Perception of the European Union in the context of the migration crisis – a comparative study of the Czech Republic and Croatia

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Percepcija Europske unije u kontekstu migracijske krize – komparativna studija Češke i Hrvatske

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Latest works:

Bagić, D. & Ostojić, J. (2023). Croatia: Trade unions able to retain influence despite loss of resources IN: Waddington, J.; Muller, T. and Vandaele, K. (eds.) *Trade unions in the European Union*. Brussels, Peter Lang.

Bagić, D., Šuljok, A. & Ančić, B. (2022). Determinants and reasons for coronavirus disease 2019 vaccine hesitancy in Croatia. *Croatian Medical Journal*, 63 (1), 89-97. https://doi.org/10.3325/cmj.2022.63.89.

Bagić, D. & Šuljok, A. (2021). "Put on a mask and stand back" - research on the determinants of protective behavior against the disease COVID-19 in Croatia. *Sociology and space: journal for spatial and sociocultural development research,* 59 (2021), 219; 119-147 doi:10.5673/sip.59.0.5.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a comparative study of the Czech Republic and Croatia built on the logic of different outcomes regarding the perception of the European Union in the context of the migration crisis. Two Central European cases represent one case of a member state, the Czech Republic, which rejected deeper integration into the EU through the rejection of mandatory migrant quotas and whose political elites politicized the topic of migration and linked it with questions of European integration in a critical manner. In contrast, the other case, that of Croatia, shows the absence of these observations. Building on theories of European integration, above all the post-functionalist approach, the dissertation looks at not only political elites but also the attitudes of citizens, asking if they can be linked with positions of political actors. Attitudes of citizens are analyzed through cross-national survey data. Political elites are investigated through three sources: expert opinions on party positions, political party parliamentary manifestos, and online media texts. The main goal of the dissertation was to answer how the politicization of the migration crisis reflected on the perception of the European Union. The findings can be summarized by stating that the Czech Republic needs to be understood as a case where marked sensitivity about questions of sovereignty developed, paving the way to political consensus about differentiated integration. In Croatia, the political elites understood migration as an issue that has to be managed humanely and in cooperation with the EU. The dissertation also asked what the dynamics between the citizens and political elites were like regarding the perception of the European Union. Based on the evidence present in the dissertation, a top-down process can be argued as decisive in the Czech Republic, despite some evidence that also shows the relevance of the concerns and actions of citizens in shaping political elites' actions and positions. Finally, the dissertation sought to offer some explanations as to why Czech political elites politicized the topic during the height of the crisis, but the Croatian ones did not. The explanations offered are: that the countries were at different points on the path toward European integration, that the agency of national political elites as influenced by party opportunity structure mattered, and that legacies each country carried as well as identity concerns played a significant role.

KEYWORDS: migration crisis, European Union, Euroscepticism, Central and Eastern Europe

EXTENDED SUMMARY IN CROATIAN

Ova disertacija komparativna je studija Češke i Hrvatske koncipirana na temelju logike različitih ishoda u pogledu percepcije Europske unije u kontekstu migracijske krize. Ova dva srednjoeuropska slučaja predstavljaju slučaj jedne države članice – Češke – koja je odbacila dublju integraciju u EU putem odbacivanja obveznih migrantskih kvota i čije su političke elite politizirale temu migracija i povezivale je s pitanjima europskih integracija na kritičan način. Nasuprot tome, drugi slučaj, onaj Hrvatske, pokazuje izostanak takvih zapažanja. Takav odnos predstavljao je dobar istraživački materijal čija važnost leži u popunjavanju praznine u literaturi vezanoj uz povezanost stavova prema migracijama i Europskoj uniji, kao i onoj vezanoj uz pitanja europskih integracija u Hrvatskoj nakon pristupanja EU. Štoviše, analiziranje epizoda u kojima je jedinstvo unutar EU-a narušeno nosi veliku važnost u stvarnom životu za pitanja otpornost i budućnost EU-a.

Nadovezujući se na teorije europskih integracija, ponajprije postfunkcionalizam, disertacija promatra ne samo kako su se političke elite pozicionirale, već i kakvi su bili stavovi građana te mogu li se oni povezati s pozicijama političkih aktera. Istraživački dio se stoga dijeli na onaj koji se dotiču građana i onaj koji se dotiče političkih elita. Stavovi građana analiziraju se pomoću anketnih podataka iz dva međunacionalna istraživanja – European Social Survey (ESS) i International Social Survey Program (ISSP). ESS je glavni izvor koji omogućuje usporedbu stanja prije (2008.) i stanja nakon krize (2018.), dok podaci iz ISSP-a služe za popunjavanje praznine, nudeći podatke za 2013., kao i određene deskriptivne podatke. Političke elite istražuju se kroz tri izvora: stručna mišljenja o stranačkim stavovima, saborski manifesti političkih stranaka i tekstovi u internetskim medijima. Mišljenja stručnjaka analiziraju se rezultatima Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), dok se za manifeste političkih stranaka koristi baza podataka Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). Autor je uzorkovao online tekstove koji su korišteni za najvažniju, tematsku analizu pozicioniranja političkih elita.

Glavni cilj disertacije bio je odgovoriti kako se politizacija migracijske krize odrazila na percepciju Europske unije. Nalazi se mogu sažeti navodeći da Češku Republiku treba shvatiti kao slučaj u kojem se razvila izrazita osjetljivost o pitanjima suvereniteta, utirući put političkom konsenzusu o diferenciranom integracijskom pristupu pitanju migracijske krize. Češke političke elite bile su jedinstvene u odbijanju migrantskih kvota, no većina ih je isto tako

predlagala neke druge oblike suradnje unutar EU-a koji bi bili usmjereni na rješavanje krize. U Hrvatskoj su političke elite migracije shvatile kao problem koji treba rješavati humano i u suradnji s EU. Nije zabilježen niti jedan akter koji se usprotivio migrantskim kvotama, a iako je bilo kritika na račun EU-a, to je ipak poslalo poruku da država želi veću suradnju.

U disertaciji se također postavlja pitanje kakva je dinamika percepcije Europske unije između građana i političkih elita. Podaci istraživanja su pokazali da su razlike bile prisutne na prvoj točki mjerenja te su se čak povećavale u deset godina. Rezultati iz 2008. pokazuju da su Česi i prije krize više bojazni od Hrvata propuštali useljenike različitih etničkih skupina iz većinskih i siromašnijih zemalja izvan Europe. Isto tako, Česi su vjerojatnije vidjeli da imigranti potkopavaju kulturni život zemlje nego Hrvati, koji su nešto više naginjali ideji da oni obogaćuju kulturni život. Višestruka regresijska analiza dodatno je otkrila da je potpora daljnjem ujedinjenju EU bila znatno više vezana uz stavove prema imigraciji u Češkoj nego u Hrvatskoj još 2008., dok su 2018. te dvije teme postale osjetno više povezane. Međutim, na temelju dokaza prisutnih u disertaciji, proces odozgo prema dolje može se smatrati odlučujućim u Češkoj, unatoč nekim dokazima koji također pokazuju relevantnost zabrinutosti i djelovanja građana u oblikovanju djelovanja i pozicija političkih elita.

Naposljetku, disertacija je nastojala ponuditi neka objašnjenja zašto su češke političke elite politizirale temu u jeku krize, a hrvatske nisu. Ponuđena objašnjenja su da su se zemlje nalazile na različitim točkama na putu prema europskim integracijama, pri čemu je Hrvatska željela dublju integraciju te stoga morala paziti na suradnju s EU-om. Drugo objašnjenje je djelovanje nacionalnih političkih elita, pri čemu je u Češkoj došlo do većeg pritiska na kritike prema EU. Nadovezujući se na ovo je objašnjenje ovisnosti o putu i nasljeđa koje je svaka zemlja nosila – u Češkoj je postojalo i veće nasljeđe euroskepticizma i više strepnje prema imigraciji, dok se u Hrvatskoj nasljeđe rata može promatrati kao što je dovelo do veće simpatije prema migrantima. U konačnici, valja istaknuti i relevantnost pitanja identiteta, kako ih ističe i postfunkcionalistički pristup europskoj integraciji. Problemi koje je češka politička elita imala s prijedlogom EU-a o kvotama za migrante mogu se povezati s percepcijom ozbiljne kulturne prijetnje koju su vidjeli kao da bi mogla doći od muslimanskih migranata.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: migracija, Europska unija, Euroskepticizam, Srednja i Istočna Europa

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIGRATION CRISIS OF 2015-2016 FOR THE EU

1.1. The puzzle: why research the perception of the European Union in the context of the migration crisis?

"Migration has been and will continue to be one of the defining issues for Europe for the coming decades." - European Commission, 2016

If we take a trip back to 2015, one of the defining images of the year is the one of many people who were seeking a new home in Europe. Put in motion by wars in the Middle East, what was later called the migrant, migration, or refugee crisis[1] became one of the defining moments of the decade for the European continent. As with other crises that impacted it, the European Union (EU) found itself faced with the all-important question of how to (and whether even to) mount a common effort to address the problem(s). This question of increased political cooperation has become one of the prominent points of divergence in opinions toward European integration. The desires of certain member states for sovereign decision-making on various issues have even led to an unprecedented event – a country[2] leaving the EU. Crises, the migration one included, are particularly relevant for this topic because they tend to represent both an opportunity for a decrease or an increase in (political) integration. So what was the verdict in the case of the migration crisis - more or less Europe? At first sight, the path set forward seemed to lead toward the former. As the crisis emerged, the then European Commission (EC) President Jean-Claude Juncker announced the intensifying of the efforts to build stronger common European asylum

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[1] There is an important note to add about the terminology used. Taking into account the social-constructivist aspect inherent to all 'crises', as well as the knowledge that many of the terms used for describing migration fail to adequately capture the complex realities of it (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017), this dissertation opts to use the term 'migration crisis'. As will be shown in the findings, drawing distinct lines between '(real) refugees' and '(economic) migrants' formed a significant part of the political debate surrounding the crisis. This 'residualist' point of view which separates the two categories may have negative consequences for those understood to be 'migrants' (Carling, 2023). The dissertation instead takes on an 'inclusivist' definition of the term 'migrant', which can be summarized by stating that 'all refugees are migrants, but not every migrant is a refugee'. Building on this inclusivist definition, the usage of the term 'migration crisis' is meant to encompass all of the realities of people on the move and not erase aspects of it, which terms such as the 'refugee crisis' and 'migrant crisis' are closer to doing.

[2] The United Kingdom.

policies and the need for European unity when the crisis emerged. In September 2015, the EC came out with a specific policy proposal that had embedded in itself the idea that EU countries need to cooperate more and show more solidarity among each other. Most importantly, this entailed a system of a migrant relocation scheme with compulsory quotas for member states (bbc.com, 2015).[3] Such a proposal was not taken well by some member states, or its leaders to be more precise. Out of all the actors who opposed such an idea, the loudest critics came from new member states, more specifically from The Visegrád Group. Members of this sub-regional alliance – comprised of Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland – voiced opposition based on various points, ranging from economic to cultural concerns regarding immigration to their countries. For some, the concerns soon gave way to actual physical objections to migration - Hungary and Slovenia erected a wire fence on their borders. Almost nine years later, at the time of writing this dissertation, migration is still a highly pressing matter, and no solution that would satisfy all has (yet) been found. In a broader picture, the migration crisis of 2015 shook the single market project (with the Schengen system being its main component), the Schengen system of free movement and contributed to the UK's decision to leave the EU (Buonano, 2017). Faced with the unpopularity of the idea that all member states must take on at least some burden in taking in migrants, the Commission ended the relocation scheme at the end of 2017 (Statewatch, 2018) and had given up on the reforms by the end of 2018 (Gotev, 2018). It was not until mid-2023 that *political* agreement on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum was reached[4] and in late 2023 the Pact was sealed by the member states and the European Parliament (Liboreiro, 2023).

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[3] For brevity's sake and for the sake of remaining close to the language used in the analyzed materials, as well as due to taking into account that the term has become commonplace in public discussion, the dissertation mentions 'migrant quotas' in many places. As with the terms 'migrant' and 'migration crisis', the reality is more complex than what the term 'migration quotas' suggests. There is a difference between the terms 'relocation' and 'resettlement'. The EU emergency relocation scheme "is an expression of internal EU solidarity, through which people in need of international protection are transferred from Greece and Italy to another Member State of Relocation, where their asylum application will be processed", while resettlement "is a symbol of international solidarity to find a durable solution for refugees who are unable to return to their country of origin for fear of continued persecution and do not have the option to stay in their country of asylum" (International Organization for Migration, 2024). When the dissertation mentions 'migration quotas', the term encompasses both relocation and resettlement.

[4] This solution, however, is a sort of middle of the road one, not obliging all of the member states to accept migrants, but to contribute financially if they do not want to take in people.

Looking at scholarly production on this episode in European integration that can (and should) give a better understanding of what happened and the implications for future developments, it is important to say that certain questions have not yet been covered well. They are related to a set of questions that is related to how the migration crisis affected how the EU is perceived and related to in specific national contexts. Why would we consider such an avenue of research important? As will be shown in the following chapter, theories of European integration have never stressed the importance of what exactly is happening in member states more, or to be more precise, in the national political arena. Looking back at the example of the migration crisis, it is interesting to pose the question of why some member states responded the way they did, which can precisely be investigated deeper by looking at how political elites in respective societies positioned themselves, particularly in relation to public opinion. Political elites are crucial for understanding country-level decisions, although their interaction with public opinion is also of importance since authors tend to agree that the age of the 'permissive consensus' has given way to the age of a 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). This means that politicians "have to watch their backs" when deciding about European integration now more than before the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and that citizens can limit their positioning. Further scientific relevance of the topic lies in acknowledging that the understanding of "mass-elite linkages in the context of European integration remains incomplete" (Steenbergen et al., 2007: 15).

1.2.   The cases: why compare Croatia and the Czech Republic?

The defining feature of this dissertation is that it is a comparative study of two cases. More explanation for case selection and of comparative methodology will follow in the methodological chapter, but at this point, it is vital to state where the idea for comparison came from in the first place. Given that objection toward the idea of migrant quotas was most loudly heard in the bloc of post-socialist member states, the dissertation focuses on the broader region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This geopolitical term may carry different meanings in different sources, but nowadays it usually entails former European socialist countries (Berend, 2005). This means that the term covers both the former countries of the Warsaw Pact and Yugoslavia, spanning regions such as Northeast Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Europe. These regions also happen to "house" the newest EU member states and interest in studying them bears relevance for further enlargement of the EU. In that sense, the

idea of comparing a country where the merging of Euroscepticism and anti-immigrant narratives achieved low salience and where consequently it has not resulted in much political polarization with a country where the reverse happened seems fruitful. A case that encompasses the former's characteristics well is Croatia. The Czech Republic, on the other hand, is the opposite case.

Five key differences in outcomes have been detected and have served to set the foundations of the research design. All of the following points are present in the Czech Republic, but not Croatia:

1. High politicization of the topic of migration shown during the crisis and persisting up to the present.
2. Rejecting the EU's proposal of mandatory migrant quotas.
3. Negative attitudes toward migrations as part of the political mainstream.
4. Conjoining of anti-migration and anti-EU attitudes.
5. The creation of a specific political party[5] whose program is crucially defined by anti-migrant and anti-EU attitudes.

In simple terms, the study takes on one case where resistance toward European integration is demonstrable in the context of the migration crisis, and another case where it is not. More information about the political elites' and citizens' attitudes toward the EU and migration will be found in the third chapter.

1.3. The main research questions

There are three key research questions the dissertation strives to provide answers to. The first, main question is a broad and descriptive one:

- *How did the migration crisis reflect on the perception of the European Union in the two selected cases?*

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[5] *Svoboda a přímá demokracie* (SPD, Freedom and Direct Democracy).

Given that the dissertation does not speak about the state as a sole and homogenous unit, but rather looks at two different types of social actors, the second main question tries to go further in studying the problem by looking at the mass vs. elite divide:

- *What were the dynamics between the citizens and political elites like regarding the perception of the European Union?*

The third main question moves into the realm of explanation and seeks to answer:

- *Why did Czech political elites politicize the topic during the height of the crisis, but the Croatian ones did not?*

1.4.   Aims and the contribution of the dissertation

The aims of the dissertation follow straightforwardly from the research questions posed. Most broadly stated, the dissertation aims to analyze how the perception of the European Union is shaped in specific national contexts. Given the fact that the dissertation focuses on the period of crises, the broadly defined goal has been narrowed to the more specific goal of studying the perception of the Union in one of the crises – the migration crisis. This narrowing of the main goal opens the question of the change in perception the crises have led to. The crises, however, have no agency on their own, and while it is possible to track institutional changes, the dissertation focuses on the positioning and the action of social actors as divided into political elites and the citizens. Another important aim of the dissertation is thus also to explain the interaction between these two actors within the context of the studied problem.

The objectives can be divided into those of a descriptive and those of an explanatory nature. The descriptive goal entails the depiction of the various views on the EU the migration crisis has opened and/or made more pronounced. This is related to the mapping of changes in the perception of the EU as related to the crisis. The fact that only two cases are explored means that generalizations for other countries of Central and Eastern Europe are not possible. The dissertation aims to primarily explain national contexts, which does not mean that further testing and applicability of the findings in other settings are precluded.

The scientific contribution stems from the low coverage of the specific topic of the dissertation. The question of the link between migration attitudes and Euroscepticism remains understudied, as far as more in-depth, qualitative accounts go. Likewise, the study also fills the lacuna in the knowledge of the relationship between the two studied countries and the EU, which is particularly pronounced in the case of Croatia. The scientific contribution is further bolstered by juxtaposing the two levels of analysis – the citizens and the political elites. Including both levels in the analysis makes it possible to gauge certain theoretical presuppositions, such as the one on the constraining dissensus. Existing studies usually focus on only one of the levels, while those that take on both levels are scarce. The comparative aspect also represents added value to a case study approach, as it allows the testing of alternative hypotheses to explain different outcomes.

The social relevance of what is being explored lies in a better understanding of rifts between new member states and the EU, which is of high importance when considering both the resilience of the EU and the prospect of further EU enlargement.

1.5. Plan for the dissertation

In this subsection, I present the outline of the dissertation and state what each chapter strives to contribute to the whole. The dissertation content is organized in a fairly standard way, the main chapters corresponding to parts that cover the: introduction, theory, literature overview, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

This first, introductory chapter sought to succinctly define the topic of investigation, stress its real-life relevance, state the lacuna in existing research, and show how the dissertation can contribute to theory and existing knowledge.

The second, the theoretical-conceptual chapter is a collage of several areas of research which have inspired this research, all the way from conceptualizing the research to data interpretation. As an addendum subchapter, additional effort is put into trying to see what the dissertation can bring back to theory.

To not just inform the reader of what knowledge exists on the topic, but also to assert the gap in the literature that aims to be covered, the third chapter presents all the relevant existing

research pertaining generally to the perception of the EU in the migration crisis. This is explored on the level of the EU and the two countries analyzed.

The goal of the fourth, methodological chapter is to first and foremost explain the logic of the comparison being conducted, after which it strives to explain which data was used and how it was analyzed.

In addition to providing the background of the two cases through existing research, in the fifth chapter more information about the legacies the countries entered into the migration crisis are given, namely regarding experiences with migration and European integration. Relevant events related to how the migration crisis unfolded in each of the countries are also provided.

The results are then divided into three chapters, the sixth one corresponding to the investigation of citizens, and the seventh and the eighth one corresponding to researching political elites. The sixth one examines the attitudes of the citizens of both countries by utilizing data from several databases and conducting analyses that might answer the research questions. By taking into account expert surveys and analyses of party manifestos, the seventh one presents fundamental knowledge needed about the political elites in the two countries. The eighth chapter represents the biggest research chunk and deals with analyses of selected political actors through media texts.

Some discussion already takes place when presenting the findings, but trying to bring analyses of two different types of actors, as well as of two different countries, on a plane where inferences about their relation can be made, is a challenging task. That is why additional effort is produced in the eighth chapter, which is devoted to discussing the results.

The final, concluding chapter aims to concisely summarize the findings, go back to the research questions, and see how the dissertation answered them. Moreover, it is also an opportunity to see which previously unconceptualized questions it opened, and which might be fruitful for future research.

1.6. Previously published material

No paper that presents parts of this dissertation has been published so far. However, parts of the dissertation were presented at the 2022 The European Union Studies Association (EUSA) 17th Biennial Conference as part of the presentation titled 'Mass-elite Dynamics in the Crises of the European Union: Public Opinion on Immigration in Croatia and the Czech Republic before and after the Migration', which was co-authored with Prof Dr Dragan Bagić and uploaded as a conference paper (Fila & Bagić, 2022) on the organizer's website.

2. GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH – THE DISSERTATION PLACED IN THE CONTEXT OF BROADER ISSUES IN THE LITERATURE

2.1. Introductory note

This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings that have guided the dissertation research from the first steps of defining the research problem and questions, all the way to data interpretation. As the reader will see, the chapter i.e. the theoretical background is a collage of several fields of research. They make up the theoretical elements that inform the research and likewise represent fields of research the dissertation can (modestly) contribute back to. First and foremost, this dissertation relates to discussing theories of European integration. When delving deeper into matters of attitudes toward the European Union, the research also needed to be informed by existing typologies that seek to summarize Europeanist and Eurosceptic orientations and by research that explains what sources of Euroscepticism might exist. The dissertation is also informed by research on cleavages, choosing to crucially focus on the transnational cleavage, all the while keeping in mind the center-periphery cleavage as well. Very much linked to these theories (one of them, the post-functionalist one, in particular) is the debate on how the masses and elites divide shapes European integration and what it means for the topic at hand. This is related to the concept of populism, and even more so ethnopopulism, whose relevance lies in the often-found empirical ties with Euroscepticism and negative attitudes toward immigration. All of the aforementioned bodies of theory are also intimately tied to the process of politicization. And given that the dissertation deals with the perception of the EU through the lens of the migration crisis, it was also necessary to present key insights from exploring attitudes toward immigration.

2.2. Theories of European integration

European integration, a term often used in this dissertation, can be defined differently based on one's approach to integration theory. These differences notwithstanding, European integration can broadly be defined as a *process* of "intensifying political cooperation in Europe and the development of common political institutions" (Wiener & Diez, 2009: 4).

It is important to stress that the backdrop against which the research is constructed are the crises of the EU – episodes in the Union's past or present that bear great relevance to the resilience of

the European project. The 2010s in particular are considered to have been a time of a unique multidimensional crisis (Dinan, Nugent & Paterson, 2017) or, rather, a state of polycrisis (Matthijs, 2020). Such characterizations not only speak about the social relevance of the topic but also put forward the challenge for theory to be able to explain phenomena observed in crises and the impact of the crises on the entire direction of integration. The question of crises is indeed necessarily linked to the question of the (dis)integration of the Union, and thereby to the theories that seek to explain it. For the purpose of assessing their usefulness for this dissertation, three of the 'grand theories' of European integration are presented:

Table 1. *An overview of the main points of three big theories of European integration*

Theory	Main tenet	Actor focused on
Neo-functionalism	Groups or individuals will strive toward integration if supranational institutions can help them better achieve their interests than national ones	Groups or individuals
Intergovernmentalism	Nation-states are in pursuit of mutually beneficial deals	Nation-states
Post-functionalism	European integration is a result of conscious and often controversial decisions of national elites, limited by the pressure of their populations	National elites and the public

Source: Hooghe & Marks, 2019

As can be seen in the overview, the main differences lie in what each theory thinks is decisive for movements in European integration, which is also linked with the level of observation for actors it considers to be the most important. Evidently, a research design chiefly inspired by either of these theories would look quite different. Looking at *neo-functionalism* first, at its core this line of theorizing uses a rather rational choice-driven approach of observing whether or not supranational institutions can help certain groups or individuals better achieve their interests than national-level institutions. What differs significantly from intergovernmentalism is that neo-functionalism does not simply believe that nation-states can be viewed as single units of analysis, given that there are plenty of different societal actors with different interests that make up governments. One important concept it uses is the so-called 'spillover effect', which posits that integration in one sector or area creates a functional pressure to integrate into other related areas. Path dependency is also a crucial concept – the choices already made in European

integration may narrow the likely options in new events. *Intergovernmentalism*, unlike neo-functionalism, focuses on states as main actors or more accurately on national governments. Within this framework, states are chiefly driven by economic interests and are in pursuit of mutually beneficial deals. The concept of 'bargaining' therefore takes center-stage in this approach, and presupposes that in the game of chasing interests, there are those who have more and those who have less bargaining power, with the former having the power to impose their preferred cost-benefit ratio on the latter (Leuffen et al., 2021: 69). It is worth mentioning that the three big theories have also been valued based on how optimistic or pessimistic they are. Intergovernmentalism, to a smaller degree, but even more neo-functionalism are ultimately optimistic lines of thought that expect some obstacles on the way but consider the path to be forward-going overall. The *post-functionalist* development lies in moving away from seeing the bigger picture of the political arena as a primarily rationally driven field, meaning the approach ultimately has more pessimistic undertones. This line of thinking is highly tied to the concept of politicization, paying attention to the "arena in which an issue is debated because it affects the nature of the conflict" (Hooghe & Marks, 2019: 1117). It highlights elections, referendums, or party primaries, for instance, as specific events when politicization can be observed. The reason can be found in the assumption that "regional integration has become firmly embedded in the democratic mass politics of states" (Leuffen et al., 2021: 144). A key building block of post-functionalism is the concept of multi-level governance, which, on one hand simply denotes the reality that governance spans from the local to the global level. On the other hand, the significance of multi-level governance for theory is that individuals' interest in self-determination, better served in smaller entities, can clash with the functional logic of larger political units (Leuffen et al., 2021). European integration is understood as having a systemic effect that can "polarize societies on a cultural divide that arguably takes the form of a durable socio-political cleavage" (Hooghe & Marks, 2019: 1117). A key and novel concept of this approach is the asserting of the existence and relevance of a so-called transnational cleavage, which speaks about how questions of sovereignty polarize societies.[6] The novelty that post-functionalism furthermore adds is insights from political psychology fortified by the focus on public opinion, which may not only be shaped by economic preferences, thereby making the outcome of decision-making not necessarily characterized by functionality. As an important

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[6] More on this cleavage can be found in the subchapter 2.4.

driver of opposition to European integration, cultural concerns are now recognized. This is because "post-functionalism agrees with the sociological-institutionalist assumption that jurisdictions build on communities of common cultures and identities" (Leuffen et al., 2021: 144). In that sense, individuals, citizens of member-states in this case, are recognized as actors with loyalties to the 'national', which may not work in favor of the functional logic that sees the supra-national authority as an efficient, thereby from a utilitarian point of view favorable, mode of organization. National identities, in their exclusive form, can be politicized and steer citizens away from positive views of European integration (Kuhn, 2019). Therefore, there are significant constraints to integration to be posited for both intergovernmental bargaining and spillover effects suggested by neo-functionalism.

Another highly relevant concept that needs to be mentioned when talking about obstacles to integration and that is often used in post-functionalist analyses is *differentiated integration*, or as it is sometimes called, flexible integration. It denotes desire to integrate more in certain areas, while seeking less integration or *status quo* in others (Holzinger & Schimmelfenig, 2012). Differentiated integration is also a reality for the Union - some rules and policies such as the Schengen regime and a common European monetary policy apply only to some member states. In discussions about the future of Europe, the concept is taken into account when presenting ideas of a 'two- or multiple-speed Europe'.

Existing literature can yet again be useful to assess the theories; Table 2 demonstrates how each of the three theories can be useful in explaining what happened in the migration crisis:

Table 2. *Applicability of grand theories of European integration in the case of the migration crisis*

Theory	Advantages
Neofunctionalism	• Points to hidden, yet nonetheless present integrative activity • Explains why the Schengen has not failed but was upgraded • Path-dependent constraints on disintegration, the sunk cost of ditching the "key pillar of European integration – free movement"
Intergovernmentalism	• Explains the disagreement of some states with the quota suggestion • Explains the disagreement by stating the costs of rejecting the quotas were not high (weak pressure for cooperation)

Post-functionalism	• Explains the identity dimension of opposing quotas • Highlights the influence of new challengers in politics

Source: Hooghe & Marks, 2019

An important takeaway is that although we can use the term 'grand', no theory of European integration is truly grand enough to explain all aspects of the crisis. In that sense, the migration crisis is both intergovernmental bargaining, the spillover of path dependency, and an ideological conflict. The dissertation is, however, most crucially informed by the post-functionalist approach to European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Post-functionalism justifies the thematic focus of the dissertation because it stresses the importance of dissensus in the meaning of the EU in particular member states, not just on the level of the elites, but also in public opinion. Its focus on identity is very well suited to explain why the EU's proposal for migrant quotas was rejected by some (Hooghe & Marks, 2019), in this case possibly by the political elite in the Czech Republic.

Although post-functionalism does not entirely overlap with them, this also invites to the table social constructivist approaches. These approaches do not make enough substantial claims about European integration to be considered a theory on their own, but their added, complementary value is that they stress that "political culture, discourse, and the 'social construction' of interests and identities matter" (Risse, 2009: 146). Social actors are therefore not seen as just "calculating machines who always know what they want and are never uncertain about the future and even their won stakes and interests" (Risse, 2009: 147). The relevance of this approach lies in questioning how social norms and actors' social identity shape their positions. Related to social constructivist questions, something that is very pertinent is the question of how Europe is seen in all these crises. Europe itself can be seen through two distinct substantive concepts standing on opposite ends of one another – one of a modern Europe, and the other of a nationalist Europe (Risse, 2010). Modern Europe embraces modern, democratic, and humanistic values, and is secular, whereas nationalist Europe is that of "white Christian people that sees itself as a distinct civilization" that is closed off to Islam, Asian, or African cultures (Risse, 2010: 6). The relevance for the migration crisis is obvious since the contact with non-White non-Europeans could have prompted reflections from political actors on what Europe and being European mean.

Finally, it is worthwhile to reflect on the potential contribution of new theories of disintegration. These theories have undoubtedly been inspired by events such as the Brexit vote – an unprecedented event of one member state deciding to leave the Union. However, the term 'theories' should be taken loosely, as they are not so much theories as they are refocusing and re-specifying old approaches. Douglas Webber (2014; 2019) and Hans Vollard (2018) both claim: that there are no theories of disintegration, the focus has so far been only on integration. In that sense, they represent criticism of optimistic theories such as neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, yet also serve as a warning about the pessimism of post-functionalism (Webber, 2019). Their main insight is that processes of integration and disintegration happen simultaneously, which is the reality of trying to solve heterogeneity in the Union. One useful concept from this literature is the one of 'differentiated (dis)integration' (Schimmelfenig & Winzen, 2019) – entailing a phenomenon whereby more integration is desired in one area, but in another, there is so much less integration desired that we may talk about disintegration.

To sum up, concepts usable from various theories that are relevant to research are: differentiated integration, politicization, path-dependency, spillover effect, and conceptualization of Europe through a modern or nationalist lens. These concepts have been integrated into the research of citizens' and political elites' positions concerning the European Union.

2.3.   Europeanism and Euroscepticism

The question of positioning toward European integration is yet another field that has been theorized about. There are two typologies of relation toward the EU that are most often cited. The meaning of typologies in relation to the EU lies in organizing empirical data in clear sections so that different cases may be compared more easily. The first one, and the most used one, was made by Taggart & Szczerbiak (2001) and simply differentiates between the soft and hard Eurosceptics. Whereas hard Euroscepticism means principled opposition to European integration (relating to not joining or leaving the EU), soft Euroscepticism entails the general embracing of European integration, but with contingent or conditional opposition. Authors do however note that even principled opposing need not entail not joining or exiting the EU, but rather an opposition toward the EU in its current form. The authors offer no differentiation among pro-EU actors, which can be a point of criticism. Aside from that, the soft Eurosceptic category seems overly inclusive, as was even noted in empirical research in the CEE region

(Neumayer, 2007). The second most-cited typology is by Kopecký and Mudde (2002), and is a direct criticism of the first one, but is actually used more rarely today. These authors propose two axes, which when juxtaposed produce four types. They differentiate between support for European integration and support for the EU (as only one possible mode of integration). The four types proposed are Euro-enthusiasts, Euro-pragmatists, Euro-sceptics, and Euro-rejectionists. Whereas it is clear that Euro-enthusiasts support both the integration and the EU, while the Euro-rejectionists reject both, it should be clarified a Euro-pragmatist is a person who may support the EU but is skeptical toward European integration, and that a Euro-sceptic is a person who does not necessarily take issue with integration, but does with the EU. In short, this typology was criticized as well. According to Blanuša (2006), it is hard to differentiate between support for the EU and general support for European integration; those in favor of one are often in favor of the other. Furthermore, the same authors question the Euro-pragmatist category, asking if we can truly see the difference between those who support the EU on pragmatic grounds and those who incorporate pragmatic grounds in their views. The usefulness of considering these typologies lies in asking if understanding where opposition to either European integration or the EU came from. Summaries of the results of the dissertation try to see the applicability of both typologies and try to reflect on their added value.

Another highly relevant body of work that is useful to cite within this dissertation relates to the sources of Euroscepticism. Much like the case of the typologies of Euroscepticism, there are various typologies that seek to collate the factors that drive Euroscepticism. One of the broader divisions is that between hard and soft factors. A significant amount of research focused on the so-called hard factors (van Klingeren *et al.*, 2013: 689), but political, cultural, and even affectively driven aspects have also been increasingly explored with time. Hard factors encompass characteristics such as work status, income, and economic evaluations (van Klingeren *et al.*, 2013: 690). It makes sense that in the decades preceding the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, these factors predominantly explained Euroscepticism since the EU itself was predominantly focused on the economic benefits of member states. The expectation, however, is that nowadays soft factors play a greater role than hard ones (van Klingeren *et al.*, 2013). Among these soft factors, it has been repeatedly proven that anti-immigrant attitudes are linked with negative attitudes toward the EU, while government approval should also be taken into consideration (Boomgaarden *et al.*, 2011). Sometimes Euroscepticism is understood as an expression of "a more general malaise", meaning erosion of trust, a decline in voter turnout and political participation, and economic and cultural insecurity might act favorably toward the

growth of Euroscepticism (Hooghe & Marks, 2007). Advocates of the so-called 'benchmarking approaches' will therefore plead to always bear in mind how satisfaction with national politics translates into opinions on the EU. Additionally, some authors (e.g., Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007) distinguish between political and instrumental Euroscepticism stressing that political Euroscepticism is more widespread and entails objections regarding perceiving infringement on national sovereignty. It is within this body of work that authors have added theories of nationalism to the mix of explanations, with conceptualizations of national identity taking center stage. Exclusive national identities motivate Euroscepticism (McLaren, 2002; Weßels, 2007). If we wish to be more nuanced than the division between hard and soft factors or between political and instrumental factors, the division into three categories of explanations is also often cited: utilitarian, identity, and cue-taking factors (Hobolt & de Vries, 2016). Utilitarian ones line up well with the already explained hard factors and entail individual cost-benefit analysis, with those who are usually already well-off seen as greater beneficiaries of the integration processes than those who are not. Identity matters and the question of national identity have also already been touched on, but perceptions of out-groups such as minorities and immigrants are also significant to mention as correlates of European attitudes; more positive attitudes toward other groups, particularly seen as other cultures, are linked with a more positive assessment of the EU (Hobolt & de Vries, 2016: 421).Linked to stressing that political developments in each member state truly matter for the direction of European integration, is the notion that political elites and media cue citizens and frame their understandings of the EU. The basis for this is the belief that European issues are mostly remote from the daily lives of citizens and that this leaves space for politicians and the media to fill their "information shortfalls" (Hobolt & de Vries, 2016: 421-422). It is when recognizing this factor that populist actors can be singled out as highly influential actors (Krouwel & Abts, 2007). Finally, it is worthwhile to add that Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe has often been given attention in research, with findings currently pointing to utilitarian sources of Euroscepticism still holding more sway over identity and political cues than they do in Western Europe (Guerra & Serrichio, 2014; Guerra, 2018).

2.4.   The transnational cleavage

This doctoral research is also informed by the body of work exploring cleavages - most acutely by the concept of transnational cleavage (Hooghe & Marks, 2018) and, to a lesser extent, the

center-periphery cleavage (Pisciotta, 2016). Cleavage theory is an extremely important tool in political science, where it is used to explain voter behavior. The main idea behind the theory is that there are cleavages in society - underlying social conflicts that decisively shape party politics. Voters are understood as "social beings who live in a multidimensional space of socially constructed locations" and who are "grounded in collective contingencies that shape their lives" (Hooghe & Marks, 2022: 1). Contemporary societies are indeed confronted with several grievances (such as migration, globalization, and welfare state reconfigurations) that "transform social cohesion into a contentious domain" (van Der Brug et al., 2015: XIV). One of the aims of the dissertation is to try to answer if the two selected cleavages have been made more pronounced in the context of the crisis and within these specific national contexts.

When talking about the transnational cleavage, at its core is the political reaction against European integration and immigration, and the rise of the desire to defend the nation-state against transnational shocks (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). Supranational activity by the EU can precisely be interpreted by political actors as one of those shocks because it "introduces rule by those who are regarded as foreigners, diminishes the authority exercised by the national states over their own populations, produces economic insecurity among those who lack mobile assets, and facilitates immigration" (Hooghe & Marks, 2018:110). According to the authors who ushered in this term, the relevance for party competition is that radical right parties mobilize this cleavage, as well as 'challenger parties' more broadly, which restructure party competition by bringing new issues to the table (De Vries & Hobolt, 2020). But aside from linkage with one or another conceptualization of certain political parties, crucial for understanding the rise of the transnational cleavage is the so-called GAL/TAN divide. Moving beyond terms such as left-wing and right-wing ideology, the divide pits political options on opposite ends, each united by three constitutive elements. The abbreviation GAL is short for green, alternative, and libertarian, whereas TAN is short for traditionalist, authoritarian, and nationalist. The divide is highly related to the topic at hand, seeing as how "GAL-TAN positioning captures most closely the content of the transnational cleavage which pits those who embrace open societies, multiculturalism and international governance against those who conceive these as a threat to their way of life and their national community" (Dassonneville et al., 2023: 46). This new conceptualization is said to be preferable to the simpler left-right divide due to "individual-level studies revealing that citizens' preferences on the left–right dimension are increasingly disconnected from their preferences on socio-cultural issues" (De Vries, 2018, as cited in Dassonneville et al., 2023: 46). But for a cleavage to be defined as a 'cleavage', it should show

"structural (i.e., socio-demographic & contextual), normative (i.e. attitudinal), and institutional (i.e. political mobilization) dimensions" (Bartolini and Mair 1990, as cited in Teperoglou et al., 2022: 2). According to Dassonneville and co-authors (2023: 47), "these conditions appear to be present in the case of the transnational cleavage". Newer research such as the one by De Vries (2018) affirms the 'cosmopolitanism-parochialism' divide, while some other research such as that by Jackson and Jolly (2021) shows that positions on issues of transnationalism structure voting behavior in various European countries. Moreover, structural divisions seem to be present in support of GAL and TAN parties, and consequently in the phenomenon of the transnational cleavage (Marks et al, 2022). Dassonneville and co-authors (2023) likewise claim that groups divided on the GAL/TAN poles develop group consciousness that matches this division (Bornschier et al., 2021) and that the cleavage is gaining an organizational basis (Sass & Kuhnle, 2022), also adding the finding that the weight of "GAL-TAN positions for citizens' views of party competition strengthens over time" (p. 61). The broader base for mobilizing are the social lines it cuts across: the winners of transnational integration such as the highly educated, socio-cultural specialists should have a greater preference for European integration than those who are less educated and are unskilled workers (Kriesi et al., 2012: 73). Ultimately the main question that arises is to what extent did the migration crisis serve as a catalyst for the widening of this cleavage?

The second cleavage deemed relevant is the center vs. periphery cleavage, which can be applicable to multiple levels of space. Even though the concept first and foremost points to divides within nation-states, in this context, we are talking about the divides between Eastern and Western EU states noticeable even in the accession process during the Eastern enlargement (Pisciotta, 2016). This relation was distinctly asymmetric at its core – the center was asking the periphery to fulfill certain conditions, lest their joining the EU come in peril. The meaning of the concept for the dissertation is how the fact that core states were mostly in favor of migrant quotas and the fact that some peripheral states were against them played out in the general perception of the core vs. periphery issues. Cabada (2020) for instance, claims that a change of the self-perception from the periphery to semi-periphery could be observed, based on the narratives of some Central European post-socialist political actors.

