



MIGRATION PROGRAMME

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

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Summary

Analyzing data from the European Social Survey (ESS), we explore macro-level effects of the 2015 refugee crisis on public attitudes toward immigration in Greece. Contrary to the belief that the crisis hardened Greeks' attitudes toward immigration, we find no evidence of a significant negative effect that persists over time. Indeed, we observe a slight improvement in immigration attitudes since a low point that occurred during Greece's foreign debt crisis. More broadly, the commonly held belief that European publics are becoming more hostile toward immigrants over time is a misperception of reality. We instead observe a slight improvement in attitudes since the refugee crisis of 2015.

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Introduction

The 2015 refugee crisis was a pivotal event that shaped public debates on immigration in Europe, leading to the negotiation of bilateral agreements with Europe's neighbors to manage refugee inflows and culminating in a new framework for European Union (EU) members to share the costs associated with refugee inflows. Among all EU members, "frontline" states such as Greece were the most affected by the crisis. By comparison to other large migrant-hosting countries in Europe which also received large inflows of migrants, Greece received a disproportionately large number of refugees in relation to its

population size.¹ The long-term effects of this landmark event have not yet been studied. This report provides such an analysis focusing on public opinion in Greece. Specifically, we analyze data from before and after the refugee crisis to test whether the crisis intensified anti-immigrant attitudes in aggregate public opinion.

Media coverage of the refugee crisis and public statements made by political elites regarding immigration in Greece have generated the perception that the sharp rise in refugee inflows has had a lasting negative effect on public attitudes toward immigration. At the height of the refugee crisis, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, whose *Nea Dimokratia* party was then the largest party in opposition in the Greek parliament, noted that the chaotic conditions in the refugee camps and lack of any government planning for the handling of the refugee crisis intensified xenophobia and extremism.² Similar views are heard from the NGO sector: Lefteris Papagiannakis, leader of advocacy and research for *Solidarity Now* noted that the lack of efforts to integrate migrants and refugees and the political exploitation of the refugee crisis have made Greek society less accepting of migrants than it used to be.³ In public debates, the refugee crisis is portrayed as having caused "fatigue"⁴ among the native population, feeding racism and xenophobia.⁵ Media coverage directed attention away from the mismanagement of the crisis and focused instead on its negative repercussions for local populations, while some conservative politicians referred to

1 Figures A1 and A2 in the appendix show refugee arrivals in Greece and the four larger refugee-hosting countries in the European Union by year over the past decade).

2 See <https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/613653/mitsotakis-oi-eikones-anarhias-s-ti-mutilini-kai-ti-hio-pistopoion-tin-anikanotita-tis-kubernisis/> [Accessed 9/2/24].

3 <https://www.news247.gr/erevnes/erevna-20-20-oi-polites-lene-nai-sti-metafora-prosfigon-stin-ipeirotiki-ellada/>.

4 <https://www.antenna.gr/Politics/article/4/557126/koymoytsakos-oi-ellines-den-einai-rat-sistes-alla-yparxei-metanasteytiki-koposi>

5 See, for example, the statement by Vassilis Kanellis, news editor at *in.gr*, regarding the link between the political conflicts surrounding the refugee camps and intensifying racism and xenophobia: <https://www.in.gr/2020/09/09/apopsi/politiko-vaterlo-sti-moria-enisxyei-ton-ratsismo-kai-tin-kse-nofovia/>. [Accessed 9/2/24].

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immigration inflows as an “informal, illegal colonization” of the country.⁶ These narratives feed conservative politicians’ claims that the population demands stricter immigration policies. Reacting to that perspective, several members of parliament have advocated restricting migrants’ social integration and increasing border controls to prevent further inflows.⁷

The scholarly literature seems consistent with the perspective that exposure to large refugee inflows can engender negative responses among the native population. At the individual level, a positive correlation has been shown between exposure to the 2015 refugee crisis and short-term support of anti-immigrant policies in the native population. Specifically, using data collected soon after the 2015 crisis, Hangartner et al. (2019) show that proximity to the crisis caused an increase in negative attitudes toward refugees and other migrants⁸. The mechanisms underlying these short-term effects can be multiple, and are difficult to separate from displaced negative reactions to the state’s mismanagement of the crisis.

If we take existing short-term effects of the crisis as a point of departure and assume that direct physical proximity and exposure to refugees and other migrant inflows causes immigration attitudes to harden, then we would expect to see a negative secular trend in public opinion concerning immigration in Greece over time, given the overall rise in migration inflows. More negative views should be recorded after the crisis compared to the period prior to the onset of the crisis in 2015. Moreover, such a pattern should be more pronounced in Greece relative to other EU countries that were less affected by the crisis. We explore these hypotheses using aggregate public opinion data that are freely available from the European Social Survey.

⁶ The statement is attributed to Nea Dimokratia’s Alexis Samaras: <https://www.politico.eu/article/migration-divides-greek-government-refugees-antonis-samaras-kyriakos-mitsotakis-syriza/> [Accessed 9/2/24].

⁷ For example, in 2020, Dimitris Vartzopoulos, a member of parliament for the ruling Nea Dimokratia party stated that many MPs are in favor of constructing closed camps for refugees on uninhabited islands because the way local populations view all migrants is changing. See <https://www.parapolitika.gr/po-litiki/article/1039522/vartzopoulos-arketoi-vouleutes-uper-ton-kleiston-domon-metanaston-s-e-akatoikita-nisia/> [Accessed 9/2/2024].

⁸ That study exploits proximity to the Turkish coast as a way to analyze the effects of the crisis by taking advantage quasi-random variation in the size of refugee inflows across different Aegean islands. Data were collected within a year of the peak of the crisis. Longer-term effects have not yet been explored within a framework that allows for causal inference – though for an exception, see [Choi and Sambanis \(2024\)](#).

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Effect of the Refugee Crisis on Public Attitudes Toward Immigration in Greece

Trends in ESS data on public attitudes toward immigration since 2002

ESS data from Greece are available for several years (waves): 2002, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2020⁹. To explore changes in public opinion over time, we identify all years for which ESS data on Greece is available as well as all survey items pertaining to immigration attitudes for which we have data for all of those years/waves of the ESS survey, and we plot over-time trends. The complete list of survey items (variables) is included in *Table 1* of the appendix.¹⁰ Figure 1 plots over-time trends in these variables since 2002. We plot means per survey round for each of the variables included in Table 1.¹¹ Note that the questions asked in these surveys do not distinguish between attitudes toward asylum seekers vs economic migrants, so what is presented below is opinion toward “migrants” as an aggregate category.

Variable	Label	Description	Scale
imsmetn	same race	Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority	1: Allow none; 2: Allow few 3: Allow some; 4: Allow all
imdfetn	different race	Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	1: Allow none; 2: Allow few 3: Allow some; 4: Allow all
impctr	poorer country	Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	1: Allow none; 2: Allow few 3: Allow some; 4: Allow all

⁹ Round 10 of the ESS was scheduled for 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19. Date for Greece were collected between 2021-22.

¹⁰ The data is publicly available at <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>. We analyze unweighted data; weight-adjusted results look similar.

¹¹ Appendix 1 includes the raw data in Table format.

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imbgeco	good for economy	Immigration bad or good for country's economy	0: Bad for the economy 10: Good for the economy
imueclt	enriches culture	Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	0: Undermined by immigrants 10: Enriched by immigrants
imwbcnt	improves country	Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	0: Worse place to live 10: Better place to live

Table 1: Variables, labels, and corresponding scales. Average sample size per question and wave: $n = 2,438-2,466$. Note: variables *ismmetn*, *imdftn* and *impcntr* have been recoded so that higher values indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes.

What becomes immediately clear from Figure 1 is that the refugee crisis of 2015 has *not* caused an aggregate-level deterioration of public opinion toward immigrants in Greece.

