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Cushion or catalyst? How welfare state generosity moderates the impact of economic vulnerability on populist radical right support

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Cushion or Catalyst? How Welfare State Generosity Moderates the Impact of Economic Vulnerability on Populist Radical Right Support

Abstract

- The rise of populist radical right parties represents one of the most dramatic shifts in European party systems of the past decades. Although it has been established that the populist radical right's core appeal centers around issues of immigration and multiculturalism rather than economic matters, there has been a debate in the literature about the role of socioeconomic factors as a driver of PRRP success. We focus on two strands of argument relating to the welfare state and its impact on PRRP support. On the one hand, generous social policy regimes may mitigate the adverse economic effects of globalization and thus make workers less vulnerable to the appeal of populist radical right parties (the inoculation hypothesis). On the other hand, generous welfare regimes may make voters more concerned about increased numbers of low-skilled immigrants entering a country and potentially claiming benefits paid for largely by the taxes and contributions of the native population (the welfare chauvinism hypothesis).
- Our results suggest several channels through which the welfare state affects votes for the PRRP. Firstly, social protection seems to moderate economic vulnerability: in countries with higher relative redistribution and/or poverty prevention, the economically vulnerable are less likely to vote for the PRRP. Secondly, the direct effect of social welfare measures on the populist vote is positive when considering individual voters' positions. Thirdly, a stronger welfare state contributes to increasing the salience of the immigration platform for voting decisions. As a result, voters in high-redistribution countries are more likely to vote for the PRRP if they have a more moderate view on migration.

Keywords

- Populism, Right-Wing Populism, Welfare State, Party Systems, Europe, Social Protection.

Cushion or Catalyst? How Welfare State Generosity Moderates the Impact of Economic Vulnerability on Populist Radical Right Support

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Abstract

The rise of populist radical right parties represents one of the most dramatic shifts in European party systems of the past decades. Although it has been established that the populist radical right's core appeal centers around issues of immigration and multiculturalism rather than economic matters, there has been a debate in the literature about the role of socioeconomic factors as a driver of PRRP success. We focus on two strands of argument relating to the welfare state and its impact on PRRP support. On the one hand, generous social policy regimes may mitigate the adverse economic effects of globalization and thus make workers less vulnerable to the appeal of populist radical right parties (*the inoculation hypothesis*). On the other hand, generous welfare regimes may make voters more concerned about increased numbers of low-skilled immigrants entering a country and potentially claiming benefits paid for largely by the taxes and contributions of the native population (*the welfare chauvinism hypothesis*).

Our results suggest several channels through which the welfare state affects votes for the PRRP. Firstly, social protection seems to moderate economic vulnerability: in countries with higher relative redistribution and/or poverty prevention, the economically vulnerable are less likely to vote for the PRRP. Secondly, the direct effect of social welfare measures on the populist vote is positive when considering individual voters' positions. Thirdly, a stronger welfare state contributes to increasing the salience of the immigration platform for voting decisions. As a result, voters in high-redistribution countries are more likely to vote for the PRRP if they have a more moderate view on migration.

1. Theoretical Framework

The rise of populist radical right parties (PRRPs) represents one of the most dramatic shifts in European party systems of the past decades (Mudde, 2013). Parties such as the French Front National (FN), the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Danish People's Party (FDP) or the Dutch Freedom Party (PVV) have not only captured growing shares of the national vote but have also left their imprint on the policy output of European democracies,

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be it as part of a coalition government (Afonso, 2015; Minkenberg, 2001), as parliamentary supporters of minority cabinets (Careja et al., 2016) or by pressuring mainstream parties to adopt parts of the populist radical right policy agenda (Bale et al., 2010; Han, 2015).

Although it has been established that the populist radical right’s core appeal centers around issues of immigration and multiculturalism rather than economic matters (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Mudde, 2007), there has been a lively debate in the literature about the role of socioeconomic factors as a driver of PRRP success (De Lange, 2007). This debate has been fueled to a large extent by the observation that the working class –once the prime mobilizing force behind the expansion of the welfare state (Korpi, 1983) –today constitutes one of the radical right’s most important electoral constituencies (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Oesch, 2008). In our discussion we focus on two strands of argument relating to the welfare state and its impact on PRRP support. On the one hand, generous social policy regimes may mitigate the adverse economic effects of globalization and thus make workers less vulnerable to the appeal of populist radical right parties (the inoculation hypothesis). On the other hand, generous welfare regimes may make voters more concerned about increased numbers of low-skilled immigrants entering a country and potentially claiming benefits paid for largely by the taxes and contributions of the native population (the welfare chauvinism hypothesis).

Globalization has not only altered the economic systems of established democracies but has also left its mark on their political configurations (Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008). The increased permeability of national borders has resulted in greater inflows and outflows of people, goods and capital, thereby affecting the economic opportunities and cultural status of large population segments. In their study of globalization, the welfare state and the populist radical right, Swank and Betz (2003) argue that increases in free trade, foreign direct investment and migration are likely to hurt low-skilled workers in rich countries, and that voters in these countries tend to feel that the downsides of globalization outweigh the upsides. As a consequence, voters become vulnerable to the appeal of the populist radical right. However, as Swank and Betz (2003) then go on to demonstrate, this is much more the case in welfare regimes with low levels of generosity and coverage. When Esping-Andersen (2013) used a measure of welfare state universalism as a moderating variable, they found that higher levels of trade openness and

capital mobility are only correlated with better PRRP performance in polities with low levels of social protection. They concluded that universal welfare states protect workers against the increased economic insecurity that results from globalization, and thus inoculate them against the siren call of the PRRP.