2.5. The mass/elite divide

It has already been mentioned that post-functionalism considers the importance of public opinion and that it opens up space for researching the relationship between the positions and actions of political elites and the attitudes of the public. Despite the relevance of public opinion which has grown over the decades, it should be pointed out that the EU is still primarily a project of the elites (Best, Lengyel, Verzichelli, 2012), which justifies the focus on them in this dissertation. Still, as post-functionalism has pointed out, the citizens also play a role in shaping the direction of integration. The question that opens up then is: who is exactly cueing whom?

Regarding basic definitions, by using the term elites in this dissertation, I mean "networks of individuals and small, relatively cohesive, and stable groups with major decisional power" (Pakulski, 2018: 12). Depending on how elites are approached, there are two traps for the research part of the dissertation. The first is which type of elite to even analyze. Even though it would be relevant to explore both intellectual and media elites, the dissertation focuses on political elites precisely due to the insight that they are the most important ones in shaping European integration. It is also somewhat more straightforward to explore the mass-elite relation as well, than in the case of other types of elites. The second trap concerns the literal criterion of "great decision-making power". It is known that political challengers, who need not be considered the elite, can influence shaping discussions and positions of other actors. Even marginal political actors can also affect national politics and how mainstream parties position themselves (e.g. Persson, Mårtensson & Karlsson, 2019).

When comparing preferences toward European integration between citizens and the political elite, according to (perhaps older) research by Hooghe (2003), elites are generally more supportive of European integration, but there are similarities in the question of some politics (mostly related to politics of high expenditure, such as those of a redistributive nature). More recent research by Müller, Jenny, and Ecker (2012) states that, overall, the elites support European integration more than citizens, but they point out the differences in the divide between states and concrete politics. More or less, this lines up with Hooghe (2003) – citizens were once more enthusiastic over the idea of a social Europe. It is quite important to point out an even recent contribution by Sus and Hadeed (2021) because they contradict previous findings and even post-functionalism's basic ideas. These authors concluded that constraining dissensus no longer exists and that we are in a period of a 'post-constraining dissensus'. This means that the opposition toward the EU originates first and foremost with elites and not the masses. Evidence

does indeed point to the fact that newer parties are less inclined toward European integration than traditional ones (Bakker et al., 2020). But even though there is a basis for what the authors claim, as well as the fact that new parties that have gained prominence in the 2010s are less inclined toward European integration, I would not fully agree with the authors. We may look at some recent research (Petrović, Mrakovčić & Fila, 2021) that pointed out that at least in CEE, citizens are still on average less inclined toward European integration than the biggest parties.[7]

2.6. Populism

Another conceptual field the dissertation touches on is the field of already mentioned populism. The transnational cleavage and its topics of Euroscepticism and immigration attitudes are indubitably linked with populism. Why? If no other reason than that the contestation of the EU that happened in the context of the migration crisis prominently occurred from actors of populist inclinations. Important to note is that while populism is an often-used concept in political debate, its meaning in academic texts differs from the everyday one. Although there is no agreed-upon definition used by all researchers, most researchers agree that behind it lies the idea that 'virtuous people' are exploited, neglected, or betrayed by a 'corrupt elite' (Rooduijn & Van Kessel, 2019: 3). This dissertation builds its conception of populism on the works of Mudde (2004) and Stanley (2008). Populism is seen as a thin-centered ideology, which is made up of four elements: 1) the existence of two homogeneous units of analysis: "the people" and "the elite"; 2) the antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite; 3) the idea of popular sovereignty; 4) the positive valorization of "the people" and denigration of "the elite"' (Stanley 2008: 102). The basis for populist criticism of the EU comes from both the idea that the EU is a project of elites, and that decision-making is obfuscated and far removed from the 'will of the people'.

Even though Euroscepticism and populism do not need to go hand in hand, in practice the two "can often be found in a symbiotic relationship" (Rooduijn & Van Kessel, 2019: 6). Important to note, however, is that when researching *public opinion*, "thus far we know virtually nothing about the relationship between populist and Eurosceptic attitudes" (Rooduijn & Van Kessel,

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[7] Of course, there are exceptions such as the governments of Hungary and Poland in the analyzed period.

2019: 21). Still, given the "symbiotic relationship" found on the level of political elites, the expectation set forward in this study is that the two will be linked on the level of citizens as well.

Within the context of this dissertation is it also highly relevant to expand the debate on populism and refer to the concept of ethnopopulism. The thin-centeredness of populism carries an important implication - in practice, it means that the key ideas of populism are often 'thickened' with more established ideological appeals. In that regard, literature speaks of both left-wing and right-wing populisms, but it is the latter that we should find relevant for the topic at hand. This is because ethnopopulism can be described as a political orientation that intertwines "the defense of the 'the people' with the defense of an ethnicity, culture, nation, religion and/or race" (Vachudová, 2020: 318), meaning that anti-elitist appeals can be merged with anti-immigration stances in a potent concoction that produces a so-called multiplier effect (Bieber, 2018). Jenne (2018) argues that the subjective impression of the rise of nationalism in the world (that cannot be verified by evidence) stems not from the spread of nationalism, but the impact of populist nationalism, i.e. ethnopopulist ideas and actors. In terms of pure ideas, populism and nationalism's touching and diverging point is the call to reframe sovereignty; nationalism's in a more exclusive manner, but populism's in a more inclusive manner by demanding popular sovereignty. Yet when European integration becomes contested, populists can join hands with nationalism by seeking to lower the sovereignty's imagined borders (Jenne, 2018: 547), which means they would attempt to exclude non-domestic elites from power, in addition to the domestic ones. Those non-domestic elites can be presented as an even greater threat to sovereignty if they are presented as a threat to the *ethnos*, whereby 'enemies' from *above* (e.g. 'the elites of the EU') are seen as conspiring with 'enemies' from *beyond* (immigrants, particularly those of a different ethnicity) (Jenne, 2018). When discussing why ethnopopulism has taken a foothold in CEE in particular and has even partnered with the phenomenon of democratic backsliding, Vachudová (2020: 334) argues that "the very factors that seemed to augur well for liberal democracy during and after the fall of communism may have contained the seeds of its degradation at the hands of ethnopopulist leaders". By this, she paints the experience of communism as a positive correlate of greater prejudice toward immigrants. Furthermore, she also speculates that the factor of ethnical homogeneity of countries that showed greatest apprehension toward Muslim immigrants might have something to do with the lack of experience with minorities constituting an important and functional part of the political

arena. In addition, she highlights an important factor of the EU's loss of power, once exerted on these countries through the accession process.

Related to the social-constructivist topic of two concepts of Europe that was presented in the first subchapter here, Rogers Brubaker (2017) speaks of two types of national populist responses to the migration crisis where religion can be seen as a civilizational or substantial (identitarian) characteristic of European societies. The civilizationalist populists would object to Muslim immigration on the grounds that they may pose a threat to liberal values attained in European societies, such as gender equality, gay rights, or freedom of speech. Brubaker (2017: 1210) describes their stance as "secularist and ostensibly liberal yet Christianist" and its identitarian Christianity "devoid of religious content". The author locates the prevalence of this sort of populism in Northern and Western Europe, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe he utilizes the example of Viktor Orbán of the opposite kind of national populism – one that has prominent references to Christianity sans internalized liberalism. Using Orbán as a single example of CEE can be criticized, however, since other authors have pointed out that civilizationalist responses to the migration crisis can also be found in that region (Tabosa, 2020; Tamchynová, 2017). The relevance these insights bear on this dissertation and analyses lie in seeing how public debates in both countries included the element of religion when making judgments about migrants, and even more broadly if such a thing as a European civilization defined by Christianity has been stressed.

2.7. Politicization

One of the previous subchapters ascertained that the transnational cleavage lies at the heart of the dissertation's research problem and that the main question that arises is why the cleavage has proliferated in some countries, but not in others. In order to answer this question, the politicization of the issues of migration and European integration also necessarily has to be investigated. The two issues are treated as "twin issues" (Hutter & Kriesi, 2022). The dissertation proceeds under the assumption that two dimensions define the degree of politicization: salience and polarization (van Der Brug et al., 2015). Both are necessary for politicization; if actors such as political parties have opposite views on a certain matter, the issue is not politicized unless it is not on the political agenda. Politicization is, aside from its wider social relevance, a highly important term for studying party competition, which is greatly

defined by how parties present to the electorate different opinions on issues based on their ideological positions. Within this process, it is once more important to point out the role that new, challenger parties may have by placing new issues on the agenda and thereby forcing other parties to position themselves. Based on the level of polarization and salience, we may detect 4 types of 'states' a topic may find itself in:
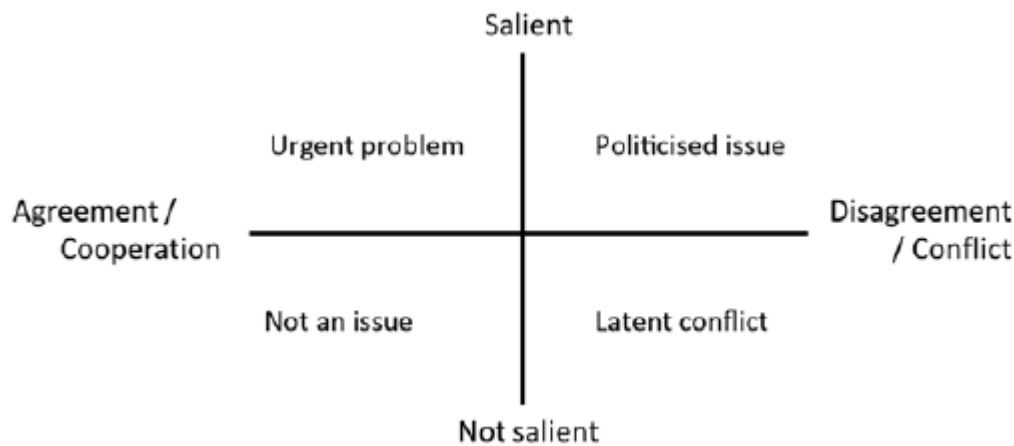
Figure 1. Typology of politics toward a topic (source: van Der Brug, 2015:7).

This typology is useful for explaining how we can categorize the state of the researched topic. As Figure 1 shows, issues may be: an urgent problem, a politicized issue, a latent conflict, or not an issue. Without attention and disagreement, a topic is simply not an issue, yet the category of a latent conflict where some disagreement exists, but the topic is not salient is much more interesting due to its potential to become a politicized issue. In the case of this dissertation, we did expect the explored issue to be politicized in the Czech Republic during and after the migration crisis, but the question is in which state the topic was prior to it. In the case of Croatia, answering the exact same question was the goal of the research, along with the question if there had been latent conflict during the crisis, pointing to a potential rise of the topic's relevance in the future.

An analytical framework for explaining politicization can be found in the four types of pathways to politicization, which emerge when juxtaposing two dimensions: bottom-up/top-down and structure/agency (van Der Brug et al., 2015). This leads to four scenarios: societal developments (structural, bottom-up), actions of specific groups in society (agency, bottom-

up), initiatives by authorities (agency, initially top-down), and political opportunity structure (structural, top-down). Applied to this research, the 'societal development' pathway presupposes structural elements, a triggering event such as the migration crisis which could have ignited structural differences in society such as the divide between the winners and the losers of globalization, resulting in participation in interest groups or social movements and voting for new parties. Regarding the actions of specific groups in society, this scenario presupposes citizens or political challengers mobilized around the issue, meaning we would witness anti-immigrant (or even pro-immigrant as a counter-reaction) social movements or non-mainstream challenger anti-immigrant parties. The scenario that stresses the 'initiatives of authorities' would mean observing the initiation of new policies and debating them by the hand of politicians. The explanation that concerns the 'political opportunity structure' entails actions of organized political actors, influenced by party structure (as relevant for internal cohesion and building coalitions with other parties) and institutional characteristics (such as the electoral system).

2.8.   Attitudes toward immigration

An important backbone of a large number of research on attitudes toward immigration is the social identity theory, therefore it needs to be briefly described. The theory, as formulated by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s and 1980s states that in-group/out-group dynamics are crucial to understanding relations in society. The pillar of the social identity theory is the idea that people place themselves in categories or groups, i.e., they automatically and inevitably engage in self-categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Aside from social categorization, but intimately tied to it, people likewise engage in social identification by having affinity toward one group over another. Subsequently, "people engage in social comparisons, observing differences between their in-group and out-groups", whereby they tend to "think more positively of the in-group and more negatively of the out-group" (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018: 3). These features of the theory have great relevance for researching attitudes of citizens (who see themselves as the in-group) toward immigrants (often perceived as the out-group).

Aside from those general theoretical building blocks, research on attitudes toward immigration tends to recognize three key concepts for explaining attitudes toward immigration: perceptions

of economic threat, perceptions of symbolic threat, and intergroup contact (European Social Survey, 2015: 4). Perceptions of an economic threat relate to "the skill-level of immigrants relative to that of native-born individuals", and questions such as the "tax-benefit system in modern welfare states" (Müller & Hong Tiing Tai, 2020: 1664) Whether it is concerns about the loss of jobs opportunities for the people already living in the country or if concerns appear about immigrants using the social system to a disproportionate level, the core of the idea is that immigration will have some negative effects on the economy. A term that has been used in research to describe exclusivist attitudes toward the country's social system is 'welfare chauvinism'. Although generally denoting the belief that the benefits of the welfare system should be awarded to the 'more deserving people', often the ethnic majority, the concept is said to manifest itself somewhat differently in CEE. Although "operating largely on the same basis of ethnocultural distinctions between the in-group and out-group", the main difference with Northern and Western European conceptions "lies in the fact that often times the out-group is formed of ethnic minorities who, due to their membership in a particular community (e.g. the Roma), were traditionally deemed to have a lesser status in relation to the ethnic majority in the respective national context", with immigrants being a recent addition since the 2015 migration crisis (Cinpoeş & Norocel, 2020: 52). In addition to the idea of an economic threat, latest research guided by the integrated threat theory uses concepts of a symbolic, realistic, and especially the idea of an 'integrated threat'. The idea of a symbolic threat refers to "concerns about the integrity or validity of the ingroup's meaning system" (Stephan et al., 2015: 256), and is "often associated with the in-group's religion, beliefs, values or ideologies" (as cited in Bell, Valenta & Strabac, 2021: 3). The existence of groups with different value systems can be interpreted as a challenge to an ingroup's morals, beliefs and norms (Stephan et al., 2015), particularly if the outside group is seen as attempting to impose its values on the ingroup, for instance, when portrayals of Muslims on the move talk about an "organized invasion". On the other hand, the idea of a realistic threat relates to "concerns about physical harm or a loss of power and/or resources" (Stephan et al., 2015: 257). These concerns can take various forms, ranging from military threat, crime, and all the way to worries about the loss of economic power. The theory of integrated threat, in its latest variant, differentiates only between realistic and symbolic threats because it strives to drive the point across that the constructed or imaginary element of seeing immigrants as a threat is ultimately tied to the realistic aspect of the threat, and that these two together form the 'integrated threat' view of immigrants. "In a nutshell, the theory states that in-groups' perceived realistic and symbolic threats are powerful source of

prejudice toward out-groups" (Stephan and Stephan 1996, as cited in Pickel & Öztürk, 2018: 171).

When looking at differences between new and old EU member states, the puzzle for theory to explain has been greater levels of Islamophobia in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe, despite the smaller or no presence of Muslim communities (Pickel & Öztürk, 2018). When trying to find general factors that should shape attitudes toward immigrants, the intergroup contact theory claims that more contact with migrants should result in more positive attitudes as well, with larger numbers of migrants increasing the chance of individuals' contact with these groups (as cited in Bell, Valenta & Strabac, 2021: 3). The effect should come as a result of decreased stereotyping and prejudice (van Klingeren et al., 2013; Stockemer et al., 2019). Applied to this research, it might mean one country already had experience with migrants or that contact with migrants during the migration crisis of 2015-2016 resulted in a more positive view of them. However, existing research also warns to pay attention to the nature of the contact achieved, seeing as how non-voluntary and threatening contact can result in a negative effect (Pettigrew et al., 2011; as cited in Gregurović, 2023). Alongside contact on an individual level, authors also pinpoint the political climate as a mediating factor – if "the political situation is characterized in many countries/regions by strong anti-immigrant parties, a latent hostility toward Muslims, a fear of Islamic terror and an upsurge of nationalism", then "there are few or no shared common goals between (Muslim) immigrants and the majority native population", and consequently "there is little intergroup cooperation, no equal status between the groups, and little action by the authorities to support positive interactions between natives and (Muslim) newcomers" (Stockemer et al., 2019: 5). Additionally, is there anything different to note about CEE and thereby the cases of Croatia and the Czech Republic? Looking at the peculiarities of the Croatian case, existing knowledge on Croatian citizens' orientations gives off the general impression that attitudes toward asylum-seekers and refugees are mostly neutral (Gregurović, 2023: 142), although "high average levels of xenophobia" have been noted in a study concerning foreign workers (Čačić-Kumpes et al., 2012: 329), but at the same time another study talks about the openness of the majority of respondents toward allowing immigrants to come to Croatia (Baričević & Koska, 2017: 20). In the Czech Republic, the summary of research would be that "social attitudes toward migrants and refugees have trended in an increasingly negative direction" (Bartoszewicz & Eibl, 2022: 3), which in specific matters means that, based on data from 2020, the majority would not accept any migrants (around 66-67%) and allow refugees to enter the EU (more than 70%), while a minority is supportive of a

permanent solidarity scheme of relocation of refugees within EU states (36%) (Bartoszewicz & Eibl, 2022: 3).

2.9.   Tying all the threads: the potential contribution of the dissertation

There are many theoretical-conceptual strands that were explored here. I deem all of them necessary for guiding and better contextualizing the research. The question remains, however, just how much the dissertation can give back to these fields. The following questions below, as well as the answers to them provided in the final chapters of the conclusion, should illustrate the theoretical contribution of the dissertation.

- Does post-functionalism have merit in explaining what happened in the migration crisis in both contexts?
- Did national elites take into account the positions of the citizens when defining and elaborating their positions?
- To what extent do identity-based explanations account for the positioning of the political elite?
- Is there relevance of the concept of transnational cleavage in CEE on the level of political elites and/or citizens?
- Do existing typologies of Europeanism/Euroscepticism work well on the empirical cases? Do they distinguish well between the actors?
- How are EU matters blended with issues of migration?
- What is the link between populism and the nexus of migration and European issues?

3. CROATIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, AND THE EU IN THE MIGRATION CRISIS - INSIGHTS FROM EXISTING RESEARCH

3.1. Introductory note

This chapter looks at existing research that can be most directly linked to the topic of the dissertation. Some general findings about the effects the migration crisis had on the EU in general are first presented. After this, the very same effects are explored for both countries. As the reader will see, research is scarce, resulting in a shorter chapter.

3.2. The EU in the migration crisis

3.2.1. The nexus between attitudes toward the EU and immigration

There is a decent amount of quantitative research of public opinion that links general anti-immigration attitudes and support for the EU. The conclusion of this research is straightforward - anti-immigration sentiments have been proven time and time again to be positively linked with Euroscepticism (McLaren, 2002; De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Toshkov & Kortenska, 2015; Stockemer et al., 2019). Earlier research (e.g. McLaren, 2002) pointed out that the cultural, i.e. symbolic threat people perceive as coming from immigrants carries great explanatory power, on par with utilitarian arguments. With time, researchers, such as Azrout and Wojcieszak (2017), expanded general findings about the link between support for the EU and immigration attitudes by exploring how attitudes toward specific EU policies are linked with attitudes toward specific immigrant groups. They found that anti-immigrant attitudes do indeed predict opposition toward selected policies, but find a distinction between some groups that can be understood as realistic (Poles in this study) and others understood as a symbolic threat (Muslims in this research). Moreover, attitudes toward EU immigration policy have been shown to be generally linked with national identity, with a greater preference for national identity over the European one meaning more negative attitudes (Luedtke, 2005). Other authors also wanted to know if there is a relation between the actual number of immigrants coming to EU member states and Euroscepticism. Conflicting findings can be found regarding this relation. One study, although admitting the findings to be preliminary, looked at internal migration in the EU from CEE member states to Spain, France, Ireland, and the Netherlands and found that higher levels of immigration had negative effects

on support for European integration in host societies (Toshkov & Kortenska, 2015). However, consulting other studies we mostly find the claim that "contrary to common belief, the results suggest no evidence that individual levels of Euroscepticism increase with actual levels of immigration", both in the case of instrumental and affective dimensions of support for the EU (Yeung, 2021: 17). The explanation offered for this is that perceptions of levels of immigration and general sentiments toward immigrants are more important and that increased contact with immigrants has a favorable effect on how they are perceived (Yeung, 2021). In a summary of all existing quantitative research on the nexus between attitudes toward immigration and the EU, Stockemer and co-authors (2019: 7) conclude that "all studies find that individuals who are more critical of immigration or a specific aspect of immigration are more likely to be critical of European integration", with the exception of attitudes toward EU immigrants.[8]

3.2.2. The migration crisis of 2015/2016

The migration crisis of 2015-2016 was not the only profound challenge the European Union has faced recently. From the Eurozone crisis, the Russian annexation of Crimea, Brexit, COVID-19, and up to the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, crises have presented opportunities for both further integration and for disintegration. The migration crisis had a multi-faceted impact on the EU. It is challenging to cover all aspects, so this subchapter will focus on the ones relevant to the topic of investigation, more specifically on the topics of the general effects on the EU, on political elites in member states, and on public opinion.

Looking at the supranational level, one of the observations that carries great relevance is that the crisis "revealed a gap between the old member states believing in solidarity and the new member states suddenly refusing to share the burden" (Stojarová, 2018: 32). This, of course, can be best illustrated by the strong disagreement some countries exhibited when presented with the proposal of mandatory migrant quotas. As a consequence, the distancing of the Visegrad Group countries from the 'center' of the EU has been argued (Sus & Hadeed, 2021: 7; Tabosa, 2020: 5), as well as the claim that the group's identification with the West has become

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[8] In one study (Lubbers & Sheepers, 2007), critical attitudes toward migrants from other EU countries did not trigger increased Euroscepticism in three out of four cases.

"partial" (Kazharski, 2018: 755). Yet the V4 is far from a homogenous entity (Fila, 2022), and recent developments[9] seem to question the notion that a distinctly anti-Western path forward has been set. On a broader scale, and as was stated in the introduction, the migration crisis of 2015 shook the single market project, the Schengen system of free movement in particular, and contributed to the UK's decision to leave the EU (Buonano, 2017). To be sure, much could also be written about policy responses to the crisis, but this is not the focus of the dissertation.[10] It suffices to point out that the crisis spurred attempts to reform The Dublin Regulation, led to the evolution of Frontex into the European Border and Coastguard Agency, and overall gave impetus to the idea of greater EU cooperation regarding migration.It alsoacted as a catalyst for intergovernmental deals, most notably the bilateral EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan agreed on in November 2015 and the EU-Turkey Deal signed in March 2016. The Deal carried great importance, owing to the effect of limiting the number of asylum seeker arrivals in the EU and to agreeing to resettle Syrian refugees from Turkey (Migration Policy Institute, 2021). Furthermore, its coming into force remains highly relevant for Croatia as it also marked the end of the so-called 'Balkan corridor'.

When exploring how the migration crisis has impacted how the EU is approached by political elites in national contexts, the most relevant finding for the topic of this dissertation is that it intensified the already mentioned phenomenon of transnational cleavage, which is now said to be "structuring political conflict on a generational time scale" (Hooghe & Marks, 2019: 1122). Looking at political impacts, it is also critically important to mention the rise of populism and radical right-wing parties (Buonanno, 2017: 116-117). Parties and politicians of this provenance capitalized on the fears and anxieties of European populations, mostly by politicizing the issue and advocating a stricter approach to immigration, often linking it with Euroscepticism as well. Hungarian and Polish governments, who were most prominently critical of immigrants, for instance, stressed the symbolic aspect as they claimed the very identity of Europe and its nation-states was under attack (Csehi & Zgut, 2021). The very same Hungarian and Polish governments approached the issue of migrant quotas by stressing that the corrupt 'Bruxelles elite' is working against the interest of people in sovereign nation-states (Csehi & Zgut, 2021),

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[9] The new Czech government elected in late 2021 has announced a 'return to the West' and Viktor Orbán's attitude towards Russia has at the time of writing this dissertation distanced him from other V4 governments.

[10] For an overview of policy changes up to 2017, see Buonano (2017).

demonstrating the potent concoction of right-wing politics and populism. Yet according to Rogers Brubaker (2017), there is a fundamental difference in populist responses to the migration crisis between the East and the West of the EU. Brubaker describes the Central and Eastern European populist answer to the migrant crisis as having a unique nationalist style that contrasts with the Northern and Western civilizationist type of response. Brubaker argues that what distinguishes Western from Eastern populist actors is that, unlike the West, the East refers to Christianity as a sole marker of civilizational belonging and calls for a defense against liberal values (as cited in Fila, 2022). In that sense, Western populists' "identitarian Christianism is devoid of religious content" and their liberalism on social questions makes it harder to classify their parties on a one-dimensional left-right axis (Brubaker, 2017: 1210). Some research, however, shows that his conclusions concerning Eastern Europe may be overly biased toward the situation in Hungary because the Czech populist responses to migration shared the very aforementioned Western qualities (Tabosa, 2020; as cited in Fila, 2022).

But it is not just the governments that were the cause of tensions. According to Stojarová (2018:42), societies of all four V4 countries have been polarized over issues of migration. In general, existing literature notes that the growth of anti-migrant sentiments in the public can be observed after the crisis (Buonanno, 2017: 116-117). These negative sentiments in public opinion have narrowed opportunities for politicians to support an EU-wide solution for the influx of migrants (Buonanno, 2017: 116-117; Hooghe & Marks, 2019: 1122). Herein lies the importance of the fact that most migrants were Muslim; there are valuable points to be made when comparing general anti-immigrant attitudes and attitudes toward Muslims. Even before the migration crisis, some authors have argued that Islamophobia is becoming a more salient driver of radical right support than anti-immigrant sentiment (Betz & Meret, 2009; Williams, 2010; Ford & Goodwin, 2010; as cited in European Social Survey, 2015: 5). Previous research also informs of higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes than generalized anti-immigrant attitudes across Europe (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Bello, 2017; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019; as cited in Bell, Valenta & Strabac, 2021: 5). As we will see later in the data, the case of the Czech Republic researched in this paper fits into what has in a different context (Włoch, 2009) been dubbed 'phantom Islamophobia' – the paradox of high levels of anti-Muslim attitudes paired with an almost non-existent Muslim population in the country. Yet Bell, Valenta, and Strabac (2021: 4) postulate a stronger importance of politicization of migration in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe precisely because there are not a lot of Muslims there (meaning little to no intergroup contact). According to them, Eastern Europe has not only been witnessing growing

negative attitudes toward Muslims and immigrants, but it also seems that the two categories have become synonymous in the minds of citizens. On the other hand, Western Europe is not exhibiting worsening attitudes, but Muslims are still perceived more negatively than immigrants are. Peshkopia and co-authors (2022) presumed Eastern Europe's more pronounced reluctance toward accepting immigrants is, among other things, linked with an exclusionary vision of national identity being more present in the East, and the inclusionary one being more present in the West of the EU.

3.3. Croatia in the migration crisis

Existing literature informs of the fact that Croatia represents the opposite case to some other CEE countries, entirely when considering the question of attitudes toward migration, and partly when observing Euroscepticism. The migration crisis had little significance in the parliamentary elections of 2015 and 2016 (Vuksan-Ćusa, 2018). Prominent politicians mostly portrayed migrants as a humanitarian issue (Henjak, 2018: 4). This was likewise the angle the social-democrat-led government took during the height of the crisis when Croatia took on a strong transitory load (Tatalović & Jakešević, 2016: 185). Despite this, with time a more securitizing approach can be observed (Šelo-Šabić, 2017; Popović et al. 2022). More specifically, the presence of the securitization of immigrants was noted in the 2019 presidential elections (Džidić, 2020). When looking at public opinion, data from the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 show that a slightly larger number of surveyed citizens thought that Croatia should be closed off to immigrants than not (Henjak, 2018: 5). The research by Henjak (2018) showed ambivalent attitudes of the citizens and scepsis toward the idea that migrants might be a positive factor for the Croatian society. Another research (Ajduković et al., 2019: 104) that focused on asylum-grantees specifically found that the condition in Croatia as of 2019 could be tipped over to either an anti-integration or pro-integration end of the scale; by looking at survey results the authors found that the citizens' attitudes were overall neutral, but demonstrated mild concern over possible dangers to Croatian culture and values. Therefore, despite the lack of politicization of the topic, it would seem that there is some apprehension among citizens that has not been voiced but could be utilized by political actors.

3.4.   The Czech Republic in the migration crisis

The question of migration has been "an integral part of Czech political and public discourse" since 2015 (Bartoszewicz & Eibl, 2022: 1), and was used in all political campaigns after 2015.

The political arena has indeed been marked by the topic of the migration crisis. There is no better evidence than the rise of a distinctly anti-migrant and hard Eurosceptic challenger party SPD (Freedom and Direct Democracy) (Hloušek, Kopeček & Vodová, 2020), which proves that migration has become a fruitful ground for political contestation. The migration crisis was the key event that transformed the then-exclusively populist[11] party Dawn into the new SPD party whose "ideology shifted toward the protection of national values, anti-Islamism, targeting the EU, and advocating a national state and sovereignty as the remedy for the crisis" (Stojarová, 2018:36). Overall, the migration crisis "gives an impetus to criticize the EU for accepting refugees and refusing the EU narrative and solidarity message" (Stojarová, 2018: 36). A notable presence of immigration issues was found in the parliamentary elections of 2017 and the presidential campaign the following year (Naxera, 2019). Most mainstream parties and actors espouse anti-immigration attitudes (Strapáčová & Hloušek, 2018: 4) and most politicians have securitized the topic (Hloušek, 2019: 265; Naxera & Krčál, 2018: 4). The securitization of migrations has served the purpose of strengthening the feeling of belongingness to a European civilization (Tamchynová, 2017), but at the same time, the migration politics of the EU were also seen as a threat to sovereignty and security (Tabosa, 2020). When investigating the link between attitudes toward migration and Euroscepticism, what is notable about the Czech case is the fact that the salience of the topic has not faded after the peak of the crisis in 2015, and can be found in political discourse up to the present day.

As far as the public is concerned, research shows strong anti-migrant attitudes and negative attitudes toward Muslims (Strapáčová & Hloušek, 2018: 2; Topinka, 2016: 242). Anti-migrant narratives are present among the population, not just the political elite (Naxera, 2019; Daniel, 2020). When looking at the European Parliament Eurobarometer survey (EB/EP 84.1) from September 2015, 69% of Czechs considered migration to be the most important question in the

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[11] The term exclusively and non-exclusively populist was used by Havlík and Pinková (2012: 29) to mark if populism is "accompanied by another clear set of ideological preferences". An exclusively populist party would not by accompanied by them.

EU, which placed them second in the whole Union. They also demonstrated an unwillingness to implement the mandatory quota solution: 54% of them were in favor of this, but this comparatively ranked them 25th in the EU. When compared to the citizens of other countries in the V4 region, they are most apprehensive toward immigrants (Fila, 2022).

3.5. Takeaways for doctoral research

The point of this chapter was two-fold: to further ascertain the gap in the literature and show how existing knowledge can inform this dissertation. One thing holds for research conducted on the EU and the level of the two member states selected for analysis here – there is a lack of research that links the topics of the migration crisis and Euroscepticism, both on the level of political elites and on the level of citizens. The same is true for research that would explore citizen-politician dynamics. Furthermore, a significant gap in the literature can be observed in Croatia regarding both political maneuvering in the migration crisis and citizens' attitudes.

All of the findings presented here were integrated into research questions for specific parts of the research (see Chapter 5 on methodology). The research conducted on the EU level opens the question of how the Czech political elite envisioned the position of their country in the EU when they articulated opposition to the migrant quotas, namely, whether or not they saw a divide between the East and the West of the EU emerging. It also makes it interesting to see if there had been any political actors in Croatia who saw things in a similar manner. The finding about the rise of radical-right and populist parties who utilized the crisis to their advantage likewise opens up the question of how exactly party ideology played a role in positioning on matters of migration and European integration. And ultimately, even though Brubaker's finding about the more nationalist (and Christianity-oriented) variant of populism being present in CEE can be questioned, it does nonetheless raise the question of how the political elite took into consideration that most of the migrants at the time were Muslim. This is particularly interesting to see in the Czech Republic, which boasts one of the least religiously affiliated populaces in the world. Coupled with the questions of European integration, it is also of interest to see if any actors envisioned a sort of a common European identity and if this identity was in contrast with those of the migrant, whether liberal-values-wise or Christianity-wise. The general findings concerning citizens set the expectation that attitudes toward migrants should have become more apprehensive than in most EU member states, and existing knowledge about the Czech case

already confirms this expectation. Regarding Croatian citizens, there is less research, meaning we cannot be immediately sure what the findings will be when we compare the state before and after the crisis. Other insights about the support for European integration in the countries would point toward the expectation that a Eurosceptic path-dependency could have played a role in the Czech Republic.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introductory note

In this chapter, I will present how I analyzed the two cases of Croatia and the Czech Republic concerning the topic of the investigation. To do so, I have to first explain the characteristics of the comparative method chosen and what its advantages and limitations are. Likewise, additional attention will be given to why the cases of Croatia and the Czech Republic have been selected for analysis. Moving on to the research that was carried out; the actors who are analyzed are also listed and their inclusion and relevance are explained. As there is a set timeframe for analysis, a special sub-chapter is also devoted to explaining which period falls under analysis. The next step is presenting the general aims and hypotheses of the research. After all this is laid out, each of the actual steps in the research needs to be elaborated on – two related to quantitative analyses, and another two related to qualitative analyses. Finally, material designed for analyses such as the analysis matrix for media sources is described and referenced.

4.2. The comparative method

Despite at times speaking in the language of variables, this study is envisioned as a *case-oriented* rather than a *variable-oriented* comparative study. The case-oriented nature reflects on the scope of the dissertation: such studies aim to offer 'limited historical generalizations which are sensitive to context' (Ragin, 2014: 35). In contrast to loftier aspirations of variable-oriented studies, which tend to contain a greater number of cases as well, when stressing generalizations or context-sensitivity, the latter is preferred. This is chiefly due to the two-case nature of the research design which is not well suited to generalization on a larger universe of cases (Tarrow, 2010). Also known as the method of *paired comparison*, the comparison of two cases has been used implicitly throughout social science history, but has seldom seen a theory of practice developed. Often considered a deviation of a single case study or a degenerate case of large-N analysis, paired comparison (and this dissertation by the same token) has certain advantages over a single case study, and certain limitations compared to a large-N one. Retaining the single-case study's quality of being able to provide in-depth accounts of studied phenomena, the addition of a second case can serve to 1) correct generalizations from single cases; 2) assess the influence of institutions; 3) create an intermediate step in theory building

(Tarrow, 2010: 245). Regarding advantage number 1, its significance is particularly stressed in the case when one wants to understand their own society better, that being Croatia in the case of this dissertation. Advantage number 2 relates to the comparison of different political systems as the source of intrasystemic behaviors. Advantage number 3 sees the paired comparison as an intermediate step between suggesting a general relationship and testing and refining a theory. As was mentioned, however, the method has its limitations. Sharing many similarities with case studies, the most common critique relates to the insufficient number of degrees of freedom and the "heroic" assumption that we can observe all relevant variables, and that there is only one difference among these variables (Tarrow, 2010). The fact that findings are expected to be non-representative for other cases has already been stressed as a problem. In the context of the dissertation, this means that it would have to be determined by additional research if the findings here can "travel" and be applied to the wider universe of Central and Eastern Europe. The criticism of atheoretical case selection is also partly applicable here because the cases do not represent ideal candidates for a design that looks at a different outcome on cases that are otherwise as similar to each other as possible. Ultimately, the Czech Republic was also chosen as a second case due to my familiarity with it and the ability to study material in the Czech language.

None of these points of criticism need to be fatal. A way out of the 'many possible explanatory variables' problem is through the method of so-called 'focused comparison'. This method is 'focused' "in that it deals only with certain aspects of historical cases examined", and it is likewise 'structured' "in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible" (George & Bennett, 2004: 67). These guidelines have been used when designing this research; with still keeping an open mind to exploratory findings, several aspects (corresponding to the topics explored in the theoretical background) of the cases have been selected before embarking on analyses. Likewise, and as should be evident later in the chapter when listing questions for specific investigative steps, there was an effort to ask the very same questions for both the Czech and the Croatian case. As for the problem of representativity, the value of a paired comparison depends on the values of the reader. Even if the analysis of the two cases cannot necessarily produce findings that apply to a bigger universe, there is: 1) still inherent value in enriching knowledge about a particular case; and 2) value in providing conclusions that can be further tested. Again, to what extent someone deems this valuable

varies; proponents of "hard" methods and large N studies will have a different perspective than area studies scholars. Moreover, asymmetry in the comparison, which could also be pointed out as criticism, was expected from the start. I am overall more acquainted with the Croatian case and have more resources to research it. Yet on the flipside, the topic has been much more relevant in the Czech Republic, meaning that there is more material to be found there.

4.3. Case selection

In comparative studies, there is an often-quoted divide between a most-similar system design (MSSD) and a most-different system design (MDSD). The study design here *roughly* follows these classical comparativist tenets. The logic behind case selection is MSSD, but as I already admitted, practicality also played a large part in choosing Croatia and the Czech Republic. The MSSD way proposes that the research takes cases with different outcomes on the dependent variables but with similar values on independent ones (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). Much like the method of paired comparison, this design also has some stronger points, as well as potential pitfalls. Its main strength is shared with MDSD – the designs can "eliminate a large number of potentially relevant explanatory variables from further analysis" (Anckar, 2008: 400). However, behind the laudable idea of keeping constant all potential explanatory factors lies the trap and the circumstance of a limited number of countries for case selection (as cited in Anckar, 2008: 390). Simply put, it is difficult to find a case similar in almost all of the variables except those that could explain the outcome, which in turn can result in overdetermining it. I will explain the key similarities and differences between the two cases.

As was already stated in the introductory chapter of the dissertation, there are palpable differences between the two studies' cases on the dependent variables – the perception of the EU and migration, as well as on the nexus between them. It is useful to repeat once more that the Czech case demonstrates: (1) high politicization of the migration topic persisting up until the present; (2) rejection of EU migrant quotas as part of joint action of the Visegrad Group; (3) a negative attitude toward migrants, as part of the political mainstream; (4) the birth of a challenger party (SPD) whose program is heavily constructed on anti-immigration stances; (5) rise in public Euroscepticism after the crisis. None of this applies to the second, Croatian case, where there has been low politicization of the topic and where acceptance of the migrant quotas scheme occurred. When it comes to similarities between the two cases, there are some crucial

ones, but admittedly, there are some crucial dissimilarities as well. Both the Czech Republic and Croatia are post-socialist countries that find themselves in the Central and Eastern European region. They are also united by the historical legacy of having been part of failed supranational entities (Austria-Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia). Likewise, they hold the status of new member states in the Union, with a shared experience of going through communism and the transition from it toward democracy and capitalism. Both went through the harmonization process and were bounded by conditionality when accessing the EU. The two countries are both ethnically homogenous and are countries of a roughly similar size area-wise. Similarities can also be found in party politics, wherein the first two decades after the fall of communism there was persistence of the main completion between two parties, one center-right, and one center-left, Party politics is also a field where dissimilarities have to be pointed out. Starting with the 2010s, the stability of the Czech party system was shaken by new challengers, who managed to upend the status quo. This brought to the forefront, and later to power, populist options. Another important dissimilarity lies in the fact that Croatia accessed the EU at a later date – whereas the Czech Republic joined in 2004, Croatia became a part of the EU in 2013. Related to this different date of entry, Croatia witnessed a violent dissolution of the supranational state it had been in, unlike the Czech Republic, which witnessed a peaceful dissolution. Moreover, the difference in historical legacies is that Croatia was considered a 'junior partner' in both Yugoslavia, whereas the Czech Republic was considered the 'senior partner' in Czechoslovakia. Yugoslav socialism was also notably different than the Czechoslovak one; the former could be considered to be of a national-accommodative type, while the latter is seen as having been of a bureaucratic-authoritarian type (Kitschelt et al., 1999: 39).

