

Perceptions of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees in Europe

Miriam-Andreea Iordache^{*}, Alyson E. Blanchard

Department of Psychology, Allerton Building, University of Salford, M5 4WT Salford, Greater Manchester, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Symbolic threats
Intergroup anxiety
Terrorism
Prejudice
Refugees

ABSTRACT

The Russian invasion of Ukraine led to a major humanitarian crisis resulting in many Ukrainians seeking refugee status in European countries. Unlike the positive attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees, Afghan refugees who were also required to leave their country following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, received a negative reaction from the same European countries. Examining similar crises, a year apart, where people fled perilous situations in their countries, reveals contrasting reactions that emphasize the need to understand factors driving diverse public attitudes. Integrated Threat Theory (ITT), which posits that perceived threats can lead to prejudice and negative attitudes, may elucidate mechanisms behind opposing reactions towards Ukrainian and Afghan refugees. This study explores whether symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, fear of terrorism, and political orientation are differentially related to attitudes towards Afghan and Ukrainian refugees in 250 European participants. Results demonstrate that participants hold more positive attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees compared to Afghan refugees. All the aforementioned factors predicted attitudes towards Afghan refugees, but only symbolic threats predicted attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees. Ethnicity and religiosity explain the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards Afghan refugees. Western European participants show a stronger link between terrorism fear and negative views on Afghan refugees than Eastern Europeans, possibly due to higher terrorism rates in the West. Thus, attitudes towards refugees are intricate, but the study emphasizes the role of ITT, terrorism fear, politics, ethnicity, religiosity, and region. The findings could refine policies, stressing the need to address these factors for fostering inclusive, empathetic European societies.

1. Introduction

It is estimated that over 5 million Ukrainians sought refuge across Europe (UNHCR, n.d.) because of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine. The response of European countries towards Ukrainian refugees was unprecedented. For the first time, the Council of the European Union activated the EU Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) which offered protection to all individuals living in Ukraine (Dobiás & Homem, 2022). However, the response to the 123,000 Afghan refugees, seeking asylum in European countries since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan (EASO, 2021) has stood in contrast. Most EU Member States did not introduce any strategy to facilitate the access to the EU of Afghan refugees through safe and legal pathways (European Parliamentary Research, 2021) despite initial assistance from the EU (European Parliamentary Research, 2021). Public opinion in the UK was similarly biased towards helping Ukrainian refugees (Kirk, 2022). This disparity in attitudes is surprising, primarily because, despite some past efforts by European institutions to support refugees, the significant measures

taken to support Ukrainian refugees have not been extended to any other refugee group. Differences in the willingness to assist refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine raises the question as to what factors may influence public attitudes towards refugees.

1.1. Integrated Threat Theory and the Ukrainian-Afghan dissimilarity on this matter

One theory that could provide light on the different attitudes towards Ukrainian and Afghan refugees is the Integrated Threat Theory, first developed by Stephan et al. (1998) based on an extensive review of the literature in an attempt to understand negative attitudes towards immigrants and refugees (Stephan et al., 1998). According to the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT), subjectively perceived fears and threats are the main causes of intergroup prejudice (Stephan et al., 2000). ITT describes four types of threats that play a role in predicting negative attitudes towards immigrants and refugees: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes (Stephan et al.,

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: m.a.iordache@edu.salford.ac.uk (M.-A. Iordache), a.e.blanchard@salford.ac.uk (A.E. Blanchard).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104439>

Received 31 July 2023; Received in revised form 23 June 2024; Accepted 30 July 2024

Available online 12 August 2024

0001-6918/© 2024 Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

2000). The current study investigates whether symbolic threats and intergroup anxiety play a role in shaping Europeans' attitudes towards Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. Symbolic threats emerge when the in-group and the out-group have different values and worldview (Stephan et al., 2000). In this context, the in-group represents the citizens of the host country, while the out-group represents the refugees. For instance, the in-group feels that the out-group poses a threat to their values, customs, tradition, beliefs (Stephan et al., 1998, 2000; Croucher, 2012; Swami et al., 2017). Intergroup anxiety arises when the in-group fears that they will be rejected, exploited, embarrassed, or ridiculed if interacting with the out-group (Stephan et al., 1998, 2000). These fears contribute to repulsive feelings of the in-group towards the out-group.

Numerous studies demonstrate that intergroup anxiety and symbolic threats are significant predictors of attitudes towards refugees (Croucher, 2012; Schmuck & Matthes, 2017; Servidio, 2020; Stephan et al., 1998). Stephan et al. (1998) found that intergroup anxiety is the strongest and most consistent predictor for prejudice towards Moroccans in Spain and towards Ethiopians and Russians in Israel. Additionally, symbolic threats are also a significant predictor of attitudes towards Ethiopians in Israel. However, symbolic threats are not a significant predictor of prejudice towards Moroccans in Spain or Russians in Israel. When it comes to Moroccans in Spain, one explanation for the lack of relationship between symbolic threats and prejudice is that there is a significant difference between the two cultures, and a small number of Moroccans would not be able to bring about changes to the culture of Spain (Stephan et al., 1998). Regarding Russians in Israel, the reason why symbolic threats were not a significant predictor of prejudice might be because Russians have a similar culture to that of Eastern and Central Europe, which is the heritage of Israeli Jews. Therefore, there is not a big cultural difference between Russians and Israeli Jews (Stephan et al., 1998). Additionally, ethnicity might play a role in this matter. Ethiopians are a black minority group in Israel with cultural differences from the white majority, hence they may be perceived as a threat to the dominant culture. In contrast, Russians in Israel are predominantly white, which might reduce the perception of cultural difference and threat of cultural change. Even though very few studies take into account ethnicity, Rajjman et al. (2021) found that individuals in Israel are more likely to have positive attitudes towards immigrants who have the same ethnicity, and negative attitudes towards immigrants who have a different ethnicity because they were perceived as a challenge to the character of the state.

