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EUROPEAN MIGRATION CRISIS: POLITICAL DISCOURSE, CONSTRUCTION OF STEREOTYPES AND SECURITISATION OF MIGRATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB

Abstract. The article problematises the European migration crisis that culminated in Croatia becoming a transit country on the Western Balkans route in the spring and summer of 2015. It focuses on analysing migrations from the perspective of political discourse, giving the increasingly frequent use of economic, security and cultural-identity stereotypes in countries affected by the crisis. The student population of the University of Zagreb was chosen due to it being familiar with the issue through different channels, in some cases even as part of the curriculum. The research was conducted in two phases (in 2016 and 2017). The first phase in 2016 focused on deconstructing the dominant political discourse presented by the government and opposition on the most popular news portals among the selected audience, which was then used to explain the formation of the students' opinions on three forms of stereotypes related to migrants: economic, security and culturalidentity. In the second phase in 2017, the authors sought to detect whether the migrant issue was securitised by the students and which elements of securitisation they attributed to the crisis.

Keywords: European migration crisis, political discourse, migrants, stereotypes, securitisation, students

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Introduction¹

Migrations as a phenomenon were rarely a research subject in the discipline of International Relations before the Cold War came to an end. This is because migrations were not seen as any big threat to the Cold War relations and the balance between the two opposing socio-political and economic blocs after the Second World War, when major changes took place in the overall structure of the international community. Since the Cold War, asymmetric threats to security have come to the fore, with the dominant realistic approach to international relations being weakened and mostly replaced by non-nationalistic critical approaches such as constructivism. Thus, scientific interest is directed at new subjects and processes in international relations, including migrations (Mitchell, 2012: 1–2).

In the second half of the 20th century, migrations at the global level became a major factor in social transformation and development, intensifying in the 21st century with people increasingly migrating in the search for security and a better life: from villages to cities, between regions, even between continents. Modern migration erodes and eradicates the traditional boundaries between cultures, languages, ethnic groups and nation states, thus posing a challenge to the national security, cultural identity and economic prosperity of those receiving migrants (Castles, 2000: 269).

There are many reasons for migration in the 21st century. It forms an integral part of globalisation, which implies networking in all aspects of social life. One of the main reasons for migration is the large differences in income, employment and social well-being among regions. However, poverty is not the only denominator of migration. Relocations from very poor to rich regions are not so common since the poor population does not have enough of the economic capital needed for travel, nor cultural capital, in terms of adapting to the new environment in which such social capital or social connections are required to find a job and thus become integrated into that environment. Yet, in exceptional circumstances, such as war or ecological degradation, which destroy the most basic social needs and living standards, the poorest people are forced to migrate, often in very miserly and difficult conditions (ibid.: 271-272). This kind of migration is noticeable in Europe in recent years - from smaller to larger countries, from poorer to richer EU members, and especially from the immediate European surroundings affected by war, terrorism and poverty. The beginning of the

¹ The article comprises parts of the theoretical framework and research from a paper that won the Rector's Award for the 2016/2017 academic year: Rukavina, Bruno and Bašić, Florijan (2016): Politički diskurs i konstrukcija stereotipova među studentima Sveučilišta u Zagrebu. Accessible at http://webcache. googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:_rn17GvCebAJ:www.unizg.hr/rektorova/upload_2016/1_(3. 10. 2017).

European migration crisis, which escalated in the summer of 2015, is linked to the Arab Spring as a process of the unsuccessful "spreading of democracy" in Europe's neighbourhood. The devastation of autocratic regimes that maintained the apparent peace in the Middle East and North Africa created more destruction, chaos and poverty. The resumption of civil war in the Middle East and political turmoil in North Africa led to state failures, the disappearance of security and consequently the circumstances reducing the need for migration. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 triggered their first major wave, primarily towards neighbouring states, culminating after the Arab Spring. Revolutionary changes flooded North Africa and resulted in stronger turmoil in the Middle East, particularly in Syria and Libya.

Immigrants from the Middle East opened up the Balkan route that ran through Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary, which then closed its border with Serbia in the summer of 2015 by erecting a 110-kmlong wire fence, thus forcing the route to shift towards Croatia and Slovenia (Archick and Margesson, 2015: 1–2). This blocked the entry of migrants to the Schengen Area and created great problems for Croatia, suddenly finding itself in the centre of the migration crisis (Smolen, 2015).

From mid-September to 1 November 2015, around 300,000 migrants entered the country and migrated to third countries, without seeking refugee status or asylum, since their destinations were Western European countries that have large numbers of immigrant communities in existence for several generations. These are economically the most developed countries in Europe with low unemployment rates and the highest quality systems of social privileges, especially Germany whose industrial leaders stressed the need for a bigger inflow of labour force and welcomed the arrival of migrants at the very start of the crisis (Dettmer, Katschak and Ruppert, 2015). However, in spite of the initial positive impulses, there has been ever decreasing solidarity among European countries with regard to migrants, the constant danger of transit countries closing their borders, as well as the countries receiving migrants, disagreements between countries over transit routes, as well as different policies on migrants in transit and destination states. The last solution that sought to curb the migration crisis was the agreement between the European Union and Turkey made in March 2016.²

Further, challenges such as the limited migrant integration opportunities and the growth of xenophobia in the recipient countries (migration and reception centres in the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden) also emerged, as well as the growing impatience of migrants to reach their destinations as soon as possible. There were also outbreaks of intolerance and conflicts

² Accessible at http://www.novilist.hr/Vijesti/Hrvatska/Tusk-objavio-Postignut-je-dogovor-EU-i-Turske-oko-migrantske-krizel-Davutoglu-To-je-povijesni-dan (3. 3. 2017).

among different ethnic migrant groups, and their integration into Western societies has not been assisted by either radicalisation within the existing immigrant communities or the links between individuals and groups with terrorist activities in Europe (ibid.: 21).

States lying along the Balkan route have largely opted for an open-borders policy allowing for the free passage of migrants as they make their way towards Western European countries, as visible in the discourse of their political elites.³ Given the scale of the European migration crisis and its far-reaching political, economic, security and cultural consequences across the European continent (manifest in the form of stereotypes related to the migrant population expressed through discourse), the goal of this research was to investigate attitudes of the student population of the University of Zagreb according to some stereotypes concerning migrants, bringing them in connection with the political discourse in Croatian news portals they mostly follow. In the second phase of the research, by taking account off the increasing securitisation (encompassing economic, security and cultural challenges) of the migration crisis, the students' attitudes were further analysed.

Given the increasingly frequent use of economic, security and culturalidentity stereotypes in the everyday political discourse in the countries affected by the migrant crisis, we decided to look at attitudes held by students at the University of Zagreb regarding this issue. We identified the target population as one made familiar with the migration problem by monitoring the media, various student forums organised in 2015 and, in some departments, the curriculum. The goal of the first research phase was to focus on deconstructing the dominant political discourse in the Republic of Croatia (via a discursive analysis of statements by government representatives and statements by the opposition) found on news portals most popular among the target audience. The dominant political discourse presented in the chosen media was then used to try to explain the formation of the students' opinions in relation to three stereotypes concerning migrants: economic, security and cultural/identity. By deconstructing the dominant political discourse and monitoring student opinions during the peak of the migration crisis, new ways of interpreting the migration process are established.

The basic questions in the first research phase in 2016 were:

1. What was the dominant political discourse of the government of the Republic of Croatia and the opposition with regard to the migrant crisis appearing in the most popular news portals among University of Zagreb students?

³ Only the Hungarian government under Prime Minister Viktor Orban was the outlier regarding the general discourse used during the escalating migration crisis in the summer of 2015.

- 2. Can we detect any stereotypes about migrants constructed through the political discourse?
- 3. What attitudes do University of Zagreb students hold to the three forms of stereotypes?
- 4. Can we link the dominant political discourse of the government and the opposition in the media with the attitudes held by the students?

During 2016 and 2017, the migrant crisis often became associated with the securitisation process, which is the subject of the second phase of this research study that was conducted in 2017. Here we wanted to determine whether the migrant issue was also securitised by students, and which elements of securitisation they attributed to the crisis (fear of terrorism, criminal activities, diseases, radicalisation etc.).

It is not for the first time a survey of citizens' attitudes to migrants has been conducted in Croatia. Building on the assumption that Croatia's accession to the European Union (EU) will change the migration pattern and lead to a gradual rise foreign worker inflows, who will require to be integrated into Croatian society, similar scientific research was conducted by the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity in Zagreb in 2012. On that occasion, Croatian citizens' attitudes to foreign workers were examined, i.e. their possible entry into the labour market and influence on the culture and values of Croatian society (Čačić-Kumpes, Gregurović and Kumpes, 2012: 305). The research participants had on average a high level of xenophobia, indicating their unwillingness to accept the arrival of foreign workers, something that cannot be attributed solely to fear of job market competition but also to the reserved attitudes of the citizens regarding cultural diversity (ibid.: 329). However, research is lacking on processes involved in the European migration crisis of 2015 and its outcomes in Croatia.

Methodology

Discourse analysis was used to analyse the political discourse engaged in by the social-democratic government and the conservative opposition in Croatia about migrants during the European migration crisis on the most popular news portals followed by⁴ students of the University of Zagreb. Discourse analysis is a way of studying texts and has its origins in different

⁴ The most popular news portals, according to the online survey conducted among students (from 31 January to 3 March 2016), such as Jutarnji list (jutarnji.hr) and Večernji list (vecernji.hr), were analysed. In the student survey, the second most widely read portal was index.hr. However, since articles from September 2015, when the migration crisis began, could not be accessed, the third most widely-used portal was used for the discourse analysis – Večernji list. As only two popular Internet portals were used, the results cannot be generalised, but still entail initial research on public discourse on migrants in Croatia.

theories and scientific disciplines. Since discursive analysis "stems from criticism of traditional social science, it is based on rooted epistemological basics that are quite different from other methods" (Halmi, Belursi and Ogresta, 2004: 35–36). "The study of naturally occurring language in any social context is discourse analysis, and it makes use of various qualitative methods to increase our understanding of human experience " (Shanthi, Kean Wah and Laijum, 2015: 159).

We conducted the discourse analysis in several phases. Phase one entailed setting the research questions, after which we selected the text for analysis. In the sample, we used 156 articles containing government and opposition statements on the migration crisis between 23 August and 8 November 2015 (the peak of the migration crisis in Croatia). In phase two, the text was carefully read, analysed and coded, i.e. "the way of organizing the system of categories and the search for the connection between them according to a particular paradigmatic model" (ibid.: 42). We then created matrices to check the reliability of the text. Ultimately, we interpreted the data obtained using a qualitative display, which provides a deeper discursive analysis and interpretation of quantitative indicators.

Empirical research was conducted in 2016 and 2017. In the first stage of the 2016 survey, we used a focus group whose main methodological role was to assist in constructing the questionnaire. In this context, a focus group can provide insight into and understanding of the topic at hand, discover new content areas, redefine the questionnaire content, and help eliminate the issue or redefine an unclear issue (Skoko and Benković, 2010: 220). The focus group was held on 19 January 2016 and involved students of the Contemporary Diplomacy course at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb. We tested the form of the questionnaire, the content, the sequence logic, and understanding of the questions. Using the information obtained, we made a minor correction to the questionnaire.

In the second phase of the 2016 survey, we used a questionnaire as a quantitative research method. The online questionnaire was conducted between 31 January 2016 and 3 March 2016. The study used a sample of 1,067 University of Zagreb students, with students of the Faculty of Political Science as a control group given that their study programmes are focused, inter alia, on international relations and migrations, which gives them tools for deeper understanding and analysis of processes and phenomena in the international community. Part one of the questionnaire contains general questions (22 in total) about students, their involvement in the migrant crisis, their perceptions of media reports on the crisis, while the second part consists of three thematic parts with questions focusing on economic, security and cultural-identity stereotypes.

Also using a student sample at the University of Zagreb (albeit smaller, making the sample incomparable with that from 2016), the main goal of the 2017 survey was to detect whether and how students had securitised the migrant crisis (here securitisation comprises cultural, economy and security elements). This entailed capturing their opinions regarding stereotypes towards the migrants who came to Europe in 2015. The research used a sample of 415 students from almost all departments at the University of Zagreb. The first part of the survey contains the same general questions as that one in 2016, while the second part is focused on establishing students' opinion on different security, economic and cultural stereotypes concerning migrants, leading to securitisation of the issue (24 questions in total).

A combination of open-ended (one in each survey) and closed-ended questions was used. Although respondents were not allowed to elaborate their opinion or present some alternatives to the options on offer, they provided information required for this kind of initial survey on migrations in Croatia (see Foddy, 1993: 127).

Political discourse during the migration crisis in Croatia

Reality is a consequence of intersubjective relations, one form of which are those existing between citizens and politicians. This relationship is established through discourse, more precisely, political discourse, which is one of the many forms of discourse. The interest of political science in political discourse emerged in the 1980s and relates to the formal and informal political context, as well as actors like politicians, political organisations and the media (Wilson, 2012: 199). Political discourse can be used as a means of forming one's own opinion and as a vehicle for possibly influencing the opinions of others. Political discourse, when used by politicians, spreads through the public sphere and this interaction creates reality. It can also construct stereotypes, either about various phenomena or a specific group of people. There is the threat of over-generalising the political discourse concept, therefore it is limited to the formal and informal political context and participants, such as politicians, political institutions, governments and the media, a viewpoint accepted in our research (ibid.). According to Henjak, Zakošek and Čular (2013: 443), "since the establishment of multiparty democracy in 1990 the Croatian party system has been characterised by high electoral volatility and a high incidence new party formations combined with stable underlying cleavages". Given the centre-periphery cleavage, the historical-identity cleavage, and the cleavage formed on divisions between secular and religious principles of organising (ibid.: 453), we put different student opinions on migrations into perspective with regard to their political orientation and try to interpret the results using the main

political parties' discourse. However, due to the electoral volatility, one cannot firmly link the political discourse with electoral (the students') attitudes.

During the migration crisis in Croatia in the summer and autumn of 2015, the dominant topic of political discourse was migrants in transit through Croatia. The dominant political actors, the centre - left coalition government⁵, the opposition (chiefly members of the conservative Croatian Democratic Party - HDZ) and President of the Republic Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović reflected on the day-to-day political discourse on migrants, while their growing inflows into Croatia became almost exclusively the focus of political communication. Government members' remarks were mostly about the care and accommodation of migrants and their transit to Hungary and Slovenia, such as the statement by Deputy Prime Minister Ranko Ostojić about the winter conditions and establishment of a centre in Slavonski Brod for a "more humane relationship with these people". The opposition pointed to the "humanitarian character of the crisis" and the need for "controlled migration through Croatia" in its these statements, with security issues being well represented such as when HDZ International Secretary, Miro Kovač, spoke about the unprotected external borders of Croatia and the government's demands to the EU to "provide citizens with security"8. In the discourse, the president also emphasised security as being vital and insisted on it.

We argue that political discourse is one factor that affects the perception of reality and public opinion on a particular issue. Highlighting economic and security problems and linking them to a specific group such as migrants impacts how the public perceives migration as a phenomenon and migrants as a group. This further creates fertile soil for stereotypes.

After a detailed text analysis using coding, we arrived at the following codes in the matrix: statement provider, stereotyping migrants in statements, government attitudes, and opposition attitudes. Migrants were most closely associated with security in statements by both the opposition and the government. For example, HDZ parliamentary representative Gordan Jandroković said: "I'm afraid the coming days will increasingly emphasize the importance of the security dimension of this problem". 9 Categories such

⁵ 12th Government was in power from December 2011 till January 2016, led by Prime Minister Zoran Milanović.

⁶ Accessible at http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/ranko-ostojic-prihvatni-centar-premjesta-se-u-slavon-ski-brod-zbog-humanijeg-odnosa-1030216 (8. 4. 2016).

Accessible at http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/hdz-vlada-ozbiljno-ugrozava-gospodarske-interese-hrvatske-1026334 (8. 4. 2016).

⁸ Accessible at http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/miro-kovac-milanovicu-budite-ozbiljni-i-objasnite-sto-je-to-plan-c-1031129 (10. 4. 2016).

⁹ Accessible at http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/gordan-jandrokovic-sve-one-koji-brinu-o-sigurnosti-hrvatske-premijer-proglasava-nehumanima-1026229 (4. 3. 2017).

as economic migrants, terrorists, unemployment, cultural vulnerability were not found in the discourse of either the government or the opposition. The reason is that Croatia was a small country along the transit route that did not experience other migration crisis problems like the integration of migrants into society or economic difficulties. In the political discourse, the migration crisis was most closely linked to border security given the large number of migrants coming from surrounding countries and Croatia's role as a small transit country. For example, the government had a negative attitude to closing the border. Namely, Croatia established itself on the route as a state open for transit, meaning it was not necessary to close the border, only to organise the transport and reception of migrants. In the early days, the organisation was poor, but the situation stabilised after the initial shock and migrants passed through Croatia without incident. The government was not in favour of closing the border, deploying the army and erecting wire fences along the border, as evident from a statement by Defence Minister Ante Kotromanović: "There is no need to send the army to the border". 10 However, when the migrant influx escalated in mid-October, the government did not rule out the possibility of closing the border. It was one of the options spoken of by then Foreign Minister Vesna Pusić: "If faced with Germany, Austria and Slovenia closing their borders ...then we will have no other option...". 11

The discursive analysis established that the government, whose statements about migrants were positive and neutral, probably did not stimulate the creation of stereotypes about migrants in the public, focusing instead on immediate security issues.

The political discourse engaged in by the opposition was largely neutral, although a negative attitude to the government policy rather than to the migrants directly was repeatedly observed. The opposition maintained a neutral and positive attitude to closing the border, sending in troops or laying down fencing wire along the border during the migration crisis. For example, Tomislav Karamarko, president of HDZ, the biggest opposition party, said "... it is not important who will protect the border, the police or the army, but that it must be done so that all those who enter Croatia are registered". According to Andrija Hebrang, the Commissioner of the President of the Republic of Croatia for the migration crisis, "Croatia should deploy its army to the border but not shoot, kick or stab, but to

¹⁰ Accessible at http://www.jutarnji.hr/kotromanovic-necemo-slati-vojsku-na-granicu-kao-slovenci-a-pozivam-panicare-da-stanu-na-balun-/1442834/ (5. 4. 2017).

¹¹ Accessible at http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/vesna-pusic-o-zatvaranju-hrvatske-granice-sve-je-moguce-ali-mi-to-ne-zelimo-1031844 (18. 3. 2017).

¹² Accessible at http://www.vecernji.hr/hrvatska/karamarko-u-tovarniku-izbjeglicama-treba-pomociali-ova-vlada-je-pokazala-neorganiziranost-1025833 (5. 4. 2017).

physically prevent migrants from entering Croatia". President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović herself made similar public statements: "I would like to avoid the situation in which I would have to set any kind of physical barrier at the border. I do not rule out this possibility in the future, it all depends on how things develop" Such discourse can also be observed among those students who were surveyed who came from the right-side of the political spectrum (296); namely, 146 of whom felt unsafe and extremely insecure during the migration crisis. The opposition's negative and neutral discourse did not take the form of stereotypes concerning migrants but was primarily used as criticism of the government's policy.

The words most commonly featured in the category opposition' attitudes were refugees and wires, confirming that both the government and the opposition mostly recognised the immediate security challenges as problems in their discourse. Neither the government nor opposition used stereotyping of the migrant crisis and migrants, inviting the conclusion that the students were influenced by several other factors when building their stereotypes about migrants.

Security, economic and cultural-identity stereotypes on migrants among the student population at the University of Zagreb

Stereotypes represent attributes that reflect certain groups. They influence the perception and reaction of people to members of individual groups and are transmitted through media, language and discourse. Stereotypes provide certain information and generate expectations about the behaviour of members of a particular group, but at the same time act restrictively as they create a readiness for certain behaviours or features that are consistent with them. They not only stimulate discrimination, but also affect "perception, interpretation and judgment resulting from discrimination, reinforcing and justifying disparities among groups" (Dovidio et al., in Dovidio et al., 2010: 7–8).

The first group of stereotypes addressed in the research are economic. According to Burns and Gimpel (2000: 203), migrants are often seen as a threat to workplaces, the social system and as competition for low-paid workers. Fear of competition in the job market can lead to anti-immigrant attitudes and protectionist demands. The second group of stereotypes related to migrants are security stereotypes. The security aspect of migration has two dimensions; the first is national security as "managing challenges"

¹³ In his opinion, Croatia was supposed to have the army posted along the borders not to shoot, kick or stab, but to physically (bodily) prevent migrants from entering Croatia.

¹⁴ Accessible at http://www.jutarnji.hr/predsjednica-grabar-kitarovic-zeljela-bih-izbjeci-postavljanje-fizicke-zapreke-na%20granici-ali-ne-iskljucujem-tu-mogucnost/1441061/ (1. 6. 2017).

that can undermine state sovereignty, as well as real and imagined migration threats to the population of destination countries" (Wohlfeld, 2014: 69). The second dimension is human security according to which migrants are subject to threats, and the fundamental endeavours should not be to protect borders but to prevent any further loss of life of migrants and their protection from people smugglers (ibid.: 69). Discourse and media categorisation of migrants as terrorists and threats to economic and social security have contributed to the creation of stereotypes concerning migrants, leading to restrictive immigration policies (Tallmeister, 2013). Apart from terrorism, migrants are linked to crime and public security. The third group of stereotypes related to migrants are cultural-identity stereotypes. A large number of societies "react alarmingly to the unregulated migrations of people who do not share their culture and national identity" (Weiner, 1992/1993: 113). States do not see migrations and migrants as objective but as a subjective threat, which depends on how the state and its citizens perceive themselves. Cultures differ in how they define who can and who cannot become part of the community (ibid.: 110).

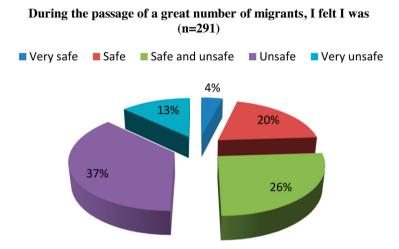
Among the sample used in the 2016 survey there were 28% of right-oriented students, and 41% who occupy the left-wing of the political spectrum. Although we cannot directly associate student attitudes with different political discourses, we can put them in perspective by using the factor of shared political orientation.

The students' attitudes differed regarding their political orientation¹⁵, with the most conservative-oriented students (50%) feeling insecure during the crisis, while a two-thirds majority (66%) of left-oriented students felt safe.

A vast majority (86%) of all conservative students believed migrants would increase the risk of terrorist attacks in the EU. A similar share (83%) believed that migrants might increase the crime rate. It is worth mentioning that a relative majority of left-oriented students (47%) also believed that migrants would increase the possibility of terrorist attacks, while 43% of them thought the crime rate in the EU would increase.

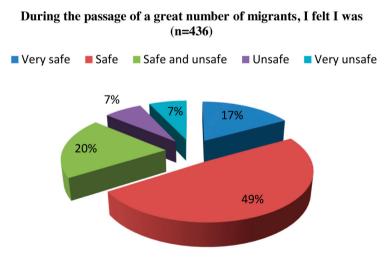
¹⁵ Data presented henceforth are based on the students' political attitudes.

Figure 3: PERCEPTION OF SAFETY DURING THE MIGRATION CRISES AMONG CONSERVATIVE STUDENTS IN 2016



Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

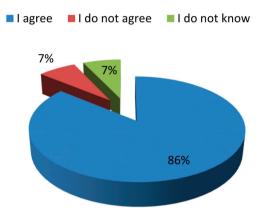
Figure 4: PERCEPTION OF SAFETY DURING THE MIGRATION CRISES AMONG LEFT-ORIENTED STUDENTS IN 2016



Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

Figure 5: PERCEPTION OF THE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS AMONG CONSERVATIVE STUDENTS IN 2016

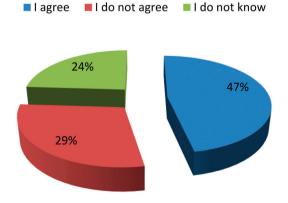
The risk of terrorist attacks will increase with the influx of migrants into the EU (n=291)



Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

Figure 6: PERCEPTION OF THE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS AMONG LEFT-ORIENTED STUDENTS IN 2016

The risk of terrorist attacks will increase with the influx of migrants into the EU (n=436)



Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

After analysing the political discourse, we concluded that neither the government nor the opposition took advantage of the migration crisis for stereotyping the issue. In their statements, politicians mostly linked migrants with their passage through Croatia and with border security. Government statements in the media about migrants were predominantly positive and neutral, according to our analysis. The government had a negative attitude to closing the border, deploying the army and installing wire fences. The discourse of the opposition was largely neutral, although sometimes negative, primarily about the government and its crisis management, without directly focusing on migrants. Issues of greatest concern to the government and the opposition were the security of the transit routes and borders, with the dominant words in the discourse being: refugees and wires. Since the government and the opposition mainly did not use stereotypes in the public discourse on the news portals followed by the students, the influences on their attitudes to migrants may have included a host of other factors, such as statements by foreign politicians ("We have seven million unemployed people, nine million suffering from poverty. We can't welcome anyone else" (Le Pen, in: Makhija, 2018); "The masses of people coming from different civilisations pose a threat to our way of life, our culture, our customs and our Christian traditions"; 16 or "How many people must die at the hands of Islamic extremists before our government closes our porous borders and stops taking in thousands of illegal immigrants?" (Le Pen, in McGuinness, 2016)) foreign media, general discussions within Croatian society etc.

The survey conducted in 2016 indicated the most prominent stereotypes about migrants were security and cultural-identity. Security today is not perceived in simple military terms as it was during the Cold War. The research showed that most security stereotypes are linked with a fear of terrorism and crime due to a real or constructed association between migrants and terrorism, or a perception that crime rates among migrants are higher than among the local population. As migrations were becoming securitised to a great extent in both the EU and in Croatia, this result is not surprising.

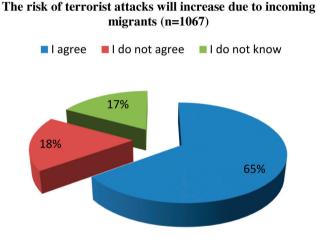
The dominant political discourse was connecting migrations with security issues on an almost daily basis and, as shown by the discourse analysis, this was not immanent to conservatives alone, but also the left wing of the political spectrum.

Culture and identity are often connected to security issues, as "most societies react with fear when there is an unregulated large-scale illegal migration of people who do not share their culture and national identity" (Weiner, 1992/1993: 113). Migrants are, on one hand, seen as a threat to the traditional

¹⁶ Accessible at http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/speechby-prime-minister-viktor-orban-on-15-march (5. 5. 2016).

domestic identity and, on the other, as an instability factor for the authorities if they are unable or unwilling to integrate (Tallmeister, 2013). Governments fear a rise in negative attitudes to migrants among most of the population, and the rise of anti-immigrant political parties, and are thus becoming more anti-immigrant themselves (Weiner, 1992/1993: 114). In this regard, discourse in which migrants were "others" and a disturbing factor in "homogenous" societies grew during the crisis and stressed the need to "protect the domestic culture and identity" on one side, and to integrate migrants on the other.

Figure 1: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2016 CONCERNING THE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

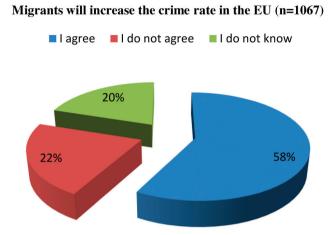


Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

The survey results show that a relative majority (46%) of students felt safe during the crisis, 29% felt unsafe, while 65% perceived migrants as a factor that would increase the number of terrorist attacks in the EU. Concerning the crime rate, 58% of the students believed the crime rate would increase due to the incoming migrants¹⁷. A possible explanation as to why a relative majority of students felt safe during the crisis in Croatia is that, except in a few cases at the start of the crisis, they did not actually encounter any migrants. The transfer system developed by the government was working well most of the time, so the general public and the students were aware that migrants were not actually staying in Croatia. The fear of terrorist attacks could be linked to the terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and Istanbul and the rising power of the Islamic State.

 $^{^{17}}$ Data presented above are aggregated for the entire sample of 1,067 students.

Figure 2: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2016 CONCERNING THE CRIME RATE TRENDS IN 2016



Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

The stereotype that migrants are carriers of public health threats was the only security stereotype that was not confirmed.

Securitisation of the migration crisis

Many security studies scholars deal with the process of securitisation. For example, Caballero-Anthony and Emmer (in Emmer, 2009) explained that "securitization is mostly about calls for closure against things perceived as existentially threatening". Securitisation is a process first developed by Ole Wæver and other researchers who were known as the Copenhagen School during the 1990s (Léonard, 2011: 8). That process is based on the constructivist theory in International Relations that looks upon the world as a constructed reality created by institutions, politicians, media, individuals etc. If the whole world is based on a construction, then security threats are also socially constructed. Thus, research into security threats should look at the process to see how security threats are created. According to Wæver, "... in a successful securitization process, a 'speech act' by a securitizing actor presents an issue as an existential threat to the survival of a 'referent object' (e.g. a state, national identity, etc.) and is accepted as such by the 'audience' of the speech act (e.g. the government, public opinion, etc.)" (ibid.: 8). Once the threat is constructed, the securitising actor, usually a politician, introduces measures that are necessary to exterminate the threat and secure

the survival of the referent object. Sometimes these measures would not be accepted without that constructed threat. The issue is then "moved out of the sphere of normal politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with easily and sometimes without normal (democratic) procedures" (Taureck, 2006: 2). Usually, the audience and public opinions are used only to give legitimacy to the actions of the securitising actor. The most important thing, according to the Copenhagen School, is the speech act and, because of that, the process of "securitization is centred on discourse" (Léonard, 2011: 8).

The process of securitisation has been present during the European migration crisis. Some European countries that are a destination for the migrants have patiently received them, some have only allowed their free passage, while others have securitised the issue and been ready to do anything to ensure that migrants do not reach their borders. Some politicians started articulating migration as a security problem where a certain part of society can be considered a threat to the political, social, economic and cultural security of the state. It is considered that illegal migrations are a violation of the state's border security and therefore pose a threat to national sovereignty (political security). Moreover, migrants often appear as a threat to the lifestyle and culture of the recipient state. In addition, they are accused of contributing to a rise in crime, ¹⁸ as well as other social problems, and

 $^{^{18}}$ Over 1 million migrants from the Middle East and Africa came to the Federal Republic of Germany in 2015 (Bericht zur Polizeilichen Kriminalstatistik, 2015). The overall crime rate in Germany has dropped, but statistics show the number of non-German crime suspects who legally resided in Germany was 555,820 in 2015, while in 2016 this figure rose to 616,230, an 11% increase (Bericht zur Polizeilichen Kriminalstatistik, 2016). Particularly emphasised are the offences of unauthorised entry to the country and unauthorised residence. Non-Germans make up approximately 10% of the German population, but accounted for 30.5% of all crime suspects in 2016 and 27.6% in 2015. The Police Report defines immigrants as "persons, who as members of a non-member state of the European Union, either individually or in groups reach the territory of the Federal Republic in order to stay here temporarily or permanently" (Bericht zur Polizeilichen Kriminalstatistik, 2015: 68). In 2016, most suspects for crime offences whose nationality was not German and who resided legally in Germany were Turks, Romanians, Poles, Syrians, Serbs, Italians, Afghans etc. Syrians topped the list of migrant crime suspects, followed by Afghans, Iraqis, Albanians, Algerians and Moroccans. Other data show non-German crime suspects committed 2,512 sexual assaults and that Syrians were the primary offenders, followed by Afghans, Iraqis, Pakistanis and Iranians. Speaking of robberies, non-German crime suspects committed 56,252 robberies and Moroccans were the primary offenders in this category. It is worth mentioning that BKA reported 487,711 violations of German immigration laws, an increase of 21.1% from 2015, when there were 402,741 violations. According to media articles, the number of criminal offences committed by immigrants has decreased and those committed were lighter offences and misdemeanours, as Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reports the data from Süddeutsche Zeitung and from NDR. According to the data, 17% of all offences relate to freeriding in public transport, a quarter refers to theft and bodily assaults, while 1.3% of the total number of offences committed by immigrants relates to rape and sexual assault. German police minister Thomas de Maizère presented a report on the crime rates for 2016, highlighting the rising crime rate in cases of death, which increased by 14.3%, rape by 12.8%, group rape by 106.3% and the number of severe bodily injuries increasing by 9.9% (Bericht zur Polizeilichen Kriminalstatistik, 2016). The number of criminal offenses

sometimes categorised as economic migrants, only seeking asylum to take advantage of social welfare or take jobs away from the local population (economic security). When European countries were faced with extreme migration flows, especially in 2015, some states demonstrated a clear process of securitisation.

The terrorist attacks that occurred during and after the migration crisis in Europe have contributed to the process of securitisation of migration. Due to them, citizens of European states that once accepted migrants are becoming increasingly disinclined towards immigration. Countries are having a difficult time answering key security questions and the EU is losing unity on the issue of migrants. "Greece already hosts nearly 60,000 refugees in deteriorating conditions, and Italy is struggling to cope with a rising tide of arrivals from the central Mediterranean route" (Ignatieff et al., 2016: 2). The fear of new migrants from the Middle East was present in Croatia, although the so-called Balkan route was closed after the Turkey-EU agreement in March 2016.

Therefore, politicians in EU countries have a very difficult task. They must convince EU citizens that the migrants who came to Europe are peaceful. However, some citizens can only see chaos, terror and destruction of their homelands. This is another example of constructing reality. After the migrant crisis, there have been several terrorist attacks throughout Europe. All of them happened in states that have received migrants. On the other hand, many have highlighted the fact there were no terrorist attacks in Eastern Europe, such as in Poland or Slovakia, countries that oppose migration from Africa and the Middle East. This is one reason the terrorist attacks have had a big impact on the securitisation of migration.

The first one happened on 13 November 2015 when Paris was hit by six or seven simultaneous terrorist attacks: 129 lives were lost, more than 350 people were injured. There were seven attackers who used several tactics: shootings, taking hostages etc. All of them were found dead afterwards, having committed suicide. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack (The Paris Black Friday 13/11/2015 Attacks – What do we know? What should we do? 2015). Another big attack came on Tuesday 22 March 2016 in Brussels – the capital of Belgium, centre of both the EE and NATO headquarters. There were two targets in Brussels – one at Brussels Airport and the other at the Maelbeek metro station. In total, 30 people lost their lives and ISIS again claimed responsibility for the attacks (ibid.). On France's largest national holiday, 14 July 2016, a 31-year-old Tunisian-born French national, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, drove a rented truck through a crowd observing

committed by foreign nationals has increased by 25.5%, but it is emphasised that the influx of migrants and the increase of criminal offences rate cannot be easily correlated.

fireworks along the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, killing 86 people and injuring more than 300. The French national police stopped the attack by killing him. Before he died, he shouted: "Allahu Akbar" (God is great). ISIS again claimed responsibility for the attacks (Aspi.org.au, 2016). Although ISIS territory is in the Middle East, it has supporters around the world and many are ready to do terrible things for its ideology. There are active cells all around Europe and support can be found even among European citizens. This is how Europeans see and construct their new dangerous reality. Terrorist attacks have continued in Europe. For example, on 19 December 2016 Anis Amri, a 24-year-old Tunisian who had pledged allegiance to ISIS drove a truck into the Breitscheid Christmas Market in Berlin, killing 11 people and wounding another 45 (Yaakov, Arava and Wyss, 2017). The last attack after the one at the London Bridge in June was in August 2017 in Barcelona when 13 people were killed and over 100 were injured. ISIS took responsibility for the attack. 19

Second research phase in 2017

The main goal of the second phase of the survey was to gain an insight into students' opinions regarding the security stereotypes (as part of the securitisation process) concerning the migrants who came to Europe in 2015. Student activism during and after the migrant crisis has not been significant, with 59% of students not reporting any kind of activity regarding migrants or the migration crisis. Similar results were noticed in the 2016 survey when 67% of students were inactive. However, one needs to take into account that the survey samples used in 2016 and 2017 are not identical and are therefore incomparable. The most common student activities (49%) were in the academic area, meaning they attended some conferences or had courses problematising migration in their departments. The reason is that most students, much like Croatian citizens in general, did not have contact with migrants since the government had organised their transportation directly from the Serbian border to the Slovenian or Hungarian border. Yet the survey indicated that students were becoming more interested in this topic by attending conferences and public debates on migration. This also indicates the students are familiar with the topic and that the survey has a more representative value.

When asked if migrants pose a threat to European culture and identity, 58,6% of the students replied positively, 31,1% believed they posed no threat, while 10,4% did not know. In the 2016 survey, 51.1% of students thought the migrants pose a threat to the European way of life. Students

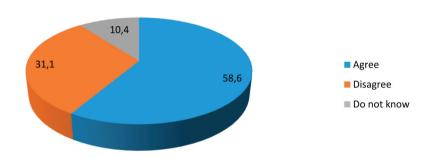
¹⁹ Accessible at http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40964242 (28 August 2017).

believed this reflects the situation in some western countries, like Sweden, Germany and France, which are losing their special cultural identity due to globalism and multiculturalism that are destroying the European way of life. Instead of the Europeanisation of the EU's neighbourhood, today there is a 'middle-easternisation' of the EU.

Figure 7: COMPARISON OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF THREATS MIGRANTS POSE TO EUROPEAN CULTURE AND IDENTITY (2017 AND 2016 SURVEYS)

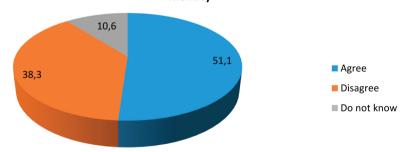
2017 SURVEY:

Migrants who arrived in 2015 pose a threat to European culture and identity



2016 SURVEY:

Migrants who arrived in 2015 pose a threat to European culture and identity



Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

Students believed that, for cultural and religious reasons, it is not possible to integrate the migrants who arrived in the summer of 2015 (56.1%). The reason for this can be found in the many cultural issues and significant differences between Europeans and migrants that are not resolved by

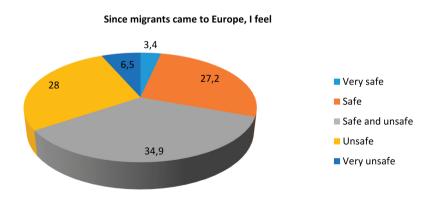
integration policies. In many European cities like Paris and Brussels, there is a process of 'ghettoisation' whereby migrants live in their own city neighbourhoods and do not communicate with the local people.

Students also thought the migrants would impose new rules and patterns of behaviour in Europe. More than 58% agree with that claim. According to them, Europe needs to be tolerant of migrants, but migrants must also be tolerant of the European rules and behavioural patterns.

Students were also 'afraid' of migrants. The are several reasons for this, for example, terrorist attacks, a massive rise in crime rates, attacks on women that were related to migrants in the public discourse, as well as perceiving migrants as being unwilling to integrate and cooperate with the domestic population. American political scientist Robert Putnam has shown in his research that immigration and ethnic diversity reduce the level of social capital and social solidarity. His research proves that respondents who live in places with exceptionally great ethnic diversity show low trust in local authorities, politicians and the media, low levels of political efficiency, and hold lower expectations that the community will work to address the dilemmas of collective action. They are also less likely to work on community projects, volunteer and engage in activities for charitable purposes, have less close and trusty friends, a lower level of happiness, and a worse perception of the quality of life (Putnam, 2007: 137-147). Although Croatia did not have many migrants who stayed and is not very ethnically diverse, students are still 'afraid' of migrants and perceive them as a threat.

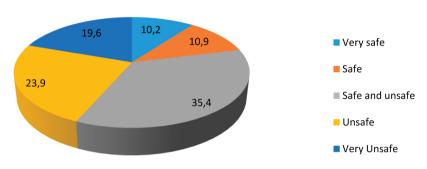
Figure 8: COMPARISON OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY (2017 AND 2016 SURVEYS)

2017 SURVEY:



2016 SURVEY:

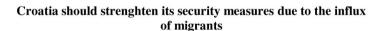


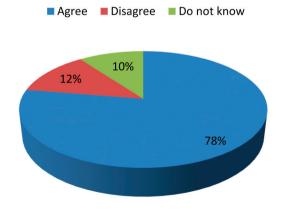


Source: Rukavina and Bašić, 2016.

More than three-quarters (78%) of the students believe the Republic of Croatia should strengthen its security measures due to the influx of migrants. Even though there were no terrorist attacks in Croatia, which was not a destination of the migrants, the students think it should be prepared and raise the security level. Croatia as a member state of the EU, the NATO Alliance and the antiterrorist coalition could be a target for terrorists. Only 12% of students disagree with this assertion and believe there is no need for Croatia to strengthen its security measures.

Figure 9: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2017 ON WHETHER CROATIA SHOULD STRENGTHEN ITS SECURITY MEASURES DUE TO THE INFLUX OF MIGRANTS

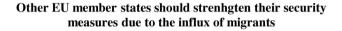


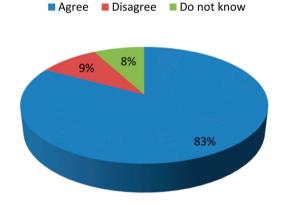


Source: The authors' own analysis.

When asked whether other EU member states should strengthen their security measures, 83% of students answered positively. Only 9% of the students think otherwise. The percentage is 5% lower when they were asked about Croatia, but Croatia was not a destination country and is not a member of the Schengen Area. Nevertheless, the vast majority of students were in favour of raising security measures and standards. This is not surprising due to the public discourse. After numerous terrorist attacks, security became one of the most important issues for European citizens, with the level of fear rising as crime rates and numbers of attacks escalate.

Figure 10: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2017 ON WHETHER OTHER MEMBER STATES SHOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR SECURITY MEASURES DUE TO THE INFLUX OF MIGRANTS

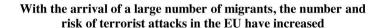


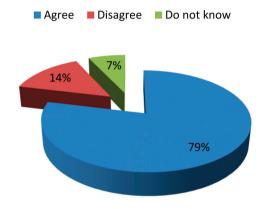


Source: The authors' own analysis..

Terrorist attacks in Europe, more precisely in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, London and elsewhere, spread panic across the continent. Security levels were raised in Germany, France and the United Kingdom. This indicates that more attacks may be expected, according to security services, security experts and the media. That there is a high risk of a new terrorist attack is a fact, and 79% of the students believe the risk of terrorist attacks has grown since the migrants arrived in Europe. Just 14% of the students think the risk has not increased or that the risk cannot be linked with migrants. This may be related to several attacks, media reports about crime and security in the EU and the public discourse on migrants that is filled with security issues.

Figure 11: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2017 ON WHETHER THE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS IN EUROPE HAS INCREASED SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS



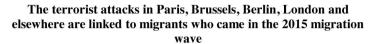


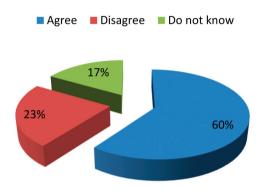
Source: The authors' own analysis.

The risk and number of terrorist attacks are, according to the students, higher since the influx of migrants. When asked whether the terrorist attacks in Europe after 2015 were linked with migrants from the Middle East, 60% of them responded in the positive, while 23% thought that migrants are not linked with those attacks. As police reports and investigations revealed, migrants were connected with some terrorist activities, crime offences and many of them were staying in EU member states illegally. This may have influenced the way the students perceived migrants and, along with the public debate on security issues, migrants and how to address this problem, students may have become more worried and started to perceive migrants as a potential threat.

Migrants in the media, politics and public discourse are not just perceived as potential terrorists, but also as perpetrators of other illegal activities. The integration process requires a certain period and, if integration fails, it is difficult for migrants to get jobs, places to live and receive social rights. Often, those who fail to integrate lose the social rights they had as asylum-seekers and turn to illegal activities. As the survey showed, the majority of University of Zagreb students believed the crime rate across the EU has increased since 2015. Almost one-third of the students do not share this opinion (31%), while 18% of students do not know.

Figure 12: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2017 ON WHETHER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS IN EUROPE ARE CONNECTED TO MIGRANTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

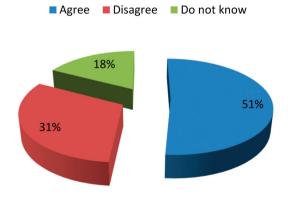




Source: The authors' own analysis.

Figure 13: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2017 ON WHETHER THE CRIME RATE IN THE EU HAS INCREASED SINCE THE MIGRANT CRISIS OF 2015

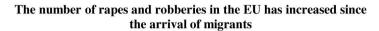
The crime rate in the EU has increased since the arrival of migrants

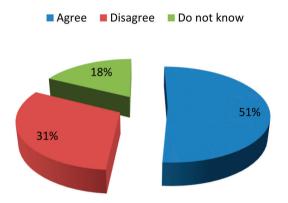


Source: The authors' own analysis.

The same share of students believe the number of rapes and robberies has increased since the migrants came to Europe. A 51% majority hold this opinion, while 31% responded negatively.

Figure 14: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS IN 2017 CONCERNING WHETHER THE NUMBER OF RAPES AND ROBBERIES HAS INCREASED SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS





Source: The authors' own analysis.

When it comes to other illegal activities such as human trafficking and trafficking in narcotics, the relative majority (47%) of students thought the rate of these criminal activities has gone up, while 35% believed otherwise.

The majority of students perceived that since the migrants came to Europe the risk or number of illegal activities has increased. Even a relative majority of 43% of students saw migrants as carriers of diseases, while 38% of students disagreed, representing the highest level of disagreement.

One possible explanation for most of these results is the prominence given to these topics in the media. Terrorist attacks, security measures, border controls, and crime rates are given greater space in the media and often the topic of political debates in EU member states, especially those that are the migrants' final destinations. Perhaps the fact terrorist attacks are the topic most discussed by experts, politicians and citizens means that they hold psychologically the biggest impact on European citizens and thus in their minds such attacks are highly connected with the migrants themselves. On the other hand, the smuggling of narcotics, robberies and human trafficking are given less space in the public sphere and such criminal activities are not closely linked with and attributed to migrants. Yet one cannot objectively use this explanation as a factor that influenced the students' perceptions.

Conclusion

In the research, we sought to determine whether (through political discourse, represented in the media) dominant stereotypes concerning the migrants who came to Europe in 2015 had been constructed. We also wanted to detect University of Zagreb students' attitudes to three types of stereotypes – security, economic and cultural-identity. The link between the dominant political discourse of the government and the opposition appearing in the most popular news portals followed by students and the students' attitudes to migrants was also questioned.

Using the discursive analysis method, we examined the dominant political discourse on the migrants on two news portals while the questionnaire helped establish the attitudes of the University of Zagreb students to three forms of stereotypes concerning the migrants. In interpreting the results, we tried to link the dominant political discourse in the media with the students' attitudes in terms of their political orientation.

After analysing the political discourse, we concluded that the government and opposition did not use the migration crisis to create stereotypes on the migrants nor to securitise the issue. In the category of economic stereotypes, students expressed concern about the burden on the social system created by the migrants. As far as jobs are concerned, opinions are divided, given that Croatia is a transit country in which migrants do not permanently stay. Students expressed the greatest concern in the category of culturalidentity stereotypes. Most of the surveyed students share the fear, common across Europe, of losing the dominant culture and identity. Further, a relative majority of students believe that the large cultural and religious differences make the integration of migrants into European societies impossible. Since the arrival of the migrants, there have been reports of attacks on and attempted rapes of women, especially in Germany, a fear has arisen that women across Europe would be more vulnerable, and that fear was shared by the relative majority of students at the University of Zagreb. The last category of stereotypes refers to security issues where we interviewed students about their own security when in the vicinity of the migrants passing through Croatia, with 45% of the respondents feeling safe. The reason for the relatively high sense of security could be that most citizens did not have any contact with the migrants. Yet most of the surveyed students believe the arrival of more migrants in Europe will exacerbate the risk of terrorist attacks. In addition to terrorism, the students also expressed fears the crime rate in the EU will increase. Attitudes about economic and security stereotypes are mostly shaped by direct influences and lived experiences. Cultural stereotypes can be explained as stemming from a fear of the unknown and different.

Although we cannot directly associate the students' attitudes with statements made by government and/or opposition, we can reach some conclusions by putting the student attitudes and the discourse of the opposition and government into perspective.

However, since migrations and migrants became a securitised issue following the European migration crisis, we wished to analyse whether that was also the case with the student population at the University of Zagreb, with securitisation comprising economic, security and cultural challenges.

The results of the survey conducted in two phases clearly showed that migration patterns and opinions have changed in Croatia, a state lying along the Balkans transit route. Adding to the challenges small states have faced in the past in the form of geographical, social and economic instigators of migrations, since the European migration crisis of 2015 there is an evident securitisation of migration issues. This is demonstrated by the online survey conducted in two phases (in 2016 and 2017), with security stereotypes being the dominant issue in the first phase and with strongly declared security-related fears in most observed categories. However, the relationship between the political discourse and public attitudes on migration has mainly been demonstrated by supporters of the government or the opposition in relation to security stereotypes. The research makes it clear that the student population in Croatia is influenced by the securitisation of migrants. demonstrated by the rising security threats in Europe after the huge influx of migrants. Unlike what were mostly economic stereotypes and challenges related to migrations in the past, security and cultural-ideology stereotypes dominate among regular citizens these days. This leads to the securitisation of migrations among citizens, who perceive there are distinct security and cultural challenges to the process that culminated in Europe in the summer of 2015, with its impacts expected to resonate in everyday life for a long time.

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