To what extent these differences in the independent variables can play a role in explaining the outcome regarding the migration crisis is challenging to ascertain in interpretative efforts. Differences such as, for instance, the presence and relevance of populist options in politics can be fairly easily posited, but the importance of different historical legacies can be harder to prove. Before the investigation, although all the while still keeping an open mind to what the finding might point to, the problem of legacies and path-dependency was focused on the issues of 1) existing attitudes toward European integration and immigration; 2) different accession timelines; 3) own recent (war) experience with refugees.

4.4. Actors

The dissertation deals with two types of actors: citizens and the political elites. To be sure, other relevant actors could be explored – different types of elites, NGOs, as well as the media. The choice to focus on two types is based on wanting to test the post-functionalist hypothesis about the constraining dissensus, which puts political elites and citizens in a distinct relationship.

The filtering of political elites is primarily based on the minimum key of presence in national parliaments during the researched period. This is done to ensure actors of marginal importance are not given greater importance than they truly have. In analyses, it means that parties present in the parliament during the analyzed timeframe are taken into account. More precisely, the dissertation deals with the leaders of those parties, at the same time also approaching coalitions through the leader of the leading coalition party. Presidents are, for obvious reasons, exempt from this 'parliamentary criterion' and are due to their importance likewise researched.

As for the citizens, the goal is to focus on the adult population. The samples contained in cross-national surveys aspire toward being representative of the general population, giving them an advantage over some sources, which might show a skewed picture of attitudes (such as online discussions).

4.5. Analyzed timeframe

The dissertation focuses on the height of the migration crisis of 2015. Analyzed timeframes are, however, wider, and differ based on the actor and type of analysis conducted. On the *main* level of analysis of political elites, corresponding to the analysis of media texts, the study does begin with 2015 as the year of the height of the migration crisis. But when expert surveys are used, the goal is also to illustrate what party attitudes were like before the crisis, and therefore they look at certain election years that preceded and followed the height of the crisis. Because there is interest in what public opinion was like before the crisis, a similar approach is also used in the case of citizens. Specific dates and analyzed years will be given when presenting each of the research methods.

The Czech Republic's first parliamentary elections after the height of the crisis followed only in 2017. Even if this does not correspond with the period of the height of the crisis, it is to be

expected that had the issue been highly politicized, the topic of migration would have made its way into the electoral manifestos of parties.

4.6. General aims and hypotheses

The main aim of the dissertation is to try to explain why the politicization of a topic related to the European Union happened in one member state, and not the other. The broader, albeit more minor aim is also to investigate the interplay between political elites and the public's attitudes. These broader goals are more focused on the concept of the transnational cleavage and by asking why it might be growing in some member states, and not the others.

More specifically, with its research design it aims to, on the one hand, gauge the effect that public opinion before the migration crisis might have had on politicians when positioning themselves during and after the crisis, and on the other hand, if the politicians themselves 'left an imprint' on public opinion after the crisis. The research operates with a narrower, focused set of variables tested.

Although the dissertation primarily takes on an exploratory character, five broader hypotheses related to the research questions defined in the introductory chapter had been set before proceeding toward data analysis:

- *The migration crisis worsened the perception of the EU in the Czech Republic, but not in Croatia*
- *Signs of the effect of constraining dissensus should be visible in the Czech Republic*
- *Signs of the politicization effect of the political elites should also be visible in the Czech Republic*
- *Politicization happened in the Czech Republic due to a stronger tradition of Euroscepticism paired with already existing negative attitudes toward immigrants*
- *The domination of pro-European elites in the political mainstream inhibited politicization of the topic in Croatia*

4.7. Quantitative analyses – surveying the citizens

The following sub-chapters move on to specific research methods used. In the case of citizens, analyses of survey data are used. Of vital importance and how survey data can help is to compare the states in both countries before and after the migration crisis. This allows us to speculate about both the preconditions that political elites were faced with before the crisis, as well as about the effect they were or were not able to achieve through politicization.

4.7.1. Aims and hypotheses

As was already mentioned, the broader aim of the dissertation is to investigate the interplay between political elites and public attitudes. Written down as hypotheses, the three main expectations regarding this specific, quantitative research segment are as follows:

H1: Negative migration attitudes are positively correlated with Eurosceptic attitudes in both cases, and the correlation increased after 2015.

H2: Negative migration attitudes and populist attitudes will be stronger predictors of Eurosceptic attitudes in the Czech Republic than in Croatia.

H3: Populist attitudes are positively correlated with Eurosceptic attitudes in both cases.

4.7.2. Data and variables
4.7.2.1. European Social Survey (ESS)

In order to research public opinion in the two countries, the paper utilizes two data points from the European Social Survey (ESS) covering the periods before (2008) and after (2018) the crisis. The 10-year gap chosen between the waves is warranted by data availability[12], but should still represent a satisfactory distance in time for observing differences. The ESS is a repeated

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[12] Croatia did not participate in Rounds 6 (2012), 7 (2014) and 8 (2016), and the dependent variable was not present in Round 5 (2010).

cross-national survey that aims to research various questions on national probabilistic samples of citizens aged 15 and over. In this case, the dataset was reduced to only Croatia and the Czech Republic. [13]

The main dependent variable hits right at the crux of the concept of transnational cleavage. The question "Do you think European unification has gone too far or it should go further" makes the respondent state whether more or less sovereignism is desired in the context of the European Union (scale from 0, "Unification has already gone too far", to 10, "Unification should go further"). We presuppose that this might be related to migration because the EU migrant quota proposal can be seen as a supranational response to the crisis, whereas its rejection can be seen as the reassertion of the nation-state. In that sense, for those critical of the EU, such a proposal should represent 'unification going too far'.

Independent variables were divided into three blocks. The first, and most important one covered attitudes toward migration. Out of six available questions in the database, three were selected for further statistical analyses. Only one variable was chosen for respondents' permissiveness toward allowing immigrants – the one concerning those of a different race/ethnic group from the majority (scale from 1, "Allow many to come and live here" to 4, "Allow none"). This question best targets the population of migrants from the 2015 wave. Out of questions pertaining to attitudes, two statements were chosen: "Immigration bad or good for country's economy" (scale from 0 "Bad for the economy" to 10 "Good for the economy") and "Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants" (scale from 0 "Cultural life undermined" to 10 "Cultural life enriched"). Including the other three migration-related questions would have led to the problem of multicollinearity in analyses. [14] Even though the three that remain are also correlated, multicollinearity diagnostics are satisfactory and due to theoretical reasons, it has been argued that the items should be kept separate (ESS, 2015; Callens, 2015; as cited in Gregurović, 2021: 357). The second block encompasses anti-elite sentiments through the use

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[13] Sample sizes: N (HR, 2008) = 1484; N (CZ, 2008) = 2018; N (HR, 2018) = 1810; N (CZ, 2018) = 2398.

[14] All of the migration variables are highly inter-correlated. The six variables form a single-factor solution in both countries and data points, with the exception of Croatia in 2018. Moreover, in all of the cases the Cronbach alpha value is higher than 0.8.

of a proxy variable measuring trust in politicians[15]. This was included to test the presupposed link between populism and Euroscepticism. Admittedly, this variable choice is far from ideal as it only indirectly covers only one aspect of populism. The third block represents a standard selection of socio-demographic control variables that were presupposed to be potentially linked to the dependent variable. The selection includes gender, self-declared religiosity, the highest level of education accomplished, age, and settlement type.

4.7.2.2.   *International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)*

In order to fill the gap between 2008 and 2018, the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data from 2013 is also used for the purposes of inferential statistics. Data from 2018 is likewise included, but solely for descriptive purposes.[16] Much like ESS, ISSP is also a repeated cross-national survey investigating the national population, but from the ages of 18 and onwards. The same procedure of reducing the dataset to only include cases from Croatia and the Czech Republic was also conducted here.[17]

ISSP contains a few relevant EU-related variables, the most important of which measures a sovereigntist attitude when confronted with having to follow the decisions of the EU. The question in the survey was "[COUNTRY] should follow [European Union] decisions, even if it does not agree with them" (scale from 1 "Agree strongly" to 5 "Disagree strongly"). This question is more specific than the general attitude toward European integration measured in ESS, and can in particular relate to accepting or rejecting migrant quotas so it still touches on a question that can be subsumed under the issue of transnational cleavage.

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[15] The question was „Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly… …politicians? "

[16] In the 2018 dataset, ISSP contains the 'Religion IV' module, where data about attitudes towards Muslims can be found. This variable is not present in the 2013 data.

[17] Sample sizes: N (HR) = 1000; N (CZ) = 1909.

The independent variables are partly replicated. There are now two blocs instead of three since there are no variables in ISSP 2013 touching on populism or even trust in politicians. The control variables are very much the same, however, covering: age, gender, urban-rural settlement, level of education, and attendance of religious services. The migration-related variables are almost the same as well, differing only slightly in the one variable on increasing the number of immigrants, which is less specific than the ESS one (which mentioned people of a different ethnicity). This variable asked respondents if they "think the number of immigrants to [COUNTRY] nowadays should be…" and then offered a scale from 1, "increased a lot" to 5, "reduced a lot". Out of questions about attitudes toward migrants, two statements were once more included: "Immigrants are generally good for [COUNTRY's] economy" (scale from 1 "Agree strongly" to 5 "Disagree strongly") and "[COUNTRY's culture is generally undermined by immigrants" (scale from 1 "Agree strongly" to 5 "Disagree strongly").

4.7.3. Method

The main statistical technique used is hierarchical multiple regression, while in the case of ESS t-tests and the Chi-Square test were also used to compare differences in means and percentages between the two countries. Analysis was conducted in SPSS (version 26).

4.8. Quantitative analyses – expert scores on political parties' positioning

The paper's voyage into trying to understand what happened with the political elite starts with the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) data (Jolly et al., 2022). Although this step in the analysis can be called 'quantitative', the (quantitative) data does not allow quantitative analyses, leaving the scores to be of a descriptive nature.

4.8.1. Aims and questions

This analysis aims to give a simple overview of how political parties' attitudes were affected by the migration crisis.

There are four, simple research questions:

1. What was a certain political party's stance toward immigration when compared before and after the crisis?
2. What was the overall stance of the country's political elites toward immigration when compared to before and after the crisis?
3. What was a certain political party's stance toward European integration when compared before and after the crisis?
4. What was the overall stance in the country toward European integration when compared before and after the crisis?

By answering these questions, we detect general trends and better orient ourselves for the following, more in-depth analyses.

Regarding expectations, when taking the matter of party competition into account, on one hand, there is the ideological divide, where the expectation is that more right-wing parties will be more critical of both immigration and European integration. On the other hand, it is prudent to also keep in mind the government-opposition divide, seeing as it makes the opposition more likely to disagree on positions the government embraced.

4.8.2. Data and variables

CHES is a database on attitudes of political parties on various issues, generated based on quantitative assessments by country experts. The dataset is suitable for the purpose of this paper because it contains a data point before and after the crisis. More specifically the following data points are presented:

- The Czech Republic: 2013 and 2017
- Croatia: 2011 and 2016

Another thing that is important to add is the focus is on political parties as individual actors, which does presume a level of homogeneity of the parties by taking expert scores (and later electoral manifestos) as representative of party attitudes. To see if there may be disagreements

in the party, CHES variables on dissent regarding issues are also consulted. In total, four relevant variables are presented and used:

1. *eu_position* – overall orientation of the party leadership toward European integration [1-7, 1= strongly opposed, 7= strongly in favor]

2. *eu_dissent* – degree of dissent on European integration [0-10, 0= party was completely united, 10= party was extremely divided]

3. *eu_salience* – the importance of European integration for the party [0-10, 0= European Integration is of no importance, never mentioned; 10= European Integration is the most important issue]

4. *immigrate_policy* – position on immigration policy [0-10, 0= strongly favors a liberal policy, 10= strongly favors a restrictive policy]

5. *immigrate_dissent* – (only in the 2016 and 2017 elections – degree of dissent on immigration policy [0-10, 0= party was completely united, 10= party was extremely divided]

6. *GAL/TAN* – green, alternative, libertarian vs. traditionalist, authoritarian, nationalist [0-10, 0= "Libertarian/Postmaterialist" or GAL, 10= "Traditional/Authoritarian" or TAN]

4.8.3. Method

There is no associated method for this part of the analysis. The number of analyzed parties is not large enough to enable statistical analyses. However, a growing chasm between parties should be observable in expert scores before and after the crisis.

4.9. Qualitative analyses – positions of the political elite as seen in party manifestos

Parliamentary electoral manifestos are analyzed qualitatively, with the focus being on finding positions toward migration and European integration, and more importantly the nexus between them.

4.9.1. Aims and questions

The aim of analyzing party manifestos is to build on the knowledge and insights on party positions that expert scores provided by taking a look at *how* positions are formed and argued.

When analyzing the manifestos the following questions were kept in mind:

1. How does a certain political party generally position itself toward migration?
2. Does the political party stress economic, security, and/or symbolic threats of migration?
3. What reasons does this party provide when positioning itself toward migration the way it does?
4. Does the party link migration matters with matters of European integration?
5. Does the party want more or less integration in the context of the migration crisis?
6. For all of the questions above, are there observable changes (and if so in what direction) after the migration crisis?

4.9.2. Data

The source for the manifestos is The Manifesto Project database (Lehmann et al., 2022). This database does not yet contain manifestos from the Czech 2021 elections so those were collected[18] by the author and referenced individually.[19] The main focus is on the parliamentary elections following directly after the height of the migration crisis. As was already mentioned, in the Czech Republic this was in 2017, and in Croatia, the elections took place in 2015 and 2016. In addition, the manifestos from the last elections of 2021 (CZ) and 2020 (HR) are also analyzed to see if anything changed regarding the topic's salience and polarization. Symmetrically, another two elections (CZ: 2010, 2013; HR: 2007, 2011) preceding the height of the crisis were analyzed to see if the question(s) had been on the agenda before.

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[18] Only the parties that entered the parliament or were in it the period before the elections were taken into account.

[19] A list of available manifestos can be seen on the project's website: https://visuals.manifesto-project.wzb.eu/mpdb-shiny/cmp_dashboard_dataset/

4.9.3. Method

The utilized method for the analysis of these documents is qualitative content analysis (Clark et al., 2021) which does not operate with themes as end results, but simply tries to answer the research questions posed.

4.10. Qualitative analyses – the positions of the political elite as seen in media texts

The final, qualitative, and most crucial part of the doctoral analysis is the analysis of media texts. Building on all the research steps that led to it, this part embarks on a deeper understanding of the positioning of politicians.

4.10.1. Aims and questions

This research segment carries the most important contribution when compared to the other three segments. Insight into media text allows us to follow the debate around the migration crisis and see not just what the positions of politicians were and how they explained them, but also to see the context that shaped their positioning.

As can be seen in the attached research materials (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), a larger number of questions were asked about material in media text. They can be summed up as follows:

1. How does the actor approach the topic of migrations?
2. Does the actor stress economic, security, and/or cultural concerns about migration?
3. What sort of attitude does the actor display toward the EU?
4. Does the actor link migration matters with matters of European integration, and if so, how?
5. Does the actor advocate differentiated integration? If so, where do they see integration going further and where do they see it taking a step back?
6. Is the actor for or against quotas? How do they back up their position?
7. Does the actor see European identity as being opposed to the identities of migrants?

8. Does the actor mention political opponents? If so, how?

9. Does the actor mention public opinion as a factor for positioning in the migration crisis? If so, how?

10. [CZ only] Does the actor mention the Visegrád Four in the context of the migration crisis? If so, how?

4.10.2. Data

In the analysis of media texts, the focus is on the height of the crisis, meaning that the analysis starts[20] on June 1st, 2015, and ends on October 20th, 2017. This was done to cover the pre-election periods in both countries; specifically, it was the Czech Republic that 'dragged out' the date because the two Croatian elections were held in 2015, while the Czech one took place in 2017.

Keeping in mind the criteria set out in the previous subchapter on actors, the following Czech politicians were selected for analysis:

1. Czech Prime Minister & leader of ČSSD party Bohuslav Sobotka
2. Czech Deputy Prime Minster & Minister of Finance & leader of ANO party Andrej Babiš
3. Czech President Miloš Zeman
4. Czech Minister of Interior Milan Chovanec (ČSSD)
5. Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek (ČSSD)
6. Opposition party ODS leader Petr Fiala
7. Opposition party KDU-ČSL leader Pavel Bělobrádek
8. Opposition party TOP-09 leader Miroslav Kalousek
9. Opposition party KSČM leader Vojtěch Filip
10. Opposition party SPD\Usvit leader Tomio Okamura

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[20] A publication by Bartoszewicz and Eibl (2022) charted occurrence of migration crisis related media text in selected Czech media sources. What can be seen in that the topic gained prominence during the summer of 2015, with June as the month when a more noticeable rise can be observed.

In the case of Croatia, there were considerably more key actors:

1. Prime Minister (2011-2015) and leader of the ruling/opposition coalition and SDP party Zoran Milanović
2. Prime Minister (2016) Tihomir Orešković
3. Prime Minister (2016-) and leader of the ruling/opposition coalition and HDZ party (2016-) Andrej Plenković
4. President Kolinda-Grabar Kitarović
5. Minister of Internal Affairs Ranko Ostojić (2015)
6. Minister of Internal Affairs Vlaho Orepić (2016)
7. Minister of Internal Affairs Davor Božinović (2016-2017)
8. Minister of Foreign Affairs Vesna Pusić (2015)
9. Minister of Foreign Affairs Miro Kovač (2016)
10. Minister of Foreign Affairs Davor Ivo Stier (2016-2017)
11. Minister of Foreign Affairs Marija Pejčinović Burić (2017)
12. Leader of the opposition coalition and HDZ party Tomislav Karamarko (2012-2016)
13. Leader of the opposition party MOST Božo Petrov
14. Leader of the opposition party IDS Boris Miletić
15. Leader of the opposition coalition and party BM-365 Milan Bandić
16. Leader of the opposition party HDSSB Dragan Vulin
17. Leader of the opposition party Živi zid Ivan Vilibor Sinčić
18. Independent Member of Parliament Željko Glasnović

The guidelines for sampling differed between the two countries. In the Czech case, greater discussion was expected, and the number of actors was lower. Taking this into account, the plan was to look at 15 texts per actor, which would result in 150 texts analyzed. Should a lack of material have been found, the criterion of minimally half of the amount was set (75). In total 135 articles were analyzed in the case of the Czech Republic, which resulted in 368 utterances analyzed. Regarding which sources were used, the focus was on gaining access to statements by political actors instead of media portrayals, therefore various sources were used. The sources

spanned from press statements of the government[21] and its ministries[22] to a diverse set of national media sources[23], as well as some international sources[24]. Press releases on political party websites[25] were also used.

In the case of Croatia, the guidelines were to aim for 10 texts per political actor. Given that there are 18 actors, this would have resulted in 180 texts. In the case of a lack of texts, a bar was sent in half the amount, meaning 90 texts. Due to a lack of material, a total of 90 articles were analyzed, resulting in 183 utterances analyzed. Like in the Czech case, press statements on the government's[26] and on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[27] websites were used. The majority of the sources, however, were found in national media portals[28] and some international sources were also used[29]. It is once more important to state that selecting and sampling among sources was not done because media portrayal was not investigated, and the positions of political actors were crucial.

When selecting parts of these texts for analysis, an utterance was taken as a unit of analysis, which entailed a sentence or more of them, that was deemed to form a whole that can be coded.

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[21] vlada.gov.cz.

[22] Namely: mzv.gov.cz., mfcr.cz.

[23] Namely: aktualne.cz, blesk.cz, byznysnoviny.cz, ct24.ceskatelevize.cz, deník.cz, e15.cz, echo24.cz, euractiv.cz, euroskop.cz, evropskenoviny.cz, forum24.cz, hanacka.drbna.cz, hlidacipes.org, hn.cz, houpaciosel.cz, hradecky.denik.cz, idnes.cz, irozhlas.cz, lidovky.cz, moravskoslezsky.denik.cz, novinky.cz, parlamentilisty.cz, plus.rozhlas.cz, prazsky.denik.cz, radiozurnal.rozhlas.cz, reflex.cz, reflex.cz, seznamzpravy.cz, tn.nova.cz.

[24] Namely: coe.int, english.radio.cz, theguardian.com.

[25] From the following websites: kdu.cz, ods.cz, spd.cz, top09.cz.

[26] vlada.gov.hr.

[27] mvep.gov.hr.

[28] Namely: danas.hr, dnevnik.hr, dnevno.hr, express.24sata.hr, glas-slavonije.hr, hkv.hr, index.hr, jutarnji.hr, kamenjar.com, maxportal.hr, nacional.hr, narod.hr, novilist.hr, portalnovosti.com, prigorski.hr, slobodnadalmacija.hr, slobodnadalmacija.hr, telegram.hr, tportal.hr, vecernji.hr, zg-magazin.com.hr

[29] Namely: aa.com.tr, dw.com, news.un.org, sd.rs, slobodnaevropa.org.

Regarding how the search for the sources was conducted, the following eight keywords were used:

- Keywords (translated into English): *refugees, migrants, migration crisis, migrant crisis, refugee crisis, quotas, border, Schengen*
- Keywords for Croatian texts: *izbjeglice, migranti, migracijska kriza, migrantska kriza, izbjeglička kriza, kvote, granica, Schengen*
- Keyword for Czech texts: *uprchlíci, migranti, migrační krize, migrační krize, uprchlická krize, kvóty, hranice, Schengen*

Google was used as the search engine for finding the articles, and its built-in option of limiting the results timeframe was also utilized. Sources were selected based on search relevance; the results the search engine selected were most related to the used keywords and thereby the topic of investigation. The links were collected up until the sample quota was achieved or if no additional links could be found.

The final samples ie. the number of texts for selected political actors attained in both countries can be seen in the following Table 3.

Table 3. *Achieved samples in Croatia and the Czech Republic*

Croatian actor	Number of texts	Czech Actor	Number of texts
Zoran Milanović	10	**Bohuslav Sobotka**	15
Tihomir Orešković	10	**Andrej Babiš**	15
Andrej Plenković	5	**Miloš Zeman**	15
Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović	10	**Milan Chovanec**	15
Ranko Ostojić	6	**Lubomír Zaorálek**	15
Vlaho Orepić	10	**Petr Fiala**	15
Davor Božinović	1	**Pavel Bělobrádek**	15
Vesna Pusić	12	**Miroslav Kalousek**	10
Miro Kovač	10	**Vojtěch Filip**	5
Davor Ivo Stier	1	**Tomio Okamura**	15
Marija Pejčinović Burić	0		
Tomislav Karamarko	5		
Božo Petrov	0		
Boris Miletić	1		

Milan Bandić	4	
Dragan Vulin	2	
Ivan Vilibor Sinčić	1	
Željko Glasnović	2	

As is evident from the table, it was difficult to find texts for the majority of Croatian politicians. In some cases, no sources were found. In order to reach the target of 90 analyzed texts, two additional texts related to Vesna Pusić's positions were taken into consideration, based on their relevance and this actor's engagement with elaboration positions on the matter. It should also be pointed out that not all material from all actors was deemed significant enough to be exemplified as quotes in a proportionate manner, but nonetheless, their positions and statements did serve to define the themes and subthemes. In the Czech Republic, the problem was encountered only in the case of Vojtěch Filip, and with Miroslav Kalousek. These differences in sampling, while not ideal, already speak about the prominence the topic had in respective countries.

4.10.3. Method

The main method of analysis is thematic analysis. The main unit of analysis in this approach is a theme – a category of interest that relates to the research focus builds on codes identified and provides the basis for a theoretical understanding of data (Clark et al., 2021). The approach here builds on steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Clarke and Braun (2013), as cited in Clark and colleagues (2021). Six steps were followed in the analysis: 1) familiarization with the material; 2) initial coding; 3) identifying themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining themes; 6) evidencing themes. Sub-themes (if present) are also assigned and represent more specific aspects of defined themes.

The codebook that was used for this and which was tested can be seen in Appendices 1 and 2. There were two parts of the codebook – the first one consisted of 30 questions in the Czech Republic and 28 in Croatia. The difference stems from adding the topic of mentions of the Visegrád Group in the Czech case.

Since the codebook (see Appendix 1) also allows counting within certain categories, quantitative content analysis is also used, albeit in a small and less important role. Questions where it was possible to distinguish between only a select few answers, such as the actor's general orientation toward migration or the EU, are displayed with shares in the analysis.

5. THE CASES CONTEXTUALIZED – RELATION WITH THE EU, PARTY COMPETITION, AND EXPERIENCE WITH MIGRATION

5.1. Introductory note

This chapter has a twofold purpose – to enable the reader to have an understanding of the cases and actors analyzed, and to provide crucial background information, some of which has relevance for explaining the results. Three things are presented for each country: its history with the EU, party competition, and experience with migration, including events related to the migration crisis itself.

5.2. Croatia
5.2.1. Croatia and the EU

Unlike the Czech Republic, Croatia's path toward the EU was more complex and less straightforward. Having only become a candidate in 2004 when some other post-communist countries were already joining the EU, Croatia became a new member state in 2013 with the support of 66% of the people who turned out to the referendum. [30] Like in other CEE countries, there was strong initial enthusiasm for joining the EU in the early 1990s (Grubiša, 2012), but "the 1991-1995 war and the authoritarian style of governance of President Franjo Tuđman (1990-1999) and his Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) resulted in the country ending the decade in unofficial isolation" (Šeperić, 2011: 463). Despite changes in political leadership, the enthusiasm started waning dramatically during the accession process in the mid-2000s when the breaking point was the extradition of war general Ante Gotovina to the Hague (Skoko, 2006: 356). Fluctuations in public opinion continued to follow the accession process (Blanuša, 2011). This, combined with low voter turnout to the accession referendum, has ultimately led some to consider the Croatian people as primarily Euro-indifferent rather than Eurosceptic (Jović, 2012). Where Croatia differs from some member states, however, are the political elites who have since 2000 generally been pro-EU (Blanuša, 2011; Kocijan & Kukec, 2016) and their consensus on accession "practically absolute" (Šeperić, 2011: 464). Party Euroscepticism can

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[30] The turnout was low, however. 43.5% of the voter base voted (per: Šeperić, 2011: 477).

generally be found on the right side of the political spectrum and was contingent in nature (Petsinis, 2019).

5.2.2. Party competition in Croatia

A list of all the Croatian political parties, along with their orientations, mentioned in this dissertation can be found in Table 5. The orientations and ideologies should be seen as reflecting how the parties positioned themselves during the time of the migration crisis, with the exception of newer parties whose manifestos were also analyzed.

Table 5. A list of Croatian parties mentioned in the dissertation

Abbreviation	Croatian	English	Years Active	European affiliation[31]	Orientation & defining ideology
BM 365	*Bandić Milan 365 – Stranka rada i solidarnosti*	*Bandić Milan 365 – Labour and Solidarity Party*	2015 -	-	Blurred center-left (Populism)
DP	*Domovinski pokret*	*Homeland Movement*	2020 -	ID (intention to join)	Right (National conservatism)
Fokus	*Fokus*	*Focus*	2020 -	RE	Center (Economic liberalism)
HDSSB	*Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije i Baranje*	*Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja*	2006 -	-	Right (Regionalism)

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[31] EPP = European People's Party; PES = Party of European Socialists; ECR = European Conservatives and Reformists; RE = Renew Europe; PEL = Party of the European Left; PIRATES = European Pirate Party; ID = Identity and Democracy; EGP = European Green Party; EAFD = European Alliance for Freedom and Democracy; EDP = European Democratic Party.

HDZ	*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*	*Croatian Democratic Union*	1989 -	EPP	Center-right (Christian democracy)
HKS	*Hrvatska konzervativna stranka*	*Croatian Conservative Party*	2014-2021	ECR	Right (National conservatism)
HNS (HNS-LD)	*Hrvatska narodna stranka (- Liberalni demokrati)*	*Croatia People's Party (- Liberal democrats)*	1990 -	RE	Center-left (Social liberalism)
HL-SR	*Hrvatski laburisti – stranka rada*	*Croatian Labourists– Labour Party*	2010 -	-	Center-left (laborism)
HSLS	*Hrvatska socijalno liberalna stranka*	*Croatian Social Liberal Party*	1989 -	RE	Center (Conservative liberalism)
HSP-AS	*Hrvatska stranka prava - dr. Ante Starčević*	*Croatian Party of Rights — Dr. Ante Starčević*	2009 - 2020	ECR	Right (National conservatism)
HSS	*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*	*Croatian Peasant Party*	1989 -	EPP	Center-right (1989-2016) Center-left (2016 -) (Agrarianism)
MOST	*Most*	*The Bridge*	2012 -	-	Center-right (Anti-establishment)
MOŽEMO!	*Možemo! – politička platforma*	*We can! – Political Platform*	2019 -	EGP	Left (Green politics)
NS-R	*Narodna stranka - reformisti*	*People's Party - Reformists*	2014 -	EDP	Center-left (Social liberalism)
RF	*Radnička fronta*	*Workers' Front*	2014 -	PEL	Radical left (Democratic socialism)
SiP	*Stranka s imenom i prezimenom*	*People with a First and Last Name*	2020 - 2020	-	Center to center-left (Anti-corruption)

SDP	*Socijaldemokr atska partija Hrvatske*	*Social Democratic Party of Croatia*	1990 -	PES	Center-left (Social democracy)
SDSS	*Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka*	*Independent Democratic Serb Party*	1997 -	PES	Center-left
ŽZ (KH)	*Živi zid (Ključ Hrvatske)*	*Human Shield (The Key of Croatia)*	2011 – (name change in 2022)	EAFD	Blurred (Populism)

Source: author

The Croatian party system has proved to be "very stable, with the same political parties dominating the party landscape in 2013 as those that have shaped the initial party system after the first multiparty election" (Zakošek, 2008; as cited in Raos, 2016: 167). The same still holds some ten years later; it can be considered one of the most stable party systems in post-communist member states, with a few caveats (Raos, 2023). The main competition has been happening between the social-democrat SDP party and the Christian-democrat HDZ, with various parties competing over the year for the third slot. Even though notable challengers such as MOST, MOŽEMO!, and ŽZ appeared in the 2010s, this did not cause a major earthquake for the stability of the existing system. Croatian politics has primarily been defined by political cleavages that divide votes based on attitude toward history and on sociocultural values, whereas unlike in the Czech Republic, economic questions have not proved to be relevant (Bagić, 2007; Henjak & Vuksan Ćusa, 2019). These political divides are related to the legacy of World War II, socialism, and the role of religion in society.

5.2.3. Croatia and migration

Croatia is a rather ethnically homogenous country at the present day. Statistics on the foreign-born population are lacking, but data from the 2011 census suggest that more than 13% of the population was foreign-born at the time (European Commission, 2022), mostly co-ethnics from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presence of people (and thereby contact) of different ethnicities has been minimal, until the 2020s when the easing of laws for employing foreign-born workers gave rise to immigration from countries such as Nepal, Philippines, or India, with the number

of foreign-born workers estimated to be 200 000 in 2024 (Vresnik, 2023). The same statement about a lack of contact with people of different religions cannot be argued, given that the Ottoman Empire's rule extended to some parts of modern-day Croatia, and that Croatians have been in contact with Bosnian Muslims. A significant event in the history of modern-day Croatia that had repercussions on migrations from and to the country was the Homeland War (1991-1995) that followed after the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia since the war made refugees flee war-torn areas. At the same time, during the war, there was battling between Croatians and Bosniaks, and the history with the Ottoman Empire also involved conflict. Modern-day Croatia has been a country of emigration rather than immigration. That coupled with declining birth rates and the opening of markets of the European Union, has resulted in a significant decline of population from 4 784 265 in 1991 to 3 871 833 in 2021 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Concerning the migration crisis of 2015-2016, at first, it appeared that Croatia would not play a significant role in migrant trajectories, given that it had not been a stop on the main migrant routes. It was only after the Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán closed borders with Serbia at the beginning of September 2015 that the routes shifted. Croatia then became a part of the so-called 'Balkan route' or 'Balkan corridor', with an estimated 800,000 people transiting through it in 2015 alone (Zrinjski, 2016). This caused tensions with neighboring countries, where it can be pointed out that Croatian politicians most notably took issue with Serbia, rather than the EU as was the case in the Czech Republic. Transit centers in Opatovac and near Slavonski Brod were built during the fall of 2015, from which migrants were supposed to be transited in a quick manner (Popović et al., 2022: 20). The so-called 'Balkan corridor' was closed in March 2016 with the EU-Turkey deal. Important to note is that the vast majority of migrants did not wish to settle in these transitory countries such as Croatia; only 200 of them asked for asylum in Croatia during the time the corridor was open (Šelo Šabić, 2017). Unlike the Czech Republic, however, Croatia accepted participation in the EU's relocation and resettlement schemes, and 250 Syrian refugees came to Croatia from Turkey between 2017 and 2019 (Popović et al., 2022: 20). With time the topic of Croatian police conducting pushbacks on the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina started appearing, after a prolonged period of speculation culminating in incriminating footage (Arbutina, 2023).

5.3. The Czech Republic

5.3.1. The Czech Republic and the EU

The story of the Czech Republic's relation with the EU is at the same time a story of early enthusiasm and successful and exemplary accession, but also one of the early and prominent appearances of Euroscepticism in the political arena, which spilled over to public opinion. The Czech Republic opened up accession negotiations in March 1998 and concluded them in December 2002, ultimately becoming a member on May 1st 2004 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, 2024). Even though political elites strongly stressed a 'return to Europe' after the fall of communism (Hloušek, 2019: 251), Euroscepticism gained a foothold in the political mainstream as early as the mid-1990s (Havlík - Hloušek - Kaniok, 2017: 53; Hanley, 2004: 692). There were two prominent political figures who differed in their ideas. The first President Václav Havel's idea of building Czech belonging to the EU was based on cultural and socially liberal grounds. On the other side stood the two-time Prime Minister and President Václav Klaus, who initially focused on Europe as a market-liberal economic model (Rovná and Rovny, 2018). His rhetoric toward the EU became harsher over time, as he growingly started seeing it as a threat to national sovereignty (Rovná and Rovny, 2018). Regarding citizens, although the Czech Republic is not often pointed out as the most glaring example of a country with significant levels of Euroscepticism, surveys often show its citizens to be among the least Euroenthusiastic people in Europe. This is not a new development. Comparatively, there was also a lower level of support for entering the EU than in other CEE countries (Hanley, 2004: 694; Guerra, 2013: 23-31), even though 77% of the citizens ended up voting for entering the EU. When looking at political parties at present times, it would appear that a pro-integration attitude prevails overall, but in practice, there are deviations from it (Hloušek, 2019: 264). In recent years, according to Havlík (2019), there has been a mobilization of Eurosceptics and a decline in the positive image of the EU in the public. Moreover, the country rejected the EU's proposal for mandatory migrant quotas.[32] Havlík (2019: 10) likewise wagers that the negative Euro-attitudes of the citizens affected the positions of the political elite. Public Euroscepticism has been persistent and was even observed to be growing in the past (Havlík, Hloušek &

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[32] Interestingly though, unlike Hungary and Poland, where Eurosceptic populist parties were in power, in the Czech Republic it was a mainstream, social-democrat-led government which rejected them.

Kaniok, 2017: 88). The recorded growth in dissatisfaction is said to be related to the crisis of the Eurozone and the migration crisis (Havlík, Hloušek & Kaniok, 2017: 80).

5.3.2. Party competition in the Czech Republic

A list of all the Czech political parties, along with their orientations, mentioned in this dissertation can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. *List of Czech political parties mentioned in the dissertation*

Abbreviation	Czech	English	Years Active	European affiliation	Orientation & defining ideology
ANO	*Akce nespokojených občanů*	*Action of Dissatisfied Citizens*	2011 -	RE	Blurred centrist (populist)
ČSSD	*Česká strana sociálně demokratická*	*Czech Social Democratic Party*	1878 -	PES	Center-left (social democracy)
KDU-ČSL	*Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová*	*Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party*	1919 -	EPP	Center-right (Christian democracy)
KSČM	*Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy*	*Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia*	1990 -	PEL (observer)	Radical left (Communism)
ODS	*Občanská demokratická strana*	*Civic Democratic Party*	1991 -	ECR	Center-right (Liberal conservatism)
Pirates	*Česká pirátská strana*	*Czech Pirate Party*	2009 -	PIRATES	Center-left (Pirate ideology)
SPD	*Svoboda a přímá demokracie*	*Freedom and Direct Democracy*	2015 -	ID	Radical right (Nationalist populist)

STAN	*Starostové a nezávislí*	*Mayors and Independents*	2004 -	EPP	Center (Liberal)
SZ	*Strana zelených*	*Green Party*	1990 -	EGP	Left (Green ideology)
TOP-09	*Tradice Odpovědnost Prosperita*	*Tradition Responsibility Prosperity*	2009 -	EPP	Center-right (Liberal conservatism)
Usvit	*Úsvit – Národní koalice*	*Dawn – National Coalition*	2013 - 2018	-	Right (Direct democracy)
VV	*Věci veřejné*	*Public Affairs*	2001 – 2015	-	Center (Populism)

Source: author

The crucial thing to point out regarding the Czech party system is that two parties dominated the competition for the first two post-revolution decades, up until the 2010s when new challengers began gaining traction. Prior to this, it was considered to be among the most stable in post-communist countries, meaning the persistence of party actors, predictable actions, and little electoral volatility (Balík and Hlušek, 2016: 104). The two parties which dominated the political landscape were the social-democratic ČSSD and the liberal-conservative ODS. The situation was also rather crystalized when it came to cleavages – the socioeconomic cleavage took a foothold, while others were marginal or nearly marginal (Hloušek & Kopeček, 2008). That means that parties and voters were divided throughout economic transformation, where ODS took on more economically liberal positions, but at the same time more socially conservative ones. Likewise, the ČSSD and ODS differed in positions toward European integration; ODS was much more skeptical, however, this was not considered to be "decisive for Czech voters" (Hloušek & Kopeček, 2008: 531). The elections of 2010 ushered in a new populist VV option, but the biggest challenger that emerged in the 2010s was the centrist populist ANO party of the billionaire Andrej Babiš, which won second place in the 2013 parliamentary elections and became part of the ruling coalition, later on proceeding to win the 2017 elections and becoming the prime minister party. The success of this party greatly put in question the finding that there is a stable socio-economic cleavage present in the country, with research pointing to the significance of "more non-ideological perception of politics which

stresses the competency of CPPs[33] to solve the most important issues combined with general dissatisfaction with the abilities of established political parties" (Havlík & Voda, 2018: 182). It was also in the middle of the 2010s that the populist Usvit party, which focused on direct democracy and was led by Tomio Okamura, evolved into the radical-right and populist SPD. The developments that happened in Czech party politics can be expected to have influenced outcomes concerning the migration crisis, as the pressure of populist parties and the radical-right SPD can be expected to have made debates about immigration and European integration more negatively oriented toward both phenomena.

5.3.3. The Czech Republic and migration

The Czech Republic is an ethnically homogenous country. Regarding contact with non-Czechs, as of 2021, 5.9% of the population was foreign-born, which is an increase of 49% from 2011 (OECD, 2021).[34] The country has maintained positive net migration since 1990, sans three calendar years (The World Bank, 2022). In this regard, it differs significantly from Croatia, which has seen an overall decline in population since the 1990s, while the Czech Republic has gained a few hundred thousand[35]. The Czechs saw arrivals of Vietnamese people during communism, which represents significant experience with migrants of different ethnicities, with their number estimated to have been a little over 60,000 in 2019 (Česko v datech, 2019). Another significant immigrant group are the Ukrainians, who have been arriving as economic migrants since the 1990s and in addition to that as refugees after the 2014 invasion of Crimea and particularly after the Russian invasion of 2022. The number of Ukrainian refugees stood at 325 742 on April 1st 2023 (Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, 2023).

Regarding experience with migrants during the migration crisis, the country did not find itself among the main migrant routes related to the crisis of 2015/2016. That coupled with rejecting

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[33] Centrist populist parties.

[34] With the main countries of birth being Slovakia, Ukraine and Vietnam.

[35] In 1991 the Czech population stood at 10 308 682, while in 2022 the figure was 10 759 525 (Czech Demographic Handbook, 2023).

participation in the EU's relocation and resettlement programs means the country and its citizens achieved minimal contact with the migration population characteristic for that wave. By the end of 2017, the country took in only 12 refugees (Radio Prague International, 2017). Despite this, there was staunch opposition to (Muslim) immigrants recorded in the country, as the results of the dissertation will show. Negative sentiments toward them developed at the very beginning of the migration crisis and persisted throughout the analyzed period. An important contextual factor to highlight were demonstrations against Islam and migration. They were linked with SPD leader Tomio Okamura and other actors from the NGO sector such as Martin Konvička's Bloc Against Islam. In the analysis materials, more notable demonstrations against Islam were recorded as early as June 2015 (Lang & Zpěváčková, 2015), in September 2015 where there were calls for the government to resign (ČTK, 2015c), and in May 2016 (ČTK, 2016c).

