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## **Changing attitudes towards immigration in times of economic crisis: a cross-national and over-time comparison**

### *Abstract:*

While anti-immigration attitudes in Europe have been investigated quite extensively, research that focuses on the evolution of attitudes towards immigration remains relatively scarce. The existing studies show that, since the mid-90s, evolutions in anti-immigration sentiment are not monotonous and vary widely across European countries. Furthermore, the observed trends can be interpreted in terms of realistic group conflict theory: Unemployment rates and immigration flows partly explain the cross-country variation in attitude trends.

The increasing availability of cross-national repeated cross-sections provides new opportunities to put the group conflict theory to the test. Such data allows us to shed light on how anti-immigration attitudes are evolving during the economic crisis different European countries are currently experiencing. This relatively novel strategy compares survey data across countries and time points simultaneously. Although this seems to be a promising approach, the combination of cross-national and over-time comparisons brings along conceptual issues as well as challenges for statistical analysis that merit further study.

Joint work with Elada Davidov and Jaak Billiet