Abstract

This thesis focuses on attitudes of the majority population against immigrants on the national level. In selected countries of the European Union, these attitudes are analysed with the goal of confirming causality between heterogeneous make-up of the population (in terms of proportion of foreign-born residents in the population) and the degree of xenophobia of the majority population. The work is based on the concept of contact hypothesis and assumes that the larger the relative size of the population of foreign-born residents is, the more positive the attitudes of the majority population are. Attitudes of the majority populations are studied on two levels. First, through the opinions of the European Social Survey 2014 respondents, and second, by the election results of populist radical right-wing parties, which are typically associated with firm anti-immigrant policies. While the levels of xenophobia expressed by the ESS respondents partially fits the expected model, the connection between results of relevant political parties and the percentage of foreign-born residents in the population was not proven. The contradictory results of both analyses are attributed to a so-called “modern racism”.

Keywords: xenophobia, immigration, radical right, contact hypothesis, Europe