

Not to Be Dismissed: The Impact of Populist Radical Right Parties on European Migration Policy

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of populist radical right parties (PRRP) on public opinion towards immigrants in European countries. Pairing attitudinal data from nine waves of European Social Survey, administered biennially between 2002 and 2018, with measures of PRRPs' electoral success from the Timbro Authoritarian index, I show that the political rise of PRRPs has worsened public opinion towards immigrants in European countries with high levels of political and social trust. This finding highlights that the impact of PRRPs on European migration policy is underestimated when research focuses only on party competition dynamics. By fostering anti-immigrant sentiments, PRRPs might indeed have a greater indirect influence on migration policymaking than existing literature suggests.

Keywords: European Migration Policy, Populist Radical Right Parties, Political Articulation, Public Opinion, Socio-political Cleavage

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Introduction

Over the last decade, migration has become a pertinent political issue in Europe. The 2010s have been marked not only by the unprecedented movement of people from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia to Europe, but also attempts by European governments to erect walls and fences in their path. Alongside this, voter support for populism has grown, and the worldview of the far-right mainstreamed. Considering these parallel trends, a puzzle comes to mind: how has the political rise of populist radical right parties (PRRPs) impacted the migration policies of European countries? Understanding this relationship is critical to forecasting how Europe might respond to the continued inflow of migrants and whether there is a cause for concern.

PRRPs are defined by three key characteristics: nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Nativism refers to the ideology that claims states should be inhabited inclusively by members of the native group and that immigrants are threatening to the homogenous nation-state. Authoritarianism denotes PRRPs' inclination for stricter law and order within their societies. Lastly, populism describes the anti-establishment and anti-elite dispositions of PRRPs (Mudde 2009).

While previous studies agree that PRRPs tend to have limited direct influence on migration policy agreements when in office, they have been inconclusive on the extent to which PRRPs can indirectly steer national policy discourses and agendas by pressuring mainstream parties to adopt more restrictive positions on migration.¹ I suggest that research on the latter have overlooked the nexus between PRRPs, public opinion and migration policies. According to political articulation theory, PRRPs might well be a potent force in creating hostility and antagonism between locals and immigrants, which in turn nudges policymakers toward adopting more restrictive migration policies. Therefore, I explore the following research question: how have the electoral success of PRRPs impacted public opinion towards immigrants in Europe?

¹ According to Bjerre et al (2014), migration policy includes the laws, regulations, decisions or orders in regard to the selection, admission, settlement and deportation of immigrants residing in the country.

Overall, my results strongly indicate that the political rise of PRRPs has worsened public opinion towards immigrants in European countries with high levels of political and social trust.

This article is structured as follows. I begin by providing an overview of existing literature on how PRRPs influence migration policymaking. I then outline political articulation theory as the framework for this study and introduce my main hypothesis. Next, the methodology section discusses the selection of countries, identifies alternative hypotheses and treats issues of operationalisation. Finally, the different hypotheses are tested in a multivariate panel regression. This article concludes with a discussion of the results.

Literature Review

Akkerman (2018) examined that PRRPs have direct and indirect paths of influence on migration policymaking. On the one hand, PRRPs that hold executive or parliamentary power could directly influence migration policies by providing their inputs on government budgets (Akkerman 2018). However, studies have consistently found that electorally successful PRRPs have limited direct influence on migration policymaking (Heinisch 2003).

On the other hand, existing literature is inconclusive on the extent of the indirect impact that PRRPs have on migration policies. Most comparative large-n studies (using expert and voter surveys) have found significant empirical evidence that established political parties respond to the electoral success of PRRPs (Abou-Chadi 2016; Spanje 2010; Kyung 2014). According to Meguid (2008), right and left mainstream parties will shift towards more restrictive migration policies to mitigate any potential loss of votes to PRRPs. However, recent fine-grained analyses of party positions strongly challenge these findings. By measuring party distances in this policy field, they demonstrate that the rise of PRRPs is only weakly correlated with mainstream parties' stances on migration policies (Dancygier and Margalit 2020; Akkerman 2015). This result is consistent with Odmalm and Bale's qualitative case study that emphasises the autonomous role of mainstream parties in determining their policy positions on migration. They suggest that mainstream parties often maintain their policy

positions – despite challenges by PRRPs – to preserve the loyalty of their support base (Odmalm and Bale 2015).

I propose that it is possible to break the impasse in the debate above by examining the causal mechanisms by which PRRPs might influence the policy stances of mainstream parties. The studies highlighted above mainly focused on establishing broad patterns in the evolution of the immigration debate over a wide range of countries and years, rather than offering precise causal accounts of how PRRPs can shape migration policies. Investigating the causal mechanisms might shed light on specific circumstances whereby PRRPs may have a greater influence on mainstream parties' policy stances, and by extension, migration policies.

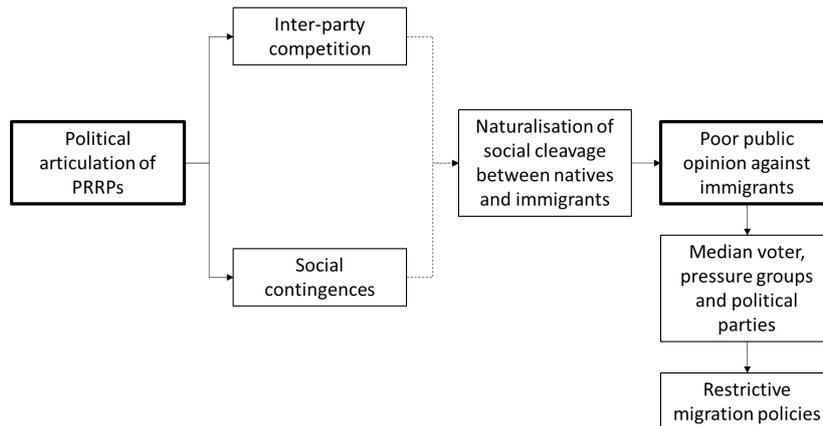
I argue that it is especially crucial to study the nexus between PRRPs, public opinion and migration policies. PRRPs might well be a potent force in creating hostility and antagonism between locals and immigrants, which in turn nudges policymakers toward adopting more restrictive migration policies. This perspective draws upon De Leon's theory of political articulation which emphasises the constructive role of political parties in forging critical socio-political blocs based on class, ethnicity and race cleavages (De Leon, Desai, and Tugal 2009).

To the best of my knowledge, no study thus far has investigated the role of PRRPs in *creating* socio-political blocs that are hostile towards immigrants. A few studies have found that PRRPs can contribute to the politicization of immigration issues in general elections and mass media (Grande, Schwarzbözl, and Fatke 2019; Harteveld, Van Der Brug, Dahlberg, and Kokkonen 2015). Nevertheless, the extent to which PRRPs can create animosity against immigrants within the local populace has been widely neglected. Considering this gap in the literature, I will explore the following research question: how have the electoral success of PRRPs shaped public opinion towards immigrants in Europe?

Theory and Hypotheses

Political articulation

Figure 1
How political articulation of PRRPs fosters anti-immigrant sentiments & impacts policies



Source: Author.

At its core, political articulation theory contends that parties are often *central* to the constitution of socio-political identities within societies because they provide specific logics to the reproduction of particular social formations. Through a process termed political articulation, political parties work to naturalize certain class, ethnic and racial identities “as a basis of social division by integrating disparate interests and formations into coherent socio-political blocs” (De Leon, Desai, and Tugal 2009). Social cleavages merely represent the potential differences among members of society and only gain political valence when deployed by parties to aggregate majorities.

Developing Althusser’s concept of “interpellation”, political articulation theory explains that competing parties can interpellate the same person or group of people. Following their political ideologies, parties may each (re)construct certain issues as grievances and (re)define who the sufferers and thus the people

who should be mobilizing are (Althusser 1970). For instance, rival parties could interpellate the same immigrant as an economic resource, a ticking time bomb or a sub-proletariat – each leading up to radically different policy prescriptions. Crucially, when pitted against competing ideologies, parties do not always succeed in articulating social formations and may remain at the fringes of the political arena. And even when successful, parties need to continually prop up their hegemonic projects or else they threaten to come apart (De Leon, Desai, and Tugal 2009).

Nevertheless, political articulation theory emphasises that prevailing socio-political and economic institutions shape the possibilities and limits to hegemony. De Leon, Desai and Tugal (2009) proposes that political articulation is more crucial during times of major social transformations when social formations become more heterogeneous. One such instance could be the European migrant crisis (officially from 2015 to 2019) which saw the failure of European countries to respond effectively to drastic increases in the influx of immigrants, and thus renewed opportunities for PRRPs to articulate a local-immigrant divide.

Moreover, De Leon, Desai and Tugal (2009) posits that the political articulation of parties spurs greater social transformation when it succeeds in naturalising a social cleavage that initially assumed little or no political valence. This conjecture is supported by research in social psychology which examined that socio-political changes are more disruptive if they trigger a sharp rupture to existing social and normative structures (Sablonniere 2017). Accordingly, the triumph of PRRPs is expected to be more disruptive in countries with strong socio-political trust, where the native-immigrant divide is rarely politicised initially.

In developing his theory, De Leon implicitly gauges the effectiveness of a party's political articulation by its longevity and dominance in office. As Gramsci (1971) suggests: the greater the extent a party can manipulate the culture of its society to justify a status quo, the more able it is to establish and maintain its political control. Therefore, my main hypothesis is as follows:

H1: The more electoral success PRRPs achieve, especially in countries with high levels of socio-political trust, the more negative public opinion towards immigrants will be.

Alternative explanatory variables

This study identifies and explores three alternative explanatory variables of public opinion towards immigrants: political trust, economic satisfaction and social trust.

To begin, political trust can be understood as a subjective phenomenon which reflects citizens' support for political institutions in the face of uncertainty about or vulnerability to the actions of these institutions (van der Meer 2017). The less trust citizens have in their political institutions, the less willing they are to shoulder the risks of assimilating immigrants with a different cultural background into their communities (Yamagishi 2001). Such risks may include, for instance, strains on public infrastructure and community conflicts arising from cultural clashes. Without faith in the government to mitigate these risks, citizens are more inclined to exclude immigrants from their societies (Lane and Ersson 1999). These citizens are also more attuned to vote for the strongest anti-establishment alternative – the PRRPs – which appear to offer new possibilities of political expression and mobilisation (Schwartz 2017). From these observations, I posit the following testable hypothesis:

H2: The less political trust that citizens have, the deeper anti-immigrant sentiments will be among the general public.

I now investigate the effect of economic satisfaction because citizens who are displeased with their economic circumstances are more likely to harbour anti-immigrant sentiments and vote for PRRPs. Economic satisfaction is constituted of individuals' perceptions about whether they are contented with the performance of their national economy because of various macroeconomic and personal events (Rosenstone 1982; Solt 2008). Individuals who are dissatisfied with the economy are more likely to perceive immigrants as competitors within the labour market. Consequently, they are likely to be more intolerant of immigrants within their societies than those with less economic grievances. Importantly too, economically disenfranchised individuals are compelled to opt for the only political alternative that openly rejects economic modernization and liberal immigration – the

PRRPs (Kriesi, Grande, Lachat, Dolezal, Bornschie, and Frey 2006). Our next hypothesis derives from these arguments:

H3: The more dissatisfied citizens are with the performance of their national economies, the deeper anti-immigrant sentiments will be among the general public.

Finally, I consider the role of social trust in shaping public opinion towards immigrants and popular support for PRRPs. Social trust is characterised as trust in people with whom we are not previously acquainted. It implies an expectation that strangers, including immigrants from different cultural backgrounds, are trustworthy. People with higher levels of social trust readily assume more positive attitudes towards immigration than distrusters, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances. Moreover, social trust tends to moderate the effects of perceived threats on people's attitudes towards immigration (Herrerros and Criado 2009). Therefore, social trust bolsters positive attitudes towards immigration and, by extension, dampen the popularity of PRRPs (Berning and Ziller 2017).

H4: The higher the level of social trust within a country, the less anti-immigrant sentiments among the general public.

Data and methods

Sampling

I have selected 31 European countries for my analysis, including 26 European Union (EU) members plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and the United Kingdom.² This sampling choice is in line with the broader context and objective of the study, which seeks to examine the influence of PRRPs on the migrant policies of European countries. Critically too, all countries in the sample have accessible and accurate data on the results of PRRPs in national elections; and have participated in at least one round of

² See Appendix 1.

the European Social Survey (ESS) which is conducted biyearly since 2002. Countries which lacked either set of information were excluded from the study. This sampling criterion ensures uniformity and quality in the panel dataset used in this analysis.

Dependent variable

This study assessed how positive/negative public opinion was towards immigrants in every country by averaging their scores on three pivotal ESS items. Each of these items explored a specific impact of immigration on the local population: “Immigration bad or good for country’s economy”; “Country’s cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants”; and “Immigrants make country worse or better place to live”. The mean score of every country was recorded in an index with a scale of 0 to 10 (from very negative to very positive).

Main independent variable

I operationalized the electoral success of PRRPs in each country by measuring *the total percentage of votes they hold in their national parliament every year based upon the results of the latest election*, as recorded in the Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index. For instance, the vote share of PRRPs in the 2015 Polish parliamentary election carries forward for their term in office (until 2018). The key advantage of using the Timbro Index is in its consistent and robust categorization of political parties. To determine the ideological stance of each party, the Index heavily draws upon scholarly literature on the European party system and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey which provides a quantitative measure of parties along the left-right political spectrum (Timbro 2019). The electoral success of PRRPs will serve as the main independent variable in this study. It will be interacted with the control variables measuring trust to probe for conditional effects among different countries.

Alternative explanatory variables

I constructed one independent measure for each of the alternative explanatory variables: political trust, economic satisfaction and social trust.

Firstly, I operationalised political trust by taking every country’s average score across five ESS items, each measuring the

level of trust that respondents have in a particular political institution: parliament; legal system; politicians; political parties; and European Parliament. The scores are captured in an index with a scale of 0 to 10 (from least to most trust).

Next, I operationalised economic satisfaction by recording the average score of how satisfied the respondents are with the present state of their national economy for each country. This index has a scale of 0 to 10 (from very unsatisfied to very satisfied).

Finally, I used each country's mean score across three items in the ESS to construct an index that measures social trust: "Most people can be trusted", "Most people try to be fair" and "Most of the time people helpful". This index ranges from 0 to 10 (increasing in the scale of social trust).³

Control variables

This study controls for three key demographic and economic variables across countries and time: age distribution of the population, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and size of the foreign population. Age is a critical control variable because older natives everywhere disproportionately oppose immigration, regardless of income, education and employment status (Schotte and Winkler 2014). Hence, it is likely that the older the population of a country, the more negative attitudes towards immigrants will be. This study drew upon the World Bank's estimate of *population aged 65 and above as a percentage of the total population* to measure the age distribution of each country's population.

This study also controlled for differences in the standard of living across countries given Amnesty International's findings that poorer nations have been more accepting of immigrants than richer countries (Amnesty International 2016). Each country's *GDP per capita* (current US\$) figures were obtained from the World Bank's national accounts database. The logarithmic specification of GDP per capita is taken as it improves the fit over that obtained with the raw scores.

Lastly, the indicator *foreign population as a percentage of population* was included because research suggests that natives are more likely to harbour anti-immigrant sentiments when the

³ See Appendix 2.

proportion of foreign population is larger (Herrerros and Criado 2009). Data for this indicator was taken from OECD population database for every country except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Serbia (which were omitted from the database). Figures for these four countries were derived from the United Nations' international migrant stock 2019 dataset instead.

Methodology

This study adopted the fixed effects regression model to control for time invariant variables within each European country. Each country is likely to have unobserved and unchanging characteristics that uniquely influence their public opinion towards immigrants. The fixed effects model eliminates these unobserved and time-invariant factors within each country, allowing for better comparison across the European countries. The panel-corrected standard errors (PSCE) of the estimated coefficients in the regression were then obtained with Beck and Katz (1995) method. This approach corrects the underestimation of standard errors that is prevalent in fixed effects regression models.

Moreover, I introduce a dynamic panel model with 2-year lagged effects of PRRPs' electoral success on public opinion towards immigrants to check for simultaneous causality bias. I suspect that public opinion towards immigrants might influence the electoral success of PRRPs. After all, the voter base of PRRPs comprise of those who carry strong anti-immigrant attitudes. This two-way correlation between public opinion towards immigrants and the electoral success of PRRPs would cause biasness in the study's regression model. Nonetheless, this study elucidates the causal effect of PRRPs on public opinion towards immigrants by creating a lagged version of the fixed effects regression model. This lagged version offers protection against the bias arising from reverse causality (Leszczensky & Wolbring, 2018). A lag of two years was utilised as the European Social Survey, which constitutes the measures of the explanatory variables, occurs biennially.

Results

Table 1
Effect of electoral success of PRRPs on public opinion towards immigrants

| Explanatory variable | coef. | pcse | p-value |
|--|---------|--------|--------------|
| Electoral success of PRRPs | -0.3093 | 0.0991 | 0.0019** |
| Ln(GDP per capita (current US\$)) | -0.0961 | 0.1047 | 0.3599 |
| % of foreign population | 0.0029 | 0.0755 | 0.6982 |
| % of population aged 65 and above | -0.0874 | 0.0958 | 0.3630 |
| Political trust | -0.0065 | 0.1262 | 0.9589 |
| Satisfaction with economy | 0.1923 | 0.1037 | 0.0657. |
| Social trust | 0.7222 | 0.1268 | 6.146e-08*** |
| Electoral success of PRRPs x Political trust | -0.2130 | 0.0856 | 0.0139* |
| Electoral success of PRRPs x Social trust | -0.3180 | 0.1281 | 0.0141* |

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.1$, adjusted R-square: 0.4829, p -value $< 2.2e-16$, $N=200$. Source: Author.

Contrary to popular discourse on mass media, I find that socio-demographic factors – the level of economic development of a country, the age composition of its population, and its percentage of the foreign population – are not statistically significant when their effects are controlled. Significantly, this finding suggests that socio-demographics cannot explain the variation in the levels of anti-immigrant sentiments across European countries. In particular, it hints that the influx of migrants, and hence an increase in the percentage of foreign population, would not naturally trigger anti-immigrant sentiments. Rather, there are intervening variables that contribute to the framing of the influx of immigrants as an issue of contention among locals. I turn to these factors which have stronger explanatory power.

Moreover, the alternative hypothesis that less economically satisfied societies harbour more anti-immigrant sentiments,

holding other variables constant, is statistically significant at 0.1 significance level. This finding is consistent with research which examined the economic determinants of anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe. Peri (2010) explains that local populations need a rationale for their economic woes, especially in times of crisis, and immigrants are convenient targets of blame. Locals often perceive immigrants as cheap labours who are displacing them in low-waged jobs, as welfare-dependents who are draining the government coffers, and as foreigners who exacerbate strains on local infrastructure (Day, 1990; Pear, 1986). Consequently, anti-immigrant sentiments are heightened in countries with economically dissatisfied locals.

Moreover, this study supports the alternative hypothesis that more socially trusting societies generally possess more favourable opinion towards immigrants. At the 0.001 significance level, a one standard deviation increase in the level of social trust would lead to a 0.7222 standard deviations improvement in public opinion towards immigrants, if the electoral success of PRRPs rise by one standard deviation. This finding is expected and consistent with Herreros and Criado's (2009) theory that more trusting societies are more hospitable towards immigrants. They explain that people who trust more tend to systematically exclude heuristics and cues based on racial or cultural stereotypes when forming their beliefs about others and are hence more accepting of immigrants (Herreros and Criado 2009).

With regards to the main hypothesis, the results strongly suggest that the rise of PRRPs has aggravated anti-immigrant sentiments in European countries with high levels of political and social trust. The electoral success of PRRPs has a statistically significant and negative influence on public opinion towards immigrants at the 0.01 level. Moreover, the interaction between it and political trust is statistically significant at the 0.05 level and unexpectedly negative. Similarly, the interaction between the electoral success of PRRPs and social trust is statistically significant at the 0.01 level and unexpectedly negative. Specifically, these findings indicate that one standard deviation increase in the electoral success of PRRPs will dampen public opinion towards immigrants by 0.8403 standard deviations on average, if political and social trust both increase by one standard deviation. These

results provide support to my main hypothesis. According to political articulation theory, the rise of PRRPs reflects their growing ability to naturalise the social cleavage between natives and immigrants, and hence foment anti-immigrant sentiments among the public.

Interestingly, this study finds that the impact of PRRPs on anti-immigrant sentiments are exacerbated in European countries with higher levels of socio-political trust. This finding goes against common intuitions that deep social-political trust would constrain the political articulation of PRRPs and hence mitigate their negative influence on public opinion towards immigrants. However, this reasoning appears to be flawed. It relies upon the untenable assumption that prevailing socio-political norms would compel PRRPs to moderate their political stance and messaging. In this modern age, PRRPs are emboldened by the clusters of supporters they can amass and organise through traditional means and social media campaigns (Steenvoordena and Harteveld 2018; Schroeder 2018). Therefore, socio-political trust is unlikely to cushion the impact of PRRPs on public opinion towards immigrants.

Instead, this unexpected finding can be reconciled with political articulation theory. In countries with strong socio-political trust, the social cleavage between natives and immigrants tend to assume less political valence. The political rise of PRRPs and the increasing potency of their political articulation would, therefore, be more disruptive to the social fabric of these countries. Hence, the electoral success of PRRPs aggravates public opinion towards immigrants to a greater extent in countries with higher levels of socio-political trust.

The issue that remains is whether the regression model suffers from simultaneity bias, considering that deep anti-immigrant sentiments among the populace are likely to generate electoral support for PRRPs. I address this concern with a lagged variable regression which affirms the study's main finding that the rise of PRRPs worsens public opinion towards immigrants in European countries with deep socio-political trust (Figure 3). The electoral success of PRRPs preserves its statistical significance at 0.05 level when lagged in this fixed-effects regression. Furthermore, its interaction with political trust is statistically

significant at the 0.01 level, and its interaction with social trust is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. This result demonstrates that simultaneity causal bias is likely to be limited. In other words, the result proves the core idea of political articulation theory that PRRPs in Europe do not merely represent cleavages between locals and immigrants, but also actively create and perpetuate the social division. In doing so, they foment anti-immigrant sentiments among the local populace.

Table: 2
Lagged effect of electoral success of PRRPs on public opinion

| Lagged (t-2) explanatory variable | coef. | pcse | p-value |
|--|---------|--------|-----------|
| Electoral success of PRRPs † | -0.5978 | 0.2848 | 0.0379* |
| Ln(GDP per capita (current US\$)) | -0.5068 | 0.3159 | 0.1113 |
| % of foreign population | -0.4336 | 0.2891 | 0.1362 |
| % of population age 65 and above | -0.4232 | 0.2333 | 0.0721. |
| Political trust | 0.3283 | 0.1580 | 0.03979* |
| Satisfaction with economy | 0.16622 | 0.1050 | 0.1160. |
| Social trust | 0.3704 | 0.1521 | 0.0163* |
| Electoral success of PRRPs x Political trust | -1.1159 | 0.3434 | 0.0015** |
| † | | | |
| Electoral success of PRRPs x Social trust † | 1.518 | 0.4221 | 0.0005*** |

Note: † lagged explanatory variable, *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, . $p < 0.1$, adjusted R-square: 0.1345, p-value $< 4.1313e-09$, N=168. Source: Author.

Conclusion

This article has started from the observation that European countries have turned their backs on migrants in the past decade, alongside the political rise of PRRPs. Exploring the nexus between political parties, public perception and migration policymaking, I asked how the electoral success of PRRPs has impacted public opinion towards immigrants in Europe.

To answer this question, I have analysed four competing hypotheses on the determinants of public opinion towards immigrants: the electoral success of PRRPs, political trust,

economic satisfaction and social trust. From my multivariate panel analysis, I demonstrate that the rise of PRRPs worsens public opinion towards immigrants in European countries with high levels of political and social trust.

The limitation of this study, however, is its small number of observations because it aggregates data at the country level and focuses on the European context. Future research could overcome this issue by incorporating data from later rounds of ESS, which are unavailable at the time of writing. Moreover, this study could be complemented by further research that examines how much public opinion steers migration policy discourse and formulation in European countries, to understand the significance of PRRPs' indirect impact on policymaking.

Nevertheless, what are the implications of this study's findings? I show that the impact of PRRPs on migration policy is underestimated when research focuses only on party competition dynamics. PRRPs can naturalize native-immigrant social divisions, thereby engendering anti-immigrant sentiments among the public in European countries. Considering that public opinion sets the boundaries within which politicians find opportunities or constraints, PRRPs might indeed have a greater indirect influence on migration policymaking than existing literature suggests. This finding should trigger alarms among mainstream parties and civil society groups advocating for immigrant rights. They might face more public apathy or resistance towards their political agenda if PRRPs continue to gain electoral success. As Foucault (1991) observes "[e]ach society has its regime of truth" that pervades society, which is in constant flux and negotiation, as with the power attached to it.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

List of countries in sample & their participation in the European
Social Survey (ESS)

| S / N | Country | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E |
|-------------|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | SS |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 1 | Austria | | | | | | X | | | |
| 2 | Belgium | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| 3 | Bulgaria | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4 | Croatia | | | X | X | X | X | | | X |
| 5 | Republic of Cyprus | | | X | X | X | X | | | |
| 6 | Czech Republic | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 7 | Denmark | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 8 | Estonia | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 9 | Finland | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 10 | France | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 11 | Germany | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Greece | X | X | | X | X | | | | |
| 13 | Hungary | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 14 | Iceland | | X | | | | X | | X | |
| 15 | Ireland | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 16 | Italy | X | X | | | | X | | X | X |
| 17 | Latvia | | | X | X | | | | | |
| 18 | Lithuania | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 19 | Luxembo urg | X | X | | | | | | | |
| 20 | Netherlan ds | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 21 | Norway | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 22 | Poland | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 23 | Portugal | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 24 | Romania | | | X | X | | | | | |
| 25 | Serbia | | | | | | | | | X |
| 26 | Slovakia | | X | X | X | X | X | | | |
| 27 | Slovenia | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 28 | Spain | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | Sweden | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 30 | Switzerland | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 31 | United Kingdom | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Source: Author.

Appendix 2
Operationalization of variables

| S/N | Variable | Data source |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Public opinion towards immigrants | Selected ESS items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration bad or good for country's economy (IMBGECO) • Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants (IMUECLT) • Immigrants make country worse or better place to live (IMWBCNT) |
| 2 | Electoral success of PRRPs | Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index |
| 3 | GDP per capita (current US\$) | World Bank's estimate of <i>population ages 65 and above as a percentage of the total population</i> |
| 4 | % of foreign population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OECD population database for every country except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Serbia |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations' international migrant stock 2019 dataset for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Serbia |
| 5 | % of population aged 65 and above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>GDP per capita</i> (current US\$) from the World Bank's national accounts database. |
| 6 | Political trust | <p>Selected ESS items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust in country's parliament (TRSTPRL) Trust in the legal system (TRSTLGL) Trust in politicians (TRSTPLT) Trust in political parties (TRSTPRT) Trust in European parliament (TRSTEP) |
| 7 | Satisfaction with economy | <p>Selected ESS item</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied the respondents are with the present state of the economy (STFEKO) |

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| 8 | Social trust | Selected ESS items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful (PPLTRST)• Most people try to take advantage of you, or try to be fair (PPLFAIR)• Most of the time people helpful or mostly looking out for themselves (PPLHLP) |
|---|--------------|---|

Source: Author.

Appendix 3
Descriptive statistics Dependent and independent variables in
regression

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Max. | 7.011 | 69.600 | 101524 | 39.342 | 22.75 | 6.132 | 7.976 | 6.835 |
| Min. | 3.015 | 0.000 | 5197 | 0.129 | 10.48 | 2.225 | 1.340 | 1.258 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.7358 | 14.2506 | 20712.24 | 6.3370 | 2.4825 | 0.9328 | 1.4568 | 0.9179 |
| Mean | 5.142 | 13.030 | 35510 | 7.573 | 16.69 | 4.301 | 4.635 | 5.195 |
| Variables | Public opinion towards immigrants | Electoral success of PRRPs | (GDP per capita (current US\$)) | % of foreign population | % of population aged 65 and above | Political trust | Satisfaction with economy | Social trust |

Source: Author.

Appendix 4
Model Specification

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.1$, N=200.

| Model 6 | Model 5 | Model 4 | Model 3 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Variables |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 0.48288 | 0.48131 | 0.37524 | 0.1135 | 0.0863 | 0.000 | Adjusted R-Squared |
| 25.8692 | 23.2658 | 23.5033 | 11.58 | 12.3596 | 9.3502 | F-statistic: |
| -0.3180** (0.1281) | -0.3067* (0.1297) | | | | | Electoral success of PRRPs x Social trust |
| | -0.0595 (0.1031) | | | | | Electoral success of PRRPs x Satisfaction with economy |
| -0.2131* (0.0856) | -0.1722 (0.1118) | | | | | Electoral success of PRRPs x Political trust |
| 0.7222*** (0.1268) | 0.7447*** (0.1274) | 0.7413*** (0.1404) | | | | Social trust |
| 0.1923. (0.1037) | 0.1922. (0.1048) | 0.3256** (0.1152) | 0.4360** (0.1314) | | | Satisfaction with economy |
| -0.0065 (0.1262) | -0.066 (0.1281) | -0.1286 (0.1376) | 0.0521 (0.1541) | 0.3943** (0.1147) | | Political trust |
| -0.0874 (0.0958) | -0.0837 (0.0974) | -0.2771** (0.1026) | -0.2885* (0.1111) | -0.2465* (0.1185) | -0.2580* (0.1206) | % of population aged 65 and above |
| 0.0293 (0.0755) | 0.0270 (0.0759) | 0.0055 (0.08797) | -0.0980 (0.0957) | -0.0726 (0.1032) | -0.0864 (0.1111) | % of foreign population |
| -0.0962 (0.1047) | -0.0883 (0.1060) | -0.1854 (0.1169) | 0.0961 (0.1096) | 0.1531 (0.1134) | 0.3872*** (0.1074) | Ln(GDP per capita (current US\$)) |
| -0.3093** (0.0981) | -0.3094** (0.0993) | -0.1149 (0.0942) | -0.1259 (0.1059) | -0.6749 (0.1144) | -0.0132 (0.1169) | Electoral success of PRRPs |

Source: Author.