Other research has found a similar logic at work. In their analysis of individual-level attitudes toward immigration, Crepaz and Damron (2009) argue that the earliest incarnations of the modern welfare state in pre-WWI Germany and Austria were designed with the purpose of holding together vast multi-ethnic empires. Translating this argument to the contemporary era, they use multilevel models to demonstrate that welfare state generosity softens individuals' attitudes towards immigrants. Along similar lines, Van Der Waal et al. (2013) show that lower levels of inequality lead to a greater willingness to grant welfare benefits to immigrants.

In a study of party platforms between 1960 and 2003, Burgoon (2009) shows that election manifestos tend more towards nationalism as measures of globalization increase (trade flows, capital mobility, immigration), but that this effect is limited to cases with low levels of social spending and decommodification. Again, generous welfare states diminish the impact of globalization on the development of nationalist sentiment. Finally, Arzheimer (2009) detects a somewhat more complex pattern of interaction. In countries with high levels of immigration, generous unemployment benefits dampen the impact of unemployment on the PRRP vote. However, the opposite is the case when migration is low. In such situations, higher unemployment benefits are correlated with increased PRRP support.

The empirical studies discussed above provide good reason to conjecture that welfare states mitigate the impact of globalization on the success of populist radical right parties. This is because economically vulnerable voters are better protected from social risks and therefore less attracted to anti-globalist and nativist appeals. This is the inoculation hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. *Welfare state generosity decreases the impact of economic vulnerability on votes for the populist radical right.*

While there is clearly evidence in the literature for this hypothesis, it should not go unnoticed that some of the strongest populist radical right parties can be found in countries with very large welfare states, such as Austria, Denmark, Belgium or France. On the other hand,

some of the countries in Europe with very weak PRRPs are those with smaller welfare states, such as Ireland, Spain or Portugal.

Indeed, as ethnic heterogeneity in most developed countries has increased over the past decades, the welfare state has itself become a battleground in the fight over immigration and multiculturalism. The literature on welfare chauvinist attitudes shows that immigrants are perceived as one of the least deserving groups. Survey data confirm that, in comparison with the elderly, the sick and disabled and the unemployed, immigrants are viewed as the least deserving group in all of the 18 countries analyzed (Van Oorschot, 2006, 2008). What is more, experimental evidence has established a clear causal connection between immigrant status and perceptions of deservingness (Cappelen and Midtbø, 2016; Hjorth, 2016). European voters even differentiate between culturally distant and non-distant migrants, granting greater social rights to the latter than the former (Kootstra, 2016).

The fact that immigrants are perceived as less deserving than the native population has profound implications for the link between welfare states and PRRP support. The combination of high immigration levels and generous welfare provisions raises the potential for welfare chauvinist mobilization by the populist radical right, and increases the perception among economically vulnerable natives that they have to compete for social benefits with the immigrant population. Veugelers and Magnan (2005), for instance, identify two causal paths in their fuzzy set analysis that lead to high levels of PRRP support in a country. Both include high welfare state effort as an ingredient in the causal recipe. In a more recent analysis, Rapp (2017) shows that more generous welfare provisions (unemployment and healthcare expenditure) combined with high levels of ethnic diversity decrease social and political tolerance towards immigrants.

The welfare chauvinism hypothesis thus argues the exact opposite of the inoculation hypothesis. Rather than limiting PRRP success by protecting workers from the adverse effects of globalization, generous welfare states provide a mobilization opportunity for nativist parties. Where benefits are more generous, welfare chauvinist attitudes become more salient in determining vote choice. We hypothesize that this effect will be more pronounced among economically vulnerable voters, since those are the individuals most likely to become dependent

on welfare programs and may therefore be more likely to perceive themselves to be competing with immigrants for social benefits.

Hypothesis 2. *Welfare state generosity increases the impact of economic vulnerability on votes for the populist radical right.*

2. Data and the Model

2.1. The Econometric Model

The profile of voters' ideal points $(x_i)_{i \in N}$ and the profile of party positions $(\phi_j)_{j \in J}$ are combined to obtain the distance (in this case an Euclidean norm was calculated) of each voter from every party, producing an array $(\delta_{ij})_{i \in N}^{j \in J}$. The voting intentions of the electors are represented by a matrix $(y_{ij})_N^J$ in which $y_{ij} = 1$ if voter i feels ideologically close to party j .

Our econometric model combines features of a spatial model of voting as well as individual and country-specific characteristics. The pure spatial theory of electoral competition assumes that:

$$\chi_{ij} = P(u_{ij} > u_{i1} \forall 1 \neq j) = P(\varepsilon_1 - \varepsilon_j < \beta(\delta_{i1}^2 - \delta_{ij}^2 : 1 \neq j)).$$

Models of binary choices usually deal with characteristics that vary by individual or region (country), but not by alternatives. An advantage of measuring characteristics that vary by alternatives is that we may then determine the effect of adding an alternative, using its characteristics. In our context, adding specific alternative characteristics means that we can control for the interplay between the ideological positions of all parties within a country and the ideological positions of the voters, irrespective of the existence of the institutions we are interested in.

The general specification is as follows:

$$u_{ijk} = a_{ik}\varphi + \mathbf{X}_{ij}\beta_j + \mathbf{Z}_k\gamma + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

where:

u_{ijk} is the utility of voter i with respect to party j in country k

a_{ik} is the vector of characteristics unique to voter i in country k

X_{ijk} is the vector of characteristics specific to party j with respect to voter i in country k , where β_j 's can vary between the parties

Z_k is the vector of characteristics of country k .

Moreover, we analyze interactions between the country-specific and individual-specific variables.

2.2. Data

Data on the ideological positions of European parties are taken from the Chapel-Hill expert survey data set collected in 2014 (Bakker et al., 2015). Data on the ideological stances and demographic characteristics of the voters are from the 2014 and 2016 European Social Survey waves (NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, 2014, 2016). Most data on the institutional background are covered in the Quality of Government data set (Teorell et al., 2017), as well as other data sets such as the social justice indicators produced by the Bertelsmann Foundation (Schraad-Tischler and Schiller, 2016). Table 1 presents the parties in the study which are classified as populist.