6. RESULTS - CITIZENS' VIEWS OF MIGRATION AND THE EU

6.1. Introductory note

This chapter will demonstrate what the views of Czech and Croatian citizens on migration and the EU were like before and after the migration crisis. The results are divided into two sections. The first one presents crucial descriptive data, while the second one touches on the results of statistical analyses that serve to show the link between attitudes toward migration and the EU.

6.2. Description of attitudes toward migrants

Statements covering three scenarios related to the acceptance of immigrants seem to paint a picture of two different societies (Figure 2). Statistically, Czechs and Croatians differed in 2008 and 2018 on all three questions. Czechs were overall more negative toward migrants than positive in 2008, but the difference is particularly noticeable in 2018 when their attitudes turned even less permissive. Based on this survey data, allowing immigrants of a different race or from poorer countries in Europe in particular became a highly unpopular idea in Czech society. The same cannot be said for Croatians, who on average show no signs of developing more unfavorable views between 2008 and 2018. [36]

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[36] What is more, t-tests show a statistically significant difference on questions of accepting immigrants of the same ethnic group as majority and those from poorer countries (Appendix 3). The attitudes of Croatians grew more permissive in those two scenarios.
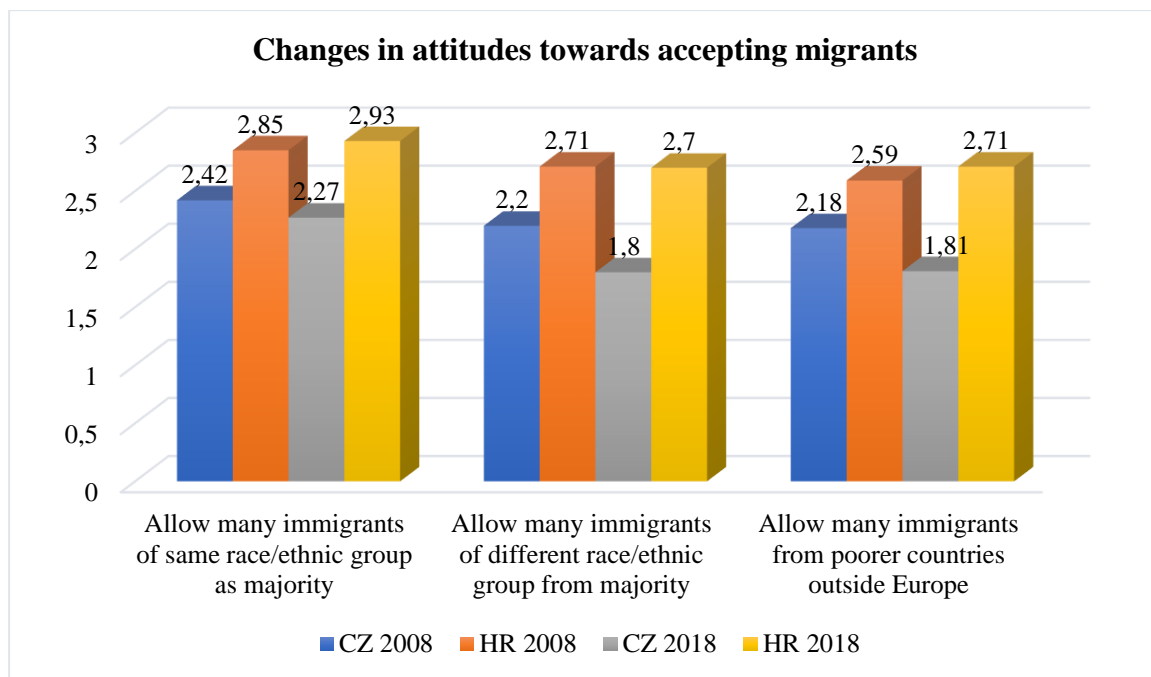
Figure 2. *Changes in attitudes toward accepting migrants*

When looking at general statements about immigration (Figure 3), it is evident that in 2008 Czechs considered immigrants to be a somewhat greater threat to the economy, rather than seeing them as a cultural threat. What is more, there was no statistical difference between Czechs and Croatians regarding the idea that immigration is good or bad for the country's economy (Appendix 4). Ten years later, this changed dramatically as the perception of a cultural threat rose from a mean answer of 4.45 to 3.65, with the lower number indicating a more negative attitude. Likewise, Czechs also seem to show an overall more negative attitude toward immigrants when gauging if they make the country a worse or better place to live. Puzzlingly though, Croatia is the exact opposite case. Mean values indicate that the perception of immigration has turned almost somewhat more positive after the migration crisis.
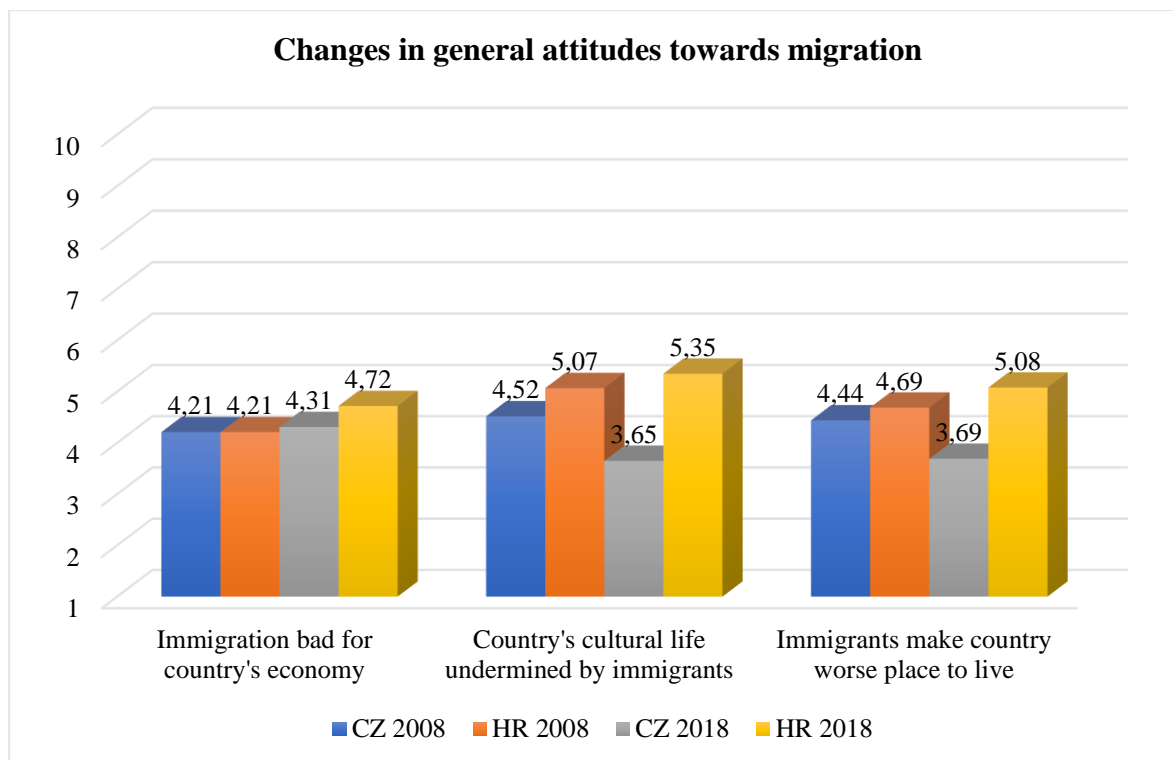
Figure 3. *Changes in general attitudes toward migration*

Note: lower values indicate a more negative attitude

Sources: ESS 2008 and ESS 2018

The descriptive data on migration topics point to two tentative conclusions. One is that the preconditions for a more critical attitude toward migrants were already present in the Czech Republic before the migration crisis. Second, the changes in attitudes that happened in the Czech Republic point to the politicization of migration, which has then been reflected in public opinion.

Delving deeper into the data, it is worthwhile to also take a look at attitudes toward Muslims (Table 5). Using International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data from 2018, a tremendous difference between the two countries can be noticed. There are barely any 'very positive' attitudes toward Muslims in the Czech Republic, while in Croatia there are very few 'very negative' attitudes. Coupled with the existing knowledge that there the CEE region has been witness to the obfuscation of the border between 'the migrant' and 'the Muslim', this is an important piece of the puzzle that explains different outcomes between the countries.

Table 5. *Attitudes toward Muslims*

	Country and year	f	%
Very positive	HR 2018	204	22.1%
	CZ 2018	25	1.9%
Somewhat positive	HR 2018	252	27.3%
	CZ 2018	94	7.1%
Neither positive nor negative	HR 2018	351	38.0%
	CZ 2018	411	30.8%
Somewhat negative	HR 2018	87	9.4%
	CZ 2018	376	28.2%
Very negative	HR 2018	30	3.2%
	CZ 2018	428	32.1%

Source: ISSP 2018

6.3. Attitudes toward the EU

Both in 2008 and 2018 Czechs were less enthusiastic than Croatians about the prospect of European unification going further (Figure 4). Moreover, for Czechs, we can also notice a non-negligible decline from 2008, which may hint at the widening of the transnational cleavage. Interestingly enough, the same two observations cannot be made about the trust in the European Parliament, which has not only seen a rise in both of the countries over the years but is higher in the Czech Republic. The question of emotional attachment toward Europe raises questions as well, given that Czechs are significantly more attached to it.[37] At this point, it is worthwhile to remember that feeling European and supporting the EU as one mode of European integration can be distinct matters. Clearly, in the Czech Republic, the rift between the two is more pronounced than in some other countries.

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[37] As was also seen in International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data from 2013 (Petrović, Mrakovčić & Fila, 2021).
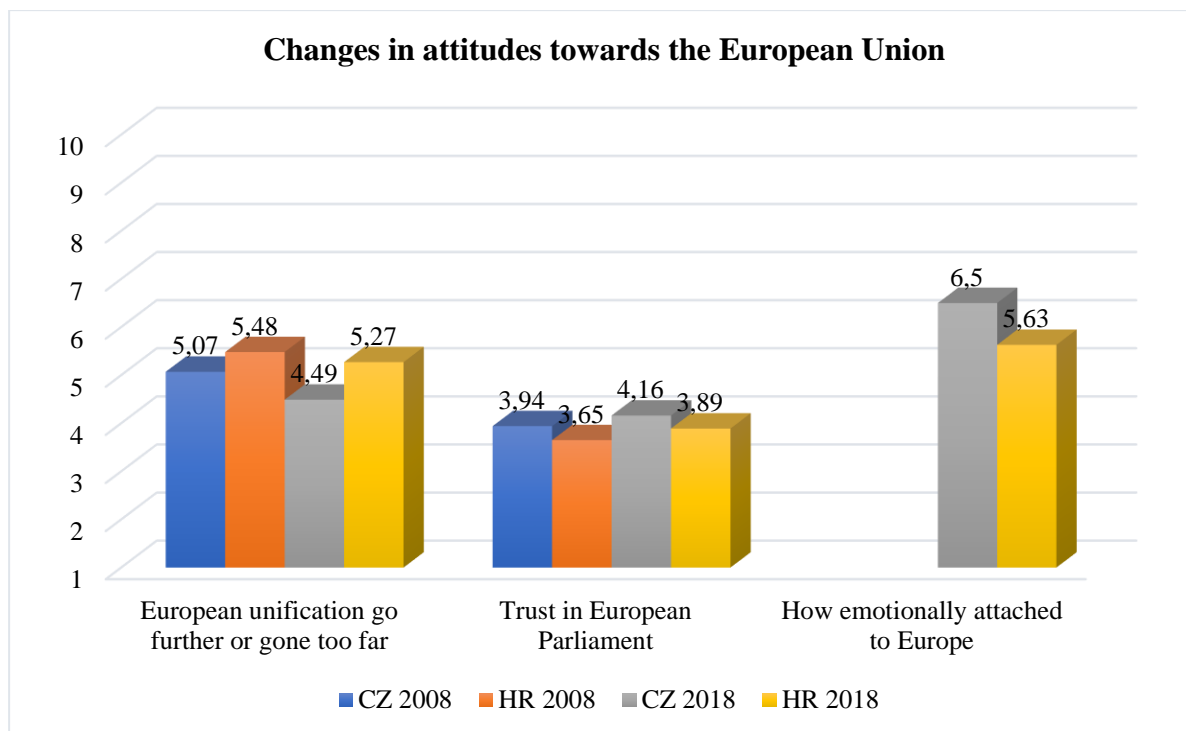
Figure 4. *Changes in attitudes toward the European Union*

Completing the mosaic of descriptive data, shares of answers related to voting in a potential referendum about remaining or leaving the EU (Table 6) further reveal that Czechs are flakier on the topic of the EU. While the majority of them (over 60%) stated that they would vote to remain, the contrast with Croatia reveals higher proportions of not just those who would vote to leave, but also of those who are uncertain or who would simply not vote.

Table 6. *Voting for remaining in or leaving the EU*

	Country & Year	Leave	Remain	Would not Vote	Don't know	Chi
Would vote for [country] to remain member of European Union or leave	CZ 2018	475 (19.8%)	1429 (61.6%)	200 (8.6%)	215 (9.3%)	116.086***
	HR 2018	272 (15%)	1357 (76.4%)	62 (3.5%)	85 (4.8%)	Cramer V = 0.168

Sources: ESS 2008 and ESS 2018

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

6.4. Influence of attitudes toward migration on EU attitudes

The most obvious finding from Table 7 which analyzed what might have shaped attitudes toward further European integration in 2008 is that the proposed model had poor explanatory power in Croatia. Even though both the economic and cultural aspects of immigration were statistically significantly linked with the dependent variable, the rather low R2 value (6.2%) means that ultimately this might not have been decisive for forming an opinion. This is in contrast with the Czech case where there is a considerably larger percentage of variance explained (14.1%). Curiously, in both cases, the statistical contribution of the variable measuring willingness to welcome immigrants into the country dwindled to a point of non-significance. In Croatia, cultural concerns seem to have been a stronger predictor, while in the Czech Republic, it was economic concerns. Naturally, the direction of the relationship is such that more negative attitudes toward immigration point to more negative attitudes toward further European unification. Both perceived benefits/threats from immigrants and trust in politicians are better predictors of attitudes toward EU unification in the Czech Republic than in Croatia. In both cases, socio-demographic control variables only made a small contribution to the model. Out of the variables that did show a connection, linkage with religiosity and age was observed in Czechia, while in Croatia age, gender, and type of settlement are significant predictors. Regarding age, the direction of the links is different, however. In the Czech Republic, older people tend to favor less EU unification than younger ones, while the reverse is true for Croatia. In Croatia, respondents from more urban settlements tend to support further unification in comparison with respondents from more rural settlements.

Table 7. Linear regression in ESS 2008

DV: European unification go further (vs. gone too far)	I		II		III	
	β (CZ)	β (HR)	β (CZ)	β (HR)	β (CZ)	β (HR)
CONTROL VARIABLES						
Age	-.103***	.087**	-.066**	.100***	-.058*	.099***
Female gender	-.021	-.077*	-.024	-.090**	-.021	-.090**
More rural settlement	-.014	-.061	-.009	-.056	-.025	-0.65*
Higher level of education	.065**	.059	.029	.042	.024	.055
Less frequent attendance of religious services	.031	-.009	.053*	-.022	.063**	-0.13
IMMIGRATION						

	β (CZ)	β (HR)	β (CZ)	β (HR)	β (CZ)	β (HR)
Allow immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority			.005	.003	.005	.008
Immigration good (vs. bad) for country's economy			.231***	.096*	.209***	.078*
Country's cultural life enriched (vs. undermined) by immigrants			.144***	.105**	.137**	.111**
ANTI-ELITE SENTIMENTS						
Greater trust in politicians					.152***	.127***
Adjusted R²	.015	.017	.128	.047	.149	.062
F change	6.004***	4.746***	72.611***	12.615***	42.560***	18.258***

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

When comparing results from 2008 with those from 2018 shown in Table 8, we noticed a general rise in the predictive power of the model in both countries. It has now become rather successful in the Czech case, where the final model explains 27,2% of the variance. Croatia has also seen a rise in the explanatory power of the selected variables, but the figure (10.4%) is once more considerably smaller than in the Czech Republic. In both cases, almost all of the variables are now statistically significant predictors, with the exception of settlement size, religiosity, and educational level in Croatia. Compared to 2008, the change that happened in the Czech Republic is that the idea of cultural threat seems to have become a better predictor than that of an economic threat. Yet in Croatia, this aspect does not seem to be as stressed. Anti-elite sentiments retain their relevance but are now secondary to immigration attitudes in Croatia as well as in the Czech Republic. Regarding control variables, one interesting thing to note is the rise in the coefficient for age, with the direction of the coefficient once more pointing to differences between how Euroscepticism is structured in the two countries.

Table 8. Linear regression in ESS 2018

DV: *European unification go further (vs. gone too far)*	I		II		III	
	β (CZ)	**β (HR)**	**β (CZ)**	**β (HR)**	**β (CZ)**	**β (HR)**
CONTROL VARIABLES						
Age	-.212***	.111***	-.134***	.117***	-.133***	.115***
Female gender	-.032	-.065*	-.012	-.061*	-.009	-.062*
More rural settlement	-.081***	.017	-.060**	.030	-.076***	.024

Higher level of education	.125***	.016	.081***	-.001	.082***	-.004
Less frequent attendance of religious services	-.050**	.062*	-.007	.038	.006	.046
IMMIGRATION						
Allow immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority			.073***	.074*	.069**	.079**
Immigration good (vs. bad) for country's economy			.155***	.189***	.107***	.176***
Country's cultural life enriched (vs. undermined) by immigrants			.265***	.075*	.252***	.071*
ANTI-ELITE SENTIMENTS						
Greater trust in politicians					.182***	.097***
Adjusted R²	.069	.018	.243	.099	.272	.107
F change	31.598***	6.651***	157.231***	45.939***	81.631***	15.598***

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

ISSP data from 2013 is very much in line with the aforementioned ESS data (Table 9). Even before the crisis, similar questions related to migration were related to a somewhat similar dependent variable[38] more in the Czech case than in the Croatian one (12.7% vs 4.4% variance explained). What is interesting, however, is that the variable touching on the idea of immigrants as a cultural threat was not a statistically significant predictor this time around in either of the countries. Links with populism were not explored since there was no suitable variable to be found in this database.

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[38] The problem of following decisions of the EU even if the country does not agree with them should also measure sovereigntist sentiments.

Table 9. *Linear regression in ISSP 2013*

DV: Country should follow decisions of the European Union	I		II	
	β (CZ)	β (HR)	β (CZ)	β (HR)
CONTROL VARIABLES				
Age	.081***	-.050	.060**	-.060
Female gender	-.005	.022	-.013	0.39
More rural settlement	.079***	.068	.057*	.086*
Higher level of education	-.035	.005	-.011	.035
Less frequent attendance of religious services	.067**	-.048	.024	-.042
IMMIGRATION				
Number of immigrants to increase to country			.247***	.090*
Immigrants generally good for economy			.149***	.151***
Immigrants undermine culture			.007	-.044
Adjusted R²	.016	.003	.127	.049
F change	1.518	6.333***	13.183***	70.999***

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

7. RESULTS – POLITICAL ELITES' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE EU IN THE MIGRATION CRISIS AS SEEN THROUGH EXPERT SCORES AND PARTY MANIFESTOS

7.1. Introductory note

The first results chapter is divided into two subchapters which reflect the sources used for analysis. The idea behind the structure of the subchapters is that each source answers a piece of the puzzle, gradually moving toward those that provide more in-depth knowledge. In all analyses, for efficiency's sake, party abbreviations are used.

7.2. Overview of Chapel Hill Expert Survey scores
7.2.1. Expert takes on Croatian parties

When looking at expert opinions from the Chapel Hill Survey regarding migration matters, we can see that experts gauged that, overall, favoring more liberal immigration policies has declined from 2011 to 2016 among parliamentary parties (Table 10).[39] Focusing on parties that remained elected, with all of the parties except for the Croatian Peasant's Party (HSS), we notice a growth in the restrictiveness of their attitudes. Regarding the exception of HSS, this is most likely a reflection of party leadership changing in 2016.[40] It also indicates that this party has the highest dissent score on this matter. The difference between SDP and HDZ is particularly interesting. Judging by expert scores, one would expect that HDZ would have harshly criticized the then-in-power SDP. Despite the low acceptance of migration as indicated by these scores, HDZ has not opposed migrant relocations in the EU. According to data from September 2017, Croatia, however, received only 54 of them at that point (Martin, 2017).

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[39] 2014: M= 5.43; Mdn= 4.29; SD= 2.58

2019: M= 6.07; Mdn= 5.39; SD= 1.96

[40] The party used to be more inclined towards the right, but the then and current president Krešo Beljak has turned the party more towards the left and has affiliated himself with left-wing options such as SDP and even the radical left-wing RF (*Radnička fronta*, Workers' Front).

Out of the parties that were present for only one election year, the green ORaH party has positioned itself as the most pro-immigration party among all of the ones in the database. On the other hand, the most negative attitude was recorded in 2016 with the now-defunct Croatian Conservative Party (HKS).[41] Prominent challengers of migration in the form of the Most and Živi zid parties also emerged around this time. This change in the constellation of parties consequently resulted in the mean value for 2016 turning noticeably more unfavorable toward migration. GAL/TAN values match very well with a party's stance toward immigration. Without an exception, those that have the highest TAN value also have the most anti-immigration positions.

Table 10. *Croatian parliamentary parties in 2011 and 2016 and their CHES immigration scores*

Party	2011	2016	2016_dissent	2011_GAL/TAN	2016 GAL/TAN
Present in both elections					
HNS	3.000	4.364	2.048	1.75	1.92
IDS	3.000	3.667	1.450	1.88	1.33
SDP	3.714	4.522	2.619	2.25	2.29
HSLS	4.286	5.158	2.176	3.25	3.55
HDZ	7.143	7.696	2.652	8.25	7.13
HDSSB	7.500	8.800	1.294	8.63	8.55
HSS	8.000	5.474	3.118	8.75	4.66
Mean value	*5.235*	*5.331*	*2.194*	*4.97*	*4.20*
Present in a single election					
ORaH	1.833	-	-	1.00	-
HSP-AS	8.714	-	-	9.38	-
HL-SR	3.857	-	-	2.13	-
Most	-	8.696	1.857	-	8.50
HKS	-	9.263	0.706	-	9.48
SDSS[42]	-	3.765	2.000	-	2.91

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[41] Despite the party not existing anymore, its personnel should not be discounted since the party was created on the grounds of the HSP-AS party and since some members went on to be a part of the HS (*Hrvatski suverenisti*, Croatian Sovereignists) party that organized a petition for a referendum on adopting the Euro.

[42] Even though this party was elected to the Parliament following the elections of 2011, there are no expert scores for it recorded that year.

ŽZ	-	7.333	3.105	-	4.96
HSU	-	5.300	1.889	-	4.94
NS-R	-	3.222	3.929	-	2.95
BM 365	-	6.588	1.733	-	6.04
Mean value	*4.801*	*6.310*	*2.419*	*4.17*	*5.68*
All of the parties					
Mean value	*5.117*	*6.142*	*2.228*	*4.73*	*4.94*

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014 and 2019 (Jolly et al., 2022)

Note: 0 indicates a liberal immigration policy and 10 indicates a restrictive policy.

Note: 0 indicates no dissent and 10 indicates a divided party.

Note: 0 indicates a GAL position and 10 a TAN position.

When looking at orientations toward European integration (Table 1), we would be hard-pressed to say that the positions have turned more negative as glaringly as in the case of immigration attitudes. Eyeing the mean value for parties present in both election years, the parties have seemingly grown more pro-EU. This, however, is greatly aided by the jump in value that was attributed to HSS, with the change in leadership once more explaining the deviation. What is evident is the growing assessment of dissent within parties. The case of HDZ's rising European policy score and intra-party dissent could also point to the difference the party witnessed with the change in the Tomislav Karamarko toward the Andrej Plenković leadership. The parties that emerged in 2016 are very much a different story. In the same way that the appearance of Most, HKS, and Živi zid added challengers of immigration to the mix, these three parties were likewise challengers of European integration. The link with GAL/TAN is not as straightforward as was in the case of immigration. HDZ stands out as a high TAN, pro-EU party, while ŽZ was rated as a Eurosceptic party, but in the middle of the road between GAL and TAN. Overall, a slight decrease in the salience of EU matters is also observable, which can be explained by the fact that Croatia entered the EU between the two points of assessment.

Table 11. *Croatian parliamentary parties in 2011 and 2016 and their CHES European integration scores*

Party	2011	2016	2011_dissent	2016_dissent	2011_salience	2016_salience	2011_GAL/TAN	2016_GAL/TAN
Present in both elections								

HNS	7.000	6.565	1.111	1.500	9.333	7.391	1.75	1.92
IDS	6.778	6.947	0.714	0.625	8.667	8.130	1.88	1.33
SDP	6.556	6.625	1.222	1.625	8.778	7.750	2.25	2.29
HSLS	6.333	6.478	1.000	1.500	6.667	6.200	3.25	3.55
HDZ	6.222	6.667	1.556	3.125	7.667	9.042	8.25	7.13
HDSSB	4.750	3.900	1.167	3.667	6.222	4.294	8.63	8.55
HSS	5.000	6.381	1.667	2.500	6.222	6.300	8.75	4.66
Mean value	*5.793*	*6.223*	*1.287*	*2.320*	*7.651*	*7.015*	*4.97*	*4.20*
Present in single election								
ORaH	6.111	-	1.000	-	8.111	-	1.00	-
HSP-AS	3.625	-	4.000	-	7.000	-	9.38	-
HL-SR	5.556	-	6.111	-	6.111	-	2.13	-
Most	-	3.818	-	3.857	-	5.609	-	8.50
HKS	-	2.619	-	2.200	-	5.900	-	9.48
SDSS	-	6.174	-	1.600	-	5.762	-	2.91
ŽZ	-	1.818	-	3.286	-	6.913	-	4.96
HSU	-	5.762	-	1.000	-	3.412	-	4.94
NS-R	-	6.421	-	2.000	-	5.667	-	2.95
BM 365	-	4.750	-	2.250	-	3.217	-	6.04
Mean value	*5.097*	*4.480*	*3.704*	*2.313*	*7.074*	*5.211*	*4.17*	*5.68*
All of the parties								
Mean value	*5.793*	*5.410*	*2.012*	*2.316*	*7.033*	*6.173*	*4.73*	*4.94*

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014 and 2019 (Jolly et al., 2022)

Note: 0 indicates an anti-EU orientation and 7 indicates a pro-EU orientation.

Note: 0 indicates no dissent and 10 indicates a divided party.

Note: 0 indicates European integration is not important and 10 indicates it is a most important issue.

Note: 0 indicates a GAL position and 10 a TAN position.

So what is the link between EU and migration attitudes? Statistical analyses should once more be taken with a grain of salt, but for the 11 cases in 2011, the correlation between *eu_position* and *immigrate_policy* is statistically significant and amounts to r= -0.815. For the 14 cases in 2016, the correlation between *eu_position* and *immigrate_policy* is also significant but now stands at r=-0.770. The somewhat smaller coefficient is unexpected because of the presupposed effects of the migration crisis. Even though it may seem that this is due to new parties taking the scene in 2016, when calculating the coefficients solely for the parties present in both database versions, in 2011 the coefficient was r=-0.8851, while in 2016 it is again lower r=-0.7576. Given the smaller number of cases, it is not wise to make any conclusions based on the

changes in coefficients. But descriptively we do notice parties growing more negative toward migration, yet not toward the European Union at the same time.

7.2.2. Expert takes on Czech parties

Expert scores on immigration positions of Czech political parties shown in Table 12 glaringly point to two major conclusions. One is that prior to the crisis only the Green Party was markedly liberal in its approach and that while some parties held a moderate position (like ANO, ČSDD, TOP-09), others were already pointing toward a more restrictive attitude (KDU-ČSL, KSČM, ODS, Svobodni, Usvit). The second conclusion would be that after the crisis the attitudes got noticeably more negative for most parties, except KDU-ČSL and TOP-09. The ruling coalition partners between 2013 and 2017 ANO and ČSSD stand out in particular as parties that started as more moderate but turned dismissive toward immigration. A markedly negative attitude is less expected from a left-wing option such as ČSSD, which is why the highest dissent score the party has might not be as surprising. The link with GAL/TAN is not as obvious as in the Croatian case. Parties such as ANO and ČSSD ultimately do not tend toward the TAN end, but they nonetheless developed dominantly anti-immigration positions. What is noticeable, however, is that all of the parties that were present in both election years have shifted toward a more TAN position, with the exception of TOP-09.

Table 12. Parliamentary parties in 2013 and 2017 and their CHES immigration scores

Party	2013	2017	2017_dissent	2013_GAL/TAN	2017_GAL/TAN
Present in both elections					
ANO	5.86	8.50	2.13	4.46	5.73
ČSSD	4.33	7.19	4.64	4.43	4.92
KDU-ČSL	7.00	6.65	3.28	7.64	7.78
KSČM	6.67	8.96	1.25	6.57	8.07
ODS	7.88	8.44	2.00	6.00	7.04
TOP 09	5.00	4.76	2.33	5.50	4.85
Mean value	*6.13*	*7.42*	*2.61*	*5.77*	*6.40*
Present in a single election					
SVOBODNI	7.63	-	-	4.86	-
SZ	1.33	-	-	1.29	-

USVIT	9.40	-	-	7.71	-	
Pirates	-	3.58	2.73	-	1.00	
SPD	-	9.85	0.27	-	9.37	
STAN	-	5.08	2.19	-	4.08	
Mean value	*6.12*	*6.17*	*2.31*	*4.62*	*4.82*	
All of the parties						
Mean value	*6.12*	*7.00*	*2.31*	*5.35*	*5.77*	

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014 and 2019 (Jolly et al., 2022)

Note: 0 indicates a liberal immigration policy and 10 indicates a restrictive policy.

Note: 0 indicates no dissent and 10 indicates a divided party.

Note: 0 indicates a GAL position and 10 a TAN position.

In Table 13 which shows attitudes toward European integration, we do not see as clear of a pattern as with immigration. According to experts, parties such as ANO, KSČM, and ČSSD did see some decline in Eurooptimism. The ODS which was known for its mild Euroscepticism has turned more positive, but this should be interpreted in the context of the change in party leadership to the more moderate Petr Fiala. What is notable is the addition of the highly Eurosceptic SPD to the competition; even if the communist KSČM party was known to tread the line between hard and soft Euroscepticism, the SPD is even more radical. Regarding GAL/TAN, parties such as ANO, ČSSD, and KSČM have shown movements toward a more TAN position, and their attitudes toward the EU have followed suit i.e. they have become slightly more negative. Furthermore, it seems that EU issues have become more salient after 2013.

Table 13. *Parliamentary parties in 2011 and 2016 and their CHES European integration scores*

Party	2013	2017	2013_dissent	2017_dissent	2013_salience	2017_salience	2017_GAL/TAN	2017 GAL/TAN
Present in both elections								
ANO	5.20	4.48	3.00	2.85	4.20	4.93	4.46	5.73
ČSSD	6.07	5.74	2.92	4.23	5.73	5.59	4.43	4.92
KDU-ČSL	6.50	6.33	1.38	2.15	6.40	6.33	7.64	7.78
KSČM	2.73	2.37	3.23	2.54	4.33	5.00	6.57	8.07
ODS	2.87	3.78	3.62	2.92	6.67	6.04	6.00	7.04
TOP 09	6.67	6.67	1.46	1.31	6.64	7.48	5.50	4.85
Mean value	*5.01*	*4.83*	*2.60*	*2.67*	*5.66*	*5.90*	*5.77*	*6.40*
Present in a single election								

SVOBODNI	1.33	-	0.75	-	7.67	-	4.86	-
SZ	6.57	-	2.15	-	6.67	-	1.29	-
USVIT	2.27	-	2.42	-	4.07	-	7.71	-
Pirates	-	6.12	-	3.08	-	6.00	-	1.00
SPD	-	1.48	-	1.08	-	7.33	-	9.37
STAN	-	6.52	-	1.33	-	6.92	-	4.08
Mean value	*3.39*	*4.71*	*1.77*	*1.83*	*6.14*	*6.75*	*4.62*	*4.82*
All of the parties								
Mean value	*4.47*	*4,83*	*2.33*	*2.39*	*5.82*	*6.18*	*5.35*	*5.77*

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014 and 2019 (Jolly et al., 2022)

Note: 0 indicates an anti-EU orientation and 7 indicates a pro-EU orientation.

Note: 0 indicates no dissent and 10 indicates a divided party.

Note: 0 indicates European integration is not important and 10 indicates it is a most important issue.

Note: 0 indicates a GAL position and 10 a TAN position.

When only provisionally trying to look into correlations between the two topics presented, in 2013 the correlation between EU and immigration positions was -0.729 (p < 0.05). In 2017 the figure is now higher and stands at -0.869 (p < 0.01). For the 6 parties present in both years, the correlation stood at -0.638 (p > 0.05) in 2013. In 2017, the figure stands at -0.888 (p < 0.05). However, due to the low number of cases influencing the interval of confidence, these correlations should not be taken as solid evidence. If confirmed in further analyses, however, it could be speculated that this happened because the topic of migrant quotas as an EU-directed proposal achieved greater salience.

7.3. Analyses of political party parliamentary manifestos

After expert scores, analyses of parliamentary manifestos further deepen and broaden the knowledge of how political parties position themselves. Although all available manifestos were analyzed, only the manifestos of parties where there was relevant material found are described in the following sub-chapters, with the excluded manifestos listed at the end of each sub-chapter.

7.3.1. Croatian political parties' manifestos

The analysis of manifestos of Croatian political parties is divided into the periods before, immediately after, and in the aftermath of the crisis. Because there is less material, only the parties that mentioned relevant topics are listed.

7.3.1.1.   The years preceding the height of the crisis (2007, 2011)

In the two elections preceding the migration crisis of 2015/2016, there is barely any mention of the migration issue.

In 2007, **HDZ** made no directed statements but only promised to build a Center for Asylum Seekers and a Center for Foreigners, which was an EU-funded project (Mlinarić, 2004). The **HSLS-HSS-PGS** coalition promised to devote special attention to refugees, which is related to the return of those who lived in Croatia before the Homeland War (p.40). During this electoral campaign, **SDP** mentioned that social policy should take an interest in migrants, among other vulnerable groups of people in society (p.19). They also mention the "refugee crisis" as a threat to national security, but add that this is why they advocate for membership in the EU and NATO, believing that international cooperation is necessary to solve those issues. **SDSS** talks about the return of Serbian refugees.

Finally, in 2011**,** only the SDP-led **Kukuriku coalition** made mention of the topic, in a special subchapter about migrations. They demonstrate a positive attitude toward economic migrants, advocating support for greater cooperation with countries that will more than likely provide an immigrant workforce in the future. Migrations are, however, yet again briefly mentioned as a global security challenge. **SDSS** talks about Serbian refugees once more. Overall, we can see that in the years preceding the migration crisis of 2015/2016, there was very little discussion about migration. If the discussion existed it was partly related to the Homeland War refugees, such as in the case of SDSS in both years and the HSLS-HSS-PGS coalition in 2007, and not migrants of non-European origins that were dominant in the crisis of 2015/2016. SDP can be seen as showing foresight, as the need for economic migrants increased in time, culminating with the liberalization of foreign worker quotas in the early 2020s. They are also the only party who linked the issue with European integration, and in a positive way at that.

The following electoral manifestos were analyzed, but nothing relevant could be singled out: HNS-Liberals (2007), IDS (2007), HDSSB (2007, 2011), HDZ (2011), HL-SR (2011), SDSS (2011), HDSSB (2011), HSS (2011), Independent List of Ivan Grubišić (2011).

7.3.1.2.   The height of the crisis (2015 & 2016)

Even though two elections of 2015 and 2016 took place at the height of the crisis, materials from party manifestos pertaining to migration matters are in fact scarce. The issue of migration is generally addressed more from the viewpoint of reducing emigration from Croatia rather than discussing immigration.[43]

In 2015, the **'Homeland Coalition' (*Domoljubna koalicija)*** headed by HDZ mentioned the term "migrant crisis" in the very first, introductory paragraph to its manifesto. It is listed as one of the several criticisms of the SDP-led government. This is not, however, expanded on at all further in the manifesto, with the only linked position being that they intend to counteract demographical problems with greater immigration of people of Croat descent. In contrast, the **'Croatia is Growing'** coalition led by SDP was proud of how it handled the crisis, praising the effort of the police and its 'humane and organized' way of taking care of "over 100 000 refugees from Asia" (p.18).

Interestingly enough **Živi zid**, the most anti-immigration assessed party, makes no mention of migration. Their opinions on the EU are quite clear, however - either the EU will be reformed, or they believe that Croatia should leave the Union in five years. Živi zid emerged on the issue of debt and evictions and did not profit from the migration crisis (Kneuer, 2019: 12).

In 2016, there was a shift in the **HDZ**. It now mentions the need for "solidarity and empathy toward refugees and migrants", with the addendum of fully respecting national and EU law (p.102). The SDP-led left-center coalition, which was during the election year called the '**Peoples' Coalition' (*Narodna koalicija*),** now does not reflect on migration much, other than saying that they will protect the country from cheap labor force which would diminish the price

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[43] Croatia witnessed a considerable loss of population in the 2010s due to emigration. Nowhere was this better reflected than in the census where the population dropped from 4 284 889 (2011) to 3,871,833 (2021).

of labor in Croatia. [44] Knowing that the migration crisis raised fears of migrants as a cultural threat more than those of an economic threat, this is not quite an expected finding. **MOST** believes that the system of national security has been severely jeopardized, by the "refugee crisis", among other things.

It is difficult to detect patterns with this little material, but what exists and the fact that utterances negatively oriented toward immigration and the EU hardly existed points to the fact that the humanitarian approach utilized at the beginning of the crisis was not particularly questioned within party competition.

The following electoral manifestos were analyzed, but nothing relevant could be singled out: Even Stronger Istria Coalition (IDS-led - 2015, 2016), NS-R (2015), MOST (2015), HDSSB (2015), MB 365 (2015), The Only Option Coalition (ŽŽ-led – 2016), Coalition for Prime Minister (MB 365-led - 2016).

7.3.1.3. *The aftermath of the crisis (2020)*

In the party manifestos almost 5 years removed from the height of the crisis, we puzzlingly find more material than before.

HDZ now praises itself for "successfully protecting Croatia from a potential migrant wave…" (p.6), later on continuing with the security thread of claiming to have "raised the capacity of border police to efficiently respond to the migrant crisis" (p.104) and praising the "day and night work of border policemen thanks to whom we (HDZ) are preventing illegal migration" (p. 109). Party president Plenković's visit to the Turkey-Greece border is also mentioned in the context of the EU sending a strong message that the outer border of the EU will be protected from illegal migration through combined effort" (p.109). Likewise, supporting the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration' is mentioned in light of differentiating between 'refugees' and 'economic migrants' (p.109). Overall, a securitizing lens is obvious, but the EU is presented as a key partner in dealing with migration, rather than an adversary.

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[44] Interestingly, this is not in congruence with the positive attitude towards economic migrants shown in the 2011 manifesto.

The broader lens the party presents in multiple places does mention the strengthening of national sovereignty, but they speak about "new sovereigntism, which is based on strengthening the state and the economy and on effective use of our influence in the European Union, with the aim of promoting national interests and greater quality of life for our fellow citizens" (p.6). In that sense, the party mentions numerous areas of cooperation with and within the EU as a positive thing.

The Restart coalition (SDP-led), on the other hand, completely omits the question of migration. They focused their criticisms in the manifesto on how the previous government managed the more recent, COVID-19 crisis.

MOST, like HDZ, takes a securitizing approach by stating that they will give more attention to "guarding Croatian eastern borders toward Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, which need to be supervised more to stop illegal migrations" (p. 34).

HNS-Liberals makes specific mention of "better regulation of migratory processes" when talking about how they advocate for more EU (p. 8). Migrants are discussed through an economic prism, albeit not the one that sees them as a danger to the Croatian workforce. According to this party, Croatia "does not have the problem of a too great of an influx of migrants, but rather an insufficient one", which is why it should "have a more liberal asylum policy and be more open to accepting migrants" (p.14). This is compounded by calls for cultural acceptance of migrants, interestingly drawing up on the example of Western societies which have accepted Croatian economic and political immigrants from 1945 to 1990 and refugees from 1991 – 1995.