We show trends in our six outcomes in separate panels of Figure 1. The top panels show trends in “openness” toward admitting more immigrants in the country as a function of their characteristics. We show trends for immigrants of the same (*ismmetn*) or different (*imdftn*) ethno-racial background as the majority Greek population as well as immigrants from poorer non-European countries (*impcntr*). The top left panel of Figure 1 shows that the share of the Greek public who would admit no immigrants of a different ethno-racial background or from poor countries is consistently low and has not increased over time, including during the period after the 2015 crisis. Similarly, the share of the public who would admit “none or only a few” is small and has actually increased somewhat since 2010 (top right panel). Attitudes toward immigrants or refugees of the same ethnicity as the majority population are markedly better over time.¹²

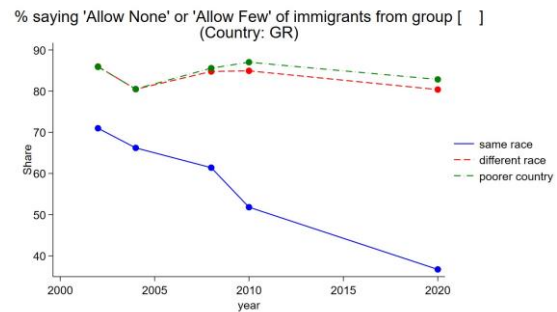
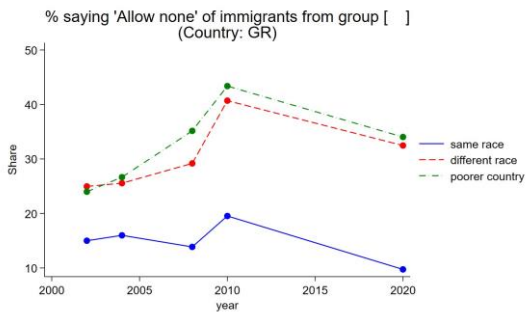
The improvement in attitudes toward immigrants with smaller perceived ethno-racial differences from the native population (*ismmetn*) makes the persistently negative attitudes toward ethnically or racially different immigrants seem more pronounced over time and suggests the possibility that racism shapes xenophobic attitudes in Greece. Yet that gap may also reflect the fact that the first wave of immigrants to Greece from other Balkan countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s is now socially integrated; first-wave migrants were ethno-racially more proximate to the Greek population compared to the current wave *and* there has been more time

¹² It is not clear which groups respondents are referring to when answering this question, however. Presumably, Ukrainians since the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war would be included in this category; perhaps also Albanian migrants on the basis of racial similarity to the native population.

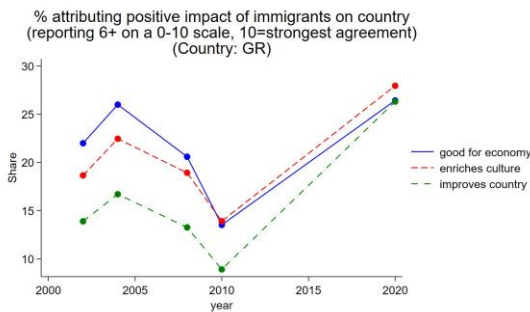
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for natives to accept the fact of the social integration of immigrants from Balkan countries. More importantly for our analysis, the gap in attitudes toward ethno-racially similar vs different immigrants predates the 2015 refugee crisis; our figures show that the gap grows at least a decade prior the onset of the crisis.

The bottom subplot of Figure 1 shows trends in beliefs regarding the impact of immigration on the economy (*imbeco*), the country's cultural life (*imueclt*) and the country overall (*imwbcnt*), with higher values suggesting more *positive* attitudes. These data show clearly a trend toward *improving* attitudes toward immigrants over time and, in particular, during the period that includes the refugee crisis. Compared to 2010 and all other available data points prior to the crisis, Greeks are now more likely to say that immigration is good for the economy, that the country's cultural life is enriched by immigration, and that immigrants make the country a better place to live. That improvement notwithstanding, average scores for all 3 measures hover below the mid-point of the 10-point scale, thereby suggesting that overall public opinion is still negative, though slightly less so compared to pre-crisis levels. Yet the 2015 crisis has not made these attitudes worse compared to pre-crisis levels.



(a) Panel A: Percentage answering *Allow none* of immigrants of same race, different race or a poorer country in Greece. (b) Panel B: Percentage answering *Allow none* or *low Few* of immigrants of same race, different race or a poorer country in Greece.

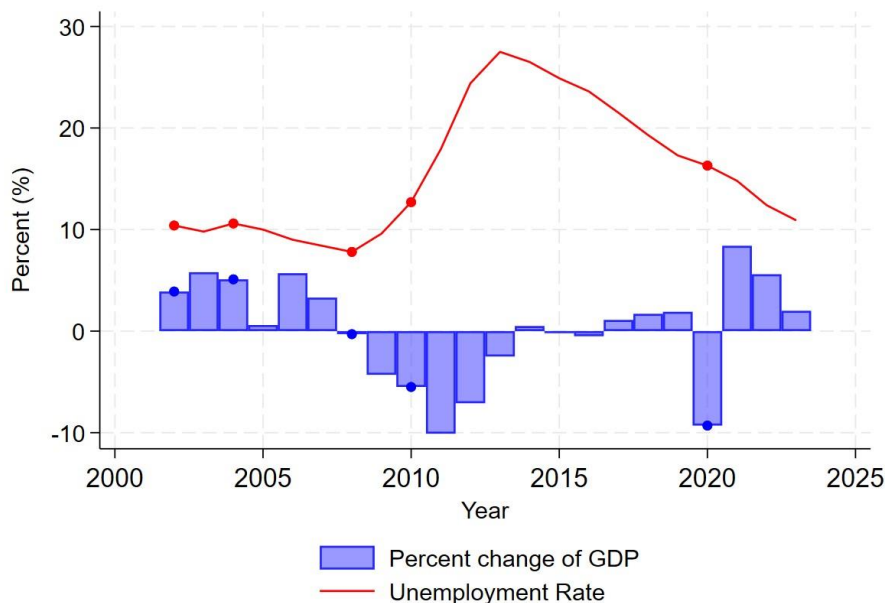


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(c) Panel C: Percent agreeing that immigrant impact is positive in Greece. A score of 6 and above on a 0-10 scale is coded as positive impact (where 10 is strongest agreement with the view that immigrants' impact is positive).

Figure 1: Change over time of the percentage of respondents by answers for all measures of immigration attitudes; 2002 - 2020. The figure is divided into three panels: Panel A and Panel B at the top, and Panel C below.

Our data show a sharp deterioration of attitudes toward immigrants and a spike in xenophobia occurring in Greece around 2010, soon after the onset of the debt crisis, which resulted in a prolonged period of fiscal austerity policies and a sharp decline in living standards, combined with an explosive increase in unemployment rates as shown in Figure 2. Thus, the sharpest decline in public attitudes toward immigrants took place in the context of an *economic crisis rather than a refugee crisis* (see also Sambanis, Nikolova and Schultz (2022)).



Data source: International Monetary Fund

Figure 2: Economic indicators: percent change in GDP (constant prices) and unemployment rate

The biggest drop in the survey item averages took place between 2008 and 2010, at the start of the economic crisis, and the most negative immigration attitudes were recorded in 2010, the year with the largest drop in per capita GDP and largest increase in unemployment. By contrast, the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015 and its aftermath are associated with a non-trivial improvement in employment and not worsening trends in GDP.

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Comparison to other EU countries

Next, we take advantage of the availability of standardized cross-country data in the ESS to test whether the Greek public has become more anti-immigrant over time and, specifically, after the 2015 refugee crisis. Individual country trends prior to 2015 may very well be different from each other due to country-specific differences in experiences with immigration, or differences in the timing of elections in which immigration features as an important policy issue. We therefore aggregate country-level data and consider the EU average for all survey items that were also collected for Greece on the same years. Results are shown in Figure 3, which plots Greek and EU averages over time for all six outcomes.¹³

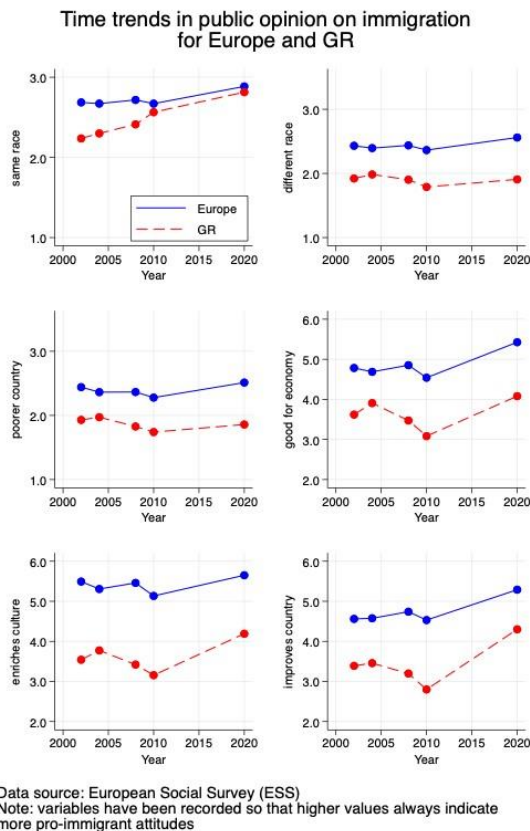
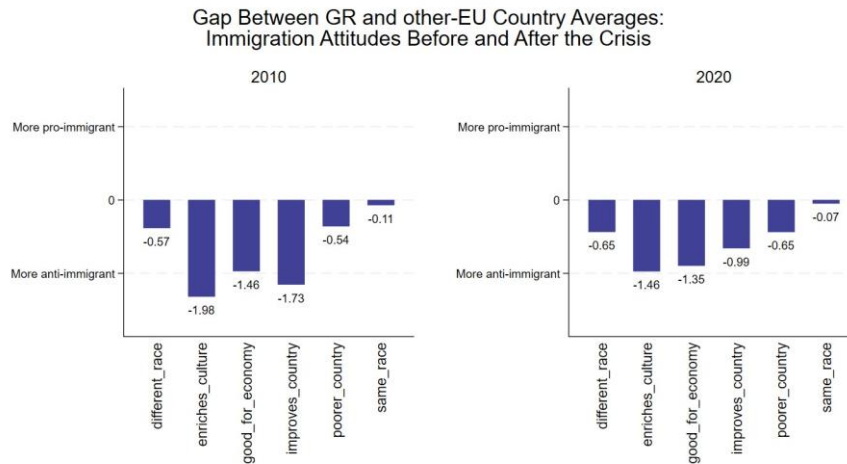


Figure 3: Over-time trends in immigration attitudes since 2002: Greece and EU comparison

¹³ Refer to Table 1 for the scale used to code outcomes for each variable. Higher values indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes for *imbgeco*, *imueclt*, and *imwbcn*; and less pro-immigrant sentiment for *imsmetn*, *imdftn*, *impcntr*.