Data from the Chapel-Hill survey have been matched with the voters' answers in the ESS Survey for the four policy dimensions presented in Table 2.

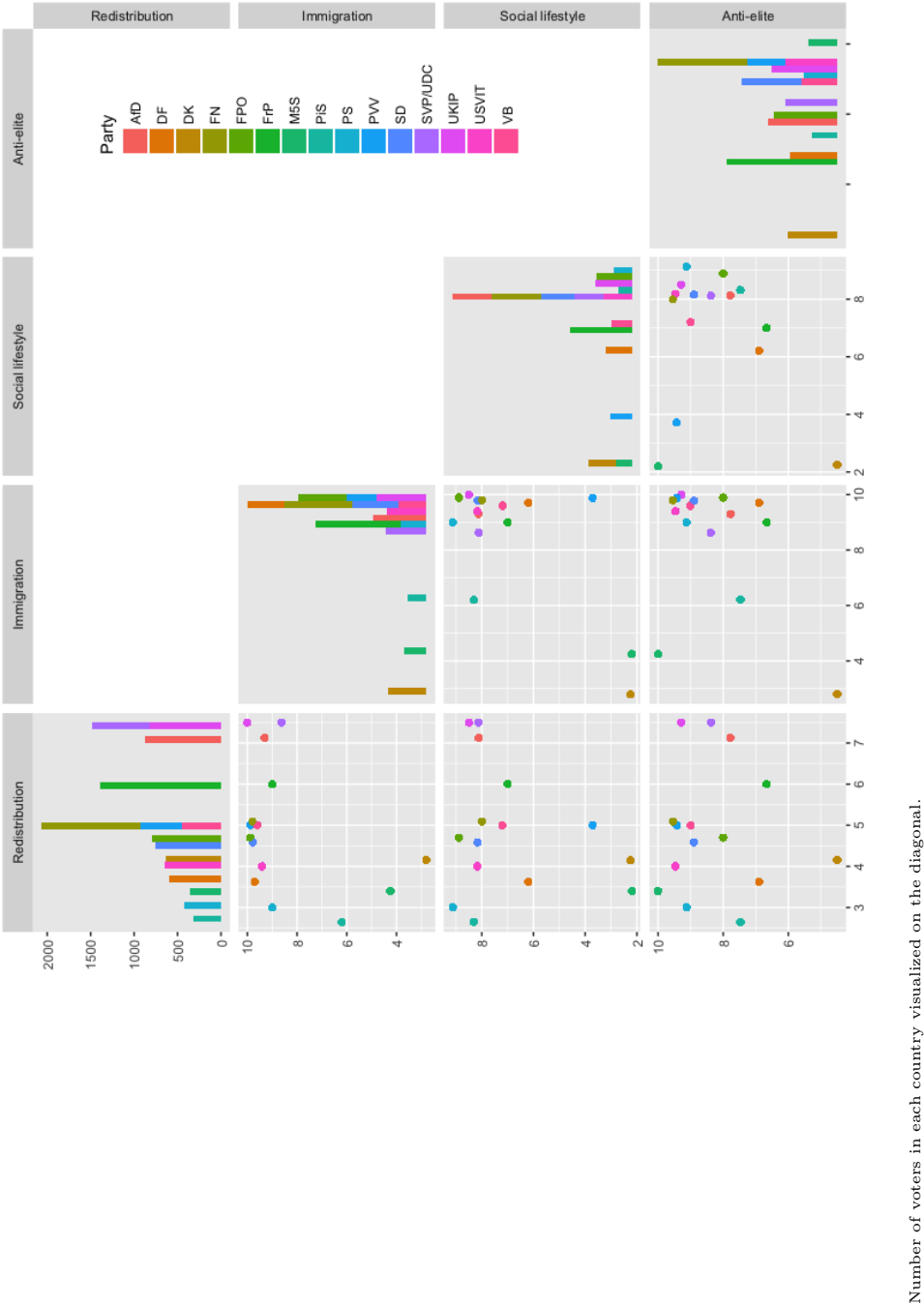
Table 1: List of major populist parties in Europe

Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)
Belgium	Vlaams Belang (VB)
Switzerland	Swiss People’s Party (SVP/UDC)
Czech Republic	Usvit
Germany	Alternative for Germany (AfD)
Denmark	Danish People’s Party (DF)
Estonia	EKRE
Finland	Finns Party (PS)
France	National Front (FN)
Great Britain	UK Independence Party (UKIP)
Hungary	Fidesz
Italy	Five Stars Movement (M5S)
Lithuania	Order and Justice (TT)
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)
Norway	Progress Party (FrP)
Poland	Law and Justice (PiS)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)

Table 2: Matching of the policy dimensions in the Chapel-Hill and ESS data sets

Dimension	Chapel-Hill	ESS	Values
Redistribution	Position on redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor	The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels	2 –strongly agree, 10 –strongly disagree
Immigration	Position on immigration policy	Average of questions B32, B33 and B34 on immigration	0 –very positive towards immigration, 10 –very negative
Anti-elite	Salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric	Would you say that politicians care what people like you think?	0 –strongly agree, 10 –strongly disagree
Social lifestyle	Position on social lifestyle, (e.g., homosexuality)	Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish	2 –strongly agree, 10 –strongly disagree

Figure 1: Positions of parties in the four dimensions



As Figure 1 shows, populist parties represent diverse political stances in the analyzed ideological dimensions. Most analyzed parties represent a conservative ideological stance on issues of society and most parties favor a strict anti-immigration policy. Moreover, most parties include anti-elite stances in their rhetoric. On the other hand, redistribution policies differ widely: whereas the Swiss SVP and the British UKIP, for instance, favor less involvement of the state in the redistribution of income, the Polish PiS and the Danish People's Party favor much more redistribution towards the poor. Thus, it is necessary to control for the ideological differences between different parties in different countries, particularly regarding the differences in stances on redistribution issues, which are directly related to our research question. We might expect the existence of social security institutions to have a different impact on the voting decisions of left-leaning and right-leaning voters.