The **Homeland Movement (DP)** party, then called the Homeland Movement of Miroslav Škoro (DPMŠ), although stressing that demographic issues are of vital importance for the country, only mentioned the immigration of people of Croat descent as a desirable outcome. There is no talk about opposing the EU's role in immigration, even though they do mention being in favor of the EU as a confederal union of sovereign states, as opposed to a supra-national, federal, and unitary state (p.3). The **MOŽEMO!** party first lists "increased migration" as one of the risks the society is facing in the context of ecological challenges. The party goes on to show a humanitarian and supportive face throughout the rest of the material. Unlike HDZ and MOST, they wish to "stop the practice of violence toward migrants and refugees on the borders and conduct an efficient investigation of those illegal actions" (p.39). Many sentiments relating to

the cultural acceptance of migrants are uttered. Moreover, there is a specific sub-chapter dealing with 'Migrations and solidarity'. Here they are very explicit about ending "securitization-militarization measures funded by the EU budget" (p.40). In contrast with that, they wish to have "transparent and politically and economically inclusive migration politics", which should be focused on "attaining the right for asylum, support for refugees and migrants and regional cooperation in setting a standard for humanitarian and refugee rights" (p.39). Even if using EU funds for negative purposes was mentioned, the party wishes to work on asylum policies with other EU member states.

The New Left (NL) party which was a part of the left coalition along with MOŽEMO! and the Worker's Front also voiced opposition toward violence against migrants and asylum seekers, instead promoting openness and integration. The EU is now criticized in the context of not being able to "secure humane solutions to the problems of refugees and migrants" (p.20).

The radical-left **Workers' Front (RF)** talks about emigration, seeing a center-periphery problem wherein peripheral Croatia is educating young people the center is then exploiting. Interestingly, EU countries are criticized for actually having worse minority rights and treatment than Croatia; "it is precisely the biggest country which openly implements politics of assimilation, discrimination or banishing" (p.51). The EU itself is also criticized - the party claims all relevant EU documents "systematically avoid regulating national minority rights…" (p.51) and that xenophobia is more and more embraced by even the biggest political parties. Former colonial powers are criticized for their hypocrisy, not just because of their past but also because they "could not function without immigrants today" (p.51). Western powers are also questioned due to their involvement in wars that incite migrations.

What the manifestos from 2020 seem to be pointing at is that a divide between the left and the right eventually did happen regarding immigration. The right (here HDZ and MOST[45]) has taken on a more securitizing approach, while the left (particularly the newly emerged parties) shows an inclination toward openness and acceptance. Even if this divide was clearly important enough to make its way into manifestos, it was not the key point of public debate at the time, surrounding the elections.

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[45] The right-wing Homeland Movement did not mention the topic. Their program is fairly economically oriented.

The following electoral manifestos were analyzed, but nothing relevant could be singled out: SiP & Focus, NR-L, SDSS.

7.3.2. Czech political parties' manifestos

In this subchapter, manifesto analyses are again chronologically delineated in the periods before, right after the crisis, and the period of the aftermath of the crisis. The analysis is done on a party basis in order to go in-depth with the range of attitudes that can be found.

7.3.2.1.   *The years preceding the height of the crisis (2010, 2013)*

a) 2010

The social-democratic **ČSSD** makes a brief mention of migration in the context of how wars may heighten it. The topic is positively linked with the EU because the party supports greater cooperation with the Union on this question.

The culturally conservative and economically liberal **ODS** intends to keep "immigration under control" – embracing foreigners who come to the country to legally work is fine by them, but those who come illegally or who would just (ab)use social benefits should be exiled (p. 24-25). Moreover, there should only be as many foreigners "as we can integrate" (p.32). Terrorism and uncontrolled migration are listed as one of the big security issues of the 21st century (p.34). Cultural fears are also present in the following statement: "Free movement of people and immigration especially from Islamic countries and African countries create pressure on the cultural identity of our civilization" (p.46). The question of a unified immigration policy is listed as an undesired potential deepening of European integration.

The Christian-democrat **KDU-ČSL**, on the other hand, has positive moments toward European integration like ČSSD; they state it is not possible to deal with terrorism and illegal immigration without Europe-wide cooperation. Effective use of the tools of the common European asylum and immigration policy is listed as one of the benefits of being in the EU. When talking about migrants, they have a specific sub-chapter devoted to "reasonable politics toward foreigners". They are critical of notions of "order", "Czech national interests" and even religious vocabulary

used for racism, xenophobia, or extremism (p.32). In contrast with that, the party would be open to citizens who respect the laws, culture, and customs of the country, as well as to those from countries facing human rights violations. On the other hand, the fact that they mention the need for a debate on the measure and the limits of potential Islamization of the Czech Republic reveals cultural fears. This is elaborated a bit more by saying that the mutual enriching of cultures is a welcome principle, but that "European religious and cultural heritage should not be endangered" (p.32). Already uttering an important sentiment that would appear during the crisis of 2015/2016, a distinction is made between illegal and legal immigration, with the former being rejected.

For the populist **Public Affairs (VV)** newcomer party only a "working, blameless and tax-paying foreigner is a welcome guest of the Czech Republic" (p.27). In line with that, their specific proposals are directed toward greater control of immigration.

There is almost nothing to note about the communist **KSČM** party, other than the fact it mentioned wanting to battle discrimination and xenophobia against minorities and foreigners (p.8).

Finally, the **Green Party (SZ)** represents a vastly different case than all the other parties. Their positive orientation is visible in saying they believe that the country should be "a home even for those who were not born here" (p.71). Specifically, the focus is on protecting such people and their rights, while wanting to support their further integration. Even if the party also reveals a face that wants deeper political integration within the EU, meaning that cooperation on the question of migrations should be expected, there is no explicit mention of this.

Overall, we cannot quite claim that migration or, as it was sometimes mentioned, the question of foreigners was insignificant in 2010. It is hard to make a clear left-right delineation because the ODS and KDU-ČSL for instance differ both in how negatively they view migration and in how the EU figures into all of it. Despite this and despite there not being the most exhaustive discussion of the topic in some of the manifestos, the left did seem more positively oriented overall. Important to note here is that ODS already desired less European integration in matters of migration.

Out of all the parties whose manifestos are present in the CMP database, only the liberal-conservative **TOP-09** chose not to point out this topic.

b) 2013

The rising star of the 2013 elections was the newly created centrist populist **ANO** party. The following passage is highly relevant:

> *"Against the backdrop of international terrorism, the threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the uncontrolled migration of people from affected areas is becoming more and more relevant. The ANO movement realizes that there are other security threats that our society must be able to face. Fortunately, we are not alone in this and we have allies in Europe and the Euro-Atlantic zone" (p.30).*

Therefore, what we see is recognizing the security threat of migration, but also a vague inclination to work on this within Europe. In its overall attitude toward the EU, the manifesto is positively oriented, mentioning the "deepening of our membership", although the country should just be an "active and constructive" but also a "critical and not capricious" member (p.29).

ČSSD does not mention anything about migration, yet in light of the changes in attitudes the party went through after the crisis, it is important to make note of their desire to continue working on the process of European integration and to implement the Euro.

ODS makes briefer mention of migratory policy than in 2010, stating that good migration is the migration that is beneficial for the country (p.25). What this means is to make it easier for those who can be integrated and who could be of use to come, but all the while to make it more difficult for those who would abuse the "healthcare and social system" (p.25).

KDU-ČSL is likewise less exhaustive this time around, stating only they would want a tighter Union immigration policy "with an emphasis on the integration of migrants in Europe while maintaining openness to persons persecuted for supporting democracy and religious freedom" (p.11).

For **TOP-09** this was again not deemed important enough to appear in the manifesto.

Tomio Okamura's new populist **Usvit** party showed signs of what his more radical SPD would become only two years later. The party's 10th and final priority is to not be "a province of the

EU" (p.3). This entails having referenda on every single transfer or sovereignty to EU organs. They see the economic benefits of the EU, but seem to be wary of political aspects such as "non-system subsidies and benefits". Shades of what SPD would become are most visible when this party says they "want strict conditions of the immigration policy to the Czech Republic" and that they do not "want maladjusted immigrants or the arrival of religious fanatics" (p.3).

The now non-parliamentary **Green Party (SZ)** exposes very supportive attitudes toward migrants, bolstered by the claims that they will implement a new foreigner's law "which will look at migration through a social optics and certainly not as security issue a priori" (p.7) and will also conceptually and financially support the integration of migrants into society. It is also mentioned that the Czech job market needs foreigners.

The overall impression of the 2013 manifestos is that the prominence of the topic of migrants and foreigners was somewhat lesser than in 2010. There is no particular change to be noticed in the parties that have already competed, but the arrival of ANO and Usvit is interesting as we do see that they referenced the topic to some extent. In the years to come these two (SPD as the off shoot of Usvit) would turn noticeably more negative toward both immigration and the EU's influence on it. ANO, however, initially showed more inclination toward deeper European integration than in the following years.

Out of all of the parties whose manifestos are present in the CMP database, only **KSČM** did not engage with the topic in 2013.

7.3.2.2. *First elections after the height of the crisis (2017)*

For the then coalition-party **ANO** and the winner of these elections, the number 1 point addressed in the manifesto is "insecurity", with the very first words of the paragraph mentioning the "un-ending migration crisis and terrorist attacks in Europe". This is immediately followed by the statement that "the defense of national identity is a priority for us" (p.2), which quite explicitly shows cultural concerns that have been raised about immigrants of a distinctly different origin. The party proposes to close the EU's external borders and to fight smugglers to defend against illegal migration, mentioning that they will fight for this cause in 'Bruxelles'. Under the guise of the topic of security, it is highly interesting that 'fiscal security' is also mentioned. The party says they will try to not implement the Euro. Later on in the manifesto

they firmly state that the acceptance of refugees should remain under the control of single member states (p.14). Further on in the manifesto, when discussing the greater role of NATO in defending European borders, it is said that the European continent cannot be the only one that has open borders for illegal migration (p.21). Security is also a topic of issue for further EU integration; in particular, they believe that the EU should focus on addressing the problem of "terrorism and extreme Islamism" (p.13). Part of ANO's solutions is also to address issues in areas outside Europe that need help and to defeat the Islamic State (p.14), which would then curb immigration toward Europe.

At the time main coalition party, **ČSSD** mentions "un-regulated" migration from countries outside the EU (p.11). In a chapter titled "Safe and a fair country in the heart of Europe", the main issues detected are the increase in terrorism, the risk of cyber-attacks, illegal migration, and others (p.29). In light of this, they are swift to propose the creation of an independent European army, and greater cooperation all-around of security institutions in Europe. They state that they have rejected and will continue to reject mandatory migrant quotas, and wish to continue working on EU border control. Like ANO, they would also prefer to help the places that are sending migrants. Fears about the economic threat migrants might pose also found their way into the manifesto; ČSSD says they will not allow the reduction of the price of labor in the country (p.11).

The liberal-conservative **ODS** party is also very clearly against mandatory migrant quotas for refugees "that the EU proposed" (p.12) and wishes to be excluded from the common EU asylum and migration policy. Migrant quotas are particularly mentioned as legislation that is in disagreement with national interests. Like others, they also mention the need to fight against terrorism. Helping out countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East as a means to help with immigration is also mentioned in this party's manifesto. Interestingly enough, their attitude toward migration is first approached positively. They would accept foreigners who can contribute to Czech society and make it easier for them to move, but on the other hand, they want to make it more difficult for those who would not show respect for Czech laws, values, and customs, and who might abuse the social system. When discussing foreign policy, they are advocates of realism and pragmatism. Regarding the EU, they claim that they do not belong to "naïve Eurooptimists, nor radical Eurosceptics" (p.13). For them, what needs to be criticized is European integration as a goal in itself. In line with their previous European positions, they

wish to abolish the requirement of adopting the Euro. The EU as a whole should "do less, but better" (p.13).

For the Christian-Democrats **KDU-ČSL**, "solving the migration wave" is listed among one of the priorities addressed. They likewise wish to "eliminate illegal migration" (p.11). They too suggest more cooperation by means of financial help for ailing countries and by greater cooperation of EU member states in protecting outer borders and inner security of the EU. What separates this party, however, is that they would "support a reform of the common asylum policy, to stabilize the countries in the European neighborhood and an effective return policy" (p.11).

The **TOP 09** party now mentions international and "uncontrolled" (p.15) migration as one of the security issues. The CHES scores represented the party fairly well; in a chapter about controlling migration, this party begins by saying that migration is an issue single member states cannot solve. They take issue with "illegal economic migration to Europe". Again, they too wish to assist the countries from which the waves are happening. There is a slight humanitarian tint to a passage about helping people from the most vulnerable groups on an individual basis. Yet those who are in the Schengen area illegally should be deported. Legal migration related to the job market is seen as a necessity for an open economy and the Czech Republic. Despite this, the party cautions against repeating the mistakes of their Western European allies in migration and integration policy (p.18).

The then-up-and-coming centrist **STAN** party talks about the migration crisis in the context of the defense and security of the country, linking it to problems in Northern Africa and the Middle East. They too want to prevent it as much as possible, because it is "cheaper than solving its consequences" (p.73). Further, EU integration is supported through the greater and more coordinated defense of the EU's outer borders.

Another newcomer who achieved parliamentary status after these elections, the **Pirates,** state that they have a rational approach to solving the refugee crisis, which means rejecting extreme demands (p.14). The same sentiment of actually helping places of conflict is uttered here as

well. The Pirates also stress the need for more cooperation within the EU - the defense of European borders, and support of the development of battlegroups.[46]

The hardline, unreformed communist **KSČM** party addresses migration in the very first point of its manifesto, taking it under the umbrella of "Life without worries" (p.7). They proclaim to want to solve the causes of the migration crisis, followed by stating that they reject the idea of compulsory quotas. Later in the text they make specific mention of "sovereignty of member states" needing to be respected. KSČM is more radical in solutions, as it seeks to offer a referendum to end the country's membership in NATO. Later on, when stating their broader visions, they also point out they want a safer Europe more united in the fight against terrorism (p.21). Where they don't differ much from others is also the idea that migration waves should be prevented at their root.

It was to be expected that the radical-right populist **SPD** party would be the most interesting of all parties. In a chapter titled "No to Islam, no to terrorists" they take the issue toward the cultural dimension the most because they do not just reject illegal immigrants, but also "Islamization of the country under the guise of multiculturalism" (p.6). This is followed by saying they would not allow the creation of a fifth colony of radical Muslims in the country. Interestingly, they want more military cooperation within the V4 but do not mention the same for the EU. Immediately after the topic of Islam and migrants follows the chapter on "The end of the EU dictate – we will leave according to the English model". Within the chapter, it is stated that the country is currently not a sovereign one. The EU is said to be undertaking a plan of a "multicultural European superstate, where the Czech Republic is going to be another meaningless administrative unit" (p. 8). And so they propose "a renewal of the sovereignty of the state" (p.8). If they don't succeed in steps related to it in 6 months, they promise to organize a referendum about EU membership. Another chapter is titled "Giving money to working families and retired people. No to immigrants, no to parasites", which also echoes economic concerns.

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[46] EU Battlegroups are "multinational, military units, usually composed of 1500 personnel each and form an integral part of the European Union's military rapid reaction capacity to respond to emerging crises and conflicts around the world" (European Union External Action, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, the question of migration was important enough to make its way into the 2017 manifestos of every single party contained in the Manifesto Project database. What is more, it is also easy to notice the discussions are now more extensive than before. Talking about foreigners gave way to talking about migrants and there is greater linkage with matters of European integration. What is highly interesting to take notice of is that not every party explicitly positions itself toward the question of EU's migrant quotas. Those who do not do so are also the parties that have a more positive attitude toward migration, which could point to the fact that quotas were so unpopular that they preferred to be avoided as a topic. Another thing that needs to be highlighted is the prominence of ideas about differentiated integration – while further integration through migrant quotas might be undesirable to them, most parties mention different ways that cooperation within the EU should be conducted in order to tackle the issue of migration.

7.3.2.3.   *The aftermath of the crisis (2021)*

For the **ANO** party, these elections signified a further departure from an initially blurred centrist populist position. This is reflected in the manifesto as well, which starts with strong sentiments of wanting to protect Czech interests within the EU. Among other things, this would entail a fight against abolishing the veto right, particularly in questions such as migration (p.6). Immediately after this, the implementation of the Euro is rejected, as well as the idea that "someone would dictate, who will live in our country" (p.6). Later on, the topic is elaborated further under the roof topic of the interior. Continuing the line of thinking, it is said that illegal migration should be solved outside of Europe. Where the line is harsher now is advocating quicker deportation of illegal migrants and ceasing the funding of NGOs that support illegal immigration (p.27). When talking about attitudes toward the EU, it is very clear that they see working on security as one of the key purposes of the membership. Migrant quotas are likewise very clearly rejected. Moreover, the economic benefits of the membership are stressed in relation to the EU not having to "come up with new agenda and adopt more power" (p.30).

ČSSD will still "systematically continue to support preventive measures toward restricting illegal migration to the EU" and will continue to reject mandatory distribution quotas (p.39). Despite this, further integration in the view of developing the European Border and Coast Guard is mentioned.

The parties **ODS**, **TOP-09,** and **KDU-ČSL** can no longer be analyzed separately because they were part of a coalition called Together (**SPOLU**) which produced a joint manifesto. ODS's aversion toward an EU solution is somewhat cast aside initially, as the first thing mentioned when discussing migration is the need for the EU's help in solving migration issues; they say "it is necessary at the European level to speed up the process of rejecting asylum seekers, to fight people smugglers and systematically help in unstable regions" (p.57). Immediately right after though, it is proclaimed that each EU member state should decide on its migration policy and asylum seekers. Likewise, mandatory quotas are rejected, with the message that problems should be solved in the countries from which the migrants are coming.

KSČM makes a clear statement against illegal immigration, however nothing else can be found in this manifesto. [47]

Pirates and **STAN** can also no longer be analyzed separately because they formed a pre-electoral coalition. Even though they were attacked for wanting to bring migrants in, the coalition proposes a differentiated solution on an EU level – cooperating on protecting the borders and stopping illegal migration is a yes, but quotas are a no. Moreover, when stating that the number of foreigners is growing, they mention that this could lead to problems regarding integration in society. Still, despite these cautious words, they are advocates of less bureaucracy burdening foreigners and would support more integration programs. And even on an EU level more work on asylum and return policies is welcome, particularly on solving issues at places that are the roots of migration. It should also be added that no specific fears toward foreigners are presented and that the coalition explicitly notices that extremists and populists in the country are complicating the country's status in the EU.

The radical **SPD** continues to present itself as the only party "which advocates the restoration of the sovereignty and sovereignty of our republic by withdrawing from the European Union". Among the things criticized and rejected about the EU are immigration policy and goals of the EU. They once again link not accepting illegal immigrants with "saying NO to Islamization". This time around, however, they want to act on an EU level to lead to more security:

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[47] For comparative purposes, it is worthy to mention that this a short 3-page document.

"The permeability of the EU's external border must be secured in such a way as to ensure maximum control of illegal immigration and to prevent the entry of illegal immigrants into the territory of the EU. We will enshrine measures to prevent illegal immigration and to repatriate illegal immigrants into our legislation. We will enforce an effective and quick return policy. We will not grant asylum to illegal immigrants and set up detention centers and facilities for them, all in accordance with international conventions."

In the manifestos from 2021, it is evident that the question of migration remains relevant, albeit somewhat less discussed. A notable moment from the electoral campaign was ANO attacking the Pirates and STAN coalition claiming that as servants of 'Bruxelles', they will bring migrants in (ParlamentníListy.cz, 2021). It is in these two parties' manifestos that we can best see how even the most pro-immigration and pro-EU actors have to tread carefully, particularly when the issue of mandatory migrant quotas is on the menu. The concept of differentiated integration once more holds relevance, as even the SPD can be seen as advocating united EU action to some extent, while it is also noteworthy to note how ODS presented a milder face within the SPOLU coalition.

8. RESULTS - POLITICAL ELITES' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE EU IN THE MIGRATION CRISIS AS SEEN THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA TEXTS

8.1. Introductory note

With what the content all of the steps of analysis have brought to the table so far, research that looks at how debates about the migration crisis took place in public discussion between politicians is still direly needed to enrich the aforementioned findings and pointers. This chapter therefore first presents a summary and crucial findings concerning both countries, taking a more of a quantitative approach to analysis. The second part of the analysis is distinctly qualitative, and is divided into two parts corresponding with the two countries analyzed.

8.2. Overview and context in both countries

The insights presented in this sub-chapter rely on a simple counting of selected categories, which makes it easy to simultaneously present findings from both countries.

The first and most evident observation was that the topic of migration, and in particular its linkage with matters of matters of European integration, was vastly more prominent in the discussion in the Czech Republic. This is already evident from the disparities in planned and achieved sample sizes in both countries; it was no issue to find articles where Czech politicians discussed the topic, but the same cannot be said about a good deal of Croatian politicians who were selected for analysis. Differences in the prominence of the topic can be seen in the number of utterances analyzed, with 183 of them recorded in Croatia and 368 in the Czech Republic. But as the following sub-chapters will show, the discussion was not just quantitatively more present but was also much more developed and richer in content. There are five themes in the Czech case compared to the four in Croatia, but the richness is evident in the vastly greater number of sub-themes.

The second key observation can be made when counting how each political actor viewed migration overall and by comparing the shares of answers between the two countries (Figure 5).
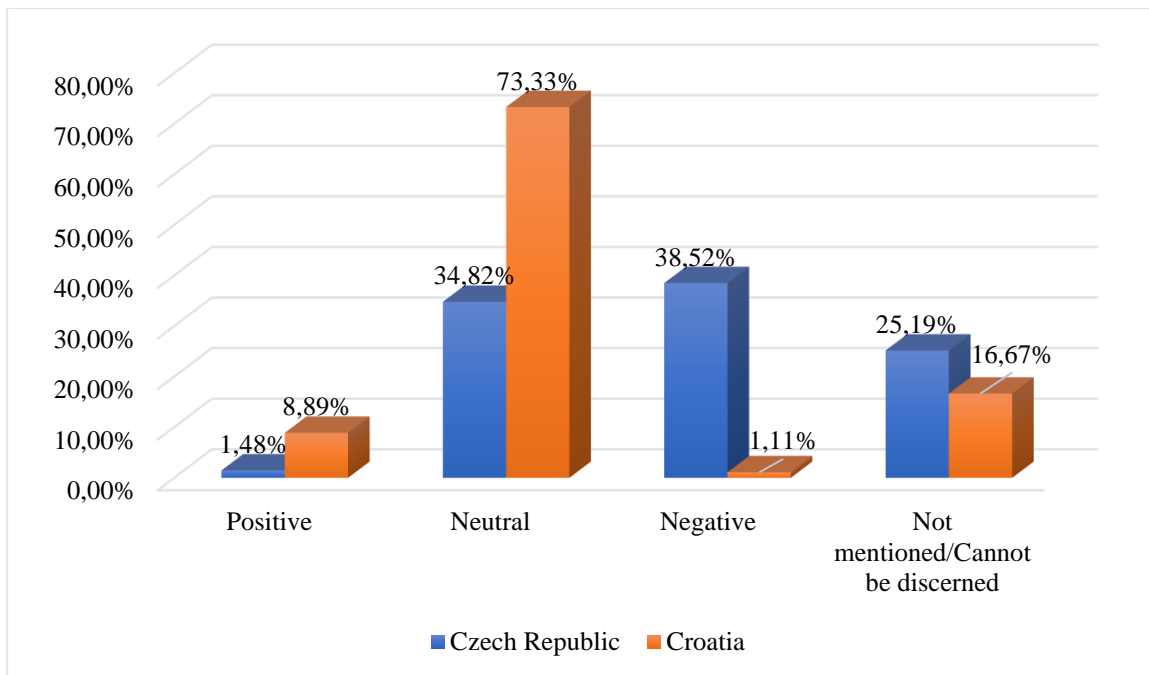
Figure 5. *Shares of categories that reflect an evaluation of political actor's overall attitude toward migration demonstrated*

In Croatia, it was not commonplace to present a position that advocates thwarting of all migrants by any means necessary, whereas in the Czech Republic, the majority of the analyzed texts showed such an orientation of the political actor. At the same time, although some Croatian politicians demonstrated orientations that could have been interpreted as very welcoming toward migrants, the prevailing attitude merged notions of efficient management of migration with humanitarianism, which was labeled as a neutral attitude here.

The third finding that still pertains to the topic of perceiving migrants relates to the absence of elements that touch on the cultural aspects of migration in Croatia. There was no source where the actor talks about Islamization or European identity standing in opposition to those of migrants. In the Czech Republic, fears of Islamization were seen in 21 of the analyzed sources (15,6%), whereas 4 sources also touched on European identity (3,0%). As will be seen in the thematic analysis, however, cultural fears were not always explicitly referring to something as extreme as Islamization, so there was in fact more worry about cultural concerns than these numbers would seem to highlight.

Just by looking at counts, the fourth conclusion would be that there was a similar degree of references to the past in political actors' narratives in both countries. Mentions of past experience were recorded in 8 sources in Croatia (8,9%), and in 18 sources in the Czech Republic (13,3%). The content of these references, as will be shown in the thematic analysis, was markedly different between the counties. Whereas in Croatia references of own experience with the war and with being refugees acted as a boost for a humanitarian outlook on migrants, in the Czech Republic references to the past went in the direction of criticizing the EU and questioning if the country's (good) experience with migrants is something that would translate on the situation with migrants of the 2015-2016 wave.

The fifth key finding can be obtained when comparing the actors' general outlook on the EU demonstrated (Figure 6).
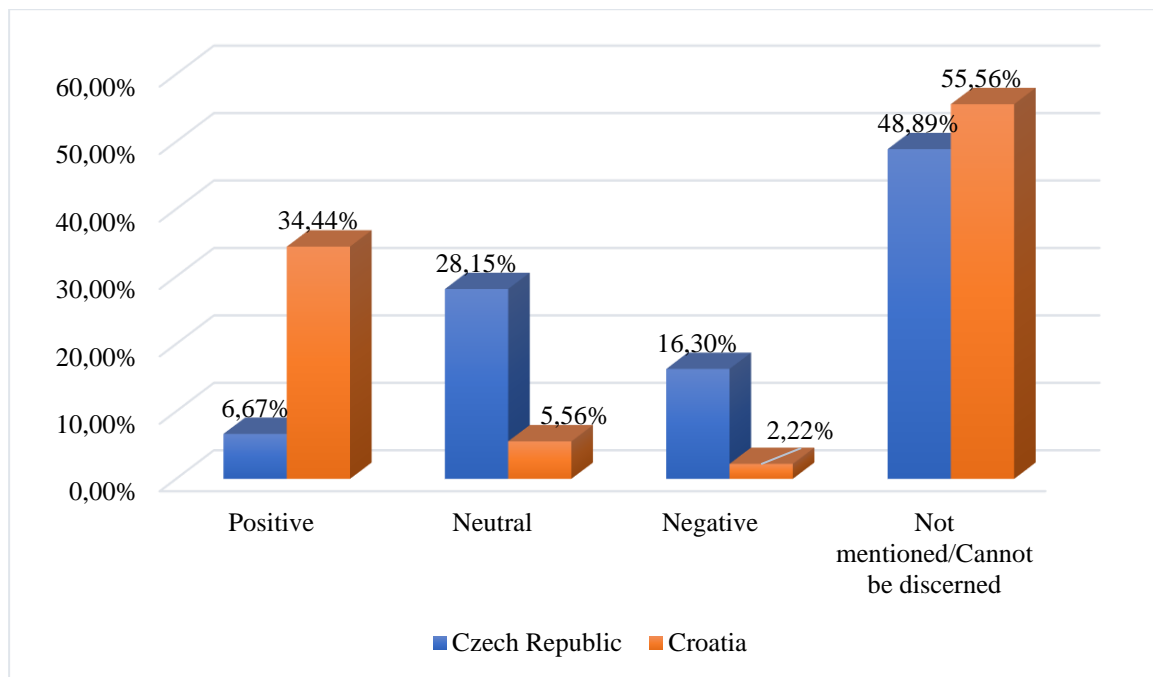
Figure 6. Shares of categories that reflect a political actor's overall estimated attitude toward the European Union demonstrated

The figure points to the conclusion that not many politicians in the Czech Republic sent messages that showed the EU solely in a positive light. Only 9 texts were coded this way, representing 6,7% of the sample. In Croatia, a positive orientation was the norm; 31 texts could have been coded to indicate a positive perception of the EU, making up 34,4% of the sample.

The most represented orientation that Czech actors showed was a neutral outlook (38 cases, 28,2% of the sample), which blended criticism with a desire for greater cooperation, as well the pointing out some of the benefits of the EU. Despite this, there was also a considerable share (16,3%) of texts where actors were only critical toward the EU, totaling 22 cases. Another relevant finding is that the EU featured more prominently in the Czech sources; there was no mention or sufficient mention of the EU in 66 of the sources, which represents 48,9% of the sample. In Croatia, the share is higher, with 50 texts coded in that manner making up 55,6% of the sample.

Thematic analysis is more suitable to show just how the EU was perceived in the eyes of both countries' political elites, but what simple analyses can further tell is that the idea of differentiated integration was almost non-existent as an important point of the debate in Croatia, whereas this mode of European integration was the most advocated one in the Czech Republic (38 texts, making up 28,15% of all valid counts). In Croatia only 1 text was coded this way, connected to PM Zoran Milanović's (Sep 28th 2015, as cited in The Croatian Government, 2015b) doubt uttered on one occasion about wanting to join the Schengen Area based on how Greece was handling its borders. Furthermore, counting of attitudes toward migrant quotas showed that not a lot of actors mentioned them in Croatia and that when they did, they did not elaborate their position much. 15 (16,7%) texts showed acceptance of quotas by analyzed actors in Croatia, with other texts having no mention of the issue. In the Czech Republic, no one accepted the quotas, and 56 texts (41,5%) showed their rejection, with the only other answer being the omission of this topic (in 79 cases).

Finally, when looking at the context in which the political debate on the migration crisis took place in both countries, we notice significant differences once more. Surprisingly, there were not too many references to citizens and their opinions in the Czech case; they were recorded in 12 texts (8,9%). This is still notably higher than the 3 texts found in Croatia (3,3%). Still, the sources that do mention the public in the Czech Republic give the impression that the topic was also important for citizens, whereas in Croatia there is no support for such a claim.[48] Another

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[48] Prime Minister Zoran Milanović's quote might further explain the matter: "*And when it was announced in the media that Croatia should, according to some calculations of the European Commission, which were problematic for many in Europe compared to their own countries, that Croatia should receive a thousand immigrants in the next two years, I watched how they would react Croatian public. It did not react at all, it reacted with silence, and*

simple statistic that might give insight into how politicized the topic was in the country was the counting of how many times opponents were referred to in sources. Although a bigger difference would be expected, the shares are not all that different. Mentions of opponents happened in 21 analyzed Croatian sources (23,3%), while in the Czech sources, this occurred 44 times (32,6%). Likewise, the topic of migration did serve as a point of criticism for the opposition in Croatia, but positions on migrants and the EU were far less developed in more critical directions. A simple look at the context surrounding analyzed sources from both countries also reveals stark differences. In the Czech Republic, the topic gave way to political demonstrations and was much more often debated in the parliament.

8.3. Thematic analysis of selected Croatian political actors' positioning

The thematic analysis allows us to see how the migration crisis was debated and what topics gained prominence in public discussion. Regarding the general approach to migrations, it can be said that almost all of the actors in Croatia were balancing between a humanitarian approach and the approach of efficient management of migration. There is no actor (or at least sufficient evidence for it) that exclusively chose one end of the spectrum. As the reader will see, cooperation with the EU can be singled out as a significant theme, with mainly positive meanings ascribed to it.

8.3.1. Theme 1: Migrants should be treated humanely

A significant theme that emerged has at its core the impetus to help migrants. Most of the actors wanted the migrants to be treated fairly and humanely when coming through Croatia, even if they had some reservations about an overall permissive approach to them. For some, this may have just been coupled with a desire for them to be escorted toward their destination, but others constructed their position on showing empathy and care for what the migrants had been through.

Looking at political divides, the focus on the humanitarian approach was most evident with Zoran Milanović's government which dealt with the matter during the height of the migration

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silence, at least in legal philosophy, means approval." - Zoran Milanović (Jul 9th 2015, as cited in The Croatian Government, 2015a)

crisis. According to Vesna Pusić (March 30th 2017, as cited in dnevno.hr), the Minister of Foreign Affairs in that government, Croatia had two different politics toward the migration crisis – one until January 2016 when Milanović's government mandate ended, and the other afterward. According to her, what separated those two politics was that her government's was that of trying to accept people as they were – refugees and people in trouble, while the other looked up to having an army on the border and to barbed wire. Her views can be described as reflecting the most on the plight of the migrants out of all the actors analyzed:

> *"This does not primarily define our attitude toward refugees, it defines our attitude toward us. This determines who we are, what kind of society we are, and what ideas guide us. And from that point of view, the refugee crisis will have even more far-reaching consequences on our society and politics than it seems at first glance."*

The Prime Minister at the height of the crisis Milanović also pointed out his humanitarian-driven approach frequently, building it on several grounds. One that is particularly interesting is, as he sees it, the Christian character of the nation as a driver toward helping migrants. As opposed to seeing conflict with the Muslim religion most of the migrants belonged to, Milanović pointed out Christianity in a positive light:

> *"Above all, we will keep in mind the interests and security of Croatia, but we will not forget that we are people, first of all, Christians, and the Pope said that every parish should receive at least one family. And many in Europe who point out that they are Christians act like that." (Sep 16th 2015, as cited in Borovac et al., 2015)*

Milanović (Oct 8th 2015, as cited in The Croatian Government, 2015c) also built his positions on rejecting the path of EU neighbors such as Hungary and Slovenia who erected wire fences:

> *"It is not normal that an EU member state is building a barbed wire toward some other EU member state. We can build a wire toward Hungary or Serbia and pretend to be hotshots, but what is that, what kind of solution is that?"*

In the same speech, he also added that the wire fence will "remain the biggest disgrace and embarrassment of the beginning of the 21st century". Aside from that, to a lesser extent, he also built his humanitarianism on criticism of not just neighboring countries' approach, but on one occasion the EU's as well:

"The way that Europe faced the problem two weeks ago in Bruxelles was unconvincing. Behind all the formal complaints that the European Commission should not determine quotas about who will receive how many migrants, as if we were dealing with potatoes instead of humans, there is in fact a fear of the unknown and the different hiding. Those are the problems Europe is to a great extent responsible for, the Europe of our fathers and grandfathers". (9th July 2015, as cited in vlada.gov, 2015a).

Domestically, the most palpable conflict occurred between PM Milanović and President Grabar-Kitarović and was only then followed by the intensity of the conflict that was occurring between the government and the biggest opposition party at the time – HDZ. The president repeatedly stated that a humanitarian approach is but one facet of how the crisis should be approached, and frequently criticized the government for what she saw as poor management of the crisis. According to Milanović (28th Sep 2015, as cited in vlada.gov, 2015c) "HDZ's program is a valley of tears, painful cuts, and we are dealing with a 'wire-loving' coalition, as we can see". Yet it cannot be said that the President and the HDZ[49] shunned a humane approach, but were rather giving more weight to managing migration rather than humanitarianism.

Further evidence that a humane side to approach the crisis had become the norm in Croatia can be seen in Grabar-Kitarović's (19th Feb 2016, as cited in jutarnji.hr, 2016) praise of Milanović's government for doing the job of taking care of and transporting over 700 000 migrants and refugees "professionally, and with a great dose of humanity". Moreover, the subsequent Prime Ministers Orešković (4th Apr 2016, as cited in vlada.gov, 2016) and Plenković (Sep 21st 2017, as cited in The Croatian Government, 2017b), as well as members of subsequent governments such as Minister Miro Kovač (28th Mar 2016, as cited in Pandžić, 2016) both pointed out a humane approach to migrants as something the country feels proud about. The latter's statement "that Croatia can and must be proud of its humane and effective treatment of refugees and migrants" as something he always mentions during his visits abroad, attests to the interpretation that political actors saw a humane approach as an element of a positive image for the country abroad.

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[49] For instance: I came here as the president of the largest party that will soon have to solve this problem, as a man who has empathy for refugees and for our people here – Tomislav Karamarko (20th Sep 2015, as cited in Hina, 2015b).

8.3.1.1. Subtheme 1: Wanting to extend help to migrants based on Croatia's own experience with refugee issues

Finally, a highly significant sub-theme of wanting to extend help to migrants based on Croatia's own experience with refugee issues was also noted in 8 utterances. Although this number is certainly not high, it is important to recognize that it was conveyed by important actors such as PM Milanović, PM Plenković, President Grabar-Kitarović, Minster Pusić, Mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandić, and even Dragan Vulin as a member of a more right-wing HDSSB party. The latter, for instance also mentioned the floods that happened in eastern Croatia in 2014:

> *"We shouldn't let those people be left to their own devices, first of all, due to humane reasons, but also because we had the chance, unfortunately, to go through something similar. Not just during the war, but also during the floods that impacted Slavonia. Normal conditions should be offered to those people, while they are in Croatia. Once they come, they should be put in adequate objects." – Dragan Vulin (Aug 26th, 2015, as cited in Večernji list, 2015).*

One quote by PM Milanović (9th July 2015, as cited in The Croatian Government, 2015) is relevant for mentioning as well because it stated that the refugee crisis Croatia faced during the Homeland War left a catastrophic mark on the economy:

> *"Even Croatia, which is the newest member of the EU, went through a dramatic exile crisis 20 years ago. Croatia adopted half a million people, at least 100,000 people from other countries, Bosniaks, and Muslims, they all found their home in Croatia and this had a disastrous effect on our economy. But we survived and endured it and we look at it as something that taught us something and made us stronger. And punished us, but that's all life."*

Furthermore, we may point out that the Zagreb mayor Milan Bandić also built his position on grounds of experience with war and exile, offering to house migrants in Zagreb, as well as in his own home:

> *"Croatia is passing the test of humanity and solidarity, the City of Zagreb witnessed this during the Homeland War when it came to exiles. Croatia needs to demonstrate solidarity and humanity in action, and the City of Zagreb needs to take the lead in this, it will answer and pass the exam." – Milan Bandić (17th Sep 2015, as cited in narod.hr, 2015)*

President Grabar-Kitarović (17th Sep 2015; as cited in kamenjar.com, 2015), already mentioned as an actor who stressed factors other than just showing a humane face, also pointed out her personal experience with housing refugees of Muslim religion during the war:

> *"Within the framework of the migration policy, Croatia can take in a certain number of people. Besides, we demonstrated that during and after the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We shoved great heart then and welcomed a large number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. My own family likewise housed several refugees of Islamic confession from Bosnia and Herzegovina for a longer period."*

8.3.2. Theme 2: Migration needs to be managed efficiently

In general, humanitarianism which was described in the previous sub-chapter is often contrasted with the securitization approach when discussing migrations. I chose not to single securitization out as a theme because most of the actors who talked about managing migration did not necessarily point out migrants as a security threat. Yet what lies at the heart of all of their messages is the desire that migration as a phenomenon should be controlled efficiently.

As was mentioned, President Grabar-Kitarović constructed her criticism of the Milanović-led government on this. According to her "the humanitarian component is only one part of a complex picture that includes issues of national security and economic, and social issues, and ultimately the values of the EU itself" (19th Feb 2016, as cited in Jutarnji list, 2016). She often mentioned that the migration flow through Croatia could have been managed better:

> *"Croatia has indeed shown a humane face, but for me, the safety of Croatian citizens and the stability of the country come first. I think that on the first day, too many refugees entered Croatia. The whole process was quite uncontrolled and there is no need for us to receive so many refugees in one day because we simply cannot meet the needs of processing and caring for these people."*

The same kind of criticism came from HDZ, in this case, the then-party president Tomislav Karamarko (Sep 20th 2015, as cited in Hina, 2015b):

> *"Croatia will accept the set quotas for accepting refugees and provide these people with everything they need. However, this disorganization, for which the Government is responsible, lowers that humanitarian standard, the rain is falling, and tens of thousands of people are getting ready to go."*

It should again likewise be pointed out that the idea of managing the crisis as a phenomenon that should be resolved as soon as possible and as efficiently as possible was uttered across the political spectrum:

> *"It is important information for Croatia that Frontex, the European external guard, should come to the border between Croatia and Serbia, so to speak, which in theory should slow down the flow and entry of people due to a slightly more rigorous procedure, of course, assuming that it all works together from Greece, through Macedonia, and Serbia. If it happens, it will be good, if it doesn't, it will be the same as before until this story ends. We are controlling it, our citizens live a regular, normal life. It would be good for this to end as soon as possible, but it will first of all depend on Turkey and Germany." - Zoran Milanović (Oct 26th 2015; as cited in The Croatian government, 2015d).*

8.3.3. Theme 3: Questioning of migrants

Even though strong and continued calls to see migrants as a threat were not recorded, a non-negligible proportion of the debate was dedicated to questioning who the migrants are and what this means for how they should be approached.