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Data source: European Social Survey (ESS)

Note: variables have been recoded so that higher values always indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes

Figure 4: Gap between Greek and EU averages before and after the refugee crisis

Two things stand out in this comparison. First, Europe as a whole has become more pro-immigrant over the past ten years, thereby challenging the commonly held perception that the increased support of right-wing nationalist parties reflects a broad-based turn toward more anti-immigrant preferences among the majority of voters (though that pattern could be attributed to increased polarization, which is something we return to in the conclusion). Second, the perception of Greece as a more anti-immigrant country than the EU average is borne out in the data, however that gap is either constant or closing over time. This last point is seen more clearly in Figure 4 which plots the gap between the Greek and EU averages with regard to each variable included in our analysis before and after the 2015 crisis. We conclude from this analysis that there is no evidence in the ESS data that the 2015 refugee crisis had persistently negative effects on attitudes toward immigrants in Greece.

Validating Results Using World Values & Eurobarometer Surveys

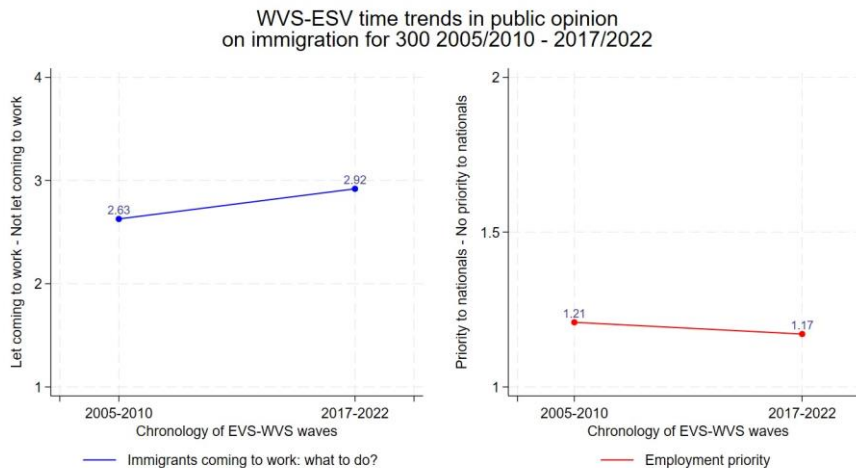
Next, we turn to data from the World Values Survey and the Eurobarometer Surveys.

World Values Survey

The World Values survey is conducted across countries in waves. We utilize data from the 7th wave (Haerpfer et al., 2022; Inglehart et al., 2014). Because there are no data from Greece in waves 5 and 6. We also use data from the European Values Survey from 2005-2010 which asks two identical questions as the WVS. The first item (# C002) asks whether “employers should give priority to nationals [Greeks] than immigrants” and respondents can agree (1), disagree (2), or neither agree or disagree (3) (we drop neutral respondents from the plot). The second item (# E143) asks about “people from less developed countries coming [to Greece] to work” and

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whether the government should “1 = Let anyone come who wants to; 2 = Let people come as long as there are jobs available; 3 = Put strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here; or 4 = Prohibit people coming here from other countries.” Mean values for each item for the two periods are shown in Figure 5. Responses are fairly consistent over time with no sharp increase noted after the crisis.



Data source: Integrated Values Surveys 1981-2022
Note: For 'Employment priority' the value 3 has been removed to improve interpretation.

Figure 5: Time trends for EVS-WVS 2005/2010 - 2017/2022.

Eurobarometer Survey

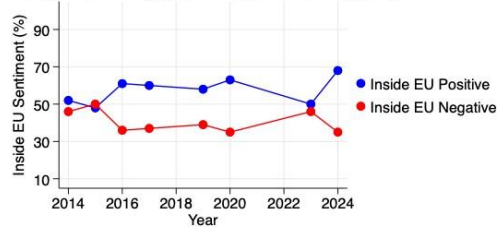
Next, we plot data from Eurobarometer surveys.¹⁴ We are able to find over-time data for several variables, which we list in Table A17 in the appendix. The questions are fairly general in nature; we show results from two questions that ask respondents whether immigration from (a) other EU countries or (b) outside of the EU evokes a positive or negative feeling. Figure 6 plots the results. Since 2014, we see a fairly flat trend with reference to immigrants from countries outside the EU. The majority of the population (approximately 70%) registers negative feelings while almost one third of the sample registers positive feelings and these numbers don't change much though there is a slight decline in the share of respondents registering negative attitudes after the refugee crisis. Results with reference to immigrants from within the EU show slightly more variability with the share of people registering positive feelings increasing after the crisis.

¹⁴ See <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home>.

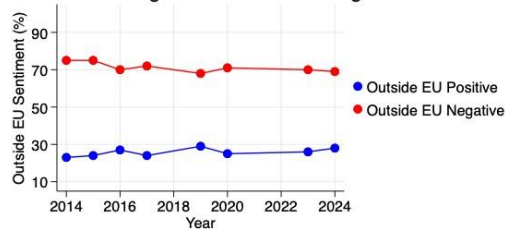
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Comparison of Inside and Outside EU Immigration Attitudes

Inside EU Immigration: Positive vs Negative



Outside EU Immigration: Positive vs Negative



Data source: Eurobarometer - EU

Figure 6: Eurobarometer attitudes towards immigration from the EU and outside the EU

Next, in Figure 7 we plot results for an item asking respondents whether they agree or disagree that immigrants “contribute a lot to our country” (4 options: total/tend to agree; totally/tend to disagree). This is the only piece of evidence until now that might support the assertion that the crisis drove the anti-immigrant sentiment. However, the evidence here is imprecise because of the gap in data points between 2008 and 2015 – a period which includes the debt crisis – and which we saw earlier was associated with a sharp deterioration of attitudes toward immigrants. This implies that the widening gap in attitudes might have preceded the refugee crisis. The drop in the share of respondents who agree that immigrants “contribute a lot to Greece” between 2015 and 2017 is actually

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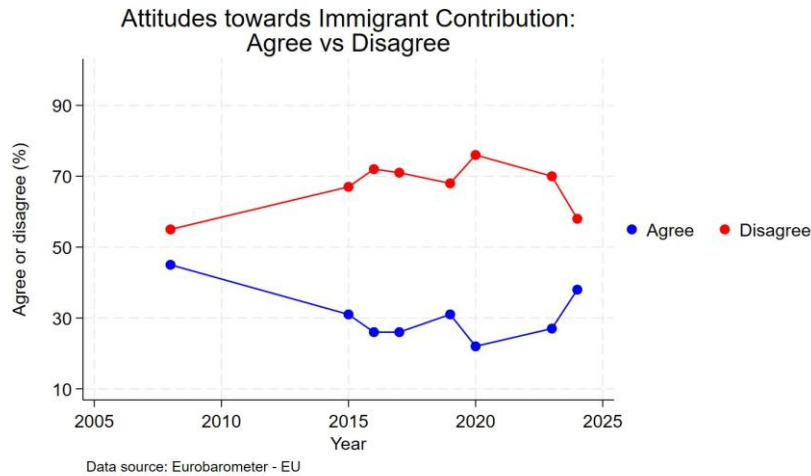


Figure 7: Eurobarometer - agree or disagree that immigrants contribute a lot to Greece quite small and that decline is completely erased as we move further away from the crisis. Interestingly, sentiment toward immigrants turns slightly more positive in the last round of the Eurobarometer survey.¹⁵

Finally, Figure 8 plots results from an item asking whether “additional measures [should] be taken to fight irregular immigration of people from outside the EU” and respondents can choose among the options “Yes, preferably at an EU level”, “Yes, preferably at a national level”, “Yes, at both levels”, and “No, no need for additional measures.” We see flat lines with the vast majority of Greeks supporting stronger measures to fight illegal migration; yet those preferences predate the onset of the refugee crisis.