The density of voters' positions on the immigration and redistribution dimensions, which are our main interest, are presented in Figure 2. Since the redistribution position can take only five values (2,4,6,8 and 10), we present immigration positions for each of these values separately. Among the economically liberal voters, the left tail (liberal immigration policy) is slightly heavier, but the differences between the densities are generally minor.

There are, however, differences in the ideological stances, particularly with respect to immigration, between the countries, as visualized in Figure 3. Voters in Hungary and the Czech Republic are the most skeptical towards immigration in our sample. On the other hand, Spanish, Norwegian and Swedish voters are on average more positive towards immigration. Despite the European migration crisis during the summer and autumn of 2015, and perhaps surprisingly, there are no significant differences between the stances of the voters on immigration in the 2014/15 and 2016/17 waves of the European Social Survey.

The dependent variable in each case is a binary choice for a party, according to the ESS question "Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?" This choice variable has an advantage over the question regarding electoral choice in the last election, as it measures ideological closeness for all individuals at the same time, regardless of the previous election date. Moreover, it captures the role of identity, rather than a decision to vote for a particular party possibly based on strategic motives.

Figure 2: Density of voters' positions on immigration and redistribution

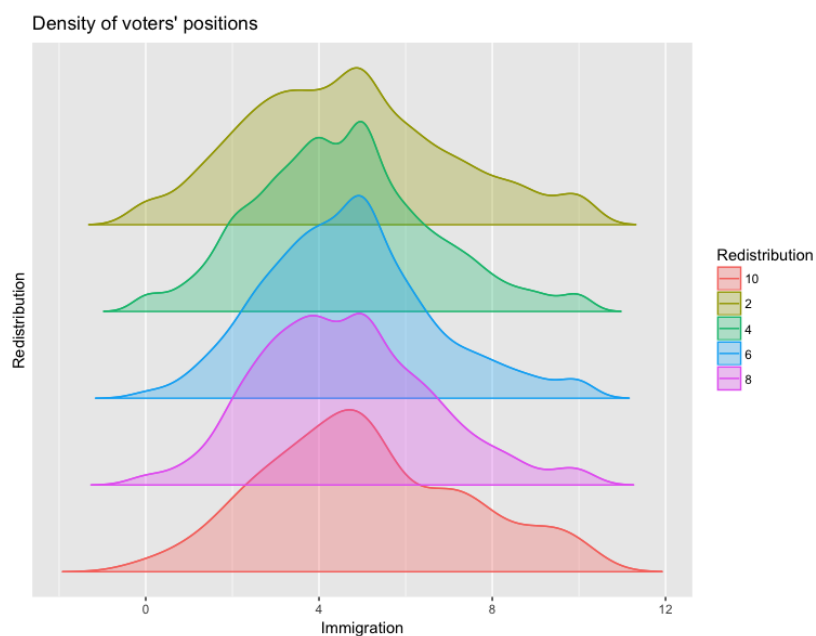
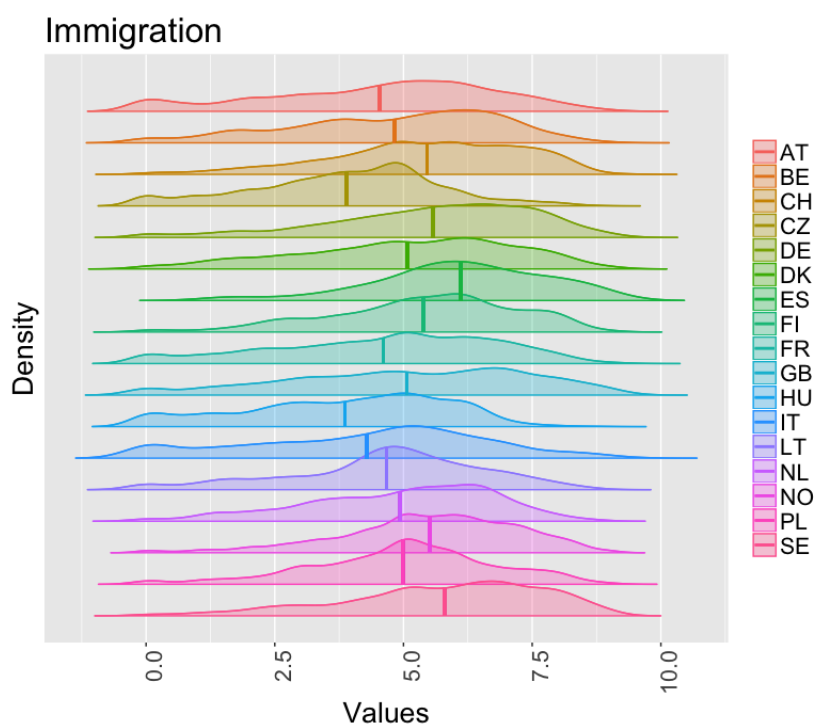


Figure 3: Density of voters' positions on immigration by country –ESS rounds combined



Independent variables include sociodemographic characteristics of the voters, country characteristics and the interactions of both. In particular, we are interested in the interaction between the material status of the voter and the welfare state institutions. Moreover, we look at the migration flows and stocks, which, as they affect attitudes against the foreign-born population, relate to the electoral success of populist parties.

We use four alternative measures of economic vulnerability.