There is an important factor that is closely linked to symbolic threats and has been found to contribute to negative attitudes towards refugees: religiosity. Given that symbolic threats involve a perceived threat to beliefs, individuals who are highly religious are more likely to perceive refugees as a threat to their beliefs and therefore hold negative attitudes towards them (Aktas et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2016). Makashvili et al. (2018) examined whether religiosity has any effect on the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees and demonstrated that religiosity influences the interaction between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees, meaning that higher levels of religiousness were associated with higher levels of symbolic threats and negative attitudes towards refugees. Using a framing approach, Anderson and Antalíková (2014) explored the explicit and implicit attitudes of both Christian and Atheist Danes towards individuals portrayed as Muslims or immigrants and found that attitudes were more negative when the individual was framed as a Muslim rather than an immigrant. Additionally, implicit attitudes varied based on the participants' religion: Christians exhibited more negative implicit attitudes towards immigrants, while Atheists showed more negative implicit attitudes towards Muslims. These results underscore the intricate interplay between religion and prejudice, highlighting the importance of both the perceiver's religious affiliation and the perceived religious affiliation of the individual in social perception.

Political orientation also shapes the way people feel about refugees. Generally, right-wing individuals tend to hold negative attitudes

towards refugees (Albada et al., 2020) because left-wing and right-wing orientations reflect either tradition or acceptance of inequality, as demonstrated by a study conducted with Dutch participants (Albada et al., 2020). Indeed, conservation, preservation of the status quo, and patriotism are associated with right-wing orientation while left-wing individuals embrace socio-cultural change and value equality, tolerance, and egalitarianism (Albada et al., 2020); hence they are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards refugees (Davidov et al., 2008). Recent research meta-analysing seventy studies with 13,720 participants identified key factors influencing attitudes towards refugees (Cowling et al., 2019). Negative attitudes were linked to being male, religious, nationally identified, politically conservative, and less educated. Ideological factors such as right-wing authoritarianism and social-dominance orientations also correlated with negative attitudes, while macro justice principles correlated with positive attitudes. Perceptions of refugees as symbolic and realistic threats were the strongest predictors of negative attitudes.

An essential factor which might have contributed to the positive and humanitarian attitudes of Europeans towards Ukrainians was the fear of Russia. The geographical proximity of the war and the fact that Russia has access to the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world may have influenced Europeans' reactions (De Coninck, 2022a,b). The fear of a war involving Russia starting in their own country and a hope that other Europeans would react in the same helpful way they did with the Ukrainian refugees could have shaped individuals' unique attitudes. Indeed, the Polish population held positive attitude towards Ukrainians, with individuals under the age of 30 exhibiting greater anxiety regarding the threats of the ongoing war (Karakiewicz-Krawczyk et al., 2022).

In contrast, Afghan refugees and immigrants might be associated with terrorism, with European citizens concerned that the Taliban entering their country by pretending to be refugees (De Coninck, 2022a, b). In fact, previous research shows that lower fear of terrorism is associated with positive attitudes towards refugees (Blanchard et al., 2020; De Coninck, 2022a,b). While most research has examined attitudes towards refugees in Western European countries there is scant research on this matter in Eastern Europe (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018; De Coninck, 2022a,b). One possible explanation for this is that Western Europe has experienced more incidents of terrorism compared to Eastern Europe, where terrorist attacks are rare or even non-existent in some countries (Engene, 2007; Statista, 2023). Hence, the gap in studies on this matter in Eastern Europe could be attributed to the assumption that the limited occurrence or absence of terrorist attacks has led to a perceived weaker relationship between fear of terrorism and attitudes towards refugees.

1.2. The current study

The main research question of this study is whether symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, fear of war, fear of terrorism, and political orientation predict Europeans' attitudes towards refugees. Symbolic threats are of great interest in relation to attitudes towards refugees. However, the influence of this factor on attitudes may vary depending on ethnicity, as previous studies demonstrated (Rajjman et al., 2021; Stephan et al., 1998; Murray & Marx, 2013; Rowatt & Al-Kire, 2021). In this study, it is hypothesized that ethnicity may mediate the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees because ethnic similarity or difference can influence the perceived threat to cultural values and identity (Rajjman et al., 2021). Additionally, religiosity might influence the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees because individuals who are more religious may be more likely to view refugees as a threat to their own cultural and religious beliefs. This could lead to greater feelings of symbolic threats and a more negative attitude towards refugees who are perceived to be culturally different (Aktas et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2016).

Additionally, the relationship between fear of terrorism and attitudes

towards Afghan refugees may vary depending on the region, with a potentially stronger association observed among individuals living in Western Europe. This could be due to the fact that Western Europe has been more heavily affected by terrorism compared to Eastern Europe (Statista, 2023).

In light of the current literature then, the following hypotheses are proposed for the study:

H1. Given contrasting attitudes towards Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, we hypothesize that attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees will be more positive compared to those of Afghan refugees.

H2. Aligned with Integrated Threat Theory (ITT), which posits that perceived threats are linked to negative attitudes, we predict that symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, fear of terrorism, and political orientation will significantly forecast attitudes only towards Afghan refugees.

H3. Considering the language and cultural differences between Ukraine and other European countries, and operating under the assumption that fear of the aggressor might impact attitudes, we hypothesize that symbolic threats and fear of war will significantly predict attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees.

H4. Given the diverse background of the participants and drawing from the previous studies discussed above, we hypothesize that ethnicity will mediate the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards both groups of refugees.

H5. Considering potential variations in participants' religiosity and building upon the previous studies discussed above, we hypothesize that religiosity will mediate the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards both groups of refugees.

H6. Given the significant impact of terrorism on Western Europe in the past, we hypothesize that the relationship between fear of terrorism and attitudes towards Afghan refugees will be stronger (negative) for individuals residing in Western Europe compared to those living in Eastern Europe.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedures

There were 250 participants in the study (66 males; 180 females; 4 non-binary) ($M_{\text{age}} = 28.12$, $SD = 8.77$). From the sample, 212 (84.8 %) were White, 10 (4 %) were Asian, 9 (3.6 %) described themselves as Mixed or from multiple ethnic groups, 7 (2.8 %) were Black, Caribbean, or African, and 12 (4.8 %) mentioned that they were from other ethnic group than the ones presented (Table 1). Ninety-one participants were from Romania, 63 were from the United Kingdom, 32 were from Spain, 26 were from France, 10 were from Germany, 6 were from Austria, 4 were from Sweden, 4 were from Belgium, 3 were from Poland, 2 were from Greece, 2 were from Ireland, 2 were from Croatia, 1 from Iceland, 1 from Hungary, 1 from Portugal, 1 from the Netherlands and 1 from Switzerland. With regards to faith, 168 (67.2 %) were Christians, 15 (6 %) were Muslims, 2 (0.8 %) were Buddhists, 58 (23.2 %) had no religion, 5 (2 %) preferred not to mention their religion, and 2 (0.8 %) specified other religion (spiritual and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Ninety-seven (38.8 %) participants did not consider themselves religious, 65 (26 %) participants considered themselves slightly religious, 69 (27.6 %) moderately religious and 19 (7.6 %) very religious.