It is important to note that the high degree of support for stricter measures against irregular migration need not imply negative affect toward immigrants *per se*. As shown in Choi and Sambanis (2024), affect can be separated from cognitive sources of support for strict immigration policies. The lack of state planning for the accommodation and integration of immigrants and refugees until very recently, and the perception that the borders are permeable, generate a feeling of unease among the native population; yet such anxieties predate the onset of the 2015 refugee crisis.

¹⁵ For a replication of this analysis for Germany, see Appendix. The warming trend toward immigrants and refugees since the refugee crisis of 2015 is also evident in Germany.

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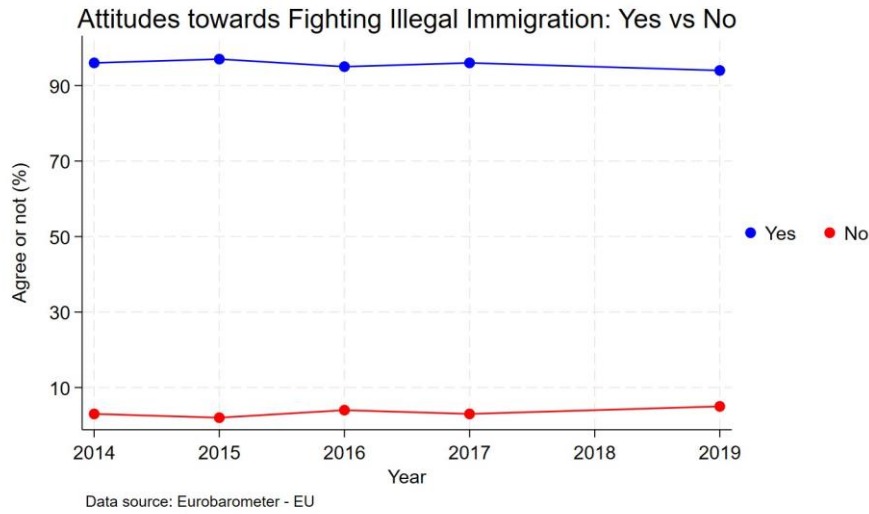


Figure 8: Eurobarometer - agree or disagree with additional measures to fight irregular non EU immigration?

Conclusion

Summarizing the results from several public opinion polls, we have shown that the refugee crisis of 2015 has not had an appreciable long-term effect on aggregate attitudes toward immigrants in Greece. Although Greek public opinion registers persistently negative attitudes toward immigration, there has been no increase in negative attitudes over time and, to some extent, we observe some minor improvements in recent years.¹⁶ In fact, this macro-level result is in fact consistent with studies of individual-level effects of increased exposure to the refugee crisis. Choi and Sambanis (2024) find that students in the University of Aegean who were exposed to the crisis are more empathetic toward refugees than their counterparts who graduated from other universities in parts of the country with little or no refugee exposure or compared to other Aegean University students who graduated prior to the onset of the crisis. Fabbe et al. (2023) find that increased exposure to the crisis does not shape local elites' individual preferences regarding refugee resettlement; and Fabbe, Kyrkopoulou and Vidali (2022) find that exposure does not shape individual-level citizen attitudes toward the location of refugee reception centers.

A possible concern with the aggregate level data that we have analyzed in this report is that aggregate patterns may hide important differentiation in opinions among subgroups of the

¹⁶ A general pattern of relative stability in attitudes toward immigrants/refugees is also evident in other countries. See [Bansak, Hainmueller and Hangartner \(2023\)](#) and [Kustov, Laaker and Reller \(2021\)](#).

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population. We have not considered the possibility that public opinion among some groups of the population may have in fact become more negative in response to the crisis, while others may have become more positive, thereby neutralizing the overall effect of the crisis. Indeed, there could be significant shifts in public opinion among subgroups of the population consistent with evidence of a growing social polarization across many issue areas in several Western democracies over the past decade.

Polarization of opinions regarding immigration could be the result of an iterative backlash triggered by the refugee crisis: first, the crisis could have triggered negative reactions among politically conservative voters, as argued by Dinas et al. (2019). In turn, we conjecture that there could be a “backlash to the backlash” among liberal voters who may have turned more positive toward immigration in recent years to counteract what they perceive as an authoritarian threat emanating from parties supporting anti-immigration policies. As it turns out, we find no evidence of growing polarization in Greece due to the refugee crisis, as we show in Appendix C. For that analysis, we use ESS data on respondents’ self-placement on the left-right political ideology spectrum and we disaggregate our results for each of the variables used in our main analysis, sorting respondents by political ideology. As we show in the Appendix, the attitudes of left-wing vs right-wing respondents move in tandem in Greece whereas they diverge considerably in Germany after the refugee crisis, where right-wing respondents became more anti-immigrant, while left-wing respondents became more pro-immigrant. Thus, while a German “backlash to the backlash” might exist, we do not see evidence of one in Greece.

Finally, while we find that aggregate public opinion remained fairly stable over time with regard to the variables we have analyzed, it is possible that dramatic events such as the 2015 refugee crisis may have generated complex reactions in the native population which are difficult to pick up in the ESS variables we have analyzed. Specifically, the refugee crisis may have reified the support for a strict immigration policy among Greeks who recognize that the country is ill-equipped to handle another mass influx of refugees, while also generating more empathy for refugees, recognizing their plight. New research suggests that general affect toward immigrants and refugees (i.e. feelings of empathy) could grow stronger among natives who experience events such as the 2015 refugee crisis, while at the same time the same people recognize the need for more effective border control policies in response to the realization that the Greek state cannot handle the pressures generated by outside migrant inflows (see Choi and Sambanis, 2024). But for most of the population that was less directly exposed to the crisis, the effects of the crisis appear to be muted, and these effects may well have been different had the crisis been handled better by the state. Our analysis suggests that simply reporting on high aggregate levels of support for border control does not necessarily reflect a high degree of bias and xenophobia in the population. Although in some countries these attitudes may move together, in other countries they are likely distinct. New research should attempt to separate measures of natives’ bias with reference to general affect toward immigrants from native responses to realistic threat generated by the state’s failure to protect both immigrants’ and natives’ rights and welfare during periods of crisis.

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Supplementary Appendix for

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This appendix provides information regarding the raw data used in the main text, as well as supplementary data analysis.

Appendix A. Data

Refugee arrivals in Greece and other EU countries

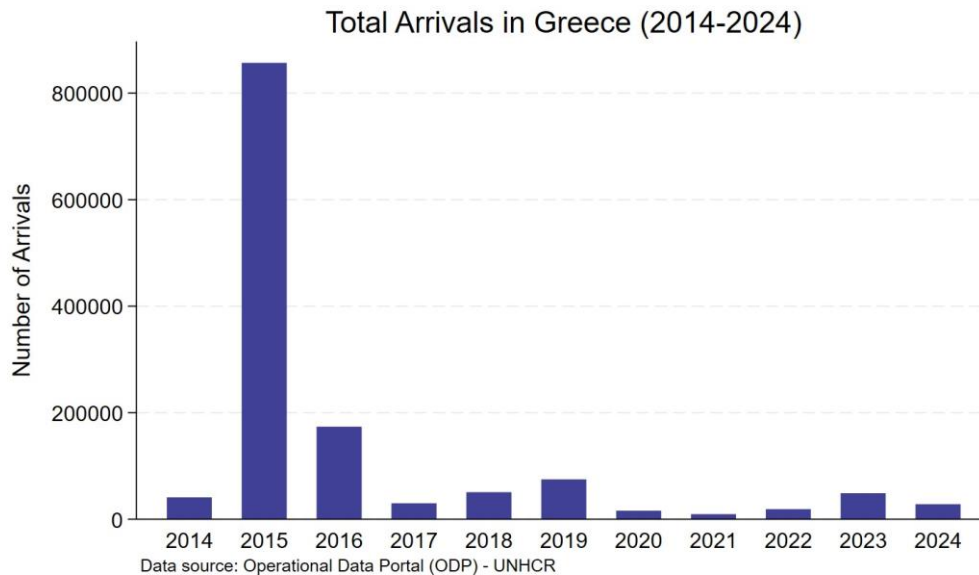


Figure A1: Total arrivals in Greece for the period 2014-2024 (August)