- *Tercil1* –equals one if an individual’s income lies in the first three deciles of the income distribution of the respective country. As 60% of the median income, this corresponds roughly to persons at risk of poverty.
- *IncSub3* –equals one if the self-reported income situation of an individual is described as "difficult to make ends meet with current income."
- *Isco89* –equals one when an individual’s job belongs to the ISCO 8 and 9 codes, that is, manufacturing and elementary workers.
- *Unemp* –equals one when an individual experienced unemployment during the year before the interview.

The first two measures capture objective and subjective aspects of low income. Income in the first three deciles corresponds roughly to the international definition of the risk of poverty (60% of the median income). The subjective measure is a more comprehensive one, as the objective position in the income distribution does not necessarily capture individual factors which contribute to the living status, such as employment of partner, children, individual costs, etc. The third measure captures the types of jobs which are typically associated with higher vulnerability with respect to globalization, that is, those which have the potential for rationalization through digitalization or increased competition from low-skilled migrants, competition from other countries and outsourcing. Finally, people who recently experienced unemployment might have additional negative sentiments towards migrants or workers in low-wage countries.

We also use three measures of the welfare state.

- *Social Policies* –a weighted index of diverse welfare state institutions by the Bertelsmann Foundation. It captures redistribution policies but also the labor-market, education and health policies present.
- *Poverty Prevention* –a subindex by the Bertelsmann Foundation focusing specifically on the policies aimed at reduction of poverty, i.e., persons living in material deprivation and income poverty.
- *Relative Redistribution* –a measure of the intensity of redistribution of income from the rich to the poor. It is calculated as a percentage reduction in inequality between the market Gini coefficient and the Gini coefficient after transfers.

The first measure captures a broadly defined welfare state, which guarantees an equalized income distribution, reduces poverty rates, uses active labor-market policies and employment protection and provides cohesive access to public health and education services. The second measure focuses specifically on the policies targeting poverty, that is, support for the economically vulnerable. Finally, the third measure captures general redistribution policies, not necessarily towards the very poor but broadly targeted, in order to reduce income inequality.

Importantly, and perhaps contrary to common perceptions, there is no significant correlation between the welfare state measures and aggregate preferences of the voters with regard to immigration, as visualized in Figure 4. On the aggregate level, there is no evidence that in countries with higher levels of social welfare measures, voters are more negative towards immigration. If anything, the correlation seems to run in the opposite direction: higher social welfare correlates with more positive attitudes towards immigration. This fact stresses the importance of looking at the individual positions of the voters.

3. Results

The first thing to notice concerning the results presented in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6, is that the actual platform of the party in question on redistribution does not affect the probability of voting for this party. For all four analyzed dimensions of policy, the distance between the position of the voter and the party has a negative impact on the probability of voting,

Figure 4: Measures of the welfare state and average attitudes towards immigration