Many actors took issue with the distinction between economic migrants and refugees, a stronger or weaker humanitarian bent to their approach notwithstanding. Minister Vesna Pusić (12th Oct 2015, as cited in Dnevnik, hr.) believed that a lack of differentiation between migrants and refugees is harming the relations between EU member states and that economic migrants should be returned, while the same is out of the question for refugees. In the case of those with a less permissive view toward immigration, such as Vlaho Orepić, they also took issue with economic migrants:

> *"Asylum is when someone comes from an unsafe environment to a safe environment, reports to the authorities, and receives the necessary protection. But we are in a situation where people who come from safe*

circumstances pass through several countries avoiding reporting to the authorities until they reach the destination where they want to report. Their expectations go beyond the framework of asylum, and we have to name their demands differently. --How? We popularly call them economic migrants." – Vlaho Orepić (9ᵗʰ Feb 2017, as cited in Bogdanić, 2017)

President Grabar-Kitarović, who believed that about 85 percent of the migrants are actually economic migrants (21st June 2016, as cited in Soudil, 2016), saw them as a potential threat to the economic conditions of Croatian citizens and added that we took in the wrong kind of refugees in Europe – men capable of fighting:

"But above all, Croatia must take care of its people and development possibilities. Namely, unemployment is around 17 percent, our economic standard is low, we explain to pensioners that their pensions cannot increase, many people are evicted from the only real estate, we have hungry children in schools, and tens of thousands of young Croatians have left their homeland. A country with such problems can only be part of a transit route for the largest number of migrants. We must show a humane face, but we must, above all, take care of our own citizens." – Kolinda Grabar Kitarović (17ᵗʰ Sep 2015, as cited in Kamenjar.com)

In general, greater criticism of this sort was to be found the more TAN-orientated a position of the actor and their party was. We may add the example of Željko Glasnović who stated that the country should prioritize welcoming back Croatian migrants, instead of aiding 'Asian economic migrants' (4ᵗʰ Oct 2016, as cited in Narod.hr, 2016).

8.3.4. Theme 4: More cooperation with the EU is desired

The linkage between the migration crisis and matters of European integration can ultimately be confirmed in Croatia. The difference between countries such as Hungary or The Czech Republic is that most political actors sought more cooperation within the EU, and saw a common solution to the problem as both desired and necessary. Messages similar to, for instance, those of PM Andrej Plenković (18ᵗʰ Jan 2017, as cited in Croatian government, 2017a) can be found with other actors across the political spectrum and various positions:

> *"When it comes to migration, Croatia believes, and I have clearly repeated this, that a strategically uniform response by the member states, based on solidarity, is the optimal approach to managing migration pressures."*

Political actors did not take issue with the notion of solidarity that was embedded in the idea of migrant quotas, and all accepted such a solution. This can be best tested when looking at the messages of the Tihomir Orešković government that followed the Milanović one. Even though they stressed the humanitarian approach less, they nonetheless did not challenge cooperation with the EU:

> *"We really want to participate in the common security policy of the Union, but also to be a responsible member when it comes to obligations. We have an obligation to receive 1,563 people. We are trying to make it happen, but the real problem is that people simply do not want to come to Croatia. On this basis, we received 19 people, we plan to take care of another 30 from Greece and 20 from Italy. We'll see if we succeed. We also have obligations regarding the Dublin Agreement. So, if a person registered for the first time in Croatia, we accept them. However, the EU is considering and revising all these processes, looking for deficiencies in the mechanisms in order to bear the common burden of the migrant crisis even better." – Vlaho Orepić (13th Feb 2017, as cited in Hina, 2017)*

The desire for cooperation can be understood to stem from wanting deeper integration in the EU:

> *"But according to the Schengen Borders Code, we have an obligation to reject and prevent illegal border crossings. Considering that we want to enter the Schengen area as soon as possible, we have to show ourselves as a responsible country." – Vlaho Orepić (9th Feb 2017, as cited in Bogdanić, 2017)*

> *"But since I have been a minister, Croatia shares the EU's common security policy, and we cooperate well with its bodies such as Frontex. We literally guard the external border of the EU and we are doing it quite successfully." – Vlaho Orepić (9th Feb 2017, as cited in Bogdanić, 2017)*

8.3.4.1. Subtheme 1: We need to follow the decisions of larger member states

In addition, a sub-theme that can go a long way toward explaining why Croatian politicians oriented themselves the way they did during the crisis concerns the need to follow the decisions of larger member states. As was already seen in a quote by PM Milanović, Croatian politicians positioned themselves in contrast to politicians such as Viktor Orbán, and were more favorable to follow the cue of leaders of large member states:

> *"The critical point in Croatia is Tovarnik. Can anyone name another? – called Ostojić, saying that 'our allies are not Karamarko, Vulin, and Orban, but Pope Francis and Miss Merkel." - Ranko Ostojić (Sep 20th, 2015, as cited in Hina, 2015a)*

The same is true for the opposition, who despite accusations of finding inspiration in other political actors, also sought to follow the lead of the EU and Germany in particular:

> *"We must behave the same way Europe is behaving. In any case, whatever Germany decides; and it is a question of how many more people Germany can accumulate and take in; and it is questionable how many more people Germany can accumulate and receive. Everything depends on that. We see that these criteria are getting stricter, therefore, Croatia will also have to tighten the criteria." – Tomislav Karamarko (23rd Jan 2016, as cited in Hina, 2016)*

8.3.4.2. Subtheme 2: Despite wanting more cooperation, the EU can be criticized for certain things

Despite the mostly positive approach to cooperation with the EU described so far, another sub-theme that can be seen relates to the criticism of the EU. As was already seen in the first theme analyzed, PM Milanović was critical of how statesmen were deciding about migrant quotas "as if people were potatoes". He also echoed bureaucracy-related criticism of EU solutions such as registering migrants in the first country they arrive in:

> *"... any approach concocted in the head of some well-paid bureaucrat in Brussels, according to which people would have to stay where they enter, is unworkable." – Zoran Milanović (24th Oct 2015, as cited in Croatian government, 2015).*

At the time of the height of the crisis, the President also criticized the EU on several occasions, and on the issue of quotas as well (but more from a management rather than humanitarian point of view):

> *"This is an opportunity for the EU, with solidarity as a fundamental and permanent value, to show that it really has a functioning common European foreign and security policy that acts decisively and participates with international institutions such as the UN and NATO and third countries in solving world crises. As early as this summer, I warned that quotas are only a temporary measure, but that they do not solve the problem at its root." - Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović (17th Sep 2015, as cited in kamenjar.com, 2015)*

The President also most notably said that Angela Merkel caused "chaos on the road" when she initially invited migrants to come, but then "pulled the handbrake" (16th Jun 2016, as cited in Srdoč, 2016). The leader of the populist ŽZ party Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, although not giving the issue great attention throughout this period, joined in on the criticism of EU and Western powers' dealing in the sending countries, believing that "the problem of refugees should be solved first of all by advocating for peace in the Middle East" (18th Oct 2015, as citen in Hina, 2015c).

8.4. Thematic analysis of selected Czech political actors' positioning

Thematic analysis of the Czech case proved to be more complex and extensive than the one conducted on Croatian political actors. Unlike in Croatia, criticism and scrutiny of migrants and the European Union were so prominent that it can undoubtedly be singled out among the main themes of the discussion. Whereas Croatian politicians accepted more cooperation within the EU, the Czech ones were in favor of it through different solutions than the one that the European Commission was undertaking. There was also much stronger criticism of the government for how it approached the migration crisis, as well as a strong narrative of seeing migrants as a threat to society. Attesting to how hotly debated the topic was, a fair share of political actors' messages can be subsumed under the theme of wanting to calm the discussion. It should also be pointed out that although the topic of the citizens' view on the matters did show up more in the sources than in Croatia, it was not present critically enough to be singled out as a theme or a sub-theme.

8.4.1. Theme 1: The EU stands to be criticized

"I wouldn't call myself a Eurosceptic. I am a person who has studied the EU
since its inception, and I have written many books about it, and I think I know
what is going on in Europe. I am a convinced European, but I am critical of
the current development of the Union because it does not offer any solution."
– Petr Fiala (May 4th 2016, as cited in Zitka, 2016)

As the university professor of political science and at the time leader of the liberal-conservative party ODS Petr Fiala demonstrated, how the EU approached the migration crisis triggered criticism and marked reflection on the EU and how it should look. Fiala was not a lone actor in this in any regard; all analyzed Czech politicians criticized the EU to some degree and all of them rejected the idea of mandatory migrant quotas. The degree of criticism varied from simply rejecting quotas and proposing some other common European solution, to ideas about organizing a referendum to leave the EU. The migration crisis did not only prompt thoughts about quotas but also acted as a catalyst for Czech politicians to rehash, solidify, or perhaps reconfigure their positions on European integration. Despite this, it cannot be said that the majority of them exhibited something that could be called 'a turn from the West' or that they wanted less integration in multiple areas.

Regarding what issues they had with the EU, there was some general criticism of the EU stating it is run by elites who are not in touch with the citizens:

"Europe is not us. Europe is politicians who are elected by the people. And
they are incapable." – Andrej Babiš (Feb 27th 2017, as cited in Zbytniewska,
2017)

"It [migrant quotas] will mean further alienation of citizens from a united
Europe and it will not mean a problem only here… It is a new attempt to
divide Europe, there will be some solution when the political elite in Brussels
mishandles a situation that affects every citizen and as a result, it leads to the
fact that people feel lost, betrayed, and have no confidence in the institutions
of the European Union." – Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký,
2015)

The problem Czech politicians had with the EU regarding migrant quotas also invoked some general ill feelings about the Union not being respective of solutions for all member states. The aforementioned ODS leader Petr Fiala doubled down on this and stated that the EU is in fact a

supranational entity that solely caters to the needs of certain member states. It is in this criticism that we can see that the Czech political elite felt like their voice needs to be heard (more) in Europe:

> *"Here you see in practice that there are no European interests in Europe. There are only the interests of Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain and so on. These are interests that are implemented through the EU, but they are the interests of these countries. If we lie to ourselves that we have no interests, we will realize someone else's interests. And that, in my opinion, is not the right approach to European integration and European cooperation." – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)*

The EU's actions in suggesting mandatory migrant quotas ultimately prompted thoughts about its direction and even survival. Once again, Petr Fiala was the most extensive (although not the most extreme) in his criticism, continuing to build on his party's tradition of (soft) Euroscepticism:

> *"I'll put it simply. If the EU does not reform, it will not survive. And that is not at all a question of whether Petr Fiala or the ODS thinks or wishes it, not even the Czech Republic. People's distrust of the EU is growing throughout the Union, you see the result of the German election and other factors. The EU must reform. And it is important that we are active in this reform, that we know what we want and can enforce it." – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)*

8.4.1.1. Subtheme 1: The EU is infringing on Czech sovereignty

> *"The dispute over refugee quotas reminds the Czechs of a historical moment, namely that decisions are being made about us without us." – Pavel Bělobrádek (May 5th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016b)*

In the quoted interview, the then-Czech Deputy Prime Minister and Christian-democrat KDU-ČSL party leader Pavel Bělobrádek alluded to the Munich Agreement of 1938 and also emphasized that Czechs are very sensitive when decisions are made about them without them. There was indeed a strong feeling during the migration crisis from the Czech political elite that the EU's proposal concerning migrant quotas severely clashes with the country's sovereignty and that the country itself should decide who it wants to accept, and in what number. For actors

such as Bělobrádek, leader of the radical-right anti-immigration SPD party Tomio Okamura, or President Miloš Zeman, this reminded them of moments in history when Czech sovereignty was infringed upon:

> *"As well as the trend of fascistic tendencies – I call it Eurofascism – it is reminiscent of the rise of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s. Eurofascists and Eurobolsheviks - it doesn't matter because they exhibit the same behavior. When someone says a different opinion, they call them xenophobes, extremists, and the like. But note that no one from those parties like us, even in other countries, disrupts anyone else's meetings - while toward us it happens quite often."* – *Tomio Okamura (Aug 29th 2017, as cited in Rozhlas.cz, 2017)*

Moreover, Tomio Okamura (Oct 8th 2017, as cited in Martinek, 2017) compared the EU with the Fourth Reich, drawing attention to the judgment of the European Court of Justice regarding quotas, saying the Court "ordered quotas on migrants even though we do not want them". He believed that "we have "entered another period of totalitarianism", because "the unelected European Commission, which has no accountability to citizens, essentially decides what will be done throughout the EU (Aug 29th 2017, SPD, 2017). President Zeman (Jun 22nd 2017, as cited in ČT24, 2017) also noted that he sees some similarities between the concept of limited sovereignty, which was part of the doctrine of Soviet Union communist leader Leonid Brezhnev, and the concept of shared sovereignty promoted by the European Union, although emphasizing that he sees similarities and not identical things.

There were also some more general sentiments about 'not letting Brussels dictate us':

> *"We don't want any refugees, we won't have them here, we don't have them (…) we will choose who we will provide humanitarian aid to, our Czech companies will choose who they want to employ, not Brussels. Brussels will not tell us who to hire here."*- *Andrej Babiš (Oct 4th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015e)*

For actors such as the already mentioned Petr Fiala in particular this episode was not merely a matter of rejecting 'the decisions of Brussels', but was also a chance to reflect on the origins, founding documents of the EU, and principles on which the EU should function:

> *"I don't want a reform that will be invented in Paris and Berlin. I listen to voices that we are small and cannot decide anything. We can't if we don't*

know what we want. And we don't know that now. Sobotka's government has no idea. I say: Let's agree on a minimum national consensus, everyone. Let's agree on national interests and let's all promote them. We have offered one version — in our opinion a perfectly reasonable one — and we are the only ones who have formulated a realistic European policy. I am ready to talk about it with other political parties and push for something. This is really about the fate of Europe and we cannot sit back and wait for someone to do something somewhere" – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)

"The Treaty of Lisbon, no matter how unfortunate it is, did not assume in the original interpretations that such important issues would be voted on by a majority. After all, it affects the sovereignty of the state! It is not possible to overvote someone. We must continue to be strongly against quotas." – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)

When talking about empowering and recognizing nation-states in the Union, he was joined explicitly in ideas by other politicians such as the leader of the centrist populist ANO party and Deputy Prime Minister at the time Andrej Babiš or Tomio Okamura:

"The greatest added value of the European Union is the national identity of each country… Strong Europe thanks to strong states, that's logical, isn't it?" – Andrej Babiš (Aug 26th 2017, as cited in ČTK, 2017b)

"I would like to refute the dirty saliva of the Euro-Bolsheviks who say about the SPD that we want the Czech Republic to find itself alone in some kind of vacuum. On the contrary, we promote the deepest and closest possible cooperation between European countries. But SOVEREIGN countries! Based on mutual benefit. And that on the basis of 4 basic freedoms, i.e. the Treaty on the European Economic Area (EFTA)[50], which we also signed as the Czech Republic. It guarantees the free movement of goods, capital, people, and services. Paradoxically, these freedoms do not completely collide with the current EU. For example, Romania still does not have free movement of persons, when we joined the EU, we also did not have free movement of services with Germany, Austria, etc. The European Union is simply a political project. A survivor. However, based on EFTA there is much to build on and lean on. We suggest flipping to another switch, as the current EU

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[50] The European Economic Area (EEA) was mistakenly abbreviated as EFTA.

model has disappointed. There is therefore a chance for changes." – Tomio Okamura (Aug 29th 2017, SPD, 2017)

8.4.1.2. Subtheme 2: The EU is underestimating the threat migration may pose

"The Islamic State, terrorism, and uncontrolled migration pose a greater threat to Europe than a conflict or a cold war with Russia." – Andrej Babiš (Jul 30th 2015, as cited in Blesk, 2015)

Another facet of the criticism mounted against the EU was the belief that migration is a severe issue, and that the EU should take it more seriously. The following more moderate and more radical reactions can illustrate the point:

> *"Security and solving the migration crisis come first and this must be reflected in the budget. The Czech Republic was involved in pan-European assistance to pig breeders. I wish them the best, but I think that the safety of EU citizens has a higher priority, but the Czech Republic is not involved in that at all." – Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo24, 2016)*

> *"Even if it was 50 or 100 years from now, there will be a war because of such a global multicultural policy and it will end very badly. People without vision are unable to see these ends. At the same time, here in Europe, irreversible steps are being taken that will end in disaster. What our ancestors have been building here for centuries is coming to an end." – Tomio Okamura (Aug 29th 2017, SPD, 2017)*

As can be seen from the quotes, the criticism ranged from wanting more money allocated in budges to prognoses of the continent crumbling in the future. It is also within this subtheme that we can recognize once more the Czech politicians' conviction that they have something valuable to offer to the discussion in the EU, by offering different solutions and all the while conveying the message that it would have been good to listen to them:

> *"Although the European leaders have their mouths full of the migration crisis - and we are glad that what we have been pointing out for a year and a half is starting to be implemented - that there must be a joint coast guard, joint protection of the Schengen borders, hotspots, but there is no provision for this in the European budget because it closed before the problem occurred." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 1st 2016, TOP-09, 2016)*

Part of the debate also reflected on the issues existing European countries have regarding the integration of migrants in their own societies, with Czech actors who believed this should also be a warning about the migrants that were coming during the 2015-2016 wave. In this context, the ČSSD Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomir Zaorálek mentioned the Brussels district of Molenbeek, where a large immigrant community lives and where Belgian police arrested Salah Abdeslam, described as the sole survivor of last year's terrorist attacks in Paris (Apr 16th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016a). This mentioning of negative examples of integration was coupled with the desire not to experience the same in the Czech Republic:

> *"But we will not accept quotas if we do not agree with them in principle, and we will not introduce problems here that we do not have. That is no solution. We don't have problems with radical Muslim communities here, we don't have neighborhoods that you can't enter because they are controlled by another culture." – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)*

When discussing the characteristics of the migrants that might pose a threat to Europe, there were comments about large numbers and security threats:

> *"Today in Europe, it is becoming clear that large numbers of migrants can have a quite fundamental impact on the security stability of those countries. This will cause Europe, which tried to spread the principles of good governance, democracy, and freedom in the world, to be unable to protect those principles itself." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Sep 20th 2016, as cited in Kabrhelová, 2016)*

However, it should also be highlighted that it was the Islamic element that certain politicians saw as dangerous for the continent, in Petr Fiala's message even expressing pessimism about the prospect of differentiating between those that need help and those that might be a threat:

> *"In a dangerous international situation, entire nations have mobilized and are pushing toward Europe. Radical Islam makes no secret of its desire to dominate Europe. Millions of people are coming to Europe, nobody knows what to do with them. Nobody knows how to distinguish those who need help from those who want to take advantage of our prosperity and from those who even want to fight against our civilization." - Petr Fiala (Jan 17th 2016, as cited in Netočný, 2016)*

8.4.1.3.   Subtheme 3: The EU is managing the crisis badly

Another specific sub-theme that can be singled out refers to broader comments that send the message that the EU is not managing the crisis well. Part of this criticism was related to the general attitude of the EU that actors interpreted as being too open:

> *"The extreme scene is always fueled by strong themes, and today such a theme is migration. The growth of extremism was also helped by the complete openness to migration and failure to address its security part." - Milan Chovanec (May 26th 2016, as cited in Martinek, 2016a)*

Actors like Andrej Babiš (Jan 18th 2016, as cited in Šafr, 2016) joined the ČSSD Minister of Interior Milan Chovanec and stated it was important that the EU simply sends a message that Europe is full and that migrants should not come. Moreover, according to him, the free movement of goods and people is a priority for his party, "even if the EU is slow, inactive, bureaucratic, constantly inventing some regulations and has not been able to solve migration" (May 7th 2016, as cited in ČT24, 2016b). This goes to show migration had become a crucial point of criticism of the EU. Babiš also added that "with unrealistic ideas, the European Commission confirms its already tarnished reputation in the eyes of Europeans" (May 7th 2016, as cited in ČT24, 2016b).

Regarding specific measures taken by the EU, the agreement the EU signed with Turkey was not met with too much approval in the Czech Republic, with even the least EU critical voices seeing it as a pragmatic solution at best:

> *"It's pragmatic, it buys time. TOP 09 is fundamentally opposed to the future of Europe standing and falling on whatever the Turkish government decides, this is of course a short-term solution. By bribing Erdogan, if you want to call it that, but it's really nothing else, Europe is buying the time it desperately needs. It is a pragmatic solution that we should probably not subject to great moral condemnations." – Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo24, 2016)*

Naturally, quotas as a solution were criticized as a bad measure, and it is only additionally worthwhile to point out that some even saw it problematic from a legal point of view:

> *"I'm not happy about it, but it's definitely not the end yet. The question is how the European Council will take place. I'm quite curious about it. I think it will*

also be a legal question whether this is even possible within the framework of European legislation.” – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 22nd 2015, as cited in Bystrý et al., 2015)

There was significant criticism aimed at the handling of external borders:

“In the beginning, the nation-states rather than the European Union as a whole failed, on the other hand, the European Commission and other bodies should have enforced more of the rules that we set and which the nation-states did not follow, partly because they could not, partly because they did not want to. That's why I also welcome the common protection of the Schengen area, that's the solution because nation states like Greece are failing.” – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 15th 2015, as cited in Novinky.cz, 2015)

“On the other hand, the European Union is so incompetent that it hasn't moved to actively protect its external borders for a year, that only now is it starting to think about a European border guard, which is supposed to have 1500 people, which will really save the million refugees who will come here.” – Miloš Zeman (May 18th 2016, as cited in ČT24, 2016c)

“I was the one who said - yes, if we, as Europe, are not able to guard the Schengen border, the protection of the borders of the nation-states is needed. But we are not that far yet.” – Petr Fiala (Aug 25th 2016, as cited in Martinek, 2016b)

Based on this criticism and understanding of the protection of external Schengen borders as failing, unlike critical comments such as those by PM Milanović in Croatia, there was understanding from both the government and the opposition that Hungary's example of erecting a wire fence to secure its border was good:

“The Hungarian government's decision to close the borders is an understandable step. I went to the Hungarian border yesterday to see what they have to face and how well they manage the whole situation. At the moment, decisive action is the only way to fight the wave of migration and prevent a completely unmanageable onslaught of refugees.” – Petr Fiala (Oct 19th 2015, as cited in Šimáček, 2015b)

“They are not able to count them, let alone register them. The effort to follow the rules and to be able to register in the system is something I can hardly dispute.” – Lubomir Zaorálek (Oct 16th 2015, as cited in Irozhlas.cz, 2015)

8.4.1.4.   Subtheme 4: Migrant quotas do not make sense

Aside from concerns about sovereignty, Czech politicians' criticism of migrant quotas was also often directed toward them simply not making sense to them. This mostly meant that they believed it was wrong to distribute people to countries they may not wish to be in, or that the quotas may act as an incentive for illegal migration:

> *"Already in September 2015, when these relocation decisions were approved, the Czech Republic drew attention to the many pitfalls associated with their implementation. Developments in the last two years proved us right when they showed that mandatory quotas for the redistribution of refugees are dysfunctional and act more like an incentive for illegal migration to Europe." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Jun 13th 2017, as cited in Euroskop, 2017)*

> *"I am glad that the Czech government is against mandatory quotas. From the beginning, I say that this is nonsense. It is an interference with the sovereignty of the state, but it is also stupid from the point of view of the refugees because we will distribute the refugees to countries where they do not want to live." – Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký, 2015)*

> *"We have a problem agreeing to mandatory quotas. We're convinced it doesn't work. It is impossible for politicians to explain to people that they have to accept this binding system when people see that migrants do not want to stay in the Czech Republic."– Lubomir Zaorálek (Sep 15th 2015, as cited in Dolejší, 2015)*

The political actors did not see accepting quotas as solidarity, but instead pointed out that the country is showing solidarity in other ways, even letting in a certain number of migrants by their own will:

> *"The Czech Republic is in solidarity, we offered to accept asylum seekers without quotas, and therefore I don't think it's fair for someone to force them on us, especially when those people don't want to come to us. The problem is what do we do with them if they don't want to be here. Do we lock them up in camps that we fence off and don't let them out because they will immediately go to Germany, catch them there, then return them to us? And so forth? I can't imagine it." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 21st 2015, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2015a)*

> *"No. We have always said that quotas cannot work. You can't force someone to be here against their will. But as a rule of law, we also have to honor the commitments we have made, and I can imagine that we will provide assistance to more than a dozen people with strict adherence to all safety safeguards. I find the discussion about the thirteenth migrant[51] comical, ridiculous, and a little ashamed of it."* – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 7th 2017, as cited in Kopecký)

Moreover, actors such as Petr Fiala argued their position further by objecting to quotas on the grounds of values that they deemed incompatible with European principles:

> *"Quotas are broken. 160,000 migrants were supposed to be relocated, but only about 15 percent of them succeeded. Quotas are against European principles. They are inhumane and against our values."* – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)

8.4.1.5.   Subtheme 5: Germany's policies are misguided

> *"The current biggest problem of solving migration is an inconsistent policy of Germany. And showing muscles to the neighbors across the border won't conceal it."* – Milan Chovanec (Sep 15th 2015, as cited in Weaver & Siddique, 2015)

The final sub-theme that can be pointed out is highly interesting in comparison with findings from Croatia. Just as there was non-negligible advocating for following the decision of major EU member states, there was non-negligible criticism in the Czech Republic concerning how Germany is approaching migration. For Andrej Babiš (Jan 18th 2016, as cited in Šafr, 2016), migration is "Germany's problem that they say they can handle", therefore his message is to "let them do it and let them not impose their decision on us that they invited someone". Politicians across the political spectrum singled out not just Germany itself, but also the at-time German Chancellor Angela Merkel's permissiveness toward migration as an issue:

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[51] By fall 2017, despite initial reluctance, the Czech Republic had taken in 12 migrants of the 2691 proposed by the EU's migrant quota relocation scheme (ČTK, 2017c).

"I don't want to cheaply criticize German Chancellor Angela Merkel for everything, but what really bothered me was that at one point she did not respect international rules". - Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo24, 2016)

"The responsibility lies with Germany, which invited these people here through the mouth of Chancellor Merkel, and then calls for pan-European solutions when it is unable to deal with the situation." – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)

"Not only in Germany, there is clearly a significant difference between the published opinion of the media and political elites and public opinion. We will know the true opinion of the majority of the society only in the next elections. It will show how much people approve of Ms. Merkel's policy." – Andrej Babiš (Jan 18th 2016, as cited in Šafr, 2016)

"A reminder is the situation in several Western European countries, where the integration of Muslim minorities has completely failed. This was already admitted years ago by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who stated that the multicultural policy was completely unsuccessful. She also lamented: I thought they would come, make some money, and leave again, but they didn't." – Pavel Belobradek (Jan 8th 2016, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2016)

"Willkomenskultur turned out to be meaningless." – Miloš Zeman (Jul 31st 2016, as cited in Kopecký, 2016b)

A highly interesting passage from Petr Fiala likewise deserves to be mentioned because it laments about the possibility of greater power that Germany would have in the EU will the loss of the United Kingdom. The quote speaks about the contentious relationship with Germany and the Germanic people the country has developed throughout history, as well as the influence European political affiliations have on this party's positioning:

"It is no secret that the British and David Cameron are great allies of the ODS within the European Reformists and Conservatives faction. Naturally, we do not wish for Great Britain to leave, because it would weaken not only our faction but also the position of the Czech Republic. Let's imagine the European Union without Britain, which would mean breaking some kind of at least apparent balance of power. Germany would suddenly dominate without the counterbalance of votes represented by the British." – Petr Fiala (May 4th 2016, as cited in Zitka, 2016)

8.4.2. Theme 2: We welcome more cooperation with the EU but through different solutions

Even though the previous sub-chapter revealed substantial criticism of the EU and staunch reluctance to accept a common solution in the form of mandatory migrant quotas, a good portion of politicians did not, in fact, desire an all-around decrease in European integration, but rather proposed some different solutions they thought were better than what the European Commission was doing. In that sense, in this theme we can see the breadth of ideas about differentiated integration. First of all, explicit sentiments about the need for greater cooperation were uttered by several actors:

> *"We are witnessing an uncoordinated reaction of the member states of the European Union, which are trying to solve a problem that is beyond them in terms of importance and scope" - Bohuslav Sobotka (Jan 21st 2016, as cited in Irozhlas.cz, 2016)*

> *"We present a comprehensive solution, our contribution to a common European solution. Because if there is no pan-European solution, the Schengen area will end, which would have fatal consequences for the Czech economy." – Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo24, 2016)*

> *"I strongly believe that the less European Union we have, the more Putin there will be. I don't want more Putin. If such a political decision were to be made[52], we will push for our entry into the Eurozone." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 1st 2016, as cited in TOP-09, 2016)*

> *"If something like this were to happen in our country, it would be my task to explain to people that we can handle the wave of migration only if we are part of a stronger whole. The idea that anyone today would be able to deal with the migration crisis on their own is completely odd and naïve." – Lubomir Zaorálek (April 8th 2016, as cited in Renovica, 2016)*

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[52] He is referring to the prospect of a 'two-speed' Europe, where some member states would be markedly more integrated than others,

Since the contestation of the EU also involved calls for referendums about leaving the EU, namely from Tomio Okamura, some actors felt the need to point out that this was not the solution they were in favor of:

> *"We offer a realistic policy. It would be great to say to everyone who will be angry with the EU: Let's get out. Because quotas are unacceptable, but not realistic. It is practically impossible to leave the European Union." - Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký, 2015)*

> *"I have been described as a pro-Russian politician, with the implication that my motivation may be the dependence of my companies on Russian natural gas. Let there be no doubt: My policy, like that of my party, is clearly pro-Western and pro-NATO. Membership in the European Union is beneficial for the Czech Republic and we want it to continue to be so." – Andrej Babiš (Oct 28th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015)*

It is also possible to add President Zeman (Jun 22nd 2017, as cited in ČTK, 2017) to the list because although he did say he was in favor of a referendum, he also stated that voting for leaving the EU would be cowardice and not a vote he would cast. In addition to this, some felt the need to reflect on the role the country should have in the EU. Joint action as part of the Visegrad Group was sparsely mentioned by some government members as another way for the country to help. The following two statements present two ideas from parties (TOP-09 and ODS) nominally on a similar position on the left-right political spectrum, but with markedly different histories and ideas regarding European integration:

> *"The second priority for us is the direction of the European Union. We are not happy about the fact that the model of multi-speed Europe is emerging, but it is simply a reality. We consider it a primary national interest for the Czech Republic to remain in the fast lane in the European Union. If it does not stay there and finds itself on the periphery of Europe, we are afraid that we will prepare our children and grandchildren for a fate similar to that of today's Ukrainians who are looking for employment with us." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 7th 2017, as cited in Kopecký, 2017)*

> *"... That's not just my position, that's the party's position. It is clearly stated there that we want to be in the EU, we want to be strong in the EU, we want to reform the EU, we know how to reform it, and how to formulate the interests of the Czech Republic. This is the policy of the ODS." – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)*

Two measures where greater cooperation in the migration crisis in the EU could be accomplished were mentioned unanimously among all actors - more work on external borders and aiding places where migrants are coming from and the developing a return policy. It is also important to add that some also pointed out more work on hotspots that would contain migrants and the development of a consistent return policy. Therefore, the following statement by the PM can be seen as entirely uncontentious for the entire analyzed Czech political elite:

> *"According to the Czech point of view, another important part of the pan-European solution is the establishment of so-called hotspots, the establishment of which, unfortunately, the EU has not progressed anywhere since the June summit. A condition for the successful control of the arrival of refugees is also the streamlining of the return policy, including the rapid adoption of the list of safe countries. According to the Czech government, it is also necessary to sufficiently involve third countries, including non-European ones, in solving the situation. The discussion should also be about the amount of funds that the EU will allocate from its budget to control migration flows." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Sep 23rd 2015, as cited in The Czech Government, 2015)*

It is also worth pointing out that some politicians also felt the need to defend the country against accusations of not being cooperative in the crisis. They pointed out instead that they are helping out and want to help more:

> *"The Czech Republic is one of the most active countries in helping to deal with this crisis, we have sent out experts to migrant hotspots, thousands of our officers have helped patrol borders where needed and we have sent millions of Czech koruna in aid to countries such as Jordan and Turkey. So if the commissioner sees fit to criticize us for not taking in migrants, he should also recognize our merit in helping in other ways. Otherwise, it is merely bullying from Brussels." – Milan Chovanec (Sep 11th 2017, as cited in Lazarová, 2017)*

> *"The label that we are not in solidarity is unfair and unfair. We are against quotas for the redistribution of refugees, but we have voluntarily offered to accept some of the refugees," – Pavel Bělobrádek (May 5th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016b)*

8.4.2.1. Subtheme 1: More work on external borders

The most prominent solution that emerged in the public debate in the Czech Republic is that the country and its politicians want more work to be done on the external borders of the EU, to prevent migrants from coming:

> *"The third thing we emphasize is that measures must take place at common European borders because if we divide the internal market of the European Union with fences at our borders, it will have fatal economic consequences for the Czech Republic. Unlike those who obfuscate the issue, Václav Klaus Jr.[53] said it quite openly. In connection with the migration crisis, he said that we must leave the European Union, even if we become a third poorer. Yes, we would indeed lose weight by at least a third. We are convinced that it is possible to find a solution at the European borders." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 7th 2017, as cited in Kopecký, 2017)*

Actors' positions could be distinguished between those that did not wish to also tighten internal borders, and those who saw it as an option if the Schengen were to fail. The ČSSD Minster of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek pointed out that the Czech Republic, as a state that has no external borders of the Schengen area, is fully dependent on the capabilities of other countries. He therefore would have liked the European Union to be able to speak to the protection of external borders and added that the Czech Republic is ready to send its own people to the "leaky" borders:

> *"If we want to defend the free movement of people, goods, and capital in Europe, if we want to defend the permeability of internal borders, we must be able to defend and protect our external Schengen border." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Feb 16th 2016, as cited in ČT24, 2016a).*

There was some criticism mounted toward countries that were crucial for protecting the border, namely, Turkey, Greece, and Italy in regard to how well they are doing their job:

> *"Exactly. The next chapter is Greece. To what extent do they fulfill what they should as Schengen border countries. Greece is now behaving similarly to*

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[53] The son of former President and Prime Minister Václav Klaus. At the time a member of the ODS, he was noted for his Euroscepticism.

> *when it was going through the economic crisis. Even here it is lax and is such a flow heater - a place through which thousands pass."* – *Lubomir Zaorálek (Oct 10th 2015, as cited in ČT24, 2015)*

> *"I am absolutely certain that Turkey with its strong military and police could do incomparably more against a more or less relaxed line between Turkey and Greece."* – *Lubomir Zaorálek (Feb 25th 2016, as cited in Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016)*

> *"If not [force Greece and Italy to start taking migration seriously], they have no business in Schengen. The Czech Republic should launch a very tough offensive in diplomatic negotiations so that primarily Greece begins to fulfill its obligations. Unfortunately, Greece will have to partially become a detention facility, where the migrants will know that they will be locked up, checked, returned."* – *Milan Chovanec (Aug 28th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016f)*

In lone idea, Deputy Prime Minister Babiš (Jul 30th 2015, as cited in Blesk, 2015) advocated an EU's own Ellis Island, "refugee camps in the southern and eastern Mediterranean to take care of applicants and process asylum applications".

8.4.2.2.   *Subtheme 2: Attempt to solve migration in countries of departure*

Another major solution all Czech politicians stressed was the attempt to solve migration in the countries from which migrants are coming so that they are less encouraged to want to come to Europe. Again, these ideas were present all over the political spectrum, regardless of ideology or government vs. opposition situation:

> *"It is better for us to help people in Jordan, Lebanon, or Turkey than to go with very naive and distorted ideas to Europe, where their integration is not easy and has many risks."* – *Bohuslav Sobotka (Feb 20th 2016, as cited in Rovenský, 2016)*

> *"We help and will continue to help intensively in solving the migration crisis directly at the site of conflicts and in the surrounding states, simply where it makes sense"* – *Milan Chovanec (Jul 5th 2017, as cited in ČTK & iDNES.cz, 2017)*

"If you allocate aid to Europe, it's wasted money… There is a need to help either in their countries or in the neighboring countries [Jordan or Turkey] where they have taken refuge." –Miloš Zeman (Sep 24th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015b)

"Taking care of refugees there is eight times cheaper than in Europe. This means that we can help people there eight times more" – Pavel Bělobrádek (May 5th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016b)

"Of course, this strategy also includes financial aid or, if you prefer, bribing the countries from which the refugees are leaving in order to improve their conditions, which would reduce their motivation to flee to EU countries. Of course, this is terribly expensive." – Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo 24)

"I have been saying for a long time that the migration crisis conflict will not be resolved unless we stabilize the situation in the Middle East. This is no balance of democracy. But it is in the interest of the security of Europe and Western democracies. The Islamic State, which has the ambition to threaten Europe, is rapidly expanding into a powerfully empty space. The only option we have, which unfortunately the West, weakened and weakening at the moment, cannot use is a military intervention against the Islamic State and calming the situation in the Middle East. It would be in our interest. Unfortunately, I fear that this will not be possible with the Obama administration in the US." – Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký, 2015)

"On the contrary, our task is to create the conditions in Syria, where a large part of the refugees are from so that they can return there. We are already thinking about how to participate in the restoration of that country." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Apr 8th 2016, as cited in Renovica, 2016)

Petr Fiala (Sep 4th 2015, as cited in Štíchová, 2015) likewise mentioned supporting non-profit organizations that are already active in sending countries.

8.4.3.   Theme 3: The government is not managing the crisis well

A significant part of the debate also centered around the Sobotka-led's government handling of the crisis. The core of all the criticism was that the government should take a stricter stance and

tougher action toward migration. The importance the topic had in national politics can perhaps be best highlighted by Tomio Okamura (Sep 28th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015c) demanding the resignation of the government and new elections based on believing the government betrayed the nation in how it was handling migration. Most criticism was recorded from ČSSD's historic adversary, the ODS, and its leader Petr Fiala, who wished the government placed greater emphasis on the issue, also pointing out at the same time that citizens feel the topic is of great importance:

> *"First, let me say something about the meeting. When you go to a pub with friends, the first thing you talk about is the migration crisis. And we will come to the parliament and we will talk about electronic records of sales, wearing reflective vests between municipalities at night, how cheap a soft drink should be in a pub... We will talk about how the socialist government wants to educate us and we will not talk about the problem that is absolutely essential."* – Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký, 2015)

Fiala (Sep 29th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015d) was likewise very critical of how the government positioned itself toward the EU, demanding an even tougher stance against migrant quotas and wanting the government to join in filing a case with the European Court of Justice when it seemed a qualified majority would lead to the quotas' implementation

> *"I almost think that if I were in the government, I would not get into this situation. I warned the prime minister in time that there was a threat of overvoting. At the same time, he claimed to my face that we would not be outvoted and that it would be discussed unanimously at the Council. I told him that we need to defend ourselves with legal action, regardless of whether we lose. It is necessary to make it clear by all means that quotas are completely unacceptable. The government didn't and it was a mistake."* – Petr Fiala (Oct 4th 2017, as cited in Cvrček, 2017)

> *"What the government and Prime Minister Sobotka are offering is no solution. It is not enough to just reject quotas rhetorically; it is also necessary to do so concretely. It is also necessary to stop making decisions at the EU level on matters that may go against the interests of the Czech Republic."* – Petr Fiala (May 4th 2016, as cited in Zitka, 2016)

Petr Fiala also developed different solutions he and his party would implement, should they find themselves in power, which included the already mentioned matters such as greater international aid:

"You asked me what I would do as prime minister. First of all, I would not underestimate the immigration crisis, we already presented our proposals at the beginning of the summer, regarding what we should do. Let's talk about them, let's discuss them. I would like to see a concrete plan from the government on what it will do. He has information from the intelligence services, from abroad, but I don't have any government plan on the table, not even whether we should change some laws." – Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký, 2015)

"We have another specific proposal. When they talk about strengthening development aid, we say - the government, keep your commitment and increase the amount for development aid to 0.33 percent of GDP. The government wants to give 0.11 percent. And that's already a nice difference if you use four instead of twelve billion Czech koruna in those refugee camps. It concerns the Czech Republic and the government must do something." – Petr Fiala (Sep 11th 2015, as cited in Kopecký, 2015)

Interestingly, although the country was in a situation where the President was once a member of the Prime Minister's party, prominent criticism was mounted by the former as well, saying the ČSSD would need new leadership if Sobotka does not change his views on migration, "otherwise, he risks being left somewhat alone within the European Union alongside Angela Merkel, and maybe not even that" (Feb 14th 2016, as cited in Kopecký, 2016a).