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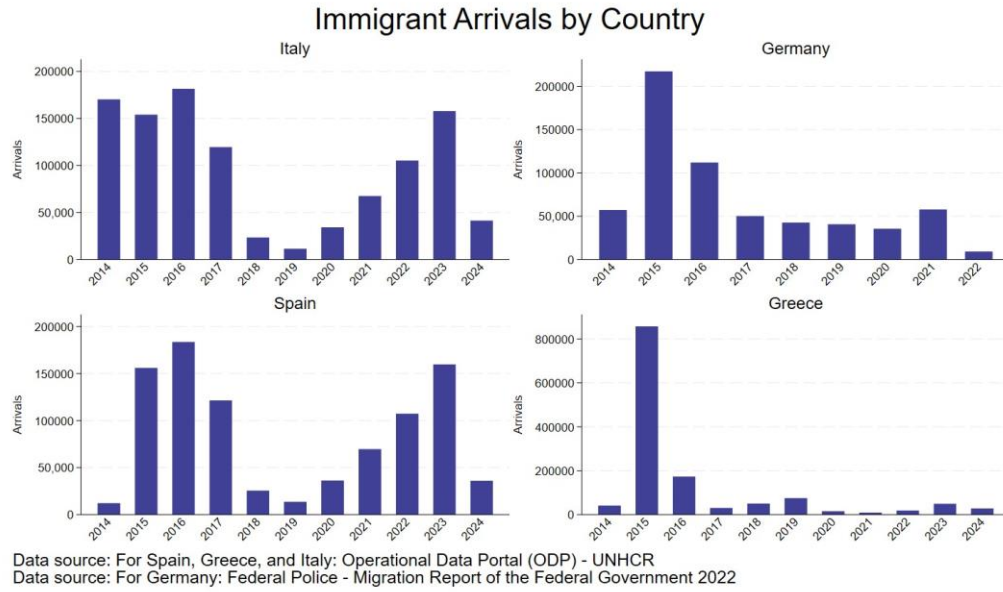


Figure A2: Total arrivals in Greece, Spain, Italy and Germany - comparative

Greece data

Below (*table 1*) we show average scores per round for each variable included in our analysis. The plotted results can be observed in the main text. The data are not recoded; original (raw) scores from ESS are shown. Following this table, we show the distribution of outcomes for all variables in Greece.

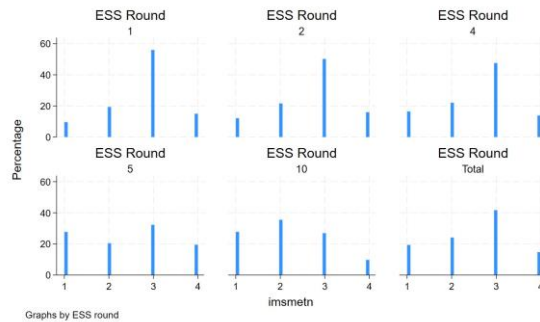
year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.76	3.08	3.07	3.62	3.54	3.39
2004	2.70	3.02	3.03	3.91	3.77	3.46
2008	2.59	3.10	3.17	3.47	3.42	3.20
2010	2.44	3.21	3.26	3.08	3.16	2.80
2020	2.19	3.09	3.14	4.08	4.19	4.30

Table A1: evolution over time of the average values measuring perception toward immigration for Greece.

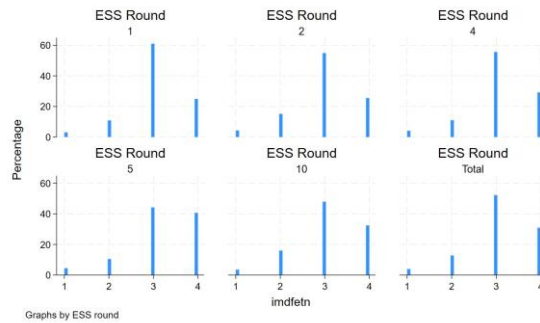
Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

EU's aggregate analysis with ESS data

In this part, we repeat the analysis done for Greece with all the countries that can be compared with Greece in the same period of time using ESS data. Specifically, these are the countries for which have also data available for the same period of time as for Greece, that is: for years 2002 (ESS 1), 2004 (ESS 2), 2008 (ESS 4), 2010 (ESS 5) and 2020 (ESS 10). The variables have the same code, description and scale as before.

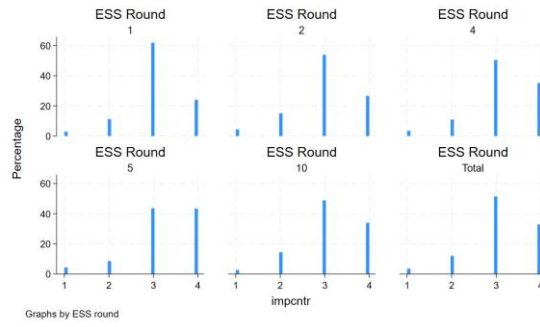


(a)



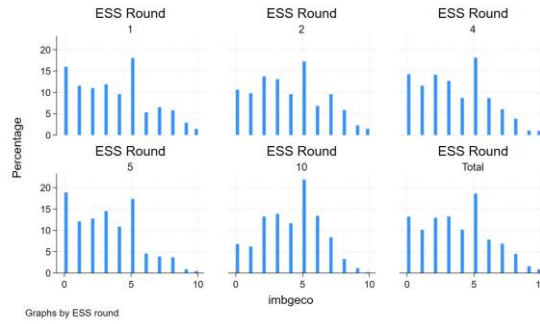
(b)

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

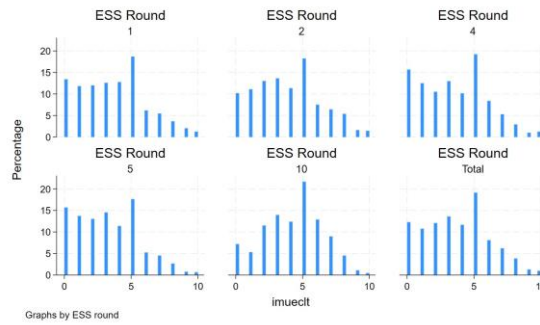


(c)

Figure A3: Histograms in percentage for the variables imsmetnc imdfetn and impctr.

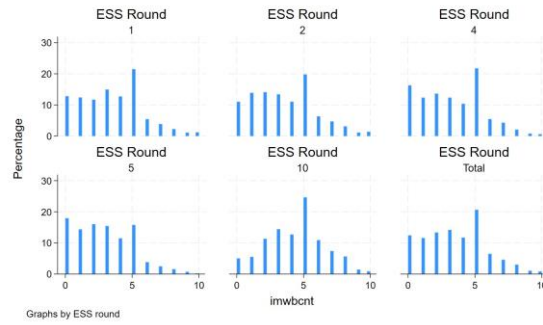


(a)



(b)

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration



(c)

ç

Figure A4: Histogram in percentage for the variables imbgeco, imueclt and imwbcnt.

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.25	2.49	2.46	4.61	5.83	4.28
2004	2.22	2.56	2.58	4.36	5.64	4.50
2008	2.10	2.41	2.39	4.80	5.85	4.91
2010	2.23	2.54	2.53	4.53	5.51	4.66
2020	1.84	2.05	2.08	5.73	6.37	5.59

Table A2: Belgium

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	1.99	2.23	2.19	5.91	6.35	5.25
2004	1.95	2.29	2.30	5.65	6.16	5.14
2008	1.93	2.30	2.37	6.21	6.22	5.53
2010	1.96	2.33	2.40	6.12	5.97	5.50
2020	1.86	2.12	2.18	6.41	6.52	5.95

Table A3: CH.

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.41	2.59	2.54	4.37	4.54	4.24
2004	2.51	2.75	2.75	4.26	4.34	4.16
2008	2.57	2.80	2.81	4.20	4.41	4.32

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

2010	2.57	2.86	2.89	3.92	4.06	4.04
2020	2.73	3.11	3.10	4.53	3.83	3.88

Table A4: CZ

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.30	2.64	2.60	5.27	7.32	5.32
2004	2.32	2.64	2.70	5.10	7.04	5.41
2008	2.20	2.51	2.64	5.52	7.28	5.54
2010	2.36	2.65	2.81	5.22	6.84	5.36
2020	1.97	2.40	2.48	6.16	7.32	5.88

Table A5: FI

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.32	2.50	2.56	5.07	5.18	4.52
2004	2.31	2.54	2.61	4.67	5.07	4.41
2008	2.26	2.45	2.55	4.84	5.44	4.71
2010	2.30	2.45	2.57	4.67	5.20	4.58
2020	1.97	2.16	2.18	5.44	5.76	5.19

Table A6: France

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.34	2.57	2.60	4.41	5.10	4.54
2004	2.29	2.52	2.57	4.55	4.95	4.59
2008	2.38	2.55	2.63	4.58	4.83	4.50
2010	2.43	2.60	2.73	4.48	4.85	4.52
2020	1.88	1.97	2.05	6.46	6.46	6.34

