Are Immigrants More Left Wing Than Natives?

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EEA ESEM Annual Congress

August 31, 2023

Introduction

"*However immigrants are people, and people make choices. [...] The descendants of the immigrants and the descendants of those descendants guarantee that the impact of current immigration will continue into the far-off future*"

G. Borjas, *We Wanted Workers*, 2016

What does the paper do?

Research Question

Do migrants' descendants hold distinctive political preferences compared to natives?

1. Considers 2nd gen. migrant status among determinants of individual **voting behavior** on a left-to-right scale

2. Compares voting behaviors of *observationally alike* natives and 2nd gen. immigrants:
   - Sample: 22 European countries, 92 national elections (2001-2017)
   - Empirical methods: fixed-effects, simulated effects, matching techniques and selection on unobservables

3. Characterizes observed voting differences: political attitudes and family background

Preview of the Results

1. Immigrants' offspring vote more for parties with a <u>left-leaning political agenda</u> compared to natives in the host country:
   - coefficient comparable in size to the left stance of having a secondary education degree, or living in an urban area
   - difference not *fully explained* by origin-specific factors
   - not driven by selection on observable and unobservable characteristics

2. Channels behind the "left-stance" in voting of 2nd gen. immigrants:
   - more *policy oriented* rather than *ideology oriented*
   - father's *negative experience* in the labor market, rather then perceived discrimination
   - not fully explained by vertical transmission of preferences
     ⇒ specific "immigrant experience"

Literature

- **Immigration and Electoral Outcomes** - Barone et al. (2016);
  Edo et al. (2019); Moriconi et al. (2022); Mayda et al. (2022);
  Giuliano and Tabellini (2021); Chevalier et al. (2018); Bhatiya
  (2023)

- **Immigrants' Descendants Assimilation** - Borjas (1993); Card
  et al. (2000); Algan et al. (2010); Duncan and Trejo (2018);
  Giavazzi et al. (2019); Abramitzky et al. (2020)

- **Individual Determinants of Voting Behavior** - Milligan et al.
  (2004); Gerber et al. (2016); Kaustia et al. (2016); Cantoni and
 Pons (2022)

Data - European Social Survey

1. **European Social Survey (ESS)**   ▸ Elections

   - Multi country individual level surveys (8 waves between 2004-2018)

   - Extensive information on individual characteristics (including parental background)

   - **Definition** - Second Generation Immigrant

      - Born in the country of residence
      - *Father* born abroad   (Fernandez and Fogli, 2009)
        (alternative definition: *mother*)

   - Information on party voted during the last election:

      - 240 parties, 92 elections (2001-2017), 22 European countries.

Data - Migrants' Offspring Geographical Distribution
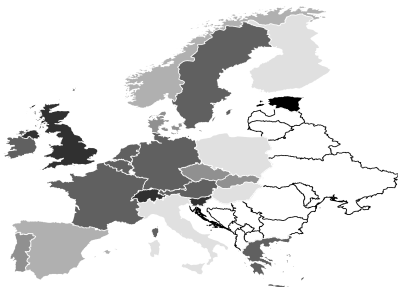
(a) 1st Gen. - Pre 2005
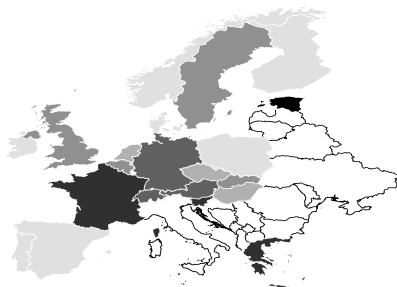
(b) 2nd Gen. - Pre 2005

Note: 1st Gen. Mig. for comparison purposes only.

Data - Manifesto Project Database

2 Manifesto Project Database (MPD)

- Analysis of parties' political preferences through *content analysis* of parties' manifesto
  - → 1093 parties in analysis over 715 parliamentary elections (1945-2017)

- Reliable measures to compare parties over time and across countries (Laver and Garry, 2000; Klemmensen et al., 2007)

- **Left-to-Right index** (*rile*)   (Budge and Laver, 2016)
  - → free markets, economic incentives, traditional values, morality **vs** welfare state, public education, market regulations, workers' rights

- We attach each 1999-2017 party average level of *rile*, to the corresponding party vote from the ESS.

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Left-to-Right Index - Subset of Parties
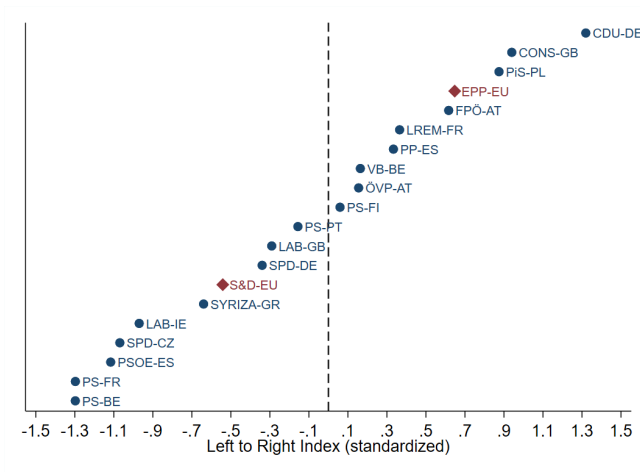
Empirical Strategy

We estimate the following specification:

$$Y_{i,o,c,e}^{\pi} = \alpha + \beta Mig_{i,o,c,e}^{2nd} + \gamma \mathbf{X}_{i,o,c,e} + \theta_{c,e} + \theta_o + \epsilon_{i,o,c,e}. \qquad (1)$$

- Y^{π}: political preference of party voted π
- Mig^{2nd}: 2nd gen. migrants dummy
- $\mathbf{X}$: age, gender, education, income, employment status, religiosity, marital status, children, domicile, father's employment status and education
- $\theta_{c,e}$: destination-by-election year fixed-effect
- θ_o: origin-specific fixed-effect (father's birthplace)   ▸ Origins

$\hat{\beta}$: <u>average immigrant-native differences</u> in voting behavior (conditional on individual characteristics, parental background, destination-by-year and country-of-origin fixed-effects)

Ceteribus paribus assumption on origins

What does $\widehat{\beta}$ actually capture (since we control for θ_o)?

- θ_o captures a 'common root' for voting preferences of people from a given origin (regardless of whether they are offspring of emigrants, or stayers in the country of origin), on average.

- Consistent with the insight from the cultural economics literature (see Alesina and Giuliano, 2015 for a review).

- Separate identification of β and θ_o in eq. (1) comes from the 21 countries that appear in our data both as residence and origin of migrants (*connected set*).

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Main Results

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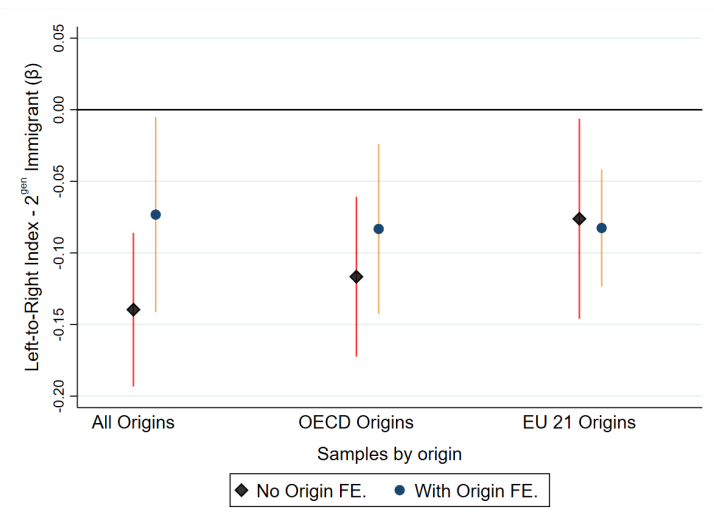
Main Results
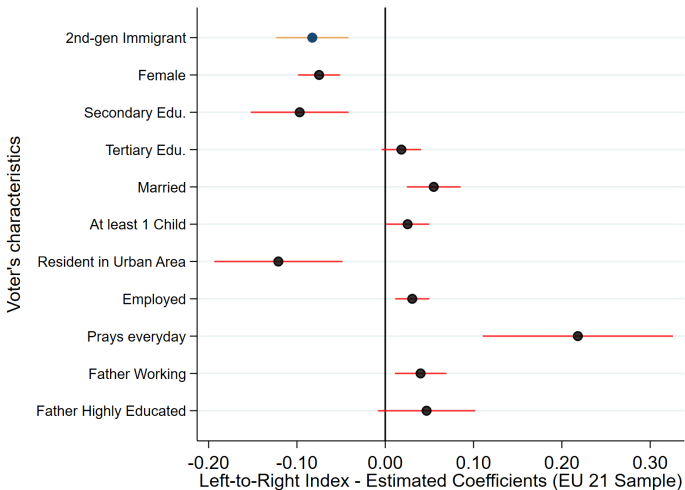
Identification Threats & Robustness Checks

- **Compositional differences btw migrant and native samples?**
  <u>Action</u> → *Covariates Matching*
    – Mahalanobis Metric Matching
    – Trimmed and more comparable samples   ▸ Descriptive

  <u>Action</u> → <u>*Simulations*</u> *based on observables: no selection.*   ▸ Simul

- **Omitted local factors?**   (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001)
  <u>Action</u> → *Regional fixed-effects & controls*   ▸ Robustness Checks

- **Omitted unobservable characteristics?**

  <u>Action</u> → *Degree of Selection on Unobservables*   (Oster, 2019)
    – Intuition: how much unobservables should be important to
      undermine the estimates ($|\delta| > 1$)

  <u>Action</u> → *Extensive analysis on sub-samples*

Channels: Political 'Contents' of Left Leaning Pref.

Policy vs. Ideology

❶ Political Attitudes   ▸ Political Attitudes

Relying on information available from ESS:

- Turnout   ✗
- Party identification and ideology   ✗
- Attitudes towards Redistribution   ✓
- Attitudes EU integration and minorities rights   ✓

❷ Voting Specific Political Stances   ▸ Voting

Exploiting MPD, we can decompose voting preferences towards:

- Economic-related stances (e.g., Welfare expansion)   ✓
- Values-related stances (e.g., Multiculturalism)   ✓
- Migration-specific preferences (e.g., naturalization)   ✗

Family and Integration?

1 **Mother's migration status is not relevant**   ▸ Family Integration

2 **No role for assimilation and discrimination**
- Speak a foreign language in the family   ✗
- Belonging to a discriminated group   ✗

3 **Father's Integration Experience respondent's childhood**
- *Positive mismatch* - Occupation's skill content > education
- *Negative mismatch* - Occupation's skill content < education

⇒ Negative mismatch of migrant father *increases* the left-stance

4 **No systematic LW preferences among (selected) 1st gen.**
- 1st gen above 45 slightly more RW   ▸ 1st Gen.
- 1st gen below 45 **and** with more than 20 years of residence: LW
  ⇒ immigrant experience at young age (*impressionable years*?)

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Conclusions

- Migrants' offspring vote more for parties with a left-leaning political agenda compared to natives (left stance):

  – consistent with findings in political sciences (Strijbis, 2021)
  – similar to the effect of education, and living urban area

- Rational decision consistent with a long-term integration strategy?

  – *Contents*: policy-oriented, rather than ideology
  – *Relevant factor*: family (father) economic integration experience

- Long term shift of the political landscape?

  – *Opposite to the ST effect*, as natives vote more RW due to immig.
  – *Simulations*: on average small shift, but magnitudes are country-specific

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Thanks for your attention!
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APPENDIX

ESS - Elections

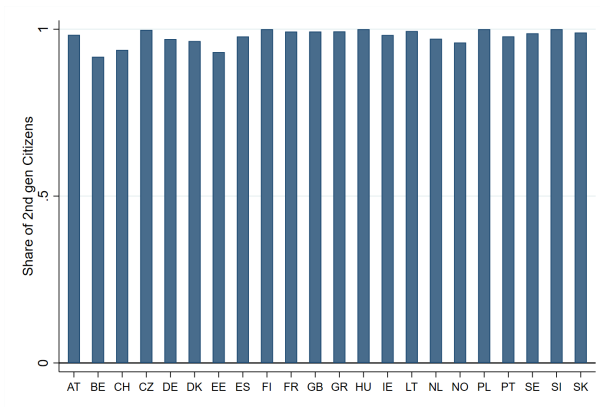| Country	(1) # Elections	(2) Election Years	(3) # Survey Rounds	(4) Survey Years
Austria	5	2002, 2006, 2008, 2013, 2017	7	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018
Belgium	4	2003, 2007, 2010, 2014	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Czech Republic	5	2002, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017	7	2004, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Denmark	4	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011	6	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, (2018)
Estonia	4	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Finland	4	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
France	4	2002, 2007, 2012, 2017	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Germany	5	2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Greece	3	2004, 2007, 2009	3	2004, 2010, 2012
Hungary	4	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Ireland	4	2002, 2007, 2011, 2016	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Lithuania	3	2008, 2012, 2016	5	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, (2018)
Netherlands	5	2003, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2017	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Norway	5	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
Poland	3	2005, 2007, 2011	5	2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014
Portugal	5	2002, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2015	7	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, (2018)
Slovakia	4	2002, 2006, 2010, 2012	5	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, (2018)
Slovenia	4	2004, 2008, 2011, 2014	6	2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016
Spain	4	2004, 2008, 2011, 2016	7	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, (2018)
Sweden	4	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014	7	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, (2018)
Switzerland	4	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018
United Kingdom	5	2001, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017	8	2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018

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Descriptive Statistics

	Full Sample			Matched Sample		
	(1) Natives	(2) Immigrants	(3) Difference	(4) Natives	(5) Immigrants	(6) Difference
Age	51.89	49.39	−2.505**	49.91	49.33	−0.581*
	(16.90)	(15.69)	(0.994)	(15.66)	(15.63)	(0.302)
Female	0.504	0.531	0.026***	0.544	0.532	−0.012
	(0.500)	(0.499)	(0.006)	(0.498)	(0.499)	(0.012)
Tertiary ed.	0.338	0.356	0.018	0.363	0.357	−0.006
	(0.473)	(0.479)	(0.021)	(0.481)	(0.479)	(0.007)
Secondary ed.	0.414	0.459	0.045	0.438	0.459	0.021**
	(0.493)	(0.498)	(0.029)	(0.496)	(0.498)	(0.010)
Married	0.635	0.619	−0.017	0.596	0.620	0.024
	(0.481)	(0.486)	(0.013)	(0.491)	(0.485)	(0.014)
At least 1 child	0.402	0.430	0.028	0.427	0.433	0.006
	(0.490)	(0.495)	(0.021)	(0.495)	(0.496)	(0.013)
Urban Area Resident	0.283	0.374	0.091***	0.381	0.374	−0.007
	(0.450)	(0.484)	(0.033)	(0.486)	(0.484)	(0.020)
Father Working	0.898	0.853	−0.045***	0.845	0.855	0.010
	(0.303)	(0.354)	(0.012)	(0.362)	(0.352)	(0.009)
Father High Skilled	0.205	0.167	−0.039***	0.234	0.168	−0.066***
	(0.404)	(0.373)	(0.012)	(0.423)	(0.374)	(0.014)
Log Household Income	10.07	10.19	0.117**	10.19	10.19	0.009
	(0.862)	(0.821)	(0.052)	(0.829)	(0.817)	(0.021)
Employed	0.554	0.589	0.035	0.600	0.590	−0.010
	(0.497)	(0.492)	(0.023)	(0.490)	(0.492)	(0.022)
Prays Everyday	0.177	0.220	0.043*	0.203	0.215	0.011
	(0.382)	(0.414)	(0.022)	(0.403)	(0.411)	(0.021)
Observations	151029	5219	156248	4533	5127	9660

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Left-to-Right Index - Full Sample

Distribution by Origin

(c) 1st Generation

(d) 2nd Generation
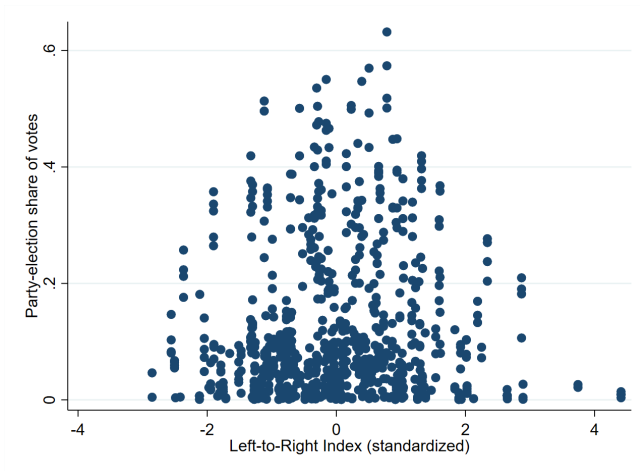
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Share of 2nd-Gen immigrants Citizens

Robustness Checks - EU21 Sample

	Benchmark	Alternative Samples		Regional Level			Oster Test	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) With Time invariant FE and Controls	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Party Voted Ideology	Western EU Sample	Matched Sample	With Time invariant FE		With Time variant FE	$R_{max} = 1.3 * R2$	$R_{max} = 3 * R2$
2nd-gen Immigrants	−0.083***	−0.073**	−0.085***	−0.066**	−0.059*	−0.068**	−0.083***	−0.083***
	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.020)	(0.020)
$\tilde{\delta}$							−44.948	−6.749
R2	0.206	0.188	0.186	0.238	0.238	0.244	0.206	0.206
R_{max}							0.268	0.619
Observations	126373	98156	5470	126372	104290	126371	126373	126373

	Subsample Analysis						
	(9)	(10)	(11) No Norway and Switzerland	(12) No 1st Election	(13) No Last Election	(14) No German 2nd Gen	(15) No only Jus Sanguinis Countries
	No Estonia	No Portugal					
2nd-gen Immigrants	−0.084***	−0.083***	−0.071***	−0.071***	−0.058**	−0.143***	−0.056**
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.034)	(0.023)
R2	0.206	0.207	0.210	0.198	0.207	0.206	0.186
Observations	121728	123065	114087	103102	99383	125977	99420

	Excluding Populist Voters			Alternative Left-to-Right Def.				
	(16) No Populist	(17) No Right Wing Populist	(18) No Left Wing Populist	(19) First Election	(20) Last Election	(21) Election Varying		
2nd-gen Immigrants	−0.085***	−0.083***	−0.084***	−0.073***	−0.074**	−0.057**		
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.021)		
Observations	125311	126070	125838	126373	126373	120475		
R2	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.22	0.25	0.35		
Individual Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destination#Year F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Origin F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Policy vs. Ideology - Political Attitudes

	Participation to Politics		Society and Openness		
	(1) Voting	(2) Interested in Politics	(3) Gay and Lesbians free to live	(4) Immigrants Enrich Culture	(5) EU Integration go further
2nd-gen Immigrants	0.007 (0.010)	0.073** (0.009)	0.109*** (0.026)	0.078** (0.033)	0.049** (0.022)
R2 Observations	0.117 180465	0.213 180157	0.237 124482	0.154 124087	0.109 105672
	Public Sector and Redistribution			Ideological Intensity	
	(6) Satisfied Education Sys.	(7) Satisfied Health Sys.	(8) Government reduce income differences	(9) Self-declared Ideology	(10) Feel Close to a Party
2nd-gen Immigrants	−0.142*** (0.025)	−0.061** (0.027)	0.073** (0.026)	−0.061* (0.034)	−0.023 (0.014)
R2 Observations	0.145 122886	0.184 125760	0.109 125510	0.071 121909	0.059 126359
Individual Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destination#Year F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Origin F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Policy vs. Ideology - Voting Specific Stances   ▸Back

	Voting: Economic-related Stances			Voting: Values-related Stances	
	(1) Welfare Expansion	(2) Education Expansion	(3) Support Workers	(4) National Way of life	(5) Multiculturalism
2nd-gen Immigrants	0.064** (0.052)	0.137** (0.052)	0.076** (0.027)	−0.092*** (0.022)	0.052** (0.022)
R2	0.54	0.46	0.45	0.18	0.25
Observations	126373	126373	126373	126373	126373

	Voting: Immigration-related Issues				
	(6) Expanding Immigration	(7) Lax Citizenship Requirements	(8) Immigrants Should Assimilate	(9) Immigrants keep their culture	
2nd-gen Immigrants	−0.041 (0.026)	−0.002 (0.002)	−0.023* (0.012)	−0.033 (0.025)	
Observations	126373	126373	106596	106596	
R2	0.16	0.30	0.49	0.55	

	Right/Left Party		Populist Party		
	(10) Right Wing	(11) Left Wing	(12) All	(13) Right Wing	(14) Left Wing
2nd-gen Immigrants	−0.033*** (0.009)	0.018** (0.008)	−0.011* (0.006)	−0.005** (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)
Observations	126225	126225	126225	126225	126225
R2	0.12	0.18	0.15	0.15	0.09
Individual Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destination#Year F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Origin F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Populism score - Definition

Populism Score – MPD variables

- Anti-establishment stance (**AES**)
    - AES1 (+): Corruption (need to eliminate corruption & clientelism)
    - AES2 (+): Anti-pluralism view (lack of competence of others)

- Commitment to protect (**CTP**)
    - CTP1 (+): Protection of internal market
    - CTP2 (-): Favorable mentions of internationalism
    - CTP3 (-): Favorable mentions of EU
    - CTP4 (+): Government ownership of industries

- Two-step PCA based on correlation matrix
  $\Rightarrow S_{i,e,t}^{p}$ Parties' populism score

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Populism score - Properties

Parties' Populism Score $(S_{i,e,t}^p)$

- Average of AES and CTP (standardized)

- Mean $= 0$; SD $= 0.81$

- Distinctive features
  1. Self-determined by parties' manifesto
  2. Continuous (extent) and time-varying
  3. Well correlated with existing data
     1. Van Kessel (2015) - Dummy, time-invariant, 2000-2013
     2. Swank (2018) - RW Dummy, time-invariant, 1960-2015
     3. PopuList - Dummy, time-invariant, 1989-2018
     4. Gpop 1 (Gryzmala Busse et al., 2020 - Dummy, time-invariant, 1960-2018
     5. Gpop 2 (Hawkins et al., 2019) - Continuous, based on electoral speeches
     6. Chapell Hill Expert Survey - Continuous, 2018

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Populism score - Properties

- **Populist party** ($\mathbf{1}_{i,e,t}^p = 1$ if $S_{i,e,t}^p \geq \eta \times SD$)
    - $\eta = 1$ "maximizes" partial correlation with alternative definitions
    - $\eta = 1$ "maximizes" RAF with most alternative definitions

- Can be combined w. **Left-Right** index (Budge and Laver, 2016)
    - (LW, Centrist, RW) = (1st, 2nd, 3rd) terciles of left-right distr.

- **Discussion**:
    - Adding more MPD components reduces partial correlations with existing measures
    - $S_{i,e,t}^p$ is highly correlated with attitudes towards immig., cultural conservatism, multiculturalism (post-2006) in centrist/RW parties
    - The 1-SD threshold justified by unsupervised clustering

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Family and Integration - Results

	(1) Migrants' Parents	(2) Father Mismatch	(3) Personal Disc.	(4) Foreign Language at Home	(5) All Factors
2nd-gen (Father)	−0.092***	−0.077***	−0.077***	−0.079***	−0.069***
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.023)
2nd-gen (Mother)	−0.038				
	(0.039)				
2nd-gen (Father) x 2nd-gen (Mother)	0.080				
	(0.125)				
2nd-gen Immigrants x Pos. Mismatch		−0.047			−0.051
		(0.116)			(0.114)
2nd-gen Immigrants x Neg. Mismatch		−0.248***			−0.249***
		(0.050)			(0.051)
Pos. Mismatch		0.091***			0.091***
		(0.025)			(0.025)
Neg. Mismatch		0.024			0.024
		(0.019)			(0.019)
2nd-gen Immigrants x Discriminated			−0.088		−0.107
			(0.078)		(0.077)
Discriminated			0.003		−0.019
			(0.044)		(0.031)
2nd-gen (Father) x Foreign Language				−0.198	−0.215
				(0.175)	(0.182)
Foreign Language				−0.002	0.006
				(0.060)	(0.072)
R2	0.206	0.208	0.206	0.206	0.208
Observations	125107	100977	125107	125107	100977
Individual Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destination#Year F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Origin F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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First Generation - Results

	All	Older than 45		Younger than 45		
	(1)	(2)	(3) More than 20 years of residence	(4)	(5) More than 20 years of residence	(6) Less than 20 years of residence
	All	All		All		
1st-gen Immigrants	−0.043*	0.002	0.010	−0.098**	−0.133***	−0.044
	(0.022)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.153)
Observations	126334	125735	125655	124975	124859	124454
R2	0.207	0.207	0.207	0.208	0.208	0.207
Origin F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destination#Year F.E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Simulations

Is the left-stance sizeable?

Computing for an hypothetical $t = 0$:

$$\widehat{Leftism}_{c,0} = Leftism_{c,N,0} + Share^{2nd}_{c,0} \times (Leftism_{c,M,0} - Leftism_{c,N,0})$$

$$\widehat{Leftism}_{c,0} = Leftism_{c,N,0} + Share^{2nd}_{c,0} \times \widehat{\beta}$$

Normalize with respect to each country natives' leftwing stance:

$$\widehat{Leftism}^{Pol}_{c,EXP} = \frac{Leftism_{c,N,0}}{\|Leftism_{c,N,0}\|} + \frac{(Share^{2nd}_{c,EXP} \times \beta)}{\|Leftism_{c,N,0}\|} \qquad (2)$$

Simulations - Summary

Summary

$Share_{c,EXP}^{2nd}$: country-specific average over the period

$\Rightarrow$ On average, migrant's response related to a left-wing shift of 3% of natives voting stance

Alternative Exercises

$Share_{c,EXP}^{2nd}$: 10%, 30% or 50% of the population

On average

- *Mild* shift for Western European countries
- Countries characterized by a moderate native population will have relevant shift (e.g. Belgium)

Simulations

We predict the following indicators of leftism of 2nd generation migrants relative to residents in D and O:

$$Left_n^D = \sum_x^X \hat{\beta}_n^x \frac{1}{D} \sum_d^D (\overline{x}_{mig}^d - \overline{x}_{nat}^d) \tag{3}$$

$$Left_n^O = \sum_x^X \hat{\beta}_n^x \frac{1}{O} \sum_o^O (\overline{x}_{mig}^o - \overline{x}_{nat}^o). \tag{4}$$

where

- $\hat{\beta}$ predicted leftism of individual characteristics of non-migrants;
- $\overline{x}_{mig}$ average characteristic of migrant (to d, or from o)
- $\overline{x}_{mig}$ average characteristic of residents (in d, or o).

Simulated Left wing stances

(e) Stance relative to Destination   (f) Stance relative to Origin

Note: authors' calculation on ESS data. The figure plot the distribution of the simulated left leaning stance of second generation immigrants due to selection on observables. We first estimate the individual characteristic specific coefficient on the sample of natives, then we draw 1000 different estimated coefficients based on the point estimate and standard deviation of the estimated coefficient. Finally, we generate the simulated left wing stance based on observables by interacting the simulated coefficients with the difference between the average characteristics of migrants and natives. The solid line provides the average simulated effect.

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