also generally from neighbouring European countries. Scholars have asserted that Muslims began to be viewed as an external enemy soon

after the fall of communism and especially after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in New York in which several Poles lost their lives (Pędziwiatr 2018). In addition, Poland's participation in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London accelerated the anti-Muslim attitudes in Poland (Pędziwiatr 2018).

In the election year of 2013 in the *Czech Republic,* only 3 per cent of the population were satisfied with the political situation in the country and, as such, the centrist populist party ANO 2011 emerged (Havlik 2015).[4] ANO 2011 can be viewed as more of a centrist populist party, with anti-corruption and anti-establishment at the forefront of its discourse, with party leader Andrej Babis stating that he wished to run the country as a business (Hanley and Vachudova 2018). ANO 2011 entered into a coalition with the social democrats after the 2013 election and won in 2017, still relying heavily on anti-establishment discourse (Leff 2019). In Hungary and Poland, both Fidesz and PiS heavily emphasised their nationalist rhetoric and moved towards an illiberal direction. ANO 2011, on the other hand, cannot be compared to these two parties, as they did not resort to nationalist rhetoric and the Czech nation still appears to be a robust democracy in its formal institutions (Hanley and Vachuvada 2018). The party constructed refugees and Muslims as an external threat and had a clear anti-immigration stance but these views were considered to be relatively mainstream in Czech politics (Hanley and Vachuvada 2018).

Following the Second World War, much of the multicultural Czech Republic disappeared. Millions of Germans were forcibly moved back to Germany and communist rule led to severe restrictions regarding immigration. From 2001 to 2007, the Czech Republic saw a significant increase in immigration, mainly due to a growing labour demand and an improving economic situation (Drbohlav 2012). Before the crisis, the Czech Republic had a similar proportion of immigrants to Hungary, with around 4 per cent of their population having an immigrant background. Like Hungary, the Czech Republic also has a somewhat long history of Roma discrimination. After the Second World War, only around 5 per cent of the Roma population survived in the country and, during the communist regime, the Roma were mainly given low-paid jobs, their children were sent to 'special schools' and there was a sterilisation scheme to reduce the birth-rate of Roma children (Law 2012). The Roma are still very much viewed as an unfavourable ethnic group, with 79 per cent of Czechs not wanting to have a Roma family as neighbours (Law 2012).

Another important aspect to keep in mind is the geographic location of the three countries and the way in which this affected how they faced external migration. The Czech Republic borders only EU countries and its immigrant population was also largely made up of EU citizens from neighbouring countries. Poland's Eastern border is with Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, who also made up the biggest immigrant populations in the country (along with Germans). Furthermore, neither Poland nor the Czech Republic were on the main migration routes in 2015–2016. Hungary, however, was on the main migration route and was among the top receiving countries for asylum-seekers in 2015 (Valenta, Lønning, Jakobsen and Župarić-Iljić 2019; Valenta, Župarić-Iljić and Vidovic 2015).

The three countries all had a relatively low proportion of immigrants, especially those from outside Europe. However, intolerance towards the different ethnic outgroups were prevalent in all three countries, despite several of them being marginal in size (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2019). The exception would be the Roma population in Hungary and the Czech Republic. The two countries both have a long history of considering the Roma population as a 'brown' or 'dark' presence in need of being managed, regulated and controlled (Law and Zakharov 2019).

Another aspect is that all three countries have had populist parties win national elections. However, there is a difference between them. Whereas Hungary and Poland's populist parties relied heavily on nationalist discourse, the discourse of ANO 2011 in the Czech Republic was primarily anti-establishment and anti-corruption.

Theory and previous research

Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) contend that Western Europe has developed a norm against blatant prejudice[5] and that a more subtle prejudice has arisen. This is no different to what many scholars believe to be a shift to a new form of racism that centres on insurmountable cultural differences between groups – often known as cultural racism (Ramos, Pereira and Vala 2020). Cultural racism can be described as a more modern form of racism, where the focus is more on cultural differences between the majority and minority populations, rather than on biological differences (Balibar 1991). However, just because a 'new' form of expressing a racist attitude has emerged, this does not mean that the previous one has disappeared (Vala and Pereira 2018). Scholars such as Ramos *et al.* (2020) maintain that traditional forms of racism still persist in certain European countries; they further find that the more democracy is institutionalised, the more active are the different anti-racism norms. This finding has implications for our study. First, the social desirability bias[6] may not be as prevalent in regard to racist attitudes in the three countries as it is in other Western countries, as they are relatively newly established democracies. The second is that the democratic backsliding which has happened in both Hungary and Poland leads us to believe that racist attitudes will be more prevalent in these two countries than in the Czech Republic.

Based on this overview, we explore the differences and similarities in what affects racist attitudes between Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. We are primarily interested in analysing the more blatant forms of prejudice in this study. Therefore, for our purposes, a racist attitude is understood as a negative attitude towards a minority group defined solely by its physical appearance. To analyse racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, we use two theoretical approaches: *intergroup threat theory* and *intergroup contact theory*. Intergroup threat theory explains the different threat perceptions that individuals or groups may have in relation to immigrants (Stephan, Ybarra and Rios 2016). An earlier version of this theory was named integrated threat theory and included four forms of threats (see Stephan and Stephan 2000).[7] In the more recent version of this theory, researchers distinguish between realistic threat[8] and symbolic threat (Stephan *et al.* 2016).