Table A7: GB

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.36	3.03	3.06	4.17	5.12	4.12
2004	2.48	3.09	3.21	3.69	5.04	4.07

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

2008	2.16	3.08	3.22	3.64	4.98	3.82
2010	2.14	3.04	3.17	3.97	5.22	4.17
2020	2.72	3.22	3.28	3.76	4.14	4.01

Table A8: HU

year	imsmetrn	imdfetrn	impctr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.01	2.29	2.29	5.04	5.60	5.37
2004	2.05	2.32	2.28	5.85	5.86	5.68
2008	2.21	2.37	2.45	5.03	5.75	5.56
2010	2.39	2.53	2.60	4.39	5.24	5.07
2020	1.98	2.11	2.19	6.47	6.64	6.72

Table A9: IE

year	imsmetrn	imdfetrn	impctr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.34	2.44	2.47	4.83	5.98	4.66
2004	2.32	2.50	2.56	4.61	5.84	4.75
2008	2.22	2.31	2.43	5.34	6.12	5.17
2010	2.26	2.33	2.50	5.24	6.12	5.26
2020	1.99	2.02	2.16	5.95	6.61	5.86

Table A10: NL

year	imsmetrn	imdfetrn	impctr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.11	2.38	2.30	5.40	5.84	4.81
2004	2.03	2.36	2.36	5.16	5.84	4.84
2008	1.92	2.25	2.27	5.76	5.91	5.33
2010	1.98	2.23	2.29	5.65	5.80	5.32
2020	1.73	1.79	1.87	6.14	6.67	6.42

Table A11: NO

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.67	2.78	2.78	5.00	5.35	3.98
2004	2.75	2.87	2.92	4.43	4.63	3.84
2008	2.72	2.77	2.80	5.06	5.57	4.42
2010	2.67	2.75	2.79	4.71	5.23	4.16
2020	2.11	2.20	2.18	6.38	6.22	5.64

Table A12: PT

year	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcnt
2002	2.29	2.47	2.45	4.36	5.21	4.47
2004	2.29	2.44	2.53	4.25	5.03	4.59
2008	2.19	2.36	2.50	4.46	5.08	4.57
2010	2.17	2.35	2.50	4.09	4.90	4.36
2020	1.97	2.37	2.41	4.85	5.15	4.81

Table A13: SI

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

CT	imsmetn	imdfetn	impcntr	imbgeco	imueclt	imwbcn
BE	-0.39	-0.49	-0.45	1.18	0.83	0.92
CH	-0.10	-0.21	-0.22	0.27	0.53	0.43
CZ	0.08	0.19	0.15	0.98	0.05	0.14
FI	-0.38	-0.25	-0.34	0.92	0.45	0.50
FR	-0.33	-0.30	-0.39	0.74	0.53	0.58
GB	-0.54	-0.62	-0.67	1.92	1.55	1.77
GR	-0.17	-0.06	-0.06	0.74	0.77	1.29
HU	0.56	0.16	0.09	-0.09	-0.97	-0.03
IE	-0.41	-0.41	-0.41	2.04	1.33	1.59
NL	-0.28	-0.31	-0.35	0.72	0.50	0.61
NO	-0.24	-0.43	-0.42	0.46	0.85	1.08
PT	-0.57	-0.55	-0.61	1.68	0.99	1.49
SI	-0.19	0.02	-0.09	0.81	0.27	0.49

Table A14: average difference value for each variable between 2020 and 2010 for all the countries

Variables description for EVS-WVS 2005/2000 - 2017/2022

Variable	Description and Coding
C002	Employers should give priority to (nation) people than immigrants 1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

E143	Immigrant policy: How about people from less developed countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think the government should do? 1 = Let anyone come who wants to 2 = Let people come as long as there are jobs available 3 = Put strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here 4 = Prohibit people coming here from other countries
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Table A15: Variables and their corresponding scales; average sample size per question and wave: *n*-1400

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

Statement	Scale
Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you. Immigration of people from other EU Member States	Very positive Fairly positive Fairly negative Very negative
Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you. Immigration of people from outside the EU	Very positive Fairly positive Fairly negative Very negative
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Immigrants contribute a lot to (OUR COUNTRY)	Totally agree Tend to agree Tend to disagree Totally disagree
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (OUR COUNTRY) should help refugees	Totally agree Tend to agree Tend to disagree Totally disagree
In your opinion, should additional measures be taken to fight irregular immigration of people from outside the EU?	Yes, preferably at an EU level Yes, preferably at a national level Yes, at both levels No, no need for additional measures

Table A16: Variables and description for Eurobarometers

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

	2008	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019	2023	2024
Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you. Immigration of people from other EU Member States		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you. Immigration of people from outside the EU		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Immigrants contribute a lot to (OUR COUNTRY)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (OUR COUNTRY) should help refugees			x	x	x	x	x	x
In your opinion, should additional measures be taken to fight irregular immigration of people from outside the EU?		x	x	x		x		

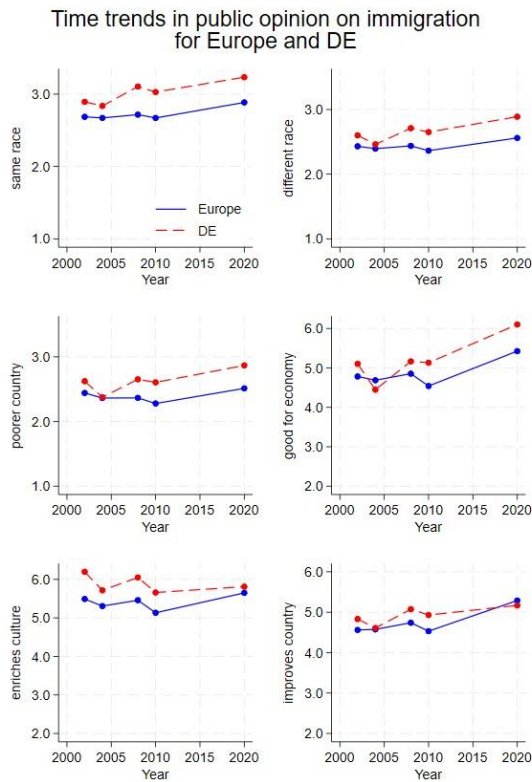
Table A17: Variables and description for eurobarometers

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

Appendix B. Comparisons Between GR and other EU Countries

This appendix replicates the analysis conducted for Greece using data from Germany and Italy. Since data from Germany is available for all time periods, it was possible to replicate all the figures created for Greece. For Italy, however, only the figures using data from the WVS-EVS surveys and Eurobarometers could be replicated.

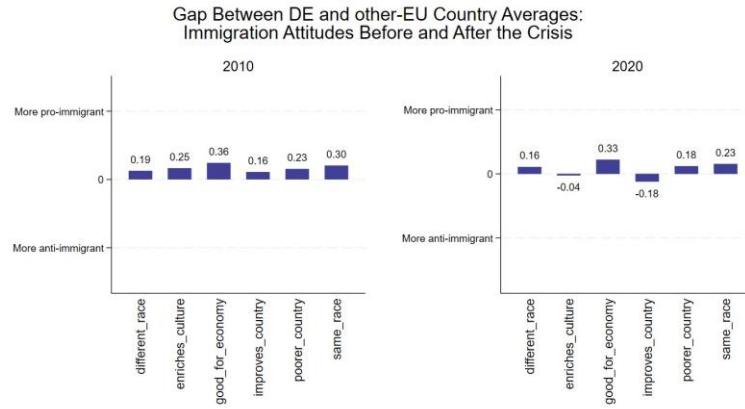
Appendix B.1. Germany



Data source: European Social Survey (ESS)
 Note: variables have been recorded so that higher values always indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes.

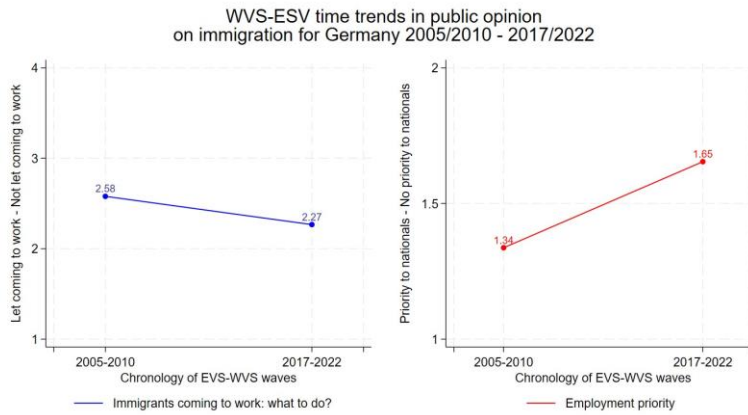
Figure A5: Over-time trends in immigration attitudes since 2002: Greece and EU comparison. See that this plot used the variables **imsmetn**, **imdfetn** and **impcntr** that have been recorded with respect the ESS original survey so that higher values indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes.