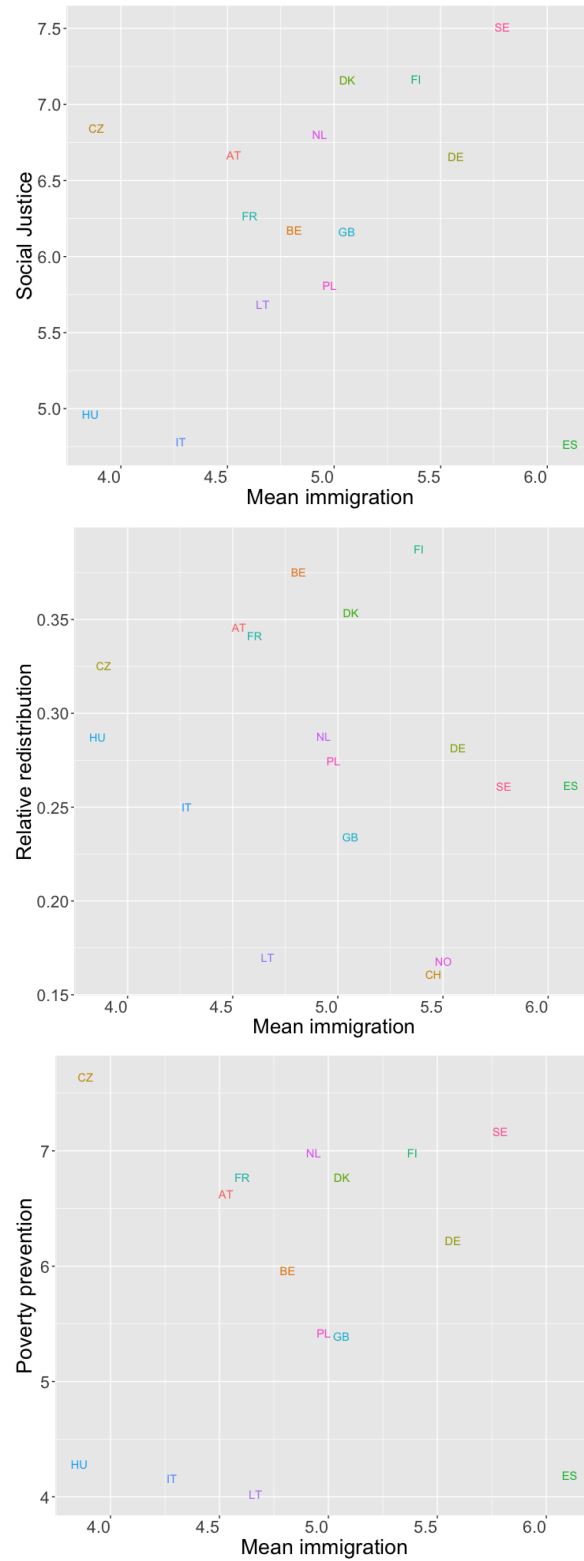


Table 3: Specification with *Tercil1*

	Voted Populist		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Inflow Foreign-Born	−0.527 (6.712)	−16.366** (6.772)	−12.448* (6.649)
Stock Foreign-Born	−0.112*** (0.010)	−0.109*** (0.010)	−0.103*** (0.010)
Age	−0.019*** (0.002)	−0.021*** (0.002)	−0.019*** (0.002)
Female	−0.244*** (0.061)	−0.236*** (0.061)	−0.221*** (0.061)
ISCED 2	0.847*** (0.122)	0.787*** (0.123)	0.942*** (0.122)
ISCED 3	0.266** (0.109)	0.252** (0.109)	0.407*** (0.109)
ISCED 4	−0.065 (0.167)	−0.092 (0.167)	0.072 (0.167)
ISCED 5+	−0.135 (0.123)	−0.183 (0.124)	−0.010 (0.123)
Relative Redistribution	5.806*** (0.529)		
Social Justice		0.324*** (0.031)	
Poverty Prevention			0.251*** (0.028)
Tercil1	1.518*** (0.383)	2.530*** (0.628)	2.169*** (0.430)
Immigration	−0.180*** (0.008)	−0.173*** (0.009)	−0.171*** (0.009)
Redistribution	−0.037** (0.017)	−0.045*** (0.017)	−0.041** (0.017)
Anti-Elite	−0.173*** (0.016)	−0.193*** (0.016)	−0.183*** (0.016)
Social Lifestyle	−0.032** (0.014)	−0.036*** (0.014)	−0.025* (0.014)
Relative Redistribution:Tercil1	−4.669*** (1.247)		
Social Justice:Tercil1		−0.380*** (0.096)	
Poverty Prevention:Tercil1			−0.329*** (0.068)
Individuals	14,680	14,680	14,680

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01: Standard errors clustered at country level in parentheses. Base category: social-democratic party in each country. Base education: ISCED 1. Inflow and stock of foreign-born population expressed as a percentage of the local population.

Table 4: Specification with *Incsub*

	Voted Populist		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Inflow Foreign-Born	-2.943 (6.732)	-20.405*** (6.757)	-15.143** (6.683)
Stock Foreign-Born	-0.109*** (0.010)	-0.105*** (0.010)	-0.101*** (0.010)
Age	-0.018*** (0.002)	-0.021*** (0.002)	-0.019*** (0.002)
Female	-0.234*** (0.061)	-0.228*** (0.061)	-0.212*** (0.061)
ISCED 2	0.847*** (0.122)	0.797*** (0.123)	0.911*** (0.123)
ISCED 3	0.262** (0.109)	0.251** (0.108)	0.374*** (0.108)
ISCED 4	-0.056 (0.166)	-0.093 (0.166)	0.043 (0.166)
ISCED 5+	-0.152 (0.121)	-0.193 (0.121)	-0.056 (0.121)
Relative Redistribution	5.610*** (0.506)		
Social Justice		0.322*** (0.030)	
Poverty Prevention			0.254*** (0.028)
IncSub3	2.371*** (0.541)	2.596*** (0.709)	2.552*** (0.468)
Immigration	-0.183*** (0.008)	-0.174*** (0.009)	-0.173*** (0.009)
Redistribution	-0.028 (0.017)	-0.038** (0.017)	-0.031* (0.017)
Anti-Elite	-0.168*** (0.016)	-0.193*** (0.016)	-0.182*** (0.016)
Social Lifestyle	-0.029** (0.014)	-0.033** (0.014)	-0.022 (0.014)
Relative Redistribution:IncSub3	-8.121*** (1.750)		
Social Justice:IncSub3		-0.428*** (0.111)	
Poverty Prevention:IncSub3			-0.426*** (0.075)
Individuals	14,680	14,680	14,680

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01: Standard errors clustered at country level in parentheses. Base category: social-democratic party in each country. Base education: ISCED 1. Inflow and stock of foreign-born population expressed as a percentage of the local population.

Table 5: Specification with *ISCO*

	Voted Populist		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Inflow Foreign-Born	−1.974 (6.700)	−20.332*** (6.743)	−14.209** (6.635)
Stock Foreign-Born	−0.109*** (0.010)	−0.105*** (0.010)	−0.100*** (0.010)
Age	−0.018*** (0.002)	−0.020*** (0.002)	−0.018*** (0.002)
Female	−0.230*** (0.061)	−0.230*** (0.061)	−0.210*** (0.061)
ISCED 2	0.870*** (0.122)	0.839*** (0.124)	0.988*** (0.123)
ISCED 3	0.276** (0.110)	0.293*** (0.110)	0.448*** (0.109)
ISCED 4	−0.049 (0.167)	−0.059 (0.167)	0.108 (0.167)
ISCED 5+	−0.131 (0.123)	−0.155 (0.125)	0.023 (0.123)
Relative Redistribution	5.457*** (0.514)		
Social Justice		0.309*** (0.031)	
Poverty Prevention			0.225*** (0.028)
ISCO89	1.235*** (0.474)	1.157 (0.731)	1.369*** (0.504)
Immigration	−0.182*** (0.008)	−0.170*** (0.008)	−0.170*** (0.009)
Redistribution	−0.028 (0.017)	−0.037** (0.017)	−0.029* (0.017)
Anti-Elite	−0.170*** (0.016)	−0.193*** (0.016)	−0.180*** (0.016)
Social Lifestyle	−0.028** (0.014)	−0.032** (0.014)	−0.020 (0.014)
Relative Redistribution:ISCO89	−4.012*** (1.539)		
Social Justice:ISCO89		−0.179 (0.112)	
Poverty Prevention:ISCO89			−0.211*** (0.079)
Individuals	14,680	14,680	14,680

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01: Standard errors clustered at country level in parentheses. Base category: social-democratic party in each country. Base education: ISCED 1. Inflow and stock of foreign-born population expressed as a percentage of the local population.