A convenience sample was recruited from university students who received course credit for taking part and the community via social media (Facebook and Instagram) and Call For Participants (a website for advertising research studies in the UK) who gave their time for free. The study was conducted online and used JISC Online Surveys to host the questionnaire. On reviewing the Participant Information Sheet and in providing consent, participants then completed a series of psychometric

Table 1
Participant characteristics.

	n^a	%
Ethnicity		
Asian or Asian British	10	4.0
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	7	2.8
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	9	3.6
White	212	84.8
Other ethnic group	12	4.8
Region		
Eastern Europe ^b	99	39.6
Western Europe ^c	151	60.4
Religion		
Christian	168	67.2
Muslim	15	6.0
Buddhist	2	0.8
No religion	58	23.2
Prefer not to say	5	2.0
Other	2	0.8
Religiosity		
Not religious	97	38.8
Slightly religious	65	26.0
Moderately religious	69	27.6
Very religious	19	7.6

^a Percentages in each category are calculated based on the total number of participants in the study ($n = 250$).

^b Eastern Europe includes the following countries: Romania, Poland, Greece, Croatia, and Hungary.

^c Western Europe includes the following countries: United Kingdom, Ireland, Iceland, France, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Netherlands, and Portugal.

measures that took approximately 20 min to complete. The study was given favourable ethical consideration by [redacted] Research Ethics Committee in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct (2018).

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Attitudes towards Afghan and Ukrainian refugees

These were measured using the same questions however worded differently to reflect either Afghan refugees or Ukrainian refugees and were created by adapting five items (see Appendix B) from the Attitudes towards refugee children scale (Angelidou et al., 2019). The original scale consists of 24 items that assess attitudes towards refugee children, involving school and adoption contexts as well. Items involving opinions about beliefs, family, or morals (perceived symbolic threats) were excluded, and five items which focus solely on public institutions and aiding refugees were selected to measure attitudes towards Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. An example item is "Public services should focus more on welcoming Afghan/Ukrainian refugees". An additional item, "The government should be generous in judging peoples' applications for refugee status" was taken from the European Social Survey (2014). The word 'peoples' was replaced with 'Afghans' for the measure assessing attitudes towards Afghan refugees, and with 'Ukrainians' for the measure assessing attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees. All items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) and were summed and averaged to create an overall score such that higher scores represent a more positive attitude towards refugees, whereas lower scores represent a more negative attitude towards refugees.

2.2.2. Symbolic Threats Scale

The Symbolic Threat Scale by Schweitzer et al. (2005) consists of 7 items which measure the perception of threat posed by perceived differences relating to cultural values, morals, and beliefs between the participants and refugees. The scale was adapted to the culture of context in the current study, i.e. "Australian culture" was changed to "our country's culture", given that participants from various cultures

took part. The response format consisted of a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Items ($n = 7$) were summed and averaged to create a score for perceived symbolic threats such that higher scores represent a higher symbolic threats. The scale showed a good internal consistency in the original study ($\alpha = 0.87$).

2.2.3. Intergroup anxiety

Intergroup anxiety was measured using the Intergroup Anxiety Scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), consisting of 11 items. The following question was asked for each item: "If you were the only member of your ethnic group and you were interacting with people from a different racial or ethnic group (e.g., talking with them, working on a project with them), how would you feel compared to occasions when you are interacting with people from your own ethnic group?". The items employed 10-point scales (1 = not at all; 10 = extremely) to determine the participants' level of certainty, awkwardness, self-consciousness, happiness, acceptance, confidence, irritation, impatience, defensiveness, suspicion, and caution when interacting with outgroup members. Scores are summed such that a higher score reflects higher intergroup anxiety. The scale showed good internal consistency in the original study ($\alpha = 0.86$). The inclusion of the Intergroup Anxiety scale within the study's framework aligns with the research hypotheses that seek to explore the influence of ITT components on attitudes towards different refugee groups.

2.2.4. Fear of war

Fear of war was measured using a two-item self-report measure adapted from a 33-item Scale of Worries (Boehnke & Schwartz, 1997) where higher scores indicate a higher perceived fear of war. Participants were asked to respond to report "How worried, if at all" they were about each potential stressor: "My country getting involved in a war" and "The outbreak of a nuclear war". Five-point response scale (1 = not at all worried, 5 = extremely worried) was adopted to measure fear of war. Items were summed and averaged to create a score for fear of war.

2.2.5. Fear of terrorism

This was measured using The Personal Perceived Risk of Terrorism Scale (Nellis, 2009) where participants were asked to indicate how worried they are of becoming a victim of terrorism using a four-point scale (1 = not at all worried, 5 = extremely worried). Examples include: "I could be on a subway or bus that is bombed" and "I could be the victim in a suicide bombing". Items were summed and averaged to create a score such that higher scores reflected increased perceived fear of terrorism.

2.2.6. Political orientation

This was determined using a single-item explicit measure of political orientation by Van Leeuwen and Park (2009). Participants were asked to state how they would describe their political orientation from a point 1 to 7 (1 = very left, 7 = very right).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptives

The means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for all variables are reported in Tables 2 and 3. An Independent t -test revealed that attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees (AU) ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.63$) were significantly more positive than those towards Afghan refugees (AA) ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.84$), with a medium effect size ($d = 0.74$). These findings support H1 in which it was predicted that attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees would be more positive compared to those of Afghan refugees.

Table 2

Means and standard deviation of the study variables.