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration



Data source: European Social Survey (ESS)
 Note: variables have been recoded so that higher values always indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes

Figure A6: Gap between Greek and EU averages before and after the refugee crisis. See that this plot used the variables **imsmetn**, **imdfetn** and **impcntr** that have been recoded with respect the ESS original survey so that higher values indicate more pro-immigrant attitudes.



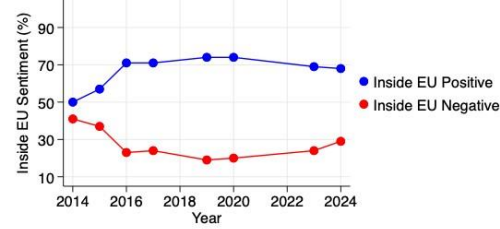
Data source: Integrated Values Surveys 1981-2022
 Note: For 'Employment priority' the value 3 has been removed to improve interpretation.

Figure A7: Time trends for EVS-WVS 2005/2010 - 2017/2022.

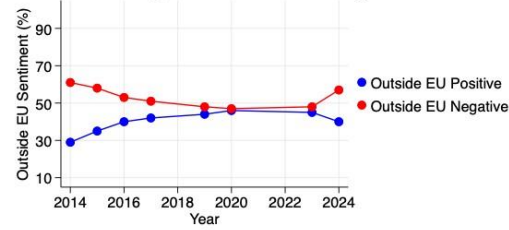
Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

Comparison of Inside and Outside EU Immigration Attitudes - Germany

Inside EU Immigration Positive vs Negative



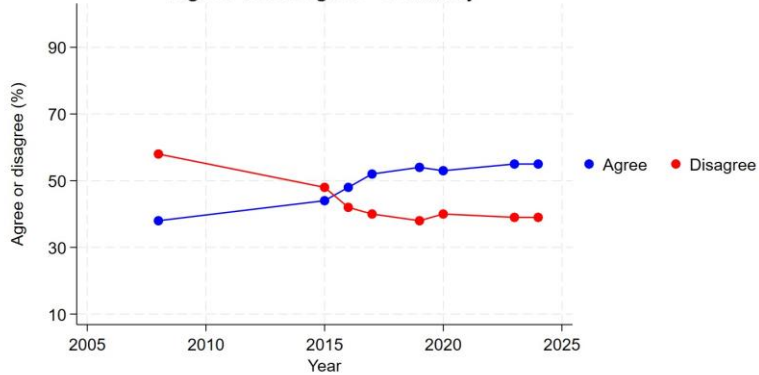
Outside EU Immigration: Positive vs Negative



Data source: Eurobarometer - EU

Figure A8: Eurobarometer attitudes towards immigration from the EU and outside the EU

Attitudes towards Immigrant Contribution: Agree vs Disagree - Germany



Data source: Eurobarometer - EU

Figure A9: Eurobarometer - agree or disagree that immigrants contribute a lot to Germany

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

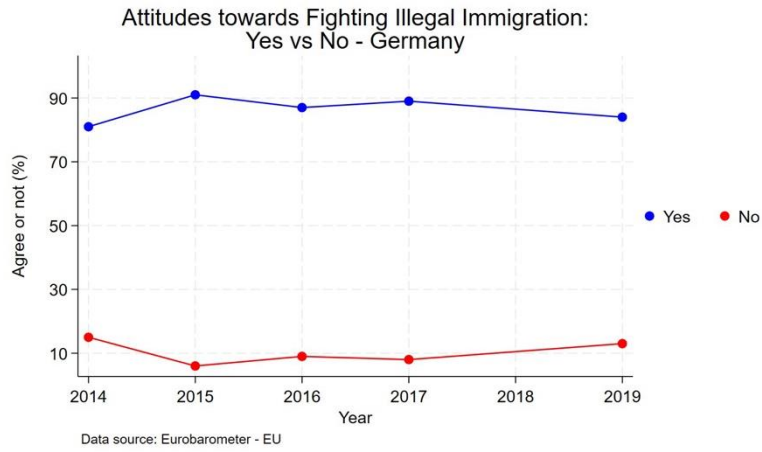


Figure A10: Eurobarometer - agree or disagree with more measures to fight irregular non EU immigration?

Appendix B.2. Italy

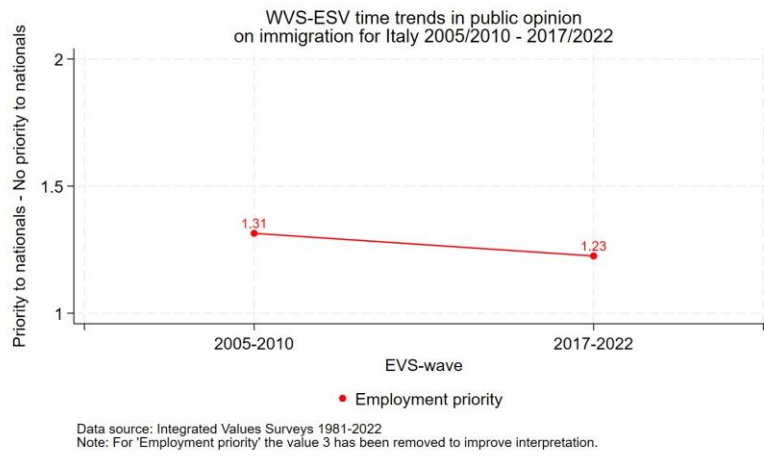


Figure A11: Time trends for EVS-WVS 2005/2010 - 2017/2022.

Comparison of Inside and Outside EU Immigration Attitudes - Italy

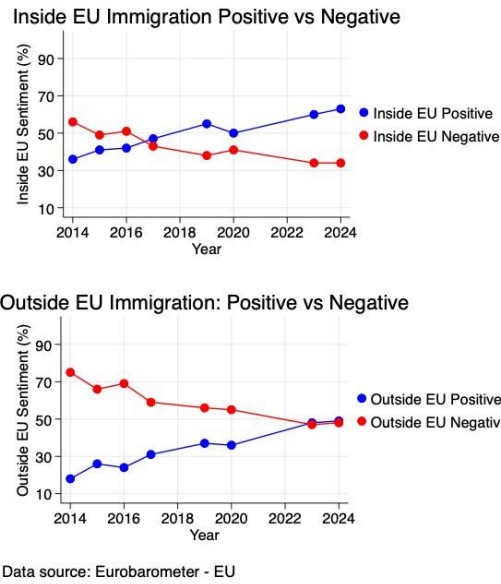


Figure A12: Eurobarometer attitudes towards immigration from the EU and outside the EU

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

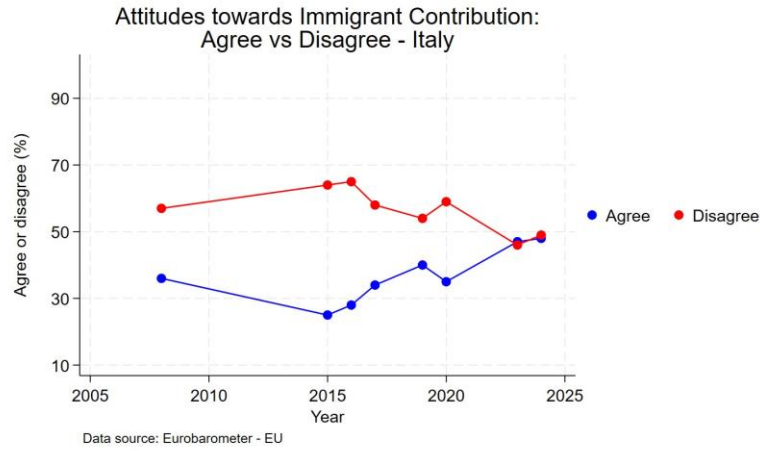


Figure A13: Eurobarometer - agree or disagree that immigrants contribute a lot to Italy

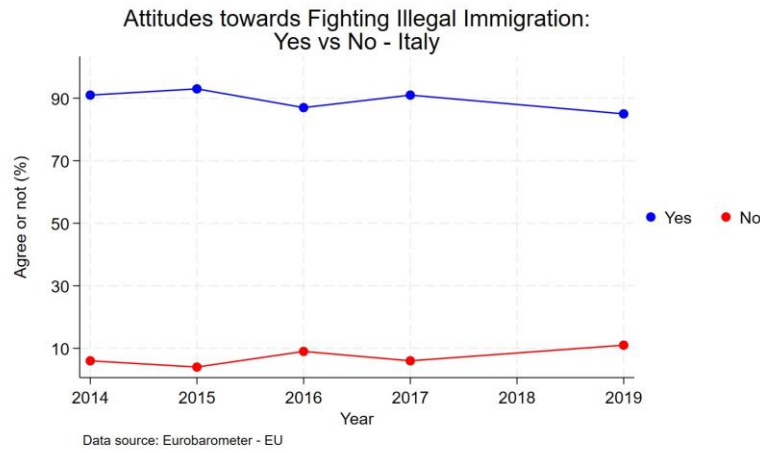


Figure A14: Eurobarometer - agree or disagree with additional measures to fight irregular non EU immigration?