Concern over physical harm or the loss of material resources can be categorised as realistic threats. At a group level, realistic threats are related to the in-group's power, resources and general welfare while, at an individual level, the category of the realistic threat concerns material, economic, physical and security threats to an individual group member (Andersen and Mayerl 2018; Billiet, Meuleman and De Witte 2014; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Nunziata 2015).

Symbolic threat is, on the other hand, at a group level linked to perceived threats to the in-group's religion, belief system, values or ideologies while, at an individual level, the symbolic threat is often linked to an individual's self-identity or self-esteem. Symbolic threat can be exemplified by individuals' perceived threat to their country's cultural identity by immigrants. It is argued in some studies that these symbolic threats are often more important than realistic threats in predicting anti-immigrant attitudes (Lucassen and Lubbers 2012).

Previous studies have examined how different threats are linked to different minority groups. Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan and Lahav (2015) found that, in Europe, symbolic threats are linked more to immigrants who are racially and ethnically different, while realistic threats are connected more with immigrants who are racially or ethnically similar. In the same vein, Gorodzeisky (2019) posits that Eastern Orthodox individuals in Russia tend to oppose the immigration of ethnically or racially different immigrants who are a threat to their cultural homogeneity and national identity. Furthermore, in their study of biological racism across Europe, Vala and Pereira (2018) highlight that new theoretical models which emphasise more symbolic and ideological dimensions, rather than socio-positional variables, should be used to understand the persistence of biological racism in Europe. We therefore expect the symbolic threat perceptions to be more important in understanding the racist attitudes in the three countries. However, as we explained in the contextualisation section, immigrants

who are ethnically and racially different were, at the time, almost non-existent in the three countries so it is somewhat unclear how the different threat perceptions may play a part in the racist attitudes.

A moderator of these negative attitudes can be intergroup contact, deriving from Gordon Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, which posits that if there is i) equal status within the contact situation, ii) cooperation between the groups, iii) common goals and iv) support from the government, contact will reduce prejudice towards out-groups. More recently, these four criteria have been found not to be essential, although they do contribute to the reduction of prejudice (Paluck, Green and Green 2019; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). However, it is maintained that negative contact and competition between groups may increase intergroup prejudice (Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami 2003; Paolini, Harwood and Rubin 2010). Intergroup contact can also moderate perceptions of threat as, when contact is established, increased empathy and knowledge and decreased anxiety towards the outgroup most likely influences the extent to which vulnerable individuals perceive outgroup members as threatening (Thomsen and Birkmose 2015). Intergroup contact can therefore reduce threat perceptions which, in turn, can reduce anti-immigrant attitudes (Schlueter and Wagner 2008).

An important aspect to consider in regards to intergroup contact in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic is that they all have small immigrant populations and even smaller racially dissimilar immigrant populations. The opportunity for contact is therefore severely limited in these countries. What can further complicate intergroup contact in Hungary are the larger Roma populations who represent the Hungarian ethnic 'other' (Csepeli and Simon 2004; Koulish 2003; Vidra and Fox 2014). We highlight this possible factor as some studies have found that casual contact with Roma minorities tends to have a negative effect on attitudes in Eastern Europe (Kende, Hadarics and Lášticová 2017; Visintin, Green, Pereira and Miteva 2017). The effect of contact in Hungary may therefore be somewhat more complex than in the other two countries.

Despite the issues that we may face with intergroup contact theory, we still maintain that it is a valuable approach as we may gain insights into the effect of contact – or its absence – on racist attitudes in societies where the opportunity for intergroup contact is less likely. Nevertheless, contact with a minority is still expected to have an effect in all three countries, which actualises important differences in experiences – such as the difference between having *no* contact and having *some* contact. Based on the above-mentioned studies, we therefore explore the various dimensions of intergroup contact and perceived real and symbolic threats on racist attitudes in the three contexts.

Data and methods

This study uses data from the seventh wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) collected in 2014–2015. The dependent variable for this study is based on the following question from the survey: '*Please tell me how important you think each of these things should be in deciding whether someone born, brought up and living outside [country] should be able to come and live here. Please use this card. Firstly, how important should it be for them to be white?*' The respondents then ranked how important they believed it was that the immigrant should be white on a scale ranging from 0–10 where 0 represents extremely unimportant and 10 is extremely important. We believe this variable accurately measures overt racism as it explicitly asks the respondents how important skin colour is in accepting an immigrant to their country. To analyse the data, we used a linear regression model in the three selected countries. The sample size is a total of 4,122 respondents, of whom 1,255 are from Hungary, 1,230 from Poland and 1,637 from the Czech Republic. The estimates are weighted using post-stratification weights.