8.4.4. Theme 4: Migrants may pose a threat to society

Much in the same way that all analyzed actors were critical to some extent about the EU, all of the actors were also critical, in varying degrees, about migrants. Moreover, all types of concerns, whether they be related to security, culture, or economy, were stressed. Those who exhibited a more positive attitude toward migrants had to justify themselves by proclaiming that they were not 'welcomers' (e.g. Miroslav Kalosek on Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo 24). In this sense then, the norm in the Czech Republic was to approach migrants through the prism of a threat, rather than the humanitarian prism witnessed to a good degree in Croatia. One of the more general objections was that large numbers are simply hard to manage:

"How many Czechoslovakians emigrated from 1948 to 1989? Do you know how many, Mrs. Jílková? 250 thousand. In 41 years. Those were the people...

they were the intellectual elite, equipped with the language, they could work immediately.[54] " – Andrej Babiš (Sep 25th 2015, as cited in Šimáček, 2015a)

"We were able to accept arrivals from the former Yugoslavia or Vietnam. That it is more difficult for some groups is a clear thing. Integration is possible if the number of people is low. But we know, for example, that according to some information, there are 150,000 refugees in Germany today, about whom no one knows where they are or what they are." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Apr 8th 2016, as cited in Renovica, 2016)

"Last but not least, there is the safety aspect. Not every foreigner is able - and willing - to integrate into Czech society, accept its values, and assimilate. It is both a question of the number and composition of the arrivals. Too many immigrants with too different a culture are very likely to bring their civilization to us, not to adopt ours." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Jan 8th 2016, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2016)

8.4.4.1.   Subtheme 1: Migrants pose security risks

"Every Muslim is a security risk and a ticking time bomb… we are in an official war, which the Islamists have declared against the Europeans" – Tomio Okamura (Jul 1st 2015, as cited in Lang & Zpěváčková, 2015)

If a securitizing lens could not be firmly established in Croatia, in the Czech Republic there is much evidence that points to this process. The opening quote arises from a radical anti-immigration point of view, but politicians from the moderate political spectrum also raised worries about migrants being a security threat:

"Refugees are people who pose a security risk and whose desire is not assimilation, but the disruption of European culture." – Andrej Babiš (Jan 18th 2016, as cited in Šafr, 2016)

"Not all migrants are criminals, but a small percentage of them are. There can be pedophiles, psychopaths, terrorists, and we should be aware of who

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[54] Babiš is contrasting the number of Czechslovaks who emigrated during the time of communism with the number of migrants coming to Europe during the migration crisis.

we let into our territory." - Milan Chovanec (May 26th 2016, as cited in Martinek, 2016a)

"The Czech Republic has the advantage of not having stronger risk communities that support radical Islam, terrorism, and other things. That is an advantage I would try to maintain. There are millions of people moving around Europe that we are unable to check. We need to be cautious about further migration. The Czech Republic must protect the safety of its people," – Petr Fiala (Aug 25th 2016, as cited in Martinek, 2016b)

Certain actors also argued the security risk aspect by pointing to European countries' previous failures to integrate migrants:

"Europe did not manage to integrate a number of immigrants even in the earlier, very weak waves of migration. What is happening now is multiplying the security risks. In this sense, I consider the policies of many EU countries to be bad, even suicidal." – Petr Fiala (Aug 25th 2016, as cited in Martinek, 2016b)

"In addition, a number of migrants in our country find out over time that the environment is foreign to them and they cannot integrate, and they start creating ghettos." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Apr 8th 2016, as cited in Renovica, 2016)

Further testifying to how great of a threat some political actors saw in migrants, the prospect of migrants coming to the country nudged them to advocate more arming of the state, as well as the citizens:

"We lack five thousand soldiers, we need to arm intensively, support the domestic arms industry, re-equip the army with weapons, and there must also be connections with the interior so that defense and interior complement each other. It is a fundamental fight[55] for the future of Europe, for survival." – Andrej Babiš (Jan 18th 2016, as cited in Šafr, 2016)

"Citizens should arm themselves against terrorists." – Miloš Zeman (Jul 31 2016, as cited in Kopecký, 2016b)

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[55] The fight against immigration.

"If not, then in addition to the police, we also have to call in the army. And not only the army, but also the so-called active reserves, which are now gradually being built up, and I think it's a very good idea because there are people who have already finished their mandatory military service and they are also interested in participating in the activities of the army,"..."And in addition to the police and the army, I would like to add that we are also preparing to deploy firefighters. And the firefighters have water cannons" – *Miloš Zeman (Jun 3rd 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016e)*

8.4.4.2.   Subtheme 2: Migrants represent a cultural danger

"Based on these sources of information from Muslims and prominent Arab politicians, I believe that this invasion is being organized by the Muslim Brotherhood, using funds from a number of countries." – *Miloš Zeman (Jan 4th 2016, as cited in Rozsypal, 2016)*

Yet another major point of departure from what was (not) observed in Croatia is how prominently cultural fears featured in the Czech public debate. Although it is once more possible to find messages from parties and actors of various orientations, the biggest proponents were Tomio Okamura and Miloš Zeman. President Zeman made explicit mentions of Islamization:

"The Czech nation has never been xenophobic, it's just a matter of preventing what you call Islamization, that is, the intrusion of a foreign unassimilable culture that tried to dominate us once in history." – *Miloš Zeman (Sep 24th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015b)*

"They will not follow and respect our laws and customs. They will have Sharia law, so unfaithful women will be stoned, and thieves will have their hands cut off. We will lose the beauty of women because they will be covered in burqas from head to toe including the face, where you only have a cloth grid. Well, I can imagine women where it would be an improvement, but such women are few and far between and I don't see anyone like that here." – *Miloš Zeman (Oct 22nd 2015, as cited in Stuchlíková, 2015)*

Tomio Okamura (Oct 8th 2017, as cited in Spěváčková, 2017) represented an even more extreme positioning that viewed Islam as a hate ideology comparable to and therefore bannable like Nazism. His narratives built their power on national historical references, such as mentioning

that Charles IV would never accept Islam and describing migrants as "uninvited maladaptive economic invaders who have come to feed off the wealth that our forefathers have created for generations" (May 14th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016c). Interestingly enough, he also built his position on what Rogers Brubaker called civilizationalist populism, expressing reluctance to accept Muslims due to the presupposed endangerment of liberal values:

> *"It is an ideology, it is a religious fascism that proclaims the superiority of men over women, believers over non-believers. It does not recognize homosexuals. We refuse to tolerate the spread of any ideology that preaches hatred toward others in the democratic Czech Republic." – Tomio Okamura (Oct 8th 2017, as cited in Martinek, 2017)*

He was not the only one expressing concern about liberal values, as the same could be heard from the Christian democrat Pavel Bělobrádek:

> *"There is a difference between a lifestyle and violating constitutional principles. I once wrote about Islam and that everyone is welcome here if they are willing and able to accept democracy, freedom, tolerance, and a secular state. This means that if they decide not to have a Christmas tree at home, it's their business, but they can't prevent me from doing so in any other way than democratically. And if it offends them, it offends them, but they have to respect it." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 21st 2015, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2015a)*

> *"As for Muslims, I can imagine a very careful assimilation of individuals who come to us because they do not agree with what they have at home: with discrimination against women and non-religionists, with Sharia law, with the linking of politics and religion, with violence, and the education of hatred. And they want to live in a state where there is a secular constitution, rule of law and equality before the law, liberal democracy, and civil liberties for all. I consider it illusory that something like this could work with a larger number of immigrants from Islamic countries, which we also could not choose ourselves." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Jan 8th 2016, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2016)*

What some of the cited quotes show is that Muslim immigrants were not only seen as a cultural threat, but also as a political threat – a threat to the republic and democracy. If there was a desire from the moderate actors to let some migrants into the country, they stressed that integrating them is of utmost importance:

"I believe that it is impossible for asylum seekers to successfully integrate into the society in which they want to live without mastering its language, knowing its culture and history, and knowing what its legal and religious foundations are. Therefore, I demand the inclusion of these elements in their compulsory education. The smaller the barriers to the integration of asylum seekers into society, the more problems we avoid in the future." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Nov 20th 2015, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2015c)

"We want to accept such refugees we will be able to integrate, and make them a part of our life, without getting into religious, cultural, and other conflicts. We want to reduce the risk of isolated groups with different ideas about life emerging in the republic." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Jul 29th 2015, as cited in Havligerová, 2015)

Political actors such as the President also used the example of existing migrants to the Czech Republic as those who are culturally compatible and used them to contrast with migrants from North Africa and the Middle East, who they believed would struggle to integrate culturally:

"I am not against migration in general: I welcomed that the Vietnamese community integrated very well into Czech society. I had no objections to Ukrainians as a workforce in, for example, the construction industry. But I had fundamental objections to the culturally incompatible flow of Islamic immigrants, saying that several million more people of this type are ready." – Miloš Zeman (Jun 22nd 2017, as cited in ČTK, 2017)

8.4.4.3.   Subtheme 3: Migrants raise economic concerns for our citizens

Selected Czech political actors also portrayed the possibility of migrants coming into the country as an economic threat to the country and its citizens. There was no recorded discussion about 'stealing jobs', but rather the greatest concern was that the immigrants would be abusing the welfare state:

"It is definitely not possible to say that the current wave of migration could benefit us economically: mass, unregulated, and in its composition completely incompatible with the needs of the Czech economy. We would end up like Western countries, where these immigrants - of Middle Eastern and African origin - are far more likely to receive welfare benefits and work far

less than the native population." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Jan 8th 2016, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2016)

"I'm talking about Ukrainians, not Muslims. They wouldn't want to work, they would want social benefits." – Miloš Zeman (May 18th 2016, as cited in ČT24, 2016c)

As can be seen from the second quote, mentions of the origins of migrants once more found their way into public messages. On another occasion, President Zeman (Aug 31st 2015, as cited in ČTKa, 2015) stated that the vast majority of migrants from the Middle East and Africa are economic immigrants. He also took issue with the educational profile of the people that would be coming in:

"We have been provided with the educational structure of those migrants who have come to Europe so far, that's something around two million people. Most of them are in Germany. Well, I found out that 35 percent of them have a basic education. So I thought, that's not too bad, that's a pretty high proportion. And so I kept scrolling and found out that the rest had no education." – Miloš Zeman (Apr 20th 2017, as cited in ČTK, 2017a)

Tomio Okamura (Jul 1st 2015, as cited in Lang & Zpěváčková, 2015) was more explicit in pitting migrants against citizens, by placing messages that the "stolen Czech state does not even have money for its own unemployed, elderly, and disabled, let alone to feed refugees", adding that he demands a referendum on whether the Czech Republic should accept migrants.

8.4.5. Theme 5: Tensions regarding migration should calm down in the country

Finally, if all of the themes some far spoke about how politicized the topic of migration was in the country, the fifth theme is yet again a confirmation of that. In short, several actors tried to work toward lowering tensions regarding migration. The reason why several of the sub-themes can be included under this broader theme is that the actors were on the defensive when putting forward all of them, meaning that they felt the need to argue why the topic should be less heated than it had become. Aside from the sub-themes that will be presented, there was some sparse mention of a general willingness to accept a smaller number of migrants as part of conveying the message that immigration of a smaller number of people would and should not be a problem:

"We have 18,000 vacancies for auxiliary workers. If our citizens do not want to fill these positions, then yes, why not." – Andrej Babiš (Sep 12ᵗʰ 2015, as cited in Irozhlas.cz, 2015)

"I think it is within our power to take on board several thousand refugees who are at stake, to provide them with a home and an education for their children. A rich country of ten million people must be able to handle that." – Miroslav Kalousek (Aug 1ˢᵗ 2015, as cited in Kálal, 2015)

"We can accept hundreds of migrants - the Ministry of the Interior is able to prepare the capacity for that, but we don't really know the exact number and we can't increase the number." – Lubomir Zaorálek (Jul 29ᵗʰ 2015, as cited in Havligerová, 2015)

8.4.5.1.   Subtheme 1: Do not abuse the topic politically

One message some political actors tried to spread is that the migration crisis should not be exploited for political purposes. Primarily it was PM Sobotka who criticized the political scene in the country:

"I am convinced that presently active politicians should not have a tendency to prey on the fear of citizens, should not have a tendency to increase the fear of citizens, to cause people to worry regardless of what is actually happening in the world."– Bohuslav Sobotka (Jun 2ⁿᵈ 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016d)

"Migration is something that undoubtedly divides society, people are interested. ČSSD has to make clear arguments, not make people irrationally afraid. We are not trying to score political points from refugees at all costs, but we are trying not to underestimate the risks that the migration crisis brings." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Feb 20ᵗʰ 2016, as cited in Rovenský, 2016)

Similar sentiments were also laid out by two opposition party leaders. Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 8ᵗʰ 2015, as cited in Český rozhlas, 2015) reminded that no strong proposal that could solve the whole problem could exist and that politicians who offer such solutions are populists. Like Sobotka with ČSSD, TOP-09 leader Miroslav Kalousek wanted to position his whole party against populism and profiting off the crisis:

"We are a consistently non-populist party. We do not underestimate the problem of migration, but we refuse to exploit it, we refuse to be traders of fear. So those who do not have problems with this approach have a certain advantage against us in this election. It is necessary to know it and take it into account, but it does not mean that we will become populists." -Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo 24)

There was also some linkage between the politicization of the topic and with interests of Russia:

"In addition, the Russians conduct ideological propaganda in the Czech Republic. They use the migration crisis as a weapon because they know that it causes fear in the Czechs." – Pavel Bělobrádek (May 5th 2016, as cited in ČTK, 2016b)

Some criticism was directly pointed toward President Zeman:

"I tend not to believe Mr. President, because he has already made many statements that are not true or verified." – Miroslav Kalousek (Feb 16th 2016, as cited in Novinky.cz, 2016)

"Within the immigration crisis, the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the interior minister are doing their best, but some members of the government and the president of the republic are making things quite complicated for them" … "Mr. President, instead of calming people down, he scares them." – Miroslav Kalousek (Aug 1st 2015, as cited in Kálal, 2015)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Zaorálek (Feb 16th 2016, as cited in ČT24, 2016a) also considered the proposal of President Miloš Zeman, for the creation of military units to protect European borders, to be misguided, saying Europe is not a war with anyone and that "we need soldiers for something other than border protection".

8.4.5.2. Subtheme 2: We do have some positive experiences with migrants

Even though it was already stated that some used previous experiences with migrants in the Czech Republic as a tool to reject the migrants on the 2015-2016 wave on the grounds of less compatibility with the Czech society, others tried to use these examples to ease worries about a scenario where the country would accept some migrants. In the case of KDU-ČSL leader and PM Sobotka, they highlighted refugees from former Yugoslavia and Ukrainians:

"In 2001, there were 18,000 refugees, mainly from the former Yugoslavia, including a large number of Muslims. And it did not cause tension in society. Times are changing, we have the Islamic State. It is understandable that people are afraid and sometimes get emotional. It is necessary to distinguish ourselves from extreme positions that call for the liquidation of all refugees." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 8th 2015, as cited in Český rozhlas, 2015)

"We need positive examples of integration; we need to have an active integration policy. Several hundred thousand people live here who were not born in the Czech Republic, or were born to parents who relatively recently came from Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina. And most of them managed to integrate into our society." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Feb 20th 2016, as cited in Rovenský, 2016)

President Zeman (Sep 24th 2015, as cited in ČTK, 2015b) was also recorded saying that if Czechs closed themselves off from all foreigners, they would really be xenophobes, adding that he never had anything against the migration of Ukrainians who would work in the Czech Republic and who do not live on social benefits. Ukrainians and Eastern Europeans were mentioned by other actors as well:

"We have very good experience with the integration of citizens of Eastern European countries who are culturally close to us, as well as people from Asia who are culturally distant from us." - Pavel Bělobrádek (Jan 8th 2016, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2016)

"Czech companies will of course not jeopardize any security, they do not want to hire dangerous people, but vetted workers who will come here for a specific job. It is the wish of Czech companies. For example, the head of the Central Bohemian ambulance also talked about the need for doctors and nurses from Ukraine." – Andrej Babiš (Oct 17th 2017, as cited in byznysnoviny.cz, 2017)

8.4.5.3. Subtheme 3: 'Real' refugees do deserve help

"Refugees are not an organized army, we cannot equate them automatically with terrorists, because refugees often flee from Islamic terrorists." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Jan 21st 2016, as cited in Bartoníček, 2016)

For some political actors, easing tensions around migration included the task of putting forward the message that it is important to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees and that the latter do deserve help. Messages of this content did often paint economic migrants in a negative light, however:

> *"We need concrete action to prevent the illegal influx of refugees, to select, among the real refugees, because they are the real poor. Most of those economic migrants have mobile phones, have money, go to ATMs, ride taxis, and go to Germany for a better life. Who wouldn't want it, ours would too."*
> *Andrej Babiš (Sep 25th 2015, as cited in Šimáček, 2015a)*

> *"First, we consistently distinguish between economic immigrants and asylum seekers. An economic immigrant is someone we don't have to accept. Then there are the asylum seekers, those are the people who knock on your door and ask for help because they fled somewhere that wanted to decapitate them or their children." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 7th 2017, as cited in Kopecký, 2017)*

Deputy Prime Minister Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 23rd 2015, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2015b) also agreed with this, adding that refugees do not have the right to choose which country they want to end up in and that the European Union must clearly separate economic migrants from those seeking safety in Europe and reject the former.

It should also be highlighted that for some actors, such as the Communist KSČM party leader Vojtěch Filip, TOP-09 leader Kalousek, or PM Sobotka, humanitarian concerns made their way into their positioning:

> *"I am often criticized for not taking a fundamental stand against refugees. That others are more forceful and earn political points from it. And I say that we are internationalists and our program is solidarity. So I can't stand against those who actually lost their homes and their livelihoods to the war."*
> *- Vojtěch Filip (May 13th 2016, as cited in Stuchlíková & Dolejší, 2016)*

> *"If we are a civilized society that builds on the foundations of Masaryk's humanism, and I firmly believe that we still are, then we cannot tell these people that we do not care at all and let them go back to where their heads will be cut off. While respecting all the safeguards that accepting such an asylum seeker must have, if you are human, you cannot refuse to help a*

person whose life is at stake." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 7th 2017, as cited in Kopecký, 2017)

"On the other hand, I am convinced that if people are really fleeing war, and there are many such refugees, we have an obligation to help them. Not only because of international legal obligations but that we are a civilized country with a strong humanist tradition that should oblige us to do so." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Feb 20th 2016, as cited in Rovenský, 2016)

8.4.5.4.   Subtheme 4: We should be inclusive and not discriminate

Linked with the aforementioned humanistic notions would be commitments to values of inclusiveness and non-discrimination some politicians utilized to defend their approach. Even if the following actors pointed out concerns they have over Muslim migrants, they also wanted to take a stand against religious discrimination:

"There is no problem for a country with 10.5 million inhabitants to integrate two or three thousand foreigners within a few years. I think that Czech society cannot completely close itself off, nor that we should build society on a strong religious principle." – Bohuslav Sobotka (Feb 20th 2016, as cited in Rovenský, 2016)

"It's insulting. I don't care at all if, for example, there are some Muslims sitting in the House of Representatives. We live in a secular state." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 15th 2015, as cited in Novinky.cz, 2015)

"It cannot be ruled out that the extremists will get into the House of Representatives, but there is certainly no potential for them to gain over fifty percent. If that happens, it will be our fault too. That is why we go out among people and explain to them, we have arguments on websites, and we participate in discussions. We have to be active because people are suffering. They have an existential fear, they are terrified of what is elsewhere and they don't want it to be here. It's not urgent, but I understand the concerns. As a democratic politician, I have to talk to people and repeat to them that we live in a secular state, in a liberal democracy, we must respect ethical values, and that there is equality of races and genders. If we once start saying that a Muslim is a terrorist, it will turn out badly." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 21st 2015, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2015a)

"Anyone who speaks derogatorily and hatefully toward a certain ethnicity or nationality and degrades people by talking about them as slugs spreads hatred in the Czech Republic increases the security risk and thus harms our country and its people" – Lubomir Záoralek (Oct 6th, 2017, as cited in Horák, 2017)

Within this sub-theme we may point out the interesting case of the Christian-democrat party KDU-ČSL's leader who felt surprised by liberal-oriented parties, whom he believed would be less apprehensive toward immigrants. His statement also goes on to tell how the politicization of the topic severely narrowed the options of parties for positioning themselves:

"I rather expected that some liberal parties here would raise the banner in support of refugees and start waving it. But all I noticed was embarrassment and passivity. At first, I thought that this was not my area, but I started discussing it because someone had to do it. I am therefore glad now that Karel Schwarzenberg said something about it after his summer sleep, that the Minister for Human Rights Dienstbier started the debate because it is interesting to discuss it with him." – Pavel Bělobrádek (Sep 21st 2015, as cited in KDU-ČSL, 2015a)

8.4.5.5.   Subtheme 5: There are no migrants here so the fears are unjustified

"After all, the Czech Republic has the fewest refugees from the entire European Union. And the biggest hysteria is in the Czech Republic. The responsibility is clear." – Miroslav Kalousek (Oct 1st 2016, as cited in TOP-09, 2016)

In line with the negative valorization of the politicization of the topic and with trying to calm tensions, there were also messages about how the Czech Republic is actually not endangered by migrants because they are not passing through it and do choose it as their destination country. Quite interestingly, the Czech President, although being very critical toward migrants, made note of this as well. Regarding the Czech demonstrations against immigrants, he said that in the Czech Republic, there are demonstrations for and against migration, with the anti-migration ones being relatively larger, stating that:

"It's a paradox because there are no migrants in the Czech Republic, no migrants at all. From the Czech point of view, migrants are something like a

yeti or like Mrs. Colombo. Everyone talks about them, but no one has seen them." – Miloš Zeman (Oct 10th 2017, as cited in Krupka, 2017)

Commenting on anti-immigration sentiments in the public, Miroslav Kalousek and Pavel Bělobrádek were also puzzled by the number of anti-migrant organizations:

"But what is intriguing is that the Czech Republic does not suffer from that situation. Unlike Germany, where there are a million refugees, unlike Austria, where there are a hundred thousand refugees, we have more anti-refugee organizations than refugees. And although we do not suffer from that problem, anti-Islamic sentiment is the strongest in our country of all the countries of the European Union." – Miroslav Kalousek (Sep 10th 2016, as cited in Echo 24)

"I think this is unbelievable considering the fact that the vast majority of those people have never seen a single refugee in the Czech Republic. And the calls for mining our borders, putting up barbed wire, destroying ships, including refugees and the like, these are terrible things, and I think the counterpoint can be how the politicians in Germany are dealing with it." - Pavel Bělobrádek (Aug 27th 2015, as cited in ČRO Radiožurnál, 2015)

9. DISCUSSION

9.1. Introductory note

In the previous three chapters, the results of different steps in the analysis, which looked at different types of actors and utilized different sources and methods, were presented. These results were presented in rather a descriptive manner, leaving lots of room for comparing results between the countries and discussing why they turned out the way they did. In this chapter, all of the specific and distinct segments of results will be discussed before finally trying to piece them all together and going back to the research questions and guidelines for analysis.

9.2. Discussing citizens' positions toward migration and the EU

Overall, survey data painted a picture of two societies that differ crucially in how their citizens view the EU and immigration. The differences were present at the first measurement point and even increased after ten years. The results from 2008 show that Czechs were more apprehensive than Croatians about allowing immigrants of different ethnic groups from the majority and poorer countries outside Europe even before the crisis. Likewise, Czechs were much more likely to see immigrants as undermining the country's cultural life than Croatians, who in fact leaned slightly more toward the idea of them enriching cultural life. Multiple regression analysis additionally revealed that support for further EU unification was considerably more tied to attitudes toward immigration in the Czech Republic than in Croatia even back in 2008. The ISSP data from 2013 mostly align with these findings, and the additional ISSP data from 2018 showed that attitudes toward Muslims were tremendously more negative in the Czech Republic. When comparing ESS results from 2008 with those from 2018, strong effects of politicization are observable. Perceiving immigrants as a cultural threat and reluctance toward accepting them have risen markedly in the Czech Republic. Even better evidence is the stark growth in the variance of support for further EU unification explained by attitudes toward immigration. Public opinion in Croatia, on the other hand, has remained almost unchanged, with only a minor growth of the variance explained in the multiple regression. The fact that in ten years, the perception of immigrants as a cultural threat increased significantly in the Czech Republic, as well as its correlation with Euroscepticism, makes for a strong base for making the argument about the effect of politicization. In addition to this, the drop in the support for further EU

integration and a sharp rise in how much this question is related to attitudes toward immigration signalize the rise of the transnational cleavage and cultural-identity matters's growing power in determining Euroscepticism. If existing research (Guerra & Serrichio, 2014; Guerra, 2018) pointed toward a greater role of utilitarian considerations in CEE than questions of identity and cue-taking, this dissertation indicates that both of these non-utilitarian factors now play a sizeable role (at least in one CEE country).

Going back to the three hypotheses set for this research segment, we can confirm the main hypothesis (H1), which claimed negative migration attitudes are positively correlated with Eurosceptic attitudes in both cases and that the correlation increased after 2015. Moreover, we can confirm the second (H2), linked hypothesis, which claims the link will be stronger in the Czech Republic than in Croatia. Moreover, ESS data likewise showed that lower trust in politicians is linked with greater reluctance toward further European integration in both countries and in both of the years analyzed, thereby confirming the third hypothesis (H3) The variable seems to be a better predictor in the Czech Republic, particularly in 2018. Although it is far from a perfect indicator of populist attitudes, the correlation may hint at the link people make between 'mainstream' politics in their country and the EU as a political institution. For instance, Croatians have a lower level of trust in the European Parliament than Czechs, which can be linked to the generally low levels of trust in political institutions in Croatian society (Bovan & Baketa, 2022) and linked with the 'benchmarking' hypothesis in theories of European integration which claims that citizens will take into account satisfaction with politics in their country when assessing the EU.

9.3. Discussing the positioning of political parties according to expert scores and manifestos

The positions of Croatian political parties on matters of immigration and European integration whose fragments of party manifestos were singled out as relevant[56] are summarized in Table 14.

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[56] To avoid cluttering the table with their entries, I list the excluded manifestos here: HNS-Liberals (2007), IDS (2007), HDSSB (2007, 2011), HDZ (2011), HL-SR (2011), SDSS (2011), HDSSB (2011, 2015), HSS (2011), Independent List of Ivan Grubišić (2011), Even Stronger Istria Coalition (2015, 2016), NS-R (2015, 2020), MOST

Table 14. Summary of Croatian party positions on migration and European integration throughout the years

Party	Year	Economic concerns?	Security concerns?	Cultural concerns?	Links immigration with European integration	More or less integration?
HDZ	2007	No	No	No	No	-
	2016	No	No	No	No	-
	2020	No	Yes	No	Yes	More
Homeland Coalition (HDZ-led)	2015	No	No	No	No	-
SDP	2007	No	No	No	No	-
Kukuriku Coalition (SDP-led)	2011	No	No	No	No	-
Croatia is Growing Coalition (SDP-led)	2015	No	No	No	No	-
Peoples' Coalition (SDP-led)	2016	Yes	No	No	No	-
Restart Coalition (SDP-led)	2020	No	No	No	No	-
HSLS-HSS-PGS	2007	No	No	No	No	-
SDSS	2007	No	No	No	No	-
ŽZ	2015	No	No	NO	No	-
MOST	2016	No	Yes	No	No	-
	2020	No	Yes	No	No	-
DP	2020	No	No	No	No	-
HNS-Liberals	2020	No	No	No	Yes	More
MOŽEMO!	2020	No	No	No	Yes	More

(2015), MB 365 (2015), The Only Option Coalition (2016), Coalition for Prime Minister (2016), SiP & Focus (2020), SDSS (2020).

The New Left	2020	No	No	No	Yes	Insufficient data[57]
RF	2020	No	No	No	No	-

Much like the accompanying text that described the positions of Croatian parties, due to pragmatic reasons, the summary for Croatia as presented above only includes the parties who mentioned the topic of migration.[58] The table clearly shows that seldom any party in the analyzed period pointed out threats from immigration. But as analyses of manifestos showed, there was more mention of the topic in the context of the parliamentary elections of 2020, when HDZ and MOST briefly raised some security concerns related to migration. No party, however, showed a negative linkage between migration and European integration. In fact, HDZ in 2020 is the only party that linked the two, yet it promised to cooperate more in the EU rather than the opposite, believing its position of 'new sovereigntism' to be fully compatible with a markedly pro-EU stance.[59]

What the foray into party positions through expert scores and party manifestos offered was some guiding light for more in-depth research on the positions of specific actors. Several points are note-worthy in the case of Croatia:

1. Expert scores point to a chasm on the topic of migration between the two main parties in Croatia at the time – HDZ and SDP.
2. Party manifestos point to the growing elaboration of positions and a growing divide between the left and the right over a securitizing vs. a humanitarian approach to migration and migrants in the aftermath of the crisis.
3. The topics of attitudes toward the EU and migration tend to be linked according to expert scores, but it does not seem that the crisis "brought them closer together in the election materials for 2016.

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[57] There is only one sentence that is critical of the EU's handling of migration matters, but it is not clear what solutions the party would propose.

[58] With two exceptions. The first one is the SDP-led Restart Coalition in 2020, given that SDP has been a long-tenured challenger of HDZ and that in 2020 the topic was discussed the most, compared to all other analyzed years. The second is ŽZ, a populist party with anti-EU stances whose omission of the topic is interesting to note.

[59] This has to be understood in the context of the party constructing its identity on deeper European integration.

4. New challengers that appeared in the parliamentary elections of 2016 and in subsequent elections have increased the salience of EU and immigration matters in the public arena.

5. Despite negatively gauged positions by experts on both matters, insight into party manifestos does not seem to point to parties negatively linking migration and European integration.

The positions of Czech political parties can be summarized as seen in Table 15. Unlike the case of Croatia where there are more such occurrences, only two parties did not present any material worthwhile of analysis – TOP-09 in 2010 and KSČM in 2013.

Table 15. *Summary of Czech party positions on immigration and European integration throughout the years*

Party	Year	Economic concerns?	Security concerns?	Cultural concerns?	Links immigration with European integration	More or less integration?
ANO	2013	No	Yes	No	Yes	More
	2017	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Differentiated
	2021	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Differentiated
ČSSD	2010	No	No	No	Yes	More
	2013	No	No	No	No	-
	2017	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Differentiated
	2021	No	Yes	No	Yes	Differentiated
ODS	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less
	2013	Yes	No	No	No	-
	2017	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Less
TOP-09	2013	No	No	No	No	-
	2017	No	Yes	No	Yes	More
KDU-ČSL	2010	No	No	Yes	Yes	More
	2013	No	No	No	Yes	More
	2017	No	No	No	Yes	More
SPOLU*	2021	No	No	No	Yes	Differentiated
KSČM	2010	No	No	No	No	-
	2017	No	Yes	No	Yes	Differentiated
	2021	No	No	No	No	-
STAN	2017	No	Yes	No	Yes	More
Pirates	2017	No	No	No	Yes	More

Pirates + STAN	2021	No	No	No	Yes	Differentiated
Usvit	2013	No	No	Yes	Yes	Less
SPD	2017	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Less
	2021	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Differentiated
Green Party	2010	No	No	No	No	-
	2013	No	No	No	No	-
Public Affairs	2010	Yes	No	No	No	-

* Coalition consisting of ODS, TOP-09, KDU-ČSL

The parties that were in power at the height of the crisis in 2015/2016, namely ANO and ČSSD showed show a noticeable shift toward more negative attitudes toward immigration and linked matters of European integration with it. Both parties started expressing more concerns over migrants and both parties rejected quotas as one proposal of deeper integration (although both would welcome more cooperation in the field of security). Did the opposition parties at the time then counter them with opposite positions? The answer is - not quite. The strongest competitor at the time, ODS, persevered in a cautious approach to migration and as well as to the idea of accepting a common EU migration and asylum policy. The other two moderate right-wing parties, TOP-09 and KDU-ČSL, are on the more supportive side of the spectrum, but it should be noted that this seems to be in line with what their positions already were before the crisis. With the loss of relevance of the Green Party and KSČM's expert-based assessment of unsupportiveness toward migrant quotas and immigration, there was a void of distinctly supportive voices on the left-wing spectrum of the political competition. After the height of the crisis, no one has a sort of 'welcome with open hands' approach. Even the more centrist parties like the Pirates and STAN are cautious not to sound too accommodating toward migrants, lest they be criticized for it like in the 2021 elections. Moreover, expert scores concerning GAL/TAN showed a general shift toward the TAN end of the scale among the major parties. In the manifestos, no party explicitly said they would support the EU's 'migrant quotas' so those who are advocating for more European cooperation on matters of migration should still be understood as being somewhat cautious on the matter. The role of SPD as a party that entered the mix and which attracts a non-negligible share of voters (around 10%) can also be speculated on, as their highly anti-EU and anti-immigration attitudes might be shifting the 'mean' of the discussion. Looking at expert scores and manifestos on the time before the height of the migration crisis, it does seem that the question of 'foreigners' (if not migrants) was already on the agenda of some parties. And when we take a look at the aftermath of the crisis, we notice that the topic's salience persevered even in the 2021 elections.

Two key points can be stressed when comparing both countries based on expert scores.

First, the mean scores for all the parties show that both the matters of immigration and European integration were more contested in the Czech Republic before the migration crisis started. There were contesters, however, in Croatia. In matters of migration, experts deemed the more right-wing Croatian parties present in the elections to favor more restrictive immigration policies, although, in the case of European integration, a noticeably more negative attitude was estimated with only one of those parties (HSP-AS). The same cannot be said for the Czech Republic, where in the 2013 election there were four challengers to deeper European integration (ODS, KSČM, Usvit, Svobodni). Likewise, when looking at attitudes toward migration policy, only one party stood out with a noticeably liberal orientation (SZ).

Second, the impact the migration crisis had on party positions is evident in the Czech Republic when looking at immigration attitudes. Despite not quite expecting that the same effect would be observed in Croatia, the expert scores also hint at the development of more restrictive attitudes in Croatia as well. The impact on attitudes toward European integration seems less obvious in both countries. This suggested that attention had to be paid to specific actors in the Czech Republic and their changes in subsequent analyses, while in Croatia seeing much of an impact was not expected.

Likewise, a few key points gained from comparing electoral manifestos can be summarized.

First and foremost, it is obvious that immigration was more discussed in the Czech Republic during all of the analyzed years. The difference is particularly stark not just in the years preceding the migration crisis, but also in the elections that followed immediately after it happened. Moreover, it has to be taken into account that the topic was already being debated in the manifestos of Czech parties prior to the migration crisis. Nonetheless, the migration crisis was a trigger for all of the actors to reflect on the topic and led to a strong linkage with questions of European integration. In Croatia, it is only in the 2020s that we can notice a growing significance of debating migration issues, however, the manifestos do not point to actors desiring less integration in the EU regarding migration.

9.4. Discussing the positioning of political actors in the migration crisis

The contextual knowledge that analysis of media texts adds can be seen as the most valuable contribution of the research part of the dissertation. To a good degree, however, it confirmed most expectations that were set by the segments of research that preceded it.

In the Croatian case, analyses of party manifestos pointed to low salience of the topic of migration and the analyses of political actors through media texts further confirmed this. The Croatian political elite mostly understood migration as a problem that has to be managed humanely and in cooperation with the EU. A noticeable shift can be observed between the narratives of the social-democrat government led by Zoran Milanović and the Christian democrat government led by Tihomir Orešković. PM Milanović and his ministers stressed a humanitarian approach to a greater deal than PM Orešković and his ministers, who can be seen as more in line with prioritizing efficient management of migration. Milanović was notably critical of Hungary's harsher approach on the grounds of believing that migrants should be approached in a civil and humane manner. Despite Milanović's government standing out more, both governments spoke about approaching and treating migrants humanely. The same holds for President Grabar-Kitarović, who can ultimately be described as the biggest challenger to a more permissive approach to migration. The President is likewise one of the few actors who was critical toward the EU, albeit not in a manner that would suggest rejecting being a part of solving the crisis. What is worthy of being pointed out is that, unlike HDZ, at one point she was explicitly critical of Angela Merkel's role in migrants coming to Europe, whereas the party was not inclined to engage in criticism of Germany. Another episode that is related to her criticism standing out was when her commissioner for migrants Andrija Hebrang stated the army should be deployed to the border in order to thwart migrants (R.I.A. & Hina, 2015). The president's clashes with the government need to be understood within the context of cohabitation, whereby the president and the PM came from different parties, which increases the likelihood of clashes. Ideological divides do seem to work well in Croatia in explaining how parties oriented themselves, as the more right-wing parties demonstrated less permissive attitudes than the more left-wing ones, although they did not go to extremes and did not polarize the issue. The government-opposition divide also played a part in the criticism of the Milanović government, but when the left-wing coalition led by SDP found itself in opposition, it did not criticize the new government much regarding its handling of migration. To an extent, this can also be explained by the waning of the topic's salience in Croatia since 2015 and up to fall 2017, which

serves to explain why the third government, that of Andrej Plenković, could only scarcely have been found to have said something about the topic. What united all three governments was that they wanted to deepen Croatia's integration into the European Union by entering the Schengen Area and implementing the Euro. Being against 'migrant quotas' would have endangered this path, and worsened relations with Germany, which have historically been good and important for Croatia. Another aspect that might explain the more humanitarian tint in the country was the invoking of its own experience with war, which was recorded among politicians of various orientations.

When looking at the Czech political parties the leaders represented, it is once more useful to reiterate a few points by summarizing what representatives of each party said. Looking at how politicized the debate was, a strong push toward more restrictive attitudes toward migration was observed coming from almost the entirety of the opposition, most prominently from ODS and SPD.

ODS leader Petr Fiala in particular has been recorded saying that the government is not giving the matter warranted attention, all the while for people in pubs migration is the main topic. He was linking the topic to the EU level by decisively rejecting migrant quotas, explaining that this infringes on Czech sovereignty and that it is nonsensical because it would be bringing in people who do not wish to be there. And when looking at who felt nudged to revisit and depict its party's positions toward European integration the most, Petr Fiala once again stands out. His and ODS' marked presence on the topic reveals the importance of party legacies. ODS had already been a known (mild) Eurosceptic party before the crisis and analyses of its manifestos confirm it was also not permissive toward immigration. The migration crisis presented an opportunity to further distance themselves from the social democrat-led government.

It is through media texts that we also know that SPD leader Tomio Okamura participated in anti-immigration protests calling for the resignation of the then-in-power government. His new, challenger party positioned itself on the radical end of the political spectrum, going so far as wanting to ban Islam as a hate ideology and calling for a referendum to leave the EU. Considering challengers like this one insignificant would be an act of folly; Okamura was an MP during the height of the crisis who subsequently went on to win around 10% of the vote in the parliamentary elections of 2017 and 2021. Along with members of non-governmental organizations and movements such as Martin Konvička's Bloc Against Islam, he undoubtedly created pressure in the political arena which made politicians reflect on the prospect of radical

actors gaining a foothold. This pressure may have had a two-fold effect; on the one hand, narrowing pro-migrant and pro-EU options, but on the other hand also resulting in a desire to create distance between certain actors, namely those more moderate and more extreme ones.

When considering other potential challengers in the opposition, although the communist KSČM party leader Vojtěch Filip went so far as to meet with the former PM and President Václav Klaus, who is notably on the right-wing end of the spectrum, to discuss a common platform against immigration, his party seems to have shied away from the issue, and Filip himself was recorded directly saying he did not wish to present a harsh position. In that very statement, he mentioned the internationalist component of his communist program and solidarity as a key value in it, pointing to the conclusion that it was harder to merge a radical-left ideology with anti-migration stances.