Appendix C. Polarization

We consider the possibility of a polarizing effect of the refugee crisis on public opinion along partisan lines. Given that partisanship data from Greece includes large numbers of missing observations, our analysis uses a variable denoting respondents' political orientation drawn from the ESS survey to place respondents on a left- vs right-wing scale. The variable label (*Irscale*) in the Figures below captures this scale. The variable is coded on the basis of answers to the following question: "In politics people sometimes talk of 'left' and 'right'. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?" It is coded on a 11-point scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right), with available observations per survey wave shown in the table below. We have excluded people who respond that they do not know or refuse to answer. Data are provided for a simple comparison between Greece (GR) and Germany (DE) for years in which Greek data are available. Below, we show descriptive statistics for the share of respondents who self-classify as "left-wing" vs "right-wing" in each sample, as well as the share who refuse to answer (a significantly higher percentage refuse to answer in Greece compared to Germany). Next, we show plots with the distribution of left-wing vs right-wing respondents in Greece in each wave of the ESS. Finally, in Figure **A16** we show results for our main analysis for left-wing vs right-wing respondents for each ESS variable shown separately in a sub-plot. The analysis reveals no evidence of polarization in Greece due to the refugee crisis (notice the roughly parallel trends for left-wing and right-wing respondents over time). However, evidence of growing polarization is apparent in Germany.

Variable	Label	Scale	N° of Observations GR	N° of Observations DE
Irscale	left - right	0 - left 10 - right	2002: 2,566 2004: 2,406 2008: 2,072 2010: 2,715 2020: 2,799	2002: 2,919 2004: 2,870 2008: 2,751 2010: 3,031 2020: 8,725

Table A18: Variable **Irscale**, its label, corresponding scale, and number of observations by year for Greece (GR) and Germany (DE).

Year	Right (0)	Left (1)	Middle (2)	Non-respondents (.)	Total
2002	749	458	776	583	2,566
2004	820	426	701	459	2,406
2008	534	530	652	356	2,072
2010	580	570	818	747	2,715
2020	839	704	931	325	2,799
Total	3,522	2,688	3,878	2,470	12,558

Table A19: Cross-tabulation of left-right orientation by year, including non-respondents and middle category for Greece (GR). Middle is respondents with *Irscale*=5.

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

Year	Right (0)	Left (1)	Middle (2)	Non-respondents (.)	Total
2002	594	1,075	1,038	212	2,919
2004	513	1,069	1,008	280	2,870
2008	545	1,064	927	215	2,751
2010	601	1,124	1,097	209	3,031
2020	1,655	3,546	2,935	589	8,725
Total	3,908	7,878	7,005	1,505	20,296

Table A20: Cross-tabulation of left-right orientation by year, including non-respondents and middle category for Germany (DE). Middle is respondents with Irscale=2.

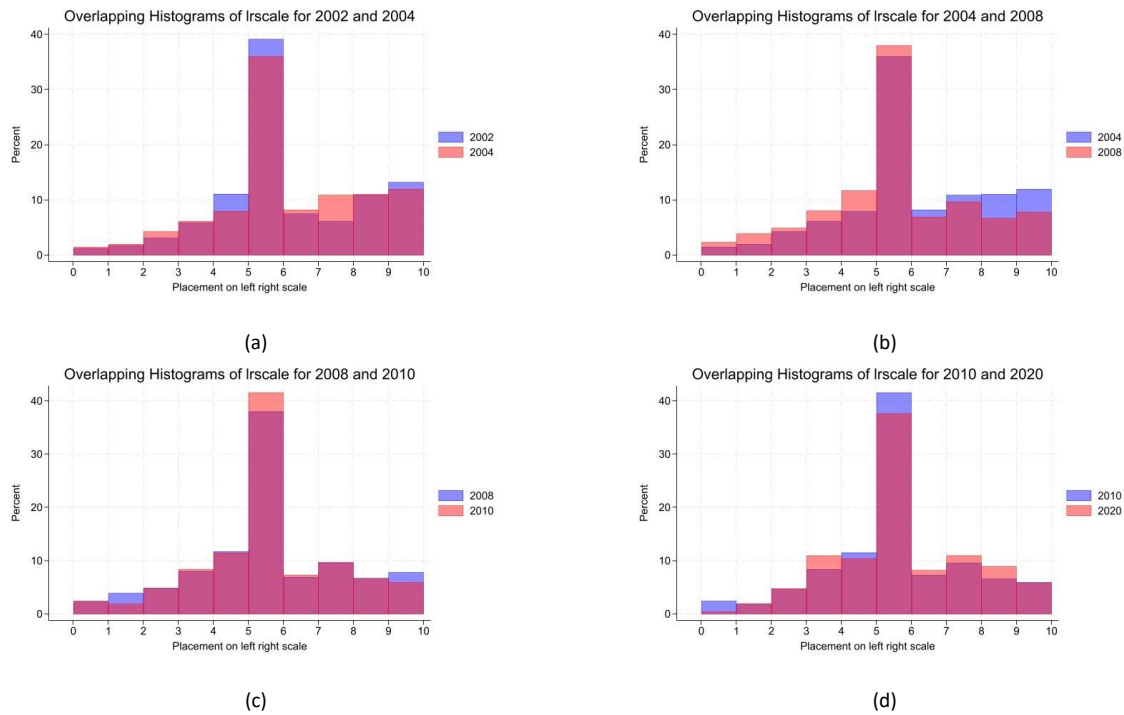


Figure A15: A series of histograms showing Irscale scale data over different time periods for Greece. (a) 2002-2004, (b) 2004-2008, (c) 2008-2010, (d) 2010-2020.

Long-term Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Greek Public Opinion Regarding Immigration

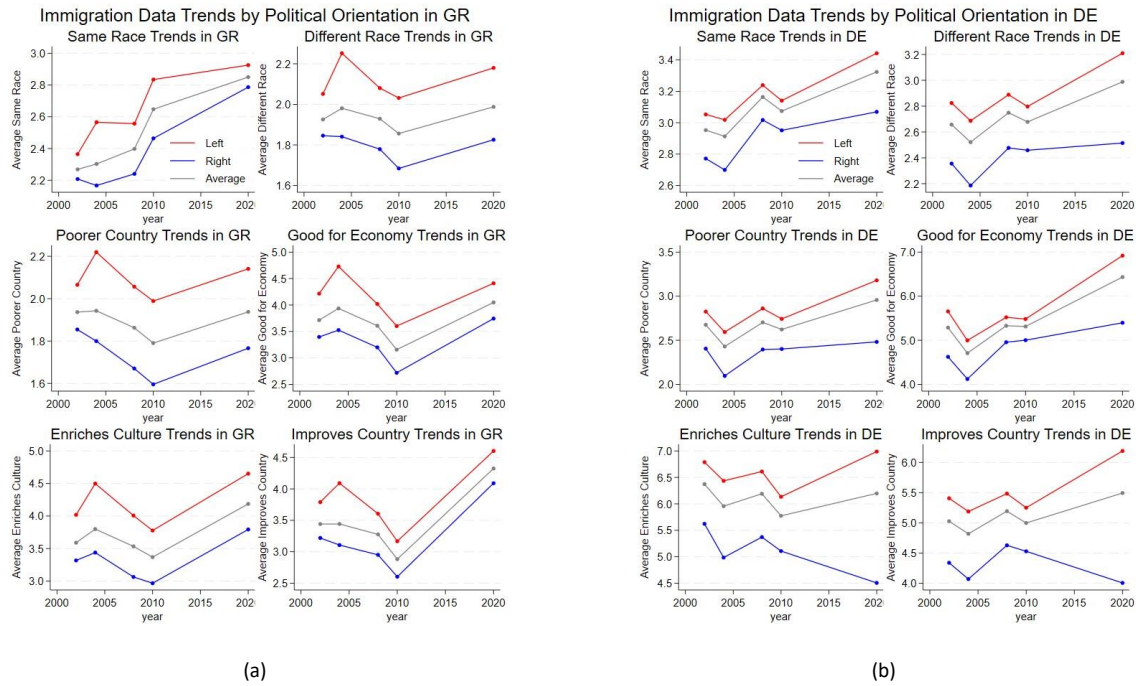


Figure A16: Comparison of attitudes towards immigration by political group. Greece (a) and Germany (b) comparison.