An interesting aspect regarding the data analysed is the period in which it was collected. The largest fraction of the data collection in Hungary took place in May 2015; in Poland it was in May and June 2015 and in the Czech Republic it was in December 2014 and January 2015.[9] The data was thus collected before the refugee

crisis of 2015 had escalated to its full scale between August and December 2015. This gives us a unique opportunity to analyse the already existing attitudes in the three countries before the height of the refugee crisis.

As this study aims to explore whether the theoretical framework usually applied in studies of ethnic prejudice can be effectively used in a racial framework, the independent variables chosen for this study all have a basis in previous research and theory exploring ethnic prejudice. Therefore, *gender* (female=1), *age* (measured in years), *education* (measured in years) and how *urban or rural* the respondents' lives were (on a scale of 1–5) have been included as they have all been found to be important for explaining ethnic prejudice (see Ceobanu and Escandell 2010 for review). Gender and education have also been found to be predictors of racist attitudes in Europe (Caller and Gorodzeisky 2021). For threat perceptions, we have chosen six individual-level characteristics which may serve as indicators of threat perceptions or increases in the level of perceived threat from non-white immigrants. *Unemployed* (1=employed), *income* (1–4) and *country economy* (0–10) are three variables that are chosen to represent economic aspects of the realistic threat category (Stephan *et al*. 2016). *Unemployed* individuals are expected to be more hostile to immigrants, as they may perceive the latter as competition for jobs. *Income* measures how satisfied the respondent is with his or her household's income. Individuals who are not satisfied with their income may perceive immigrants as a threat to them achieving a better income. *Country economy* measures how satisfied the respondents are with the present state of the economy in their country. We expect individuals who are less satisfied with their country's economy to be more racist, as immigrants of a different skin colour may be perceived as a threat to their country's economy which, in turn, could mean a reduction of benefits, higher taxes, etc. As for a security aspect in realistic threat, we use the variable *safety* (1–4), which measures the respondent's feeling of safety when walking alone after dark. In line with previous studies, we expect that individuals who feel less safe will feel more threatened by non-white immigrants, as they may perceive them as either stereotypically criminal or terrorists (see Andersen and Mayerl 2018; Billiet *et al*. 2014; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Nunziata 2015).

The symbolic threat of intergroup threat theory features two individual-level variables in this analysis: *customs* (1–5) and *religiosity* (0–10). *Customs* asks the respondents how much they agree with the following statement 'It is better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions'. We expect individuals who believe it to be better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions to be more racist, as the foreign culture of non-white immigrants may be perceived as a symbolic threat to local customs and traditions. We expect similar results for the variable that measures how religious the respondents view themselves. Individuals who regard themselves as very religious may view non-white immigrants as a symbolic threat to their Christian culture and heritage. As previous studies have shown, symbolic threats are very much linked to ethnically or racially different immigrants (Ben-Nun Bloom *et al*. 2015; Gorodzeisky 2019). Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether racist attitudes in the three countries are linked more to symbolic than to realistic threats.

As all three countries have seen a rise of right-wing populist parties, we have chosen to include three political variables which may be of interest; *Political trust*[10] (0–10), *EU too far* (0–10) and *Party last voted for*. In regards to *political trust,* we expect individuals who have lower levels of political trust to have a more racist attitude, as populist politicians often blame the establishment and immigrants for the problems in their respective countries (Bugaric and Kuhelj 2018). *EU too far* asks the respondents if EU integration has gone too far or if it should go further. We have added an EU variable because both Fidesz and PiS have been critical of EU integration. Respondents who distrust the EU may do so because they identify entirely with their nation state and the EU can be seen as a 'cause' of non-white immigration to their country (Brosius, Van Elsas and De Vreese 2019). As both Hungary and Poland have taken an illiberal turn in recent years, it would also be of

interest to identify differences between the voters in the three countries, which is why we have added a variable showing us which party our respondents voted for in the last election.

Finally, two contact variables have been added. *Contact* measures how much contact the respondents have with a person of a different race or ethnic group.[11] The original variable had seven categories; however, as previously mentioned, there are limited opportunities for contact with minorities in the three countries, which skews the distribution of the variable somewhat. We have therefore recoded the variable into three categories (1=Never, 2=Some 3=Often). We also have a variable measuring whether the respondent lives in an area with people of a different race or ethnicity (0=Almost nobody, 1=Some/many). As with the previous contact variable, this has also been recoded from three to two categories, as the variable is somewhat skewed, particularly in Poland.

Results

In Figures 1a, 1b and 1c, we show a simple distribution of the dependent variable so that we can analyse the differences concerning the levels of racist attitudes that can be found between the three countries.

From the three figures, we can see that there are high levels of racist attitudes in Hungary, with almost as many respondents believing that it is *extremely* important that the immigrants be white as those who believe the opposite. Comparatively, the results in Poland are a great deal lower than in Hungary and the Czech Republic, as there are surprisingly high levels of racist attitudes in the Czech Republic, very comparable, in fact, to those that can be found in Hungary.[12]

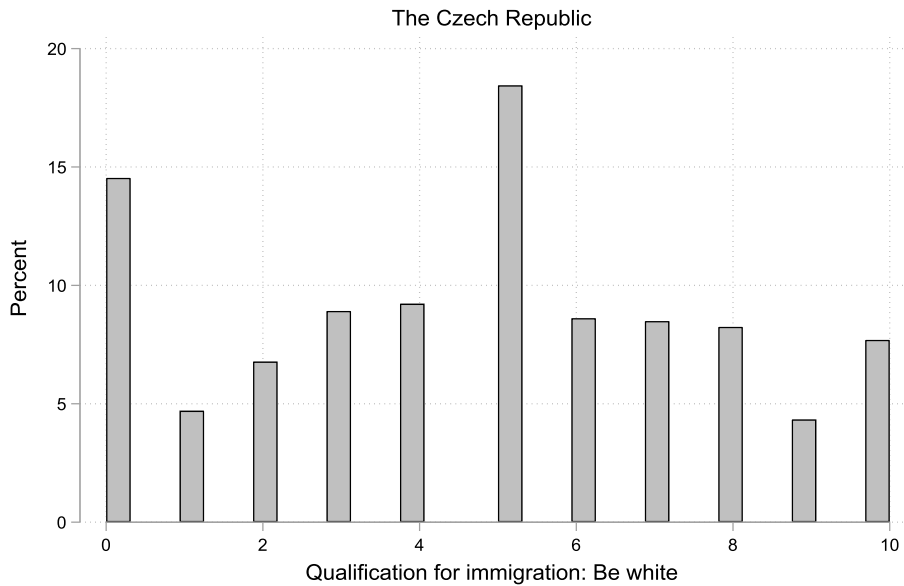**Figure 1a. Distribution on the dependent variable in Hungary**
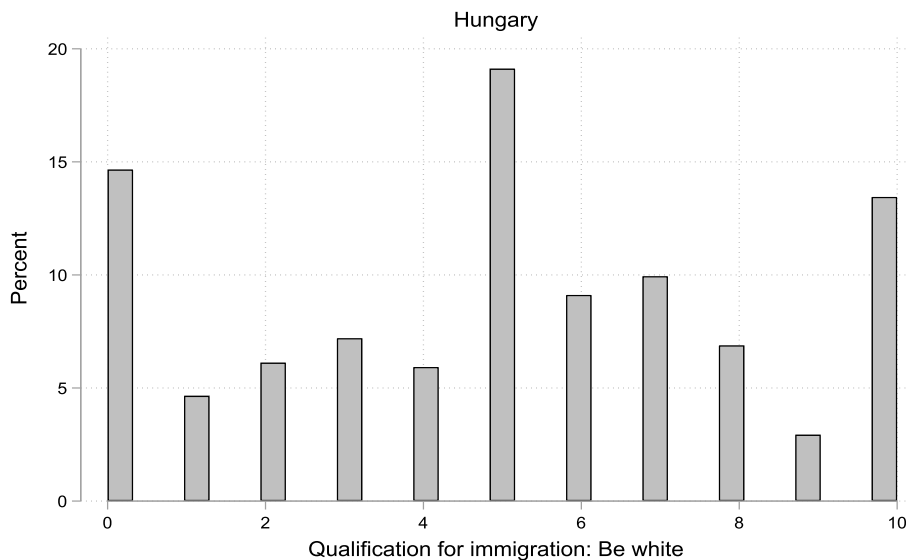
Source: Based on results from ESS Round 7 (2014).

Figure 1b. Distribution on the dependent variable in Poland
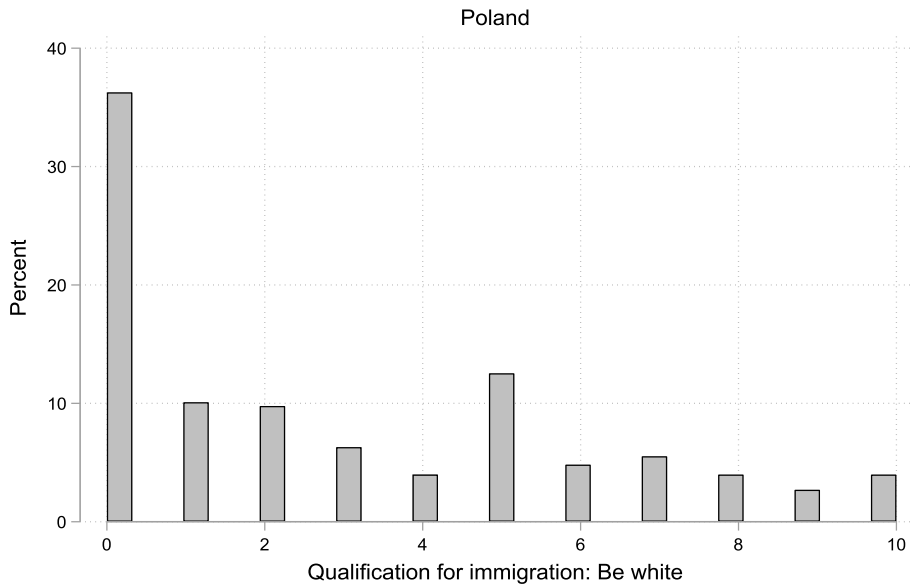
Source: Based on results from ESS Round 7 (2014).

Figure 1c. Distribution on the dependent variable in the Czech Republic

Source: Based on results from ESS Round 7 (2014).

An important aspect to comment on is the fact that there are high levels of racist attitudes towards immigrants of a different skin colour, despite there being very few immigrants in any of the three countries – the figures also show us that, even before the refugee crisis, there were extremely high levels.

We have explored the above-mentioned differences in more detail in Table 1, which includes two OLS models. We observed that previous relevant models that did not include symbolic variables had relatively low explanatory power (Vala and Pereira 2018). Therefore, we have chosen to exclude our symbolic variables from Model 1 and include them in Model 2 in order to see the differences in explanatory power of the models. When analysing the results, we mainly focus on Model 2, unless there are specific aspects regarding Model 1 that require commenting on.

We begin our analysis by commenting on the differences in R^2 between Models 1 and 2. In Model 1, Hungary and Poland have an R^2 of 0.134 and 0.110, whereas the Czech Republic has an R^2 of 0.058. When we introduce the two symbolic variables into Model 2, we see a considerable increase in all three countries, with an R^2 value of 0.185 and 0.197 in Hungary and Poland respectively and an R^2 value that is doubled in the Czech Republic to 0.117. This indicates that the symbolic variables are very important for understanding the racist attitudes we find in the three countries. *Customs* has a relatively strong effect in all three countries and shows us that individuals who believe that everyone should share the same customs in a country are more likely to have a racist attitude towards non-white immigrants. A greater discussion surrounding the effect of *customs* will take place later in the paper.

Religiosity has an effect in Poland, showing us that individuals who are more religious are more prejudiced towards non-white immigrants. In a European context, The Czech Republic can be characterised as highly secular, Hungary as somewhat religious and Poland as highly religious (Pew Research Center 2018). This may account for why *religiosity* has only a statistically significant effect in Poland since religion holds a strong position in Polish society. Some researchers explain the idea that the more religious Poles are, the stronger the racist attitudes they harbour will be, due to an ongoing trend of intensified sacralisation of the nation and an intertwining of Catholicism with Polish nationalism (Pędziwiatr 2018).

Following the effects of the symbolic variables, we start analysing the other variables from the top (see Table 1). The analysis shows that the *female* variable does not have any effect in any of the three countries. It is also evident that *age* has an effect in Hungary and Poland, showing that older individuals have more racist attitudes. However, *age* does not have an effect in the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, there is an interesting aspect regarding the estimates of *education*. Education cannot be said to have a statistically significant effect in Poland, which is surprising as education's role in defeating prejudice is one of the more robust findings across studies in the field (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). *Urban* has an effect in both Hungary and the Czech Republic; however, there is a different direction in the effect between the two countries. Living in more urban areas is associated with less racist attitudes in the Czech Republic. In contrast, living in more urban environments is associated with higher levels of racist attitudes in Hungary. *Safety* cannot be said to have an effect in any of the three countries, showing us that non-white immigrants are not necessarily perceived as a security threat. The two contact variables show interesting effects in the three countries. *Contact* has a statistically significant effect in all three countries; however, it influences the racist attitudes differently in each of them. Having some or often having contact with an individual of a different race or ethnicity is found to have a decreased effect on racist attitudes in Poland. In the Czech Republic it is only for individuals who often have contact that the same effect can be found. Surprisingly, in Hungary contact has the opposite effect, as individuals having some or often having contact with a different race or ethnicity are associated with higher levels of racist attitude. This is explored further in the section discussing the findings. While often having contact with ethnic and racial outgroups decreases racist attitudes in the Czech Republic, living in areas with different ethnic and racial minorities increases racist attitudes there.

Table 1. Linear regression models of racist attitudes in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic
Female	-0.048	-0.139	-0.176	0.054	-0.185	-0.075
	(0.175)	(0.169)	(0.171)	(0.174)	(0.163)	(0.165)
Age	0.030***	0.021***	0.004	0.029***	0.018***	-0.075
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.165)
Education	-0.104***	-0.092**	-0.118**	-0.091**	-0.036	-0.107**
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.039)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.037)
Urban	0.243**	-0.036	-0.234**	0.232**	0.012	-0.211**
	(0.084)	(0.080)	(0.078)	(0.082)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Safety	-0.092	0.083	-0.191	-0.148	0.085	-0.226
	(0.150)	(0.134)	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.130)	(0.144)
Contact *(Never as reference)*						
Some contact	0.645**	-0.687***	-0.460*	0.764***	-0.482*	-0.244
	(0.215)	(0.196)	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.188)	(0.208)
Often contact	1.092***	-1.007***	-0.723*	1.029***	-0.669*	-0.681*
	(0.268)	(0.280)	(0.286)	(0.262)	(0.268)	(0.277)
Live in area with minorities	0.035	0.101	0.309	0.205	0.216	0.399*
	(0.189)	(0.226)	(0.179)	(0.183)	(0.218)	(0.173)
Unemployed	-0.007	-0.528	0.138	-0.123	-0.683	0.089
	(0.588)	(0.410)	(0.420)	(0.631)	(0.402)	(0.401)
Income	0.240	-0.060	-0.371**	0.264	-0.083	-0.321**
	(0.144)	(0.155)	(0.121)	(0.140)	(0.149)	(0.120)
Country Economy	-0.060	0.097*	0.058	-0.038	0.101*	0.093
	(0.059)	(0.047)	(0.052)	(0.058)	(0.045)	(0.050)
Political Trust	0.110	-0.084	-0.003	0.075	-0.073	0.002
	(0.059)	(0.055)	(0.051)	(0.058)	(0.053)	(0.050)
EU too far	0.213***	0.157***	0.050	0.167***	0.131***	0.048
	(0.041)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.034)	(0.038)
Party last voted for *Jobbik as reference*						
Fidesz	-0.862**			-0.752*		

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic
	(0.316)			(0.309)		
LMP	-0.907			-0.360		
	(0.574)			(0.581)		
MSZP	-0.511			-0.279		
	(0.352)			(0.339)		
Other	-2.310			-1.846		
	(1.244)			(1.134)		
Did not vote	-1.102***			-0.967**		
	(0.314)			(0.307)		
Refused/Don't know	-1.504***			-1.313***		
	(0.332)			(0.326)		
Law and Justice as reference						
Polish Peasents Party		0.330			0.523	
		(0.535)			(0.554)	
Civic Platform		-0.239			0.097	
		(0.265)			(0.260)	
Democratic Left Alliance		-0.477			0.240	
		(0.561)			(0.497)	
Other		-0.310			0.024	
		(0.510)			(0.452)	
Did not Vote		0.377			0.705**	
		(0.262)			(0.250)	
Refused/Don't know		0.568			0.730*	
		(0.318)			(0.305)	
ANO 2011 as reference						
KSCM			-0.228			-0.081
			(0.410)			(0.391)
TOP 09			-0.372			-0.304
			(0.377)			(0.359)
ČSSD			-0.788**			-0.800**
			(0.295)			(0.282)
ODS			-0.103			0.099

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Czech Republic
KDU-CSL			-0.498 (0.447)			-0.455 (0.420)
Dawn			-0.360 (0.540)			-0.271 (0.536)
Other			-0.089 (0.701)			0.159 (0.686)
Did not vote			-0.111 (0.654)			-0.009 (0.579)
Refused/Don't know			-0.775 (0.260)			-0.677 (0.249)
Constant			(0.570)			(0.570)
Custom				0.788*** (0.100)	0.854*** (0.080)	0.811*** (0.085)
Religiosity				-0.030 (0.037)	0.154*** (0.033)	-0.001 (0.032)
R2	0.134	0.110	0.058	0.185	0.197	0.117
N	1,255	1,230	1,637	1,255	1,230	1,637

Note: standard errors in parentheses * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

The three economic variables *unemployed*, *income* and *country economy* were expected to show signs of perceived realistic group threat. Several previous studies on the topic indicate that vulnerable groups, such as blue-collar workers or unemployed people, may view immigrants as a competitive threat to their jobs (Billiet *et al*. 2014; Hoxhaj and Zucotti 2021; Kunovich 2017). Other group-threat contributions show that immigrants are either perceived as a burden on a country's economy (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010) or indicate a perceived connection between immigrants and higher crime levels (Nunziata 2015). However, we cannot see in our models that being unemployed has an effect on the racist attitudes in any of the three countries. An individual's satisfaction with their income level has a negative effect in the Czech Republic, telling us that the more satisfied an individual is with his or her income, the less racist the attitude they hold. Yet, individuals in Poland who are satisfied with the economy in the country will hold a *more* racist attitude than individuals who are less satisfied with the economy. In light of realistic group threat studies in other countries, we expected the opposite effect, as a perception of a weak economy was expected to lead to a perception of non-white immigrants as a reason for it or that an increasing inflow of non-white immigrants could be perceived to lead to a reduction in benefits or an increase in taxes. This turned out to be an incorrect assumption, as it had no effect in Hungary or the Czech Republic and had the opposite effect in Poland.

Political trust has no effect on racist attitudes in any of the three countries, while *EU too far* has a positive effect in both Hungary and Poland, meaning that the more sceptical individuals are of the EU in Hungary and Poland, the more racist the attitude that they would have. In 2014, EU integration was an important issue in party competition in both Hungary and Poland, with the two largest populist parties, Fidesz and PiS, both being critical of EU integration (Brusis 2016). Fidesz and PiS have both promised to defend their nation against the EU while, in the Czech Republic, the biggest populist party, ANO 2011, has largely had a more technocratic populism, with corruption as the main 'enemy' rather than a nationalistic populism as in Hungary and Poland. ANO 2011 leader Andrej Babis was not a staunch Eurosceptic, as he favours the EU market structure (Hanley and Vachudova 2018).

There are surprising results when exploring the *party voted for* variable. The reference category for each country includes parties that are generally considered to be the 'most' populist and radical-wing political party.[13] There are two findings we wish to comment upon when analysing the *party voted for* variable. The first is the number of statistically significant categories. When compared to Jobbik, PiS and ANO 2011, there are a total of six out of 20 categories that have a statistically significant effect; four of these categories involve respondents who did not vote or refused to state which party they voted for. The remaining two categories are the centre-right and highly anti-immigrant party Fidesz and the social-democratic ČSSD, whose voters display lower levels of racist attitudes than the radical right-wing populist parties in their respective countries. It is remarkable that *none* of the voters for the centre-left or left-wing parties in either Hungary or Poland can be said to be statistically significantly less racist than the voters for Jobbik or PiS, even after controlling for several variables. It does, therefore, appear that these attitudes could be found across the political spectrum in the three countries.

Discussion

Our exploration of racist attitudes has resulted in several very interesting findings that may be roughly divided into two categories. In the first category are findings that confirm previous studies on racist attitudes, while the second includes more unexpected findings. The magnitude of the openly racist attitudes that can be found in Hungary and the Czech Republic and the difference between these two countries and Poland are what stand out.

An often-cited methodological problem in survey research is that of the social desirability bias (Krumpal 2013), as respondents have a tendency to under-report attitudes that conflict with the prevailing norms of society. It may appear that these norms are somewhat lacking in both Hungary and the Czech Republic and it is remarkable that so many of the respondents openly admit to having a racist attitude.

Previous studies have found that symbolic threats are more connected to immigrants of a different race or ethnicity, while realistic threats are more connected to immigrants of the same race or ethnicity (Ben-Nun Bloom *et al.* 2015; Gorodzeisky 2019). This study largely finds this to be the case with the explicitly racist attitudes shown here, where realistic threats seem to have little or no effect in the three countries. Even the more economic side of realistic threats has almost no effect in the three countries. None of the economic variables have any effect in Hungary, indicating that realistic threat perceptions are not a factor in explaining the racist attitudes there, while only one economic variable has an effect in the Czech Republic and Poland. It is, however, important to consider that the dependent variable used for this study does not measure anti-immigrant attitudes in general but the importance of immigrants being white. One can assume that all immigrants in general, regardless of their skin colour, will be perceived as economically threatening to economically vulnerable individuals. Therefore, these individuals will not necessarily have a preference for white immigrants.

Symbolic threat, on the other hand, can be viewed as a very important factor for the racist attitudes in the three countries. This follows Ben-Nun Bloom *et al.*'s (2015) finding that culturally threatened individuals prefer immigrants who are similar to themselves. The perception of not having shared customs and traditions has a strong effect in all three countries. It is also a very important variable for understanding the racist attitudes in all three countries, which is also indicated by the considerable rise of the explanatory power of the statistical models. It does, therefore, seem that, even though we are measuring negative attitudes towards a minority based solely on skin colour, a perceived cultural threat is very much connected to these negative attitudes. In other words, it seems that, when an individual who harbours a racist attitude views a person of a different colour, the racist individual will also perceive this person as culturally different.

Regarding intergroup contact, there is somewhat of a conundrum here as it has the expected effect in both Poland and the Czech Republic but it has an unexpected one in Hungary in that contact equals a more racist attitude. A possible explanation for this is that, as mentioned above, Hungary has one of the largest Roma-minority populations in Eastern Europe. We may therefore expect that much of the contact that is had with another race or ethnic group is with an individual of Roma origin. We highlight this fact, as some studies have shown that contact with the Roma tends to have a negative effect in Eastern Europe (Kende *et al.* 2017; Visintin *et al.* 2017).[14] We have previously described Hungary's and the Czech Republic's long history and continued discrimination against their Roma minorities. One may therefore speculate whether these sentiments towards their Roma populations simply found a new target in the face of the arrival of irregular migrants in 2015.

Last but not least, we have also explored the effects of political parties on people's attitudes. Previous studies indicate that voters for more right-wing political parties tend to be more sceptical towards immigrants (Callens and Meuleman 2017) and that populist politicians tend to blame immigrants for the problems which their country is facing (Bugaric and Kuhelj 2018). It was therefore our expectation that there would be a statistically significant difference between voters for the more radical populist parties and voters for mainstream political parties with regard to their attitudes towards minority populations. It was therefore unexpected that we found no statistical difference in the racist attitudes between voters for right-wing populist or extremist parties in the case of Jobbik and other parties, apart from Fidesz in Hungary and ČSSD in the Czech Republic.

Conclusion

To summarise, this study demonstrates that the theoretical approaches we chose to use can be applied effectively to studies of racist attitudes, showing that symbolic threats are very important for understanding these attitudes. People with a different skin colour are often automatically attributed a difference of culture. Realistic threats, on the other hand, seem to be of less importance, although we cannot say for certain that the same results would be produced in a country with a higher percentage of non-white immigrants. However, we also acknowledge that there are some mixed and counterintuitive results with regards to intergroup contact theory and the effects of the political parties.

One highly important finding is that these racist attitudes were prevalent *before* the refugee crisis in 2015–2016. This was particularly so in the Czech Republic and Hungary. It therefore seems that there was already a fertile background of racism – and not necessarily manipulation by populist politicians – that prepared the foundations of the political response to irregular migration. This is also clear when one considers that, generally, voters across the political spectrum in all three countries seem to harbour similar racist attitudes. The political parties also seem to have taken advantage of this, as several studies have highlighted how, across the ideological spectrum, they were all hostile to migrants across Central and Eastern Europe (Hanley and Vachuvada 2018; Korkut 2020).

Notes

[1] Notable exceptions include Vala and Pereira (2018), Ramos *et al*. (2020) and Caller and Gorodzeisky (2021).

[2] Slovakia is the fourth member of the Visegrad Four. Unfortunately, Slovakia was not included in the dataset that is used in this study.

[3] All numbers relating to immigrant size and make up are extracted from the UN international migrant stock and can be found at: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.asp (accessed 21 May 2022).

[4] Dawn of Direct Democracy (Dawn) was another populist party which emerged, gaining 6.9 per cent of the votes, although several MPs and the party leader, Tomio Okamura, split to form another right-wing populist party – Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD). Dawn was dissolved in 2018.

[5] They define blatant prejudice in its full form as a belief in the outgroup's genetic inferiority.

[6] The social desirability bias refers to making oneself look good in terms of prevailing cultural norms when answering specific survey questions (see Krumpal 2013 for a review).

[7] The four threats originally included were: realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes (see Stephan and Stephan 2000 for the original 'Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice').

[8] Realistic threat does not necessarily have to be a 'real' threat, as intergroup threat theory is primarily concerned with the perceptions of threat, as perceived threats have real consequences, regardless of whether or not the perceived threat is actually real (Stephan *et al*. 2016: 258).

[9] The official data collection period in the three countries was from April to June in Hungary, November to February in the Czech Republic and April to September in Poland. The data collected in August and September in Poland only make up 1 per cent of the sample there and should not affect the overall data.

[10] Political trust was constructed using five variables: i) trust in country's parliament, ii) trust in the legal system, iii) trust in the police, iv) trust in politicians and v) trust in political parties. The constructed variable had a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.91 in Hungary, 0.86 in Poland and 0.91 in the Czech Republic.

[11] There are different measures for contact in the dataset; there is another variable measuring how good or bad the contact is between the respondent and people of a different race/ethnicity. The disadvantage with this variable is that there are very few immigrants in the three countries. As such, a large number of respondents (over 50 per cent in Poland) have never had contact with an individual of a different race/ethnicity and would therefore be excluded from the analysis. We have thus chosen to use the variable measuring the amount of contact with a minority as it is of interest to include the respondents who have never had contact with a minority.

[12] To contextualise the result, we have added the average racist attitudes across Europe in Appendix A1. It is clear that racist attitudes are considerably more pronounced in the three countries than in Western Europe. Estonia and Lithuania were the only two countries with a greater amount of racist attitudes, which indicates a considerable difference between the attitudes that can be found in Eastern European countries compared to Western Europe.

[13] The exception here would be in the Czech Republic, where ANO 2011 is the reference category. While ANO 2011 is certainly a populist party, the most right-wing populist party in the Czech dataset would be Dawn; however, as they only make up 1.65 per cent of the respondents, we have chosen ANO 2011, with 14.23 per cent of respondents, as the reference category.

[14] What complicates this explanation is that the Roma population in Hungary tends to live in more rural areas and the variable *urban* found that rural Hungarians actually have less racist attitudes than more urban counterparts. Future research should therefore focus more on the rural/urban situation.

Conflit of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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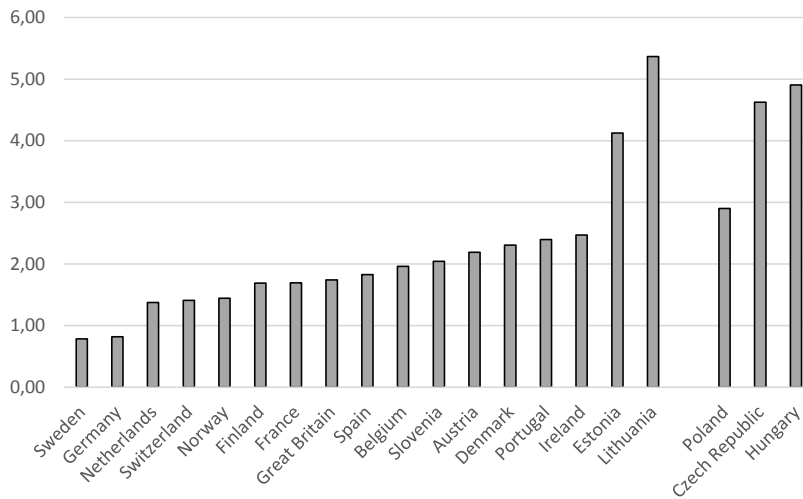
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Appendix A1

Figure A1. Average racist attitudes in Europe (0/10)

Source: Based on results from ESS Round 7 (2014).

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