It is also very evident that Czech President Zeman had a notable role in raising the cultural fears of Muslim immigrants and in making the topic even more salient in Czech society. His 'differentiated' approach to migration was that culturally similar foreigners are acceptable, but he had been particularly critical of Muslims and what he saw as Islamization even before 2015 and did not wish to welcome them during or after the height of the migration crisis. The President acted as a force of pressure on the government, even if the situation might not have looked like one of cohabitation due to Zeman's past membership in ČSSD.

The other two relevant parliamentary parties at the time, TOP-09 and KDU-ČSL, seemed to have been trying to show a milder face than the rest.

The change in TOP-09 leadership from Karel Schwarzenberg and his more genuinely humanitarian approach to Miroslav Kalousek's perhaps more pragmatic approach was discussed in light of how the party could lose some support by keeping a pro-immigration policy. Still, Kalousek carried on with his party's legacy and was found to be critical of the abuse of the topic and tried to calm tensions down, even if he too criticized both the EU and migrants.

KDU-ČSL leader Bělobrádek explicitly referred to what was going on in the debate on the migration crisis issue as fascist and populist sentiments which are dangerous, even though, like Kalousek, he expressed reservations toward the EU's handling of the crisis, as well as toward migrants.

Taking all this into account, we can see that the ruling coalition of ČSSD, ANO, and KDU-ČSL was under significant pressure to be stricter toward immigration.

The analysis shows that ANO leader Andrej Babiš was already developing his narrative about 'Brussels' imposing something on the Czech Republic even in 2015. What can also be seen is criticism toward the EU distributing money to member states, when they should be giving money to places sending immigrants – a sentiment echoed by all of the Czech actors analyzed. Babiš's criticism of the EU can be seen as developing the context of the migration crisis. Whereas before it, he may have had a more utilitarian tint to his outlook on European integration but ultimately viewed it in a positive light, after the crisis criticism related to sovereignty and Brussels bureaucracy grew. Analyses of manifestos from the parliamentary elections in 2021 can further confirm this since ANO's program even starts with a chapter "We won't give away our country" and explicitly expresses sovereigntist sentiments in relation to the EU: "we will not transfer the sovereignty of the Czech Republic to the European Parliament or the European Commission" (p.6). The conclusion can be also confirmed by additional material, such as his books, the one from 2017 titled 'What I Dream About When I Happen to Fall Asleep' (*O čem sním, když náhodou spím*) and the 2021 pre-election book "Share It Before They Ban It" (*Sdílejte, než to zakážou*). The last one in particular even begins with a memoir-style retelling of how Babiš and the Visegrád Four (V4) rejected EU migrant quotas, with partnership with Viktor Orbán on this issue being pointed out. The case of this party shows that populism, particularly the centrist variant ANO can be subsumed under, has a thin core that needs to be supplemented with 'thicker' elements such as Euroscepticism.

ČSSD is an example of a left-wing party that had to deviate from its initially more permissive approach to migration. Along with all the domestic tension, as well as the one caused by the rejection of migrant quotas, the clashes with the EU's quota proposal were even elevated to bilateral tension as the ČSSD Minister of Interior Chovanec explicitly criticized Germany for its "inconsistent" attitude toward migrants. His and the PM's Sobotka handling of the crisis, along with ČSSD Minister Zaorálek's outlook on the matters, revealed that it was nigh on impossible to be 'pro-quotas' and even understanding of migration and be successful in the Czech political arena.

Certainly, this also had to do with the attitudes of citizens, even if the politicians did not mention them as justification for their positions as often as might have been expected. Certain quotes, however, do suggest that politicians had to 'watch their backs' as it seems the prevailing mood

was against migrant quotas and a critical attitude toward migrants permeated all levels of society.

9.5. Piecing all of the pieces of the puzzle together

After all of the results and respective discussions were presented, it is necessary to go back to the main research questions.

The first main research question asked how the migration crisis reflected on the perception of the European Union in the two selected cases. There are different pictures to be painted in Croatia and the Czech Republic. In Croatia, the migration crisis paved the way for further affirmation of cooperation with the EU, with a view toward deeper integration of the country into the EU. The political elites did not politicize the topic and no effect of such politicization is observable on the attitudes of citizens, at least up until the data point analyzed here (2018). In the Czech Republic, the migration crisis meant questioning the desire to be more deeply integrated in the EU in certain matters. Looking at worsening attitudes toward the EU and their linkage with migration matters among Czech citizens, as well as looking at how the Czech political elite saw rejecting migrant quotas as a defense of sovereignty, it can be posited that the crisis resulted in the burgeoning of the *transnational cleavage* in the country. Still, linkage with the opposed concepts of a modern and nationalist vision of Europe as posited by Risse (2010) is not as straightforward. The Czech society is among the most culturally liberal among post-communist European countries and even actors such as Tomio Okamura showed a civilizationalist approach – meaning that he saw the Muslim migrants as a threat to culturally liberal values. The Czech case demonstrates how politicization of a topic can 'hook' two previously (more or less) disparate areas together. The effect of all that has transpired in this country in the wake of the migration crisis has left an impact on the future political landscape. It means that the EU's handling of migration issues will nowadays be under more scrutiny as the EU has been framed as an actor whose exerting of rule over the nation in topics of migration can be seen as undesirable. With other questions of further integration such as implementing the Euro being highly unpopular, it remains to be seen at what speed of integration the country will proceed with future developments of the EU. As the example of migrant quotas shows, options for positions on some EU matters have been narrowed for politicians.

Using conceptual and theoretical guidelines in the form of applying the most used typology of Euroscepticism by Taggart and Sczerbiak (2002) to summarize actors' positions for ease of comparison with future research would not prove very useful. If soft Euroscepticism means objection to certain policies of the EU, then all of the Czech analyzed actors could fall under this category, with the exception of the hard Eurosceptic Tomio Okamura who advocated leaving the EU. In that sense, soft Euroscepticism is indeed too inclusive of a category. When looking at Kopecky and Mudde's (2002) typology as an expanded answer to Taggart and Sczerbiak, the question arises if objection from Czech actors stemmed from objection to the EU or European integration. If we say that some actors had issues with European integration, but not the EU, we might be able to categorize them as Europragmatists, thereby differentiating them from Eurosceptics, who would be in favor of European integration, but have some issues with how the EU looks like today. But does rejection of migrant quotas mean opposition toward the EU or European integration? If the understanding prevails that the issues the political elite had with the quotas were a broader issue stemming from not envisioning European integration as a process that would lead to common migration and asylum policy in any supranational entity, we might be able to talk about Europragmatists. But as criticism of the typology noted well, these actors at the same time also had a distinct issue with how the EU looked, making it hard to have an axis where support for the EU and European integration can be entirely mutually exclusive. With how this episode in European integration showed that everyone can be 'Eurosceptic' on a certain issue, it might be good to develop more nuanced typologies that would indicate support for certain aspects of integration, such as political, economic, and security ones. This is where the growing importance of the concept of differentiated integration comes in. As the analyses of media text showed best, 'rejecting migrant quotas' did not necessarily mean that all political actors wanted 'less EU' overall. Instead, many proposed different solutions to the EU's schemes of relocation and resettlement. Their proposals such as more cooperation on protecting the borders or addressing issues in the countries of origin do still subscribe to a desire for greater integration. It could be interpreted that they did not mind a more active and efficient EU in the sense of utilitarian considerations of membership but did to some extent mind the idea of an ever-tighter union in terms of values. The schemes of relocation and resettlement seemed to trigger identity-related fears and a desire to preserve the country's 'own way' of approaching who can and should be a part of the society.

The second question asked what the dynamics between the citizens and political elites were like regarding the perception of the European Union in the migration crisis. Analyses of survey data

on citizens of both countries seemed to point to an effect of politicization in the Czech Republic, as well as toward potential cueing of the elites by the masses. In Croatia, there was some disagreement on the topic among the elites, but the issue did not ultimately become salient. According to the typology by van Der Brug and coauthors (2015), this means that in Croatia we could call it a latent conflict. Developments that happened in Croatia after the migration crisis of 2015-2016, particularly in the 2020s when migration started being more contested, seem to confirm such a label and the notion that its seeds did exist during the height of the crisis In the Czech Republic, the topic was undoubtedly highly salient as early as the beginning of the crisis. Even if there was clear agreement on certain topics such as 'migrant quotas', there was disagreement in general laxness of approaching migration that gave rise to pronounced contestation of the topic. When trying to explain how politicization occurred, using van Der Brug and coauthors' typology it could be argued that all of the scenarios could be applicable. The migration crisis as an external event itself was a structural element that ignited a part of the citizens to, at the very least, vote for new anti-immigration parties such as SPD. In the Croatian case, we saw that during the height of the crisis, there was no comparable political outlet that could have capitalized on the anxieties of parts of the population regarding immigrants to such a degree. However, based on the insight that there were also citizens' demonstrations against immigration in the Czech Republic, we can note that the actions of specific groups in society play a role as well. The existence of anti-immigration NGOs was noted in the Czech case but not in the Croatian one. Nonetheless, the material at hand points the most to the importance of top-down agency by political elites who rejected certain policies such as 'migrant quotas', discussed the topic prominently and often in settings such as the national parliament, and raised tensions regarding the threat that migrants and the EU might pose. Again, this was not observable in the case of Croatia. The scenario of the 'political opportunity structure' could also be argued and confirmed, for instance, on the example of the social democrat ČSSD whose more liberal approach to migration would have lowered chances of coalition and electoral success. In Croatia, there was some incentive by the then-opposition HDZ party to use the topic of immigration to position itself against the then-in-power SDP, but they instead chose to do this with different topics. In short, based on the evidence present in the dissertation, a top-down process can be argued as decisive both of the countries, despite evidence that also shows the relevance of the concerns and actions of citizens in the Czech case.

The third question ultimately asked why the Czech political elites politicized the topic during the height of the crisis, but the Croatian ones did not. Theories of European integration may

offer some help. Indeed, all of the merits Hooghe and Marks (2019) pointed out about each theory in explaining outcomes in the migration crisis can be applied here. When neo-functionalism speaks of path dependency and sunk costs, we may note that for both countries' political elite, it would have cost much to give up on integration. This is particularly true for the prospect of giving up on the Schengen Area as a notable achievement of the EU, in the case of the Czech Republic who already belonged to it. As was seen in quotes by some politicians, part of the reason why they were adamant about tougher controls on external Schengen borders was because they did not see if as beneficial for their own country to have to implement internal border controls. When intergovernmentalism reminds us of the importance of national elites and points to the fact the costs for rejecting migrant quotas might have been high for some of them, this can be applied to both cases analyzed here. The Czech political elites had 'less to lose' because deeper political integration was less desired among both the country's political elite and the citizens. The Croatian elites, on the other hand, were operating within a pro-EU political mainstream in national politics and not too Eurosceptic of a population and stood to lose much by creating conflict with Western member states. Finally, post-functionalism was most focused on as a guideline for research, but just how much of a role did matters of identity and citizen-elite dynamics play? Regarding the latter, we may believe, although the evidence is not conclusive enough, that citizens' attitudes inhibited politicians in the Czech Republic in permissive stances toward immigration, whereas the lack of dominantly negative attitudes among Croatian citizens should have meant the politicians did not have to 'watch their backs'. Identity matters are a curious issue. On the level of the center-periphery cleavage, it could be argued that the political elite in the Czech Republic viewed the identity of its country as a successful Central European member state that should have its voice heard more in the European Union. In that sense, it can hardly be argued they viewed themselves as the 'periphery' of the EU. Based on quotes by Croatian politicians, we could posit that they viewed Croatia more as a country that has just joined the EU and that is still trying to prove itself to be allowed deeper integration, namely entrance into the Schengen Area. But what about identity in relation to the migrants? It was clear that Czech politicians took issue with most of the migrants being Muslim, seeing and presenting them as a threat, and that the Czech citizens likewise did not demonstrate overall positive attitudes toward this group. As was seen in numerous quotes, the cultural aspect of migration fueled a great deal of opposition toward accepting 'migrant quotas' (and migrants in general). Moreover, research showed these negative attitudes were not entirely novel, pointing to the importance of path dependency.

Regarding some other avenues of explanation, pursuing the hypothesis of the economic threat primarily influencing negative feelings toward migrants seems unfruitful in this case. If that type of threat were decisive, one would expect Croatians to be more critical toward immigration and migrants. The unemployment rate in Croatia skyrocketed after the 2008 financial crisis, going from 8.53% in 2008 to peaking at 17.25% in 2014, and only then starting to decline (Statista, 2022a). The Czech Republic had a milder rise; the unemployment rate went from 4.39% in 2008 to 7.28% in 2010 and started recovering from then out (Statista, 2022b). At present, the Czech Republic has the lowest unemployment rate in the Union (Statista, 2022c). Based on this data, economic anxieties should have been higher in Croatia.

It is possible to speculate about historical reasons, however. The legacy of the Homeland War of the 1990s has sometimes been pointed out in public debates as a reason why Croatians are (and why they should be) sympathetic toward migrants. As part of the population were refugees themselves due to the war, it is hypothesized that this experience is reflected in a more favorable view of refugees from the 2015 wave. Regarding contact theory and the presupposition that contact may decrease negative attitudes, Croatians have had more contact with Muslims throughout history and there is a Bosnian minority in the country, even if conflicts were present throughout history. This means that when asked in surveys about 'Muslims', Croatians do not solely associate it with immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East. Interesting to note is also that Croatia was part of the Balkan corridor' and has consequently seen a large number of migrants transiting through it during the height of the crisis, whereas the Czech Republic avoided this scenario. The stark differences in attitudes toward Muslims serve to explain why the preconditions for a very negative view of migrants, most of whom were Muslim, existed in the Czech Republic. What is more, if looking at public opinion, the Czech Republic also had more fruitful ground for further development of Euroscepticism and especially its linkage with anti-migrant attitudes.

Finally, it should also be noted that political developments in the 2010s differ between the countries. During this decade, the Czech Republic has seen a rise in popular distrust in politics and consequently the success of populist parties at the expense of established parties. Despite the aforementioned populist radical right SPD party's relative success, the biggest winner of this period was the centrist populist ANO party. This party has not fundamentally challenged the EU and the country's membership in it but has been critical in some matters, particularly migration. Its anti-elite criticism does translate from a national context to the European Union

level (Petrović, Raos & Fila, 2022). It is in the example of ANO that we see a curious case of a more centrist party that has embraced ethnopopulism. The question we may ask then is what is such a strong factor that drove them toward this position, normally to be expected more from a party like SPD? Part of the explanation can be found in the 'thin-centeredness' of populism and the fact that exclusively-populist parties may lose their appeal with time, particularly as they participate in the government and thereby become the 'elites' they criticize. All findings here point that ANO has 'thickened' its ideology over time, trying to go in a more anti-immigration, less pro-EU, and overall, somewhat more TAN side of politics. Another explanation may be in this type of party's greater attempts to match public moods than in the case of traditional parties, with established ideological backgrounds. As was seen in the study of public opinion, anti-immigrant attitudes became pronounced in the Czech society and less trust in politicians meant less desire for European integration to go further. The case of SPD is much more straightforward, and although its success has not matched ANO, it should be interpreted as a challenger party with potent ethnopopulism that accumulated the power to shift the 'mean' of the debate. Croatia, on the other hand, has not witnessed the downfall of established parties and it could also be argued that the transnational cleavage has not gained much ground because the existing cleavages in the country are still 'functional'. It is imperative to look back and notice that in the years surrounding the migration crisis, the topics that dominated public debates in the country were related to traditional cleavages in Croatian society related to religion, history, and tradition, such as the referendum on marriage being solely a union "between a man and woman", the protests of war veterans and questions such as the use of the Cyrillic alphabet in Vukovar. However, it is curious to pose the question of why the populist ŽZ party did not write or speak much about anti-immigration in the analyzed materials and the analyzed periods, although it certainly stressed opposition to the EU. Perhaps the explanation can be found in the mix of two factors: one that the party was established with the identity of protecting the deprivileged[60], and second that the initial humanitarian and victimization approach to migrants in the country might have, in their eyes, put refugees into this category of the deprivileged.[61] Moreover, this could have been supplemented even more by seeing the refugees as victims of Western foreign policy in their countries, which the party was critical of. Taking this party's

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[60] The party's name, Human Shield, was meant to signalize its members' work on protecting people from evictions.

[61] The party leader Sinčić, although warning about the distinction between refugees and economic migrants, did state that the former should be helped (Hina, 2015c).

case into account serves as a warning that it is unwise to make a simple conclusion that populism, regardless of all other factors, always acts as a booster of the entangling of anti-immigration and anti-EU stances.

What other factors might exist that the research material did not explicitly point to? If we go back and see what sources of Euroscepticism have been theorized about, it is good to remember that the cue-taking approach does not only talk about political actors, but also the media. Existing research indicates that media portrayals of migrants in Croatia during the migration crisis were initially "moderate", with a greater presence of a victimization frame than one of a threat (Slijepčević & Fligić, 2018). Research also indicates more negative portrayals developed in the aftermath of the crisis (Popović et al., 2022). A humanitarian approach as a dominant way of looking at migrants is said to have prevailed during the time of the Balkan corridor in 2015 and 2016, but is also said to have since only prevailed among NGOs (Popović et al., 2022: 10). In the case of the Czech Republic, Bartoszewicz and Eibl (2022: 12) conclude that "wild imagery presented by the media shaped the perceptions and the attitudes of the audiences and amplified some pre-existing stereotypes". Unlike in Croatia, rather negative frames are said to have appeared from day one. When thinking about how to factor in the role that the media played, it would be impossible to design research in such a way that would enable us to say that the media created an X amount of effect on the perception of immigration and the EU, while political actors created a Y amount of effect. Still, even if this dissertation does not deal with the media, it has to that recognize *some* effect must have been produced. More research on how media portrayals are actually received by citizens might shed light if and why certain portrayals of immigrants take a foothold in the opinions of citizens.

Another major potential body of work that might have explanatory potential relates to the legal side of migration governance. When discussing path dependency, it is useful to think about the phenomenon of Europeanization of migration policies. The influence the EU has had related to the accession of new member-states is manifested in greater harmonization of migration-related law and policies, as has been proved in the case of Croatia (Lalić Novak, 2013). Regarding the migration crisis specifically, Geddes and Taylor (2016) point out that countries such as Croatia have been considered extremely important for the EU in the context of potential migrant routes. The consequence is that the EU has had a desire to influence migration and border security policies and that the country accepted greater adaptation of the EU's legal framework due to the broader benefits of EU membership. Moreover, their study explores and affirms the

influence of transgovernmental networks in shaping how central state actors end up approaching the topic. In that sense, even though this dissertation heeded the post-functionalist advice to pay attention to what is happening in the domestic arena, it did not explore the ramifications of multi-level governance to the full extent. There is also a distinct foreign-policy aspect that can be expanded on, evident in the importance of Croatia's positioning related to neighboring countries, or the Czech Republic's positioning in the context of the Visegrád Four. Although legal and policy matters, as well as the effects of transnational networks, are not within the scope of this dissertation, for the purposes of future research it may be useful to consider the dependency produced by them, as there are hints that they reflect on how political actors position themselves.

Ultimately, what the dissertation does show is that strong change in attitudes (or lack thereof) among citizens before and after the crisis can be linked to the (in)action of political actors. There was greater politicization in the Czech Republic both during the height of the crisis in 2015 and in the aftermath of it, which is according to the data, very well reflected in public opinion. In Croatia, this has not been the case, and the slightly more favorable views of migrants in 2018 point to this.

10. CONCLUSION

This dissertation was built on the grounds of exploring cases with two different outcomes in one episode of European integration – the migration crisis of 2015-2016. It operated with foundations that pointed to several crucial differences between the Czech Republic and Croatia. To put it as succinctly as possible, the Czech case represented a case of marked politicization of migration topics and their linkage with questions of European integration, whereas the same could not be observed in the Croatian case. These foundations were built on by all of the research undertaken as part of the dissertation. The result is a contribution that shows that the differences were even deeper than was known from public debate and existing scholarly production. Croatia did not indeed veer from most EU member states in the migration crisis; its elites stayed attached to a common European solution to the problem, including 'migrant quotas', and did not politicize the topic. The Czech Republic showed not just a simple rejection of specific European proposals, but through its elites' narratives, it questioned just how the EU should look like and what the country's place in it might be. Citizens of both countries might have played a role in all of this – Croatians by not exhibiting overall negative attitudes toward the EU and migrants that would push politicians to politicize the topic, and Czechs by showing more skepticism toward both the EU and migrants and in turn narrowing the maneuvering space of political actors. Moreover, citizen backlash against the idea of taking in migrants was evident in the Czech Republic due to protests against Islam and immigrants.

Before moving on to the proposed explanations of the findings, it might be useful to once more summarize just what was done in this dissertation, what the key results were, and what we can do with them (Table 16).

Table 16. A summary of the research conducted and what its findings and contributions were

Research segment	Key findings	Main contributions
Quantitative analyses of public opinion	- Czechs noticeably more negative about immigration than Croatians even before the crisis - Czechs noticeably more negative about immigration after the crisis than before it	- Asserted that the two cases differ greatly on the dependent variable - Gave good backing to claim that politicization had an effect in the Czech Republic, and that the lack of it in Croatia is a factor in public opinion not becoming more negative

	• Croatians' views of immigration have not become more negative after the crisis • Noticeable decline in desire for European integration to go further in the Czech Republic, but not in Croatia • Strong growth in the correlation between attitudes toward the EU and immigrants in the Czech Republic	• Gave support to the claim that there is a growing transnational cleavage in the Czech Republic • Presented evidence that cue-taking and identity issues are gaining momentum in the CEE as sources of Euroscepticism
CHES expert scores on party positions	• Czech parties grew noticeably more anti-immigration oriented after the crisis, and even more TAN than GAL on average • Experts did believe the positions of Croatian parties also grew somewhat less permissive regarding immigration • A slight decrease in pro-EU positions observed in the Czech case, but not in Croatia • In both countries there is the emergence of challenger parties with more extreme than moderate positions • Highlighted the puzzle of TAN parties such as HDZ that showed a pro-EU face, while some less TAN parties such as ČSSD and ANO engaged in criticism	• Put forward additional questions to be answered by further segments of research • Showed that party ideology does not always have to fully translate into political action and that it is necessary to look at contextual factors • Served to warn to pay attention to the effect challenger parties may have in shifting debates
Qualitative analysis of party manifestos	• Matters of immigration and European integration were more contested in the Czech Republic than in Croatia before the migration crisis started • The migration crisis was a trigger for all of the Czech actors to reflect on the topic and led to a strong linkage with questions of European integration	• Added credence to the hypothesis that there was the path-dependent effect of already present anti-immigration and Eurosceptic voices in the Czech case • Demonstrated how crises of the EU can negatively affect sentiments toward it • Pointed to the constraining power of the dominant approach to 'migrant quotas' in the society

	• In the Croatian case, the topic was not recognized as highly salient during the height of the crisis • Czech parties developed objections toward deeper integration within the EU	
Qualitative analysis of political actors' positioning as seen in media texts	• Vastly more discussion observed in the Czech Republic than in Croatia • The merging of criticism toward the EU and immigrants spanned across various ideological options in the Czech Republic • The topic prompted questions about the country's position and desires in the EU in the Czech case, but not in Croatia • Czech politicians' engagement with proposing different solutions to the crisis does not show a desire to simply decrease integration, but to be selective about how it should be done • In the Czech case, identity concerns related to Muslim immigrants fueled positions critical of the EU • The Croatian political elite mostly understood migration as a problem that has to be managed humanely and in cooperation with the EU	• Provided further evidence that the topic was salient and that there was polarization in the Czech case • Showed that various constraints present in the national context can override party ideology as a decisive shaper of its positioning • Asserted the importance of the concept of differentiated integration and its relevance in value-based disputes between old and new member states • Pointed to the relevance of thinking about the 'bargaining power' each country had at that point in their European integration path • Solidified the merit the post-functionalist approach has in explaining sources of objection to the EU

Intending to explain all of the researched material, the dissertation operated with a set of focuses on potential explanations that were set prior to engaging in research. Consequently, it puts forward several explanations of its results but does not claim that they explain the entirety of the phenomenon. First, it should be taken into account that the *countries' progress in European integration differed* during the analyzed period. At the height of the migration crisis, Croatia had just recently joined the EU and was pursuing deeper integration in the form of implementing the Euro and joining the Schengen Area, the accession to the latter particularly depending on the country proving how well it could protect the Schengen border. Taking this

into account means understanding that the costs of rejecting 'migrant quotas' and going 'against the grain' of the European mainstream were significantly higher than for the Czech Republic, which was already wary of deepening its integration in certain questions such as implementing the Euro. If we take a 'bargaining' approach to the puzzle inherent to intergovernmentalism, then we have to take into account that the Czech Republic, owing to its longer presence in the Union and less pronounced desires for deeper integration had more bargaining power in the whole matter, so to speak. This can also immediately be related to constructivist matters, namely perceptions of their own country, where Czech political actors seemed to have viewed the country as having a greater status in the Union than a peripheral one. This meant they believed its voice should be heard more in important decisions, and the actors themselves proposed solutions the EU should explore. As part of this, some actors did not shy away from criticizing Germany's role in determining the shape of the EU's migration policy, whereas the Croatian political elite showed no desire to engage in such conflict. Second, *the agency of national political elites as influenced by the party opportunity structure* has to be singled out as another important explanation. In Croatia there was a pro-European consensus among the political elites at the time of the height of the crisis, meaning that had a certain party decided to 'stand up to Brussels', it would have, to some extent, opened itself up to criticism and lowered its potential for cooperation. This was compounded by the elites constructing the norm of a humanitarian approach to migrants and attaching it positively to the image of the country. Moreover, there were no major rifts regarding European integration between the two most prominent parties at the time, HDZ and SDP, who 'battled' on different topics, related to older divisions in society linked with religion, tradition, and history. It could be argued that the lack of salience the topic of immigration gained at that time was due to those older cleavages still being relevant. In the Czech Republic, the situation regarding party competition was the opposite; the traditionally (soft) Eurosceptic ODS should have been expected to have criticized the more pro-EU ČSSD. This, compounded with similar inclinations of other political options, generated significant pressure on the social democrats. It is also worthwhile to note that the findings show that populism, in the context of the downfall of established options that happened in the Czech case, *can* increase the level of anti-immigration and anti-EU criticism. Yet when discussing the role of party ideology more broadly, namely how the GAL/TAN divide plays out in all this, there are notable deviations from the correlation between a more TAN orientation and anti-EU and anti-immigration positions. Although the Croatian HDZ, a notably more TAN than GAL party, exhibited a somewhat more critical approach to immigration than SDP, a more GAL party, they did not politicize the issue and the topic did not drive them toward opposing

European integration to any degree. Furthermore, when also looking at the case of the Czech social democrats (ČSSD), who lean slightly more toward the GAL side of the scale and who showed criticism toward immigration and the EU, the dissertation presents evidence to warn future research to play close attention to domestic contexts and how issues play out according to various factors in the political arena. The dissertation also affirms that public opinion may play a constraining role in how political actors position themselves. At the same time, through the supporting evidence of the rise of critical attitudes among Czech citizens, it also asserts the elites' very important role in cue-taking. As a third explanation, *identity concerns* can be pinpointed. In short, Croatians did not on average see Muslim migrants as a cultural threat, but there is vast evidence on the Czech side that points to politicians rejecting migrant quotas and migration due to fears of how culturally compatible or not Muslims are with Czechs and even Europe. Moreover, Czech political actors spoke of fears regarding Muslim immigrants from various points of view, so it is justified to say that they viewed them as an 'integrated threat', creating strong feelings toward them by merging anxieties of a 'realistic threat' with that of a 'symbolic threat'. Interesting to add is that their arguments, even when coming from the right and populist side of the political spectrum, sometimes included what Brubaker (2017) calls a civilizationalist approach – objecting to Muslim immigrants based on liberal grounds. Analyses of what explains Czech citizens' reluctance toward further European integration, showed that opinion toward immigration has sharply risen as an explanatory factor, and the question of cultural fears stands out among other types of worries. In the quotes of some politicians, it was also evident that they viewed the Western countries' experience with multiculturalism as one carrying some negative aspects. Fourth is *the importance of path dependency and legacies in national contexts*. Negative attitudes toward immigrants, particularly those of Muslim religion, as well as skeptical attitudes toward the EU were notably more present in the Czech Republic than in Croatia before the migration crisis. Why the countries found themselves in different starting positions, to begin with, is not something that can be answered by the scope of this dissertation, but it is important to recognize that the Czech case is a case of a country that now finds itself in a place where it would be difficult to turn back to a pro-migration and entirely pro-EU atmosphere. As part of these legacies, it seems plausible to add the explanation of Croatia's own experience with the war and exile as a factor that drove political actors (and perhaps citizens too) to approach migrants through a humanitarian lens.

It is also fair to mention several of the dissertation's limitations. The biggest limitation of the statistical analysis of citizens is that it is impossible to confidently establish a causal link

between public opinion and the positioning of the political elites. In that sense, even though the dissertation can posit that preconditions for the politicization of both European integration and migration existed in the Czech Republic before the migration crisis, even with additional research we cannot know the extent to which politicians incorporated this into their positioning. Motivations of political actors may not necessarily be openly communicated in their public speeches. Claiming an after-effect of politicization also somewhat suffers from the same limitation, especially given that media portrayal could be another prominent shaping influence on public attitudes. Another issue is that media texts utilized rarely contain the full breadth of positions of actors. This means, for instance, that a text might mention that someone is against migrant quotas, but completely omit that they may be in favor of some other mode of cooperation with the EU. Consequently, the awarded code would be that they are advocating less deepening of integration. To address this, it is important to not take the quantitative approach to summarizing too strictly and to rather focus on elaboration through quotes. Another thing noticed during the analysis was that sometimes there were also interesting quotes shared from other members of political parties who were not the leaders. This raises the dilemma of expanding the circle of analyzed actors in a more exhaustive or complementary study. Last but not least, as was pointed out, the dissertation explored only several variables that might explain differences in outcomes. Comparing these two cases was not akin to a laboratory experiment where the two were similar in all but a few independent variables which can then be taken to account for the difference in the dependent variable. The financial crisis that happened between 2008 and 2018, the phenomenon of accession fatigue, a general rise in distrust in politics, growth of populism, etc. - there are many possible intervening factors in changing attitudes toward the EU and migration along with it. In addition, a suggestion for further research would be to find a more recent data point to further test the after-effects of politicization. The Croatian case itself can become a temporally comparative study because migration has become a somewhat contested topic since the crisis of 2015-2016. This was already evident in party manifestos from 2020 analyzed in this dissertation but can be further exemplified by occurrences such as the right-wing Homeland Movement (DP) party threatening to collect signatures for a referendum against illegal immigration in 2023, or Most's calls to deploy the military to the borders. With the invasion of Ukraine bringing Ukrainian migrants to Europe, qualitative research exploring the changing meanings of the word 'migrant' would also be a fine addition to the collection of knowledge about the topic.

These limitations notwithstanding, it can be argued the dissertation fulfilled the promise it made regarding its aims and contribution. Its main contribution lies in the extensiveness of material offered by numerous accounts of political actors, which serve to deepen the knowledge about how the EU is perceived in certain national contexts. This is doubly so more important due to the lacuna in academic publications providing more detailed, qualitative accounts concerning the nexus between attitudes toward the European Union and migration, as well as the lacuna regarding European matters in post-accession Croatia. The takeaway from the dissertation is that there is merit in exploring this gap because specificities of national cases can challenge general expectations about the relations between phenomena. Furthermore, the studying of potential value-based rifts between old and new member states carries importance when considering both the future of the EU in its present state and with a view toward deeper overall integration and accepting new members. In that sense, this dissertation can send the message to pay more attention to what is happening in national contexts during supra-national decision-making. Although limited in this regard as it was designed to be an in-depth case study of two cases first and foremost, the dissertation also offered some contribution by testing the applicability of the main theories of European integration and prevalent typologies of relation toward the EU. It showed that post-functionalism, with its focus on cultural and identity issues, might be gaining relevance in the CEE region as an approach that can explain Euroscepticism. Related to this is the contribution to the debate on the citizen-elite relation in shaping the direction of European integration. The dissertation also cannot make bold claims about how far its conclusions might travel, but they do offer a solid ground for additional research. In the dissertation, we had a case of one post-communist country that was considered a 'good pupil' and accessed the EU sooner than the other country. Regardless of this, the Czech Republic, along with some other post-communist member states showed marked defiance toward the European Commission and older member states. Would Croatia do the same if some of the conditions that were conducive to it took a foothold in the country? Without them occurring in real life, we cannot be sure. More research on other Central European cases, however, could serve as a good testing ground.

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12. APPENDIX

12.1. Materials for the analysis of media texts

12.1.1. Appendix 1: Codebook for analysis of media texts - quantitative

a) BASIC INFO

1. **ID**

    1, 2 ...

2. **Source**

    Website

3. **Author**

    Journalist

4. **Date**

    DD/MM/YYYY

5. **Link**

    URL

b) THEMATIC – MIGRATION

1. **Actor espousing views?**

    e.g. Tomislav Karamarko

2. **Actor's overall attitude toward (im)migration?**
    POSITIVE= would generally welcome migrants in the country
    NEUTRAL= would not generally welcome migrants, but wants to treat them well
    NEGATIVE= would thwart migration by any means necessary
    NOT MENTIONED/CANNOT BE DISCERNED

3. **Actor's reasons for opposing migration?**
   Open-ended…

4. **The actor mentions the past (historic) experience of the country with migrants.**
   YES
   NO

   4.1. If yes, in which way is it mentioned?
   …

5. **The actor fears the Islamization of society.**
   YES   NO

c) THEMATIC – EUROPEAN UNION

1. **What was the actor's overall attitude toward the EU demonstrated?**
   POSITIVE (mentions the EU only in positive light)
   NEUTRAL (mentions positives, but also negatives about the EU)
   NEGATIVE (mentions the EU solely in a negative light)
   NOT MENTIONED/CANNOT BE DISCERNED

2. **Actor's opinion on deepening European integration?**
   IN FAVOR
   DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION
   AGAINST ALL AROUND
   NOT MENTIONED

   2.1. If differentiated, which areas to go further, and which ones should not?

   …

3. **The actor mentions the EU in the context of migration?**
   YES
   NO

   3.1. How does the actor mention the EU in the context of migration?

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…

4. **Actors' opinion on migrant quotas relocation scheme?**
ACCEPT
CONDITIONAL ACCEPT
REFUSAL
NOT MENTIONED

   4.1. Reason for an opinion on the migrant quota relocation scheme?

   …

5. **Actor mentions the Schengen?**
YES
NO

   5.1. The actor mentions the Schengen how?

   …

6. **The actor mentions European identity (vs. Muslim)?**
YES
NO

   6.1. Is Christianity mentioned in a substantial or civilizationalist manner?

   CIVILIZATIONALIST (mentions belonging to a Christian civilization)
   SUBSTANTIAL (mentions that the people are Christian)
   NOT MENTIONED

7. **The actor confronts the „West" with the „East" of the EU? [Center vs. Periphery?]**
YES
NO

   7.1. If yes, how is the West confronted with the East?

   …

8. **[CZ only] Actors mention the Visegrád Four (V4)?**
   YES
   NO

   8.1. If yes, how is the V4 mentioned?

   …

d) CONTEXT – POLITICAL COMPETITION

1. **Actor refers to political opponents with different views?**

   YES
   NO

   1.1. How are these opponents described?

   …

2. **The actor mentions public opinion (the people, voters, citizens)?**
   YES
   NO

   2.1. How does public opinion play into their attitudes?
   …

12.1.2. Appendix 2: Codebook for analysis of media texts – qualitative

1. Quote ID
A unique ID is assigned to each utterance.

2. Text ID
Linked with text ID from the quantitative codebook.

3. Actor
Name of actor (e.g. Bohuslav Sobotka).

4. Quote
Copy-pasted utterance, single thematic unit.

5. Comment
Summary of analyzed utterance.

6. Theme
The main theme that can be applied to the utterance.

7. Sub-theme
A sub-theme that is also applicable to the utterance.

8. Context
What the circumstances surrounding the utterance were (e.g. interview with daily media).

12.2. Supplementary figures and tables

12.2.1. Appendix 3: Changes in attitudes toward accepting migrants

	Country & Year	N	M	SD	t [country]	t [years]
Allow many/ (vs. none) immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority	CZ 2008	1937	2.42	0.821	-11.788***	CZ:
	HR 2008	1394	2.85	0.970		
	CZ 2018	2368	2.27	0.871	-23.804***	6.658***
	HR 2018	1769	2.93	0.901		HR: -3.195***
Allow many (vs. none) immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	CZ 2008	1939	2.20	0.835	-13.337***	CZ:
	HR 2008	1383	2.71	1.009		
	CZ 2018	2341	1.80	0.807	-32.134***	16.329***
	HR 2018	1759	2.70	0.947		HR: -1.238
Allow many (vs. none) immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	CZ 2008	1949	2.18	0.838	-10.471***	CZ:
	HR 2008	1380	2.59	1.040		
	CZ 2018	2321	1.81	0.820	-32.117***	14.766***
	HR 2018	1753	2.71	0.935		HR: -4.660***

Note: higher means (M) indicate greater permissiveness

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

Sources: ESS 2008 and ESS 2018

12.2.2. Appendix 4: Changes in general attitudes toward migration

	Country & Year	N	M	SD	t [country)	t [years]
Immigration bad (vs. good) for country's economy	CZ 2008	1887	4.21	2.323	-0.001	CZ: -1.396
	HR 2008	1371	4.21	2.542		
	CZ 2018	2277	4.31	2.471	-4.834***	HR: -5.351***
	HR 2018	1730	4.72	2.832		
Country's cultural life undermined (vs. enriched) by immigrants	CZ 2008	1893	4.52	2.326	-6.205***	CZ: 12.216***
	HR 2008	1377	5.07	2.622		
	CZ 2018	2325	3.65	2.238	-21.139***	HR: -2.894**
	HR 2018	1725	5.35	2.871		
Immigrants make country worse (vs. better) place to live	CZ 2008	1884	4.44	2.204	-3.022***	CZ: 10.781***
	HR 2008	1362	4.69	2.438		
	CZ 2018	2304	3.69	2.242	-17.003***	HR: -4.166***
	HR 2018	1721	5.08	2.775		

Note: lower means (M) indicate a more negative attitude

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

Sources: ESS 2008 and ESS 2018

12.2.3. Appendix 5: Changes in attitudes toward the European Union

	Country & Year	N	M	SD	t [country]	t [years]
European unification go further or gone too far	CZ 2008	1832	5.07	2.612	-4.226***	CZ: 5.976***
	HR 2008	1297	5.48	2.706		
	CZ 2018	2258	4.49	2.598	-8.892***	HR: 1.623
	HR 2018	1625	5.27	2.803		
Trust in European Parliament	CZ 2008	1923	3.94	2.529	3.140***	CZ: -2.819**
	HR 2008	1314	3.65	2.516		
	CZ 2018	2287	4.16	2.589	3.220***	HR: -2.561**
	HR 2018	1713	3.89	2.593		
How emotionally attached to Europe	CZ 2018	2371	6.50	2.296	10.500***	-
	HR 2018	1773	5.63	2.879		

Note: lower means (M) indicate more negative attitude

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

Sources: ESS 2008 and ESS 2018

13. BIOGRAPHY

Filip Fila was born on September 21st 1993 in Bjelovar, Croatia. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Bjelovar, he went on to attain a BA in Sociology at the Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (2015), as well as an MA in Sociology at the same institution (2017). Upon completion of these studies, he entered the International Masters in Economy, State and Society (IMESS) program at University College London and Charles University, graduating in 2019. Since June 2020 he is employed as a research assistant at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, through a Croatian Science Foundation-funded program Integration and Disintegration of the European Union: Dynamics of Europeanism and Euroscepticism (IDEU) led by Dr Nikola Petrović. In December 2020 he enrolled in the postgraduate doctoral program in sociology at the Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. During his PhD, in 2023, he conducted a research stay at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Masaryk University in Brno.

In his work he focuses on exploring political and societal developments in Central and Eastern European states, taking the keenest interest in issues of European integration and migration. He is the secretary of the Section for European Studies of the Croatian Sociological Association (HSD) and the treasurer of The International Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe Association (ISORECEA). So far he has published five academic and two professional papers, and has participated in fifteen national and international conferences.

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