Table 6: Specification with *Unemp*

	Voted Populist		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Inflow Foreign-Born	-2.352 (6.688)	-20.050*** (6.704)	-14.548** (6.622)
Stock Foreign-Born	-0.108*** (0.010)	-0.105*** (0.010)	-0.099*** (0.010)
Age	-0.017*** (0.002)	-0.020*** (0.002)	-0.017*** (0.002)
Female	-0.232*** (0.061)	-0.232*** (0.061)	-0.212*** (0.061)
ISCED 2	0.900*** (0.122)	0.843*** (0.122)	0.996*** (0.122)
ISCED 3	0.309*** (0.109)	0.298*** (0.108)	0.455*** (0.108)
ISCED 4	-0.011 (0.166)	-0.052 (0.166)	0.118 (0.166)
ISCED 5+	-0.094 (0.121)	-0.144 (0.121)	0.029 (0.120)
Relative Redistribution	5.106*** (0.502)		
Social Justice		0.306*** (0.030)	
Poverty Prevention			0.217*** (0.027)
Unemp	0.795* (0.474)	1.629** (0.638)	1.450*** (0.465)
Immigration	-0.181*** (0.008)	-0.171*** (0.008)	-0.170*** (0.009)
Redistribution	-0.025 (0.017)	-0.037** (0.017)	-0.028 (0.017)
Anti-Elite	-0.168*** (0.016)	-0.192*** (0.016)	-0.179*** (0.016)
Social Lifestyle	-0.027* (0.014)	-0.032** (0.014)	-0.019 (0.014)
Relative Redistribution:Unemp	-2.467 (1.558)		
Social Justice:Unemp		-0.249** (0.098)	
Poverty Prevention:Unemp			-0.220*** (0.072)
Individuals	14,680	14,680	14,680

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01: Standard errors clustered at country level in parentheses. Base category: social-democratic party in each country. Base education: ISCED 1. Inflow and stock of foreign-born population expressed as a percentage of the local population.

consistent with the rational voter theory. Nevertheless, only the parameters for positions on immigration and anti-elite rhetoric are statistically significant in every specification. The attitude towards social lifestyle, in this case the attitude towards homosexuality, does not significantly correlate with higher probability of voting for the right-wing populist parties.

Turning to other variables of interest, we can observe that being economically vulnerable is associated with an increased probability of voting for the populist right-wing parties. In most specifications, the direct coefficient of being in the first income tercile or being a low-skilled worker is significant at the 1% level. On the other hand, low-skilled jobs or previous incidence of unemployment show weaker correlations. Across all specifications, there is significant evidence of a positive correlation between measures of the welfare state and voting for the populist right. However, since the number of countries in our sample is fairly low, this result should be regarded with caution.

The most important result is the relationship between the welfare state institutions and economic vulnerability. We observe a significant and consistently negative relationship between the measures of the welfare state interacted with economic vulnerability and voting for the populist right. This suggests that welfare state institutions do indeed moderate the tendency of economically vulnerable voters to vote for the populist right, relative to the social-democratic parties in each country. Comparing the size of the coefficient, it is highest for the *IncSub* measure, related to the subjective income situation; twice as high as for the *Unemp* variable related to incidence of unemployment. The weakest associations can be observed for the *ISCO* variable, which measures having manufacturing or elementary jobs.

Typical control variables used in studies of support for the populist right show the expected signs. Females vote less often for the populist right parties. Age is also negatively associated with voting for the populist right. The highest probabilities of voting for the populist right are observed for persons with ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 education levels, that is, lower and upper secondary education.

Our individual-level data allow us to consider the marginal effects of welfare state provisions conditional on belonging to the economically vulnerable group, but also conditional on ideological stances (full results in Table 8 in the Appendix). Figure ?? presents the marginal

effects of *Social Justice* for persons in the *IncSub3* category, dependent on the ideological distances in the four analyzed dimensions. The horizontal axis represents percentiles of the distance between the voter and the party, where 0 is the shortest possible distance (voter's position very close to the party's position) and 100 is the farthest possible distance.

