

# The Origins of Socially and Politically Hostile Attitudes to Immigrants and Outgroups: Economics, Ideology, or National Context?

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## **Abstract**

Analyses of the determinants of anti-immigrant hostility remain underdeveloped in the literature. The state of current research is further diminished by the litany of competing claims over the primacy of either economic, ideological, contextual, or socio-demographic factors. In order to consolidate past research and work towards a more coherent theory of attitudinal hostility, we argue that it is first necessary to disaggregate the broad notion of hostility into “social” and “policy” forms. We then use the 30<sup>th</sup> Eurobarometer on Immigrants and Outgroups to test the ability of the economic vulnerability, ideology, and national context arguments to explain levels of socially and politically hostile attitudes to immigrants in five countries of the European Union. The results confirm that, not only are social and policy hostility distinct, but ideological factors—both new and old—provide a much more cogent account of hostility than either economics or national context. Overall, the study finds that attitudinal hostility fundamentally derives from a conjunction of low levels of education and a powerful form of “ideological hostility” that encompasses old-fashioned racism, traditional right-wing ideology, and materialist value orientations.