Variable	Means (SD) ^a	α^b
Attitudes towards Afghan refugees (AA)	3.75 (0.84)	0.86
Attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees (AU)	3.97 (0.63)	0.77
Symbolic Threats Afghan refugees (STA)	3.05 (0.76)	0.82
Symbolic Threats Ukrainian refugees (STU)	2.53 (0.58)	0.63
Intergroup Anxiety (IA)	4.04 (1.53)	0.83
Fear of War (FW)	3.27 (1.32)	0.84
Fear of Terrorism (FT)	2.67 (1.38)	0.96
Political Orientation (PO) ^c	3.78 (1.21)	
Ethnicity	3.84 (0.73)	
Religiosity	2.04 (0.99)	
Region	0.40 (0.49)	

^a Standard deviations are presented in parantheses.

^b α = Cronbach's Alpha Score.

^c Political Orientation, Ethnicity, Religiosity, and Region do not possess a Cronbach's Alpha Score due to their assessment being based on a single item for each variable.

3.2. Regression analyses

3.2.1. Linear regression

Tables 4 and 5 report the results from linear regression analysis. As expected, symbolic threats from Afghan refugees (STA), intergroup anxiety (IA), fear of terrorism (FT), and political orientation (PO) significantly and negatively predicted AA. Fear of war (FW) did not significantly predict AA, meaning that higher levels of fear of war are not associated with negative attitudes towards Afghan refugees. These findings support H2 that predicted that individuals scoring higher in STA, IA, FT, and PO would report less positive attitudes towards Afghan refugees. In contrast, IA, FT, and PO did not significantly predict AU, although STU (Symbolic threats from Ukrainian refugees) did, and it was interesting to note that FW did not significantly predict AU either. These results partially support H3 that predicted that STU and FW would predict attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees.

3.2.2. Mediation regression

A mediation analysis using PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) was run to investigate whether ethnicity mediated the relationship between STA and AA. Ethnicity did not significantly predict AA ($b = 0.10$, $t = 1.85$, $p = .07$), but STA significantly predicted AA ($b = -0.80$, $t = -16.12$, $p < .001$). The model was significant, accounting for 51 % of the variance in AA ($R^2 = 0.51$, $F(1,248) = 254.48$, $p < .001$) and revealed a significant indirect effect ($b = -0.78$, 95 % CI [-0.881, -0.688]), thereby demonstrating partial mediation. A further analysis investigated ethnicity as a mediator between STU and AU relationship. Ethnicity did not significantly predict AU ($b = 0.04$, $t = 0.93$, $p = .35$), but STU significantly predicted AU ($b = -0.44$, $t = -8.85$, $p < .001$). The model was significant, accounting for 24 % of the variance in AU ($R^2 = 0.24$, $F(1,248) = 78.35$, $p < .001$) and revealed a significant indirect effect ($b = -0.44$, 95 % CI [-0.535, -0.340]), thereby demonstrating partial mediation. Findings from both mediation analyses support H4 that predicted that ethnicity would mediate the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards both groups of refugees (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).

Two mediation analyses investigated whether religiosity mediated the relationship between STU and AU and STA and AA, respectively. Religiosity was not a significant predictor for AU ($b = -0.04$, $t = -1.23$, $p = .22$), but STU significantly predicted AU ($b = -0.43$, $t = -8.68$, $p < .001$). The model was significant, accounting for 24 % of the variance in AU ($R^2 = 0.24$, $F(1,248) = 78.35$, $p < .001$) and revealed a significant indirect effect ($b = -0.44$, 95 % CI [-0.535, -0.340]), hence demonstrating partial mediation. Religiosity was a significant predictor for AA ($b = -0.12$, $t = -3.12$, $p = .002$), and STA significantly predicted AA ($b = -0.77$, $t = -15.98$, $p < .001$). The model was significant, accounting for 51 % of the variance in AA ($R^2 = 0.51$, $F(1,248) = 254.48$, $p < .001$).

Table 3
Pearson correlations.

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. STA	0.35**	0.21**	0.15*	0.23**	0.38**	0.16*	0.07	-0.10
2. STU		0.26**	0.06	0.15*	0.19**	0.08	0.16*	0.06
3. IA			0.17**	0.22**	0.17**	-0.11	0.32**	0.09
4. FW				0.60**	0.13*	0.11	0.10	0.20**
5. FT					0.17**	0.01	0.16*	0.04
6. PO						0.04	0.30**	0.17**
7. Ethnicity							-0.09***	0.15*
8. Religiosity								0.13*
9. Region								

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

Table 4
Regression Analysis of Predictor Variables on Attitudes towards Afghan Refugees: Assessing Symbolic Threats, Intergroup Anxiety, Fear of War, Fear of Terrorism, and Political Orientation. In this table, the relationships between various predictor variables and attitudes towards Afghan refugees are examined using linear regression analysis. The table includes unstandardized (*B*) and standardized (*b*) regression coefficients, *t*-values, and associated *p*-values for each predictor variable.

Predictor variable	<i>B</i> (Unstandardized Coefficient)	<i>b</i> (Standardized Coefficient) ^a	<i>t</i> ^b	<i>p</i> ^c
STA	-0.66	-0.60	-12.88	<0.002
IA	-0.08	-0.14	-3.09	0.002
FW	0.03	0.05	0.88	0.381
FT	-0.08	-0.14	-2.52	0.012
PO	-0.10	-0.15	-3.27	0.001

^a $R^2 = 0.57$.
^b $F(5, 244) = 63.83$.
^c For abbreviations see Table 2.

Table 5
Regression Analysis of Predictor Variables on Attitudes towards Ukrainian Refugees: Assessing Symbolic Threats, Intergroup Anxiety, Fear of War, Fear of Terrorism, and Political Orientation. In this table, the relationships between various predictor variables and attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees are examined using linear regression analysis. The table includes unstandardized (*B*) and standardized (*b*) regression coefficients, *t*-values, and associated *p*-values for each predictor variable.

Predictor variable	<i>B</i> (Unstandardized Coefficient)	<i>b</i> (Standardized Coefficient) ^a	<i>t</i> ^b	<i>p</i> ^c
STU	-0.51	-0.47	-8.19	<0.002
IA	-0.04	-0.1	-1.79	0.075
FW	0.01	0.03	0.39	0.697
FT	-0.02	-0.04	-0.58	0.560
PO	-0.03	-0.06	-1.15	0.253

^a $R^2 = 0.28$.
^b $F(5, 244) = 19$.
^c For abbreviations see Table 2.

and revealed a significant indirect effect ($b = -0.78$, 95 % CI [-0.881, -0.688]), hence demonstrating partial mediation. These findings support H5 in which it was predicted that religiosity would mediate the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards both groups of refugees (Fig. 3, Fig. 4).

3.2.3. Moderation regression analyses

To examine whether region (Western Europe/Eastern Europe) impacts the relationship between FT and AA, a moderation analysis using PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) was carried out. The model specifying FT, the region, and the FT x region interaction as predictors of AA was significant ($R^2 = 0.12$, $F(3,246) = 11.28$, $p < .001$). The main effect of region on AA is indicated by a coefficient of $b = -0.41$, $SE = 0.22$, $t = -1.84$, $p = .06$. Although the *p*-value (0.06) is slightly above the typical threshold of significance, the magnitude of the coefficient suggests a potential impact of region on attitudes. There was a significant effect of FT ($b = -0.27$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = -5.58$, $p < .001$), and the interaction variable FT x region ($b = 0.19$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 2.59$, $p = .01$) on AA, thereby indicating a moderating effect of the region on the relationship between FT and AA. The addition of interaction variable accounted for an additional 2 % of the variation in AA and was significant ($F(1,246) = 6.69$, $p = .01$). The conditional effects of the focal predictor (FT) at values of the moderator (Region) indicate that for people from Western Europe (Region = 0), the relationship between FT and AA is negative and statistically significant (Effect = -0.27 , $SE = 0.05$, $t = -5.58$, $p < .001$). However, for people from Eastern Europe (Region = 1), the relationship is also negative but not statistically significant (Effect = -0.08 , $SE = 0.06$, $t = -1.44$, $p = .152$). Given that the relationship between FT and AA is negative and statistically significant for individuals from Western Europe, while for individuals from Eastern Europe the relationship is also negative but not statistically significant, these results support H6 that predicted that the relationship between fear of terrorism and attitudes towards Afghan refugees will be stronger (negative) for individuals residing in Western Europe compared to those living in Eastern Europe.

4. Discussion

Previous research has examined whether symbolic threats,

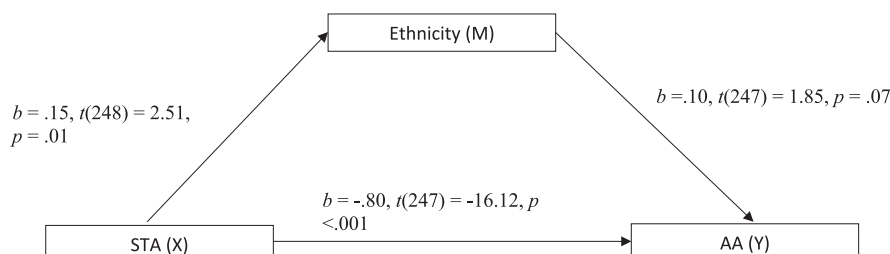


Fig. 1. Mediation regression for the relationship between STA and AA as mediated by Ethnicity.

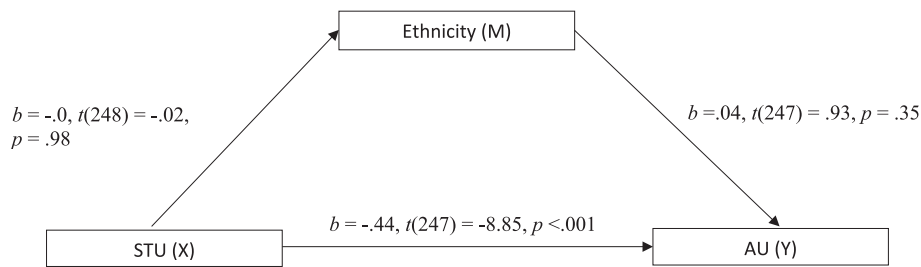


Fig. 2. Mediation regression for the relationship between STU and AU as mediated by Ethnicity.

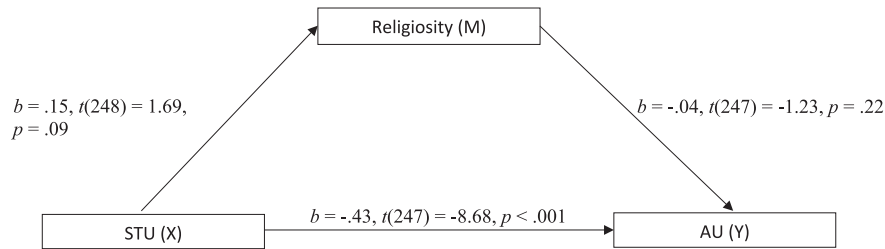


Fig. 3. Mediation regression for the relationship between STU and AU as mediated by Religiosity.

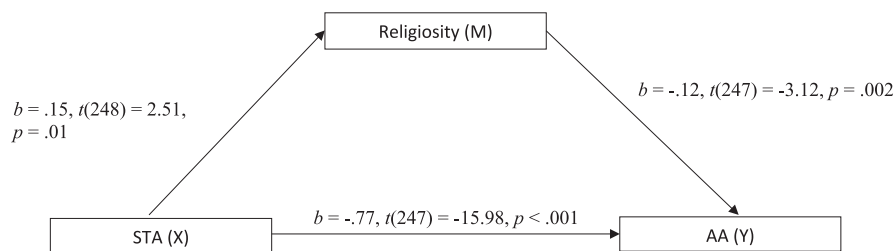


Fig. 4. Mediation regression for the relationship between STA and AA as mediated by Religiosity.

intergroup anxiety, fear of war, fear of terrorism, and political orientation can predict attitudes towards refugees (Blanchard et al., 2020; De Coninck, 2022a,b). However, this is the first study to compare how Attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees and Afghan refugees differ in Europe and identifies influential factors of these attitudes. This study uniquely addresses this gap by examining attitudes towards Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, both of whom experienced similar crises—Ukraine's conflict with Russia and Afghanistan's struggle with the Taliban—occurring within a remarkably close timeframe. In addition, both groups sought refuge within the European region. Findings demonstrated that participants had significantly more positive attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees compared to Afghan refugees, which is consistent with findings from previous surveys (Kirk, 2022).

Symbolic threats were a significant predictor for attitudes towards both Ukrainian and Afghan refugees. Previous studies found that ethnicity is related to attitudes towards refugees (Rajzman et al., 2021). The participants in the study come from different ethnic backgrounds, hence it is likely that they hold different cultural and traditional practices that influenced their perceptions of symbolic threats and attitudes towards the two groups of refugees. Moreover, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees are two groups that are part of two different ethnicities, and their cultural and traditional practices may be perceived differently by individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, it was investigated whether ethnicity plays a mediating role in the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees. As predicted, ethnicity has a significant impact on how symbolic threats influence people's attitudes towards both groups of refugees.

Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between ethnicity and symbolic threats regarding Afghan refugees.

Previous studies found that ethnicity is related to attitudes towards refugees (Rajzman et al., 2021). The participants in the study come from different ethnic backgrounds, hence it is likely that they hold different cultural and traditional practices that influenced their perceptions of symbolic threats and attitudes towards the two groups of refugees. Moreover, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees are two groups that are part of two different ethnicities, and their cultural and traditional practices may be perceived differently by individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, it was investigated whether ethnicity plays a mediating role in the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees. The mediation analysis model was significant suggesting that ethnicity explains the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards both groups of refugees.

Additionally, the study explored if religiosity could explain the link between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees. This is because religious individuals may perceive refugees as a threat to their cultural identity due to their emphasis on preserving traditional values and norms (Aktas et al., 2018). As expected, religiosity partially explained the relationship between symbolic threats and attitudes towards refugees as demonstrated previously (Makashvili et al., 2018), suggesting that individuals who hold a high value on their religious beliefs are more likely to perceive refugees as a threat to their cultural identity, which in turn predicts negative attitudes towards them.

In line with previous research (Koc & Anderson, 2018; Stephan et al., 1998; Murray & Marx, 2013), intergroup anxiety predicted attitudes towards Afghan refugees only. Social Identity Theory explains why intergroup anxiety leads to negative attitudes towards refugees. According to the Social Identity Theory, people construct their self-concept not only from their individual characteristics but also from the groups

they belong to (Hogg, 2016). Hence, if individuals feel anxious or uncomfortable interacting with members of an out-group, they may be more likely to hold negative attitudes towards that group. In the case of Afghan refugees, individuals may feel anxious about interacting with them due to cultural and linguistic differences, as well as the negative media portrayal of refugees as potential security threats. This anxiety may lead to negative attitudes towards Afghan refugees, even if individuals do not have direct experience interacting with them. Inter-group anxiety was not a significant predictor for attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees when running multiple regression analysis. This could be due to the participants' lack of prior interactions with Ukrainian refugees and the absence of strong stereotypes or negative perceptions about this particular group. Afghan refugees have sought refuge in Europe on multiple occasions, while the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to a significant number of Ukrainian refugees arriving in other European countries for the first time. As a result, some participants in the study may have had previous interactions with Afghan refugees, but not with Ukrainian refugees. Furthermore, Afghan refugees have often been portrayed negatively in the media, whereas Ukrainian refugees first received media attention in 2022, and their portrayal has been mostly positive.

As expected, fear of terrorism was a significant predictor for attitudes towards Afghan refugees, but not towards Ukrainian refugees. This was expected because Afghan refugees are often associated with terrorism, while Ukrainian refugees have never been associated with terrorism (De Coninck, 2022a,b). One of the main reasons for this is the presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan which led many people to fear that members of the group might infiltrate Afghan refugees seeking to come to Europe by pretending to be refugees and carry out terrorist attacks (Mammone, 2021).

The study's participants came from various regions of Europe, and it is known that Western Europe has been more impacted by terrorism compared to Eastern Europe (Engene, 2007). Hence, it was investigated whether there was a difference in the relationship between fear of terrorism and attitudes towards Afghan refugees in Western and Eastern Europe. The findings suggest that the level of fear of terrorism has a more significant impact on attitudes towards Afghan refugees for individuals from Western Europe. In contrast, people from Eastern Europe have not experienced the same level of terrorist activity and, therefore, may not have the same level of fear or negative perceptions of Afghan refugees (Engene, 2007; Statista, 2023).

Fear of war was not a significant predictor for the attitudes towards Afghan refugees. In contrast, it was expected that that individuals with high levels of fear of war would have a more positive attitude towards Ukrainian refugees because their fear of the aggressor (Russia) would influence them to be open towards the victims of the war, in the hope that if a war were to start in their own country, they would receive the same kind of support and acceptance from other countries. However, despite the International Migration Review (IMR) Dispatch presented by De Coninck (2022a,b), fear of war was not a significant predictor of attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees. This may be due to the fact that in the current study, the measure of fear of war addressed conventional and nuclear war in general terms, without specifically mentioning Russia. In contrast, De Coninck's (2022a,b) article in the IMR referred to a fear of the aggressor involved in the Ukrainian conflict, which is Russia. The specific wording and framing of survey questions can have a significant impact on participants' responses and may influence the results of a study.

Political orientation was a significant predictor for attitudes towards Afghan refugees, but not for attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Kirk (2022), which demonstrated that conservatives hold more negative attitudes towards Afghan refugees than labour voters, whereas, in the case of Ukrainian refugees, political orientation was not a significant factor in determining attitudes, as both conservatives and labour voters held positive attitudes towards them. Religion often influences negative attitudes towards

migrants, but research has shown conflicting results, with religion sometimes promoting either tolerance or intolerance. To clarify this, a meta-analysis was conducted with 43 studies ($N = 472,688$) from various databases (Deslandes & Anderson, 2019). The analysis aimed to explore how religion's impact varies based on its measurement (religious affiliation vs. self-reported religiosity) and target migrant type (immigrants vs. refugees/asylum seekers). The findings revealed that religious affiliation, but not religiosity, correlated with negative migrant attitudes (Deslandes & Anderson, 2019). Religiously affiliated individuals, especially Muslims, showed more negative attitudes than non-affiliated ones, and this effect was stronger towards refugees than immigrants (Deslandes & Anderson, 2019). In our study, political orientation was not found to shape participants' attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees. This may be due to the fact that European political leaders have generally shown positive attitudes towards the Ukraine crisis (Simons, 2022), which may have influenced voters to adopt the same attitude. However, in the case of Afghan refugees, some European political leaders expressed negative opinions about the crisis in Afghanistan (Mammone, 2021; Stuber, 2022) which may have influenced voters' attitudes. Furthermore, political leaders may have treated the Ukraine crisis as a humanitarian issue, while they may have treated the Afghanistan crisis as a political one.

4.1. Implications

There are several limitations of the current study. The study was conducted entirely in English for all participants, potentially leading to a selection bias favouring individuals with higher English proficiency. This could result in a lack of representation from individuals with lower levels of education or English proficiency, particularly in non-English speaking countries. Another limitation is that the study relied on self-reported attitudes; hence the participants might have been influenced by social desirability bias or might have not accurately reported their thoughts. Additionally, it is important to note that the sample is predominantly female and includes a disproportionate number of White, Christian participants compared to other ethnicities and religions which may limit the generalizability of the study to other cultural contexts and populations. What is more, the distribution of participants across countries is imbalanced, with a large majority coming from Romania and United Kingdom, and fewer from other countries, which may not be representative of the European population as a whole. Additionally, potential mechanisms such as migration forcedness, premigration experiences, and migration perils were not included, limiting the study's ability to fully explain the differences in attitudes towards these groups.

Furthermore, the study employed a single-item measure to assess the complex construct of political orientation. Political orientation is a multifaceted construct that encompasses a range of beliefs, values, and perspectives, often reflecting complex ideologies. The utilization of a solitary item to capture the entirety of political orientation in the context of refugee attitudes raises questions about the extent to which this adequately captures the nuance and complexity inherent in participants' political stances.

Two other aspects merit consideration when interpreting the findings of this study. Firstly, the potential influence of confounding variables, which were not explicitly controlled for, could affect the observed relationships. While the study focused on the selected predictor variables and their associations with attitudes towards Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, other variables not accounted for might contribute to the observed outcomes. Secondly, participant comprehension of the questions poses a potential limitation. The study's success in capturing nuanced attitudes towards distinct refugee groups relies on participants' accurate interpretation of the questions and their awareness of relevant global events. Variability in participants' familiarity with the specific refugee groups, their histories, and ongoing events might impact their responses.

There are various other factors that need to be taken into

consideration when investigating these different attitudes, such as level of education, fear of crime, or level of media exposure. Future studies should use implicit measures to assess participants' attitudes towards Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, to reduce the potential for social desirability bias. To examine whether participants' attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees have changed over time, follow-up studies could be conducted at different time intervals to see if their attitudes have remained consistent or changed. Additionally, conducting qualitative research, such as interviews, case studies, or focus groups, could provide deeper insights into participants' attitudes towards refugees and help to identify any underlying biases or prejudices. To improve the generalizability of the findings, future studies could aim to recruit a more diverse sample of participants, with a greater representation of individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and from different regions of Europe.

5. Conclusion

Peoples' attitudes towards refugees are complex and the current study can only provide broad explanations at this point. Nevertheless, the current study has provided examples of factors which can contribute to our understanding of the discrepancy in attitudes towards Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. Symbolic threats emerge as a consistent predictor for both groups, highlighting their substantial role in shaping perspectives. Ethnicity and religiosity are significant mediators in this relationship, underscoring their pivotal influence on the symbolic threat-attitude nexus. Intergroup anxiety is shown to drive negative attitudes towards Afghan refugees, resonating with the Social Identity Theory's tenets. Furthermore, fear of terrorism emerges as a distinct predictor for attitudes towards Afghan refugees, in line with the association of this group with terrorism-related concerns. Region-specific analyses illuminate the divergent impact of fear of terrorism on attitudes in Western and Eastern Europe, aligning with the varying exposure to terrorism. Lastly, political orientation unveils its differential impact, influencing attitudes towards Afghan refugees while holding little sway over attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees.

As we move forward, policymakers can harness this understanding to design targeted interventions aimed at reducing stereotypes and fostering intercultural understanding. Strategies that encourage open dialogues, cultural exchanges, and community engagement could effectively counteract negative perceptions associated with symbolic threats.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Miriam-Andreea Iordache: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Alyson E. Blanchard:** Conceptualization, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104439>.

References

- Aktas, V., Tepe, Y. K., & Persson, R. S. (2018). Investigating Turkish university students' attitudes towards refugees in a time of Civil War in neighboring Syria. *Current Psychology*, 40, 553–562. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12144-018-9971-y>.
- Albada, K., Hansen, N., & Otten, S. (2020). Polarization in attitudes towards refugees and migrants in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 51(3), 627–643. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2766>
- Andersen, H., & Mayerl, J. (2018). Attitudes towards Muslims and fear of terrorism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41(15), 2634–2655. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2017.1413200?needAccess=true>.
- Anderson, J., & Antalková, R. (2014). Framing (implicitly) matters: The role of religion in attitudes toward immigrants and Muslims in Denmark. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 55(6), 593–600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12161>
- Angelidou, G., Aguaded-Ramirez, E. M., & Rodriguez-Sabiote, C. (2019). Design and validation of a scale measuring attitudes toward refugee children. *Sustainability*, 11(10), 2797. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11102797>
- Blanchard, A., Kibowski, F., & Dunn, T. J. (2020). Existential threats of immigration and terrorism predict voting for Brexit and Trump. *Evolutionary Psychological Science*, 6, 367–379. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40806-020-00245-x>
- Boehne, K., & Schwartz, S. H. (1997). Fear of war: Relations to values, gender, and mental health in Germany and Israel. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 3(2), 149–165. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac0302_3
- Cowling, M. M., Anderson, J. R., & Ferguson, R. (2019). Prejudice-relevant correlates of attitudes towards refugees: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 32(3). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fey062>
- Croucher, S. M. (2012). Integrated threat theory and acceptance of immigrant assimilation: An analysis of Muslim immigration in Western Europe. *Communication Monographs*, 80(1), 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2012.739704>
- Davidov, E., Meuleman, B., Billiet, J., & Schmidt, P. (2008). Values and support for immigration: A cross-country comparison. *European Sociological Review*, 24(5), 583–599. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcn020>
- De Coninck, D. (2022a). Fear of terrorism and attitudes toward refugees: An empirical test of group threat theory. *Crime & Delinquency*, 68(4), 550–571. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001128720981898>
- De Coninck, D. (2022b). The refugee paradox during wartime in Europe: How Ukrainian and Afghan refugees are (not) alike. *International Migration Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183221116874>
- Deslandes, C., & Anderson, J. R. (2019). Religion and prejudice toward immigrants and refugees: A meta-analytic review. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 29(2), 128–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2019.1570814>
- Dobias, K., & Homem, F. (2022). *EU cities and regions welcoming Ukrainian refugees – Mapping multilevel coordination*. European Committee of the Regions. <https://doi.org/10.2863/060380>
- Engene, J. O. (2007). Five decades of terrorism in Europe: The TWEED dataset. *Journal of Peace Research*, 44(1), 109–121. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27640456>.
- European Asylum Support Office. (2021). Country of origin information report. Retrieved from https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2022_01_EASO_COI_Report_Afghanistan_an_Country_focus.pdf.
- European Parliamentary Research, Service.. Evacuation of Afghan nationals to EU Member States. [https://www.europol.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/69877/6/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)698776_EN.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/69877/6/EPRS_BRI(2021)698776_EN.pdf).
- European Social Survey. (2014). ESS round 7 source questionnaire. Retrieved from https://stessrelpubprodwe.blob.core.windows.net/data/round7/fieldwork/source/ESS7_source_main_questionnaire.pdf.
- Hayes, A. F. (2012). *PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process modeling [White paper]*.
- Hogg, M. A. (2016). Social identity theory. In S. McKeown, R. Haji, & N. Ferguson (Eds.), *Understanding peace and conflict through social identity theory* (pp. 3–17). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_1.
- Jones, R. P., Cox, D., Cooper, B., & Lienesch, R. (2016). *How Americans view immigrants, and what they want from immigration reform: Findings from the 2015 American Atlas*. Washington, DC: Public Religion Research Institute. <https://www.prii.org/> (Retrieved 21 April 2023).
- Karakiewicz-Krawczyk, K., Zdziarski, K., Landowski, M., Nieradko-Helusko, A., Kotwas, A., Szumilas, P., ... Karakiewicz, B. (2022). The opinions of poles about the need to provide humanitarian aid to refugees from the area covered by the Russian–Ukrainian war. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(20), Article 13369. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192013369>
- Kirk, I. (2022, July 12). *Are attitudes to Ukrainian refugees unique? YouGov*. <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2022/07/12/are-attitudes-ukrainian-refugees-unique>.
- Koc, Y., & Anderson, J. R. (2018). Social distance toward Syrian refugees: The role of intergroup anxiety in facilitating positive relations. *Journal of Social Issues*, 74(4), 790–811. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12299>
- Makashvili, A., Vardanashvili, I., & Javakhishvili, N. (2018). Testing intergroup threat theory: Realistic and symbolic threats, religiosity and gender as predictors of

- prejudice. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 14(2), 464–484. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6016028/>.
- Mammone, A. (2021, September 4). *Europe is politicising Afghan refugees instead of helping them*. Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/9/4/europe-is-politicising-afghan-refugees-instead-of-helping-them>.
- Murray, K. E., & Marx, D. M. (2013). Attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants, authorized immigrants, and refugees. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 19(3), 332–341. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030812>
- Nellis, A. M. (2009). Gender differences in fear of terrorism. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 25(3), 322–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986209335012>
- Raijman, R., Hochman, O., & Davidov, E. (2021). Ethnic majority attitudes toward Jewish and non-Jewish migrants in Israel: The role of perceptions of threat, collective vulnerability, and human values. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Status*, 20(1), 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2021.1889107>
- Rowatt, W. C., & Al-Kire, R. L. (2021). Dimensions of religiousness and their connection to racial, ethnic, and atheist prejudices. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 40, 86–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.08.022>
- Schmuck, D., & Matthes, J. (2017). Effects of economic and symbolic threat appeals in right-wing populist advertising on anti-immigrant attitudes: The impact of textual and visual appeals. *Political Communication*, 34(4), 607–626. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1316807>
- Schweitzer, R., Perkoulidis, S., Krome, S., Ludlow, C., & Ryan, M. (2005). Attitudes towards refugees: The dark side of prejudice in Australia. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 3(57), 170–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530500125199>
- Servidio, R. (2020). Classical and modern prejudice toward asylum seekers: The mediating role of intergroup anxiety in a sample of Italians. *Social Sciences*, 9(2), 10. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9020010>
- Simons, N. (2022, March 15). *Here are the politicians who have said they will take in a Ukrainian Refugee*. Huffpost. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/uk-politicians-housing-ukrainian-refugees_uk_622f51ebe4b0e01d97ae666b.
- Statista. (2023). *Terrorism in Europe – Statistics & facts*. <https://www.statista.com/topics/3788/terrorism-in-europe/#topicOverview>.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1985). Intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41(3), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1985.tb01134.x>
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., Martinez, C. M., & Tur-Kaspa, J. S. M. (1998). Prejudice toward immigrants to Spain and Israel. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29(4), 499–589. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022198294004>
- Stephan, W. S., Diaz-Loving, R., & Duran, A. (2000). Integrated threat theory and intercultural attitudes Mexico and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 31(2), 240–249. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0022022100031002006?casa_token=5q_4eU6M7GIAAAA:jbQyWlGvomVsn-sY4Ml-e3q_fdVUAA6zzXMxl7Tv4KwylEk69l6yjdjVaQV6LsNm5KpKftm9an358.
- Stuber, S. (2022, December 22). *Two different paths: The barriers facing some Afghans seeking protection in France*. The New Humanitarian. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/12/22/barriers-facing-some-Afghans-seeking-protection-France>.
- Swami, V., Barron, D., Weis, L., & Furnham, A. (2017). To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of Islamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum. *British Journal of Psychology*, 109(1), 156–179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12252>
- UNHCR. (n.d.). *Ukraine situation*. Retrieved April 5, 2023, from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.
- Van Leeuwen, F., & Park, J. H. (2009). Perceptions of social dangers, moral foundations, and political orientation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 47(3), 169–173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.02.017>