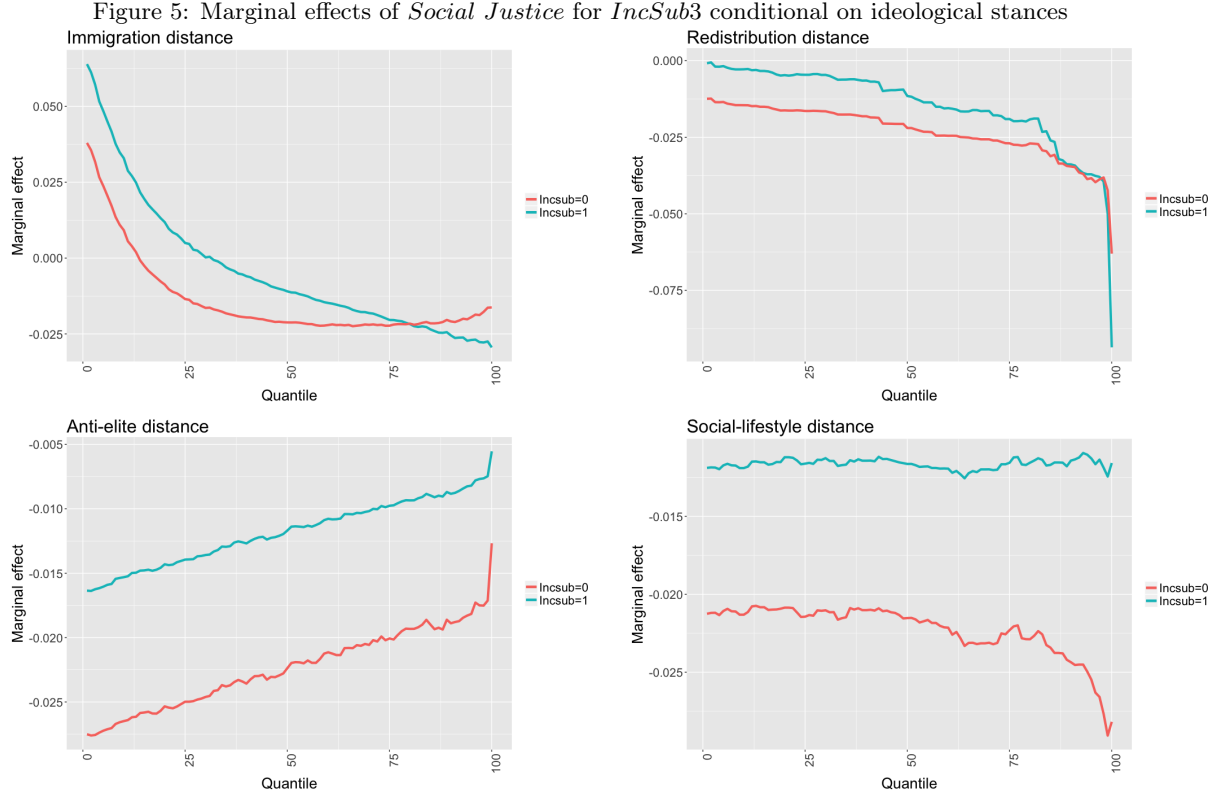
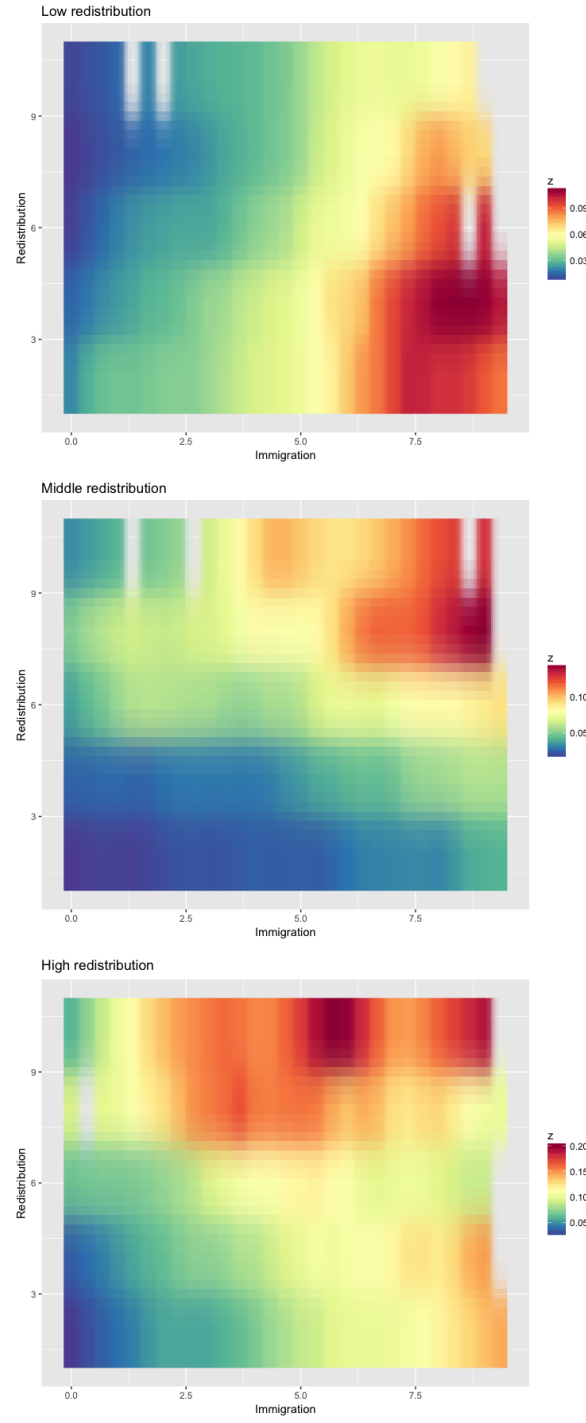


Figure ?? suggests that the relationship between the welfare state institutions and the probability of voting for the populist right for low-income groups is not linear, but indeed depends on the ideological stance of the voter. For the voters who are ideologically close to the platforms of the populists on the immigration issue, having low income combined with a strong welfare state has a positive effect on the probability of voting for the populist right. On the other hand, low-income voters who are further away from the populists' platforms are less likely to vote for the populists in countries with a stronger welfare state. These results confirm that there is an interrelation between the way the welfare state affects voting intentions and how it potentially affects ideological stances. It is, however, not possible to identify, within this framework, how much of the "welfare chauvinism" works directly through the role of the

Figure 6: Voting probabilities dependent on immigration and redistribution stances: countries with low (top), middle (middle) and high (bottom) levels of social justice



welfare state and how much works indirectly through the impact of the welfare state on the anti-immigration platforms of parties and/or the anti-immigration stances of the voters.

Regarding the question of whether welfare chauvinism becomes more salient in determining an individual's vote, we present the results of regressions interacting the welfare state measures with the ideological distance on immigration issues. Results are presented in Table 7. Although the interaction term between relative redistribution and economic vulnerability is still significant, it is indeed clear that the salience of the immigration platform increases with increasing measures of the welfare state. For all three measures, the interaction between the ideological distance with respect to the immigration platform and the measure of the welfare state is negative and statistically significant.

The latter result can also be interpreted as visualized in Figure 6. This shows the estimated probabilities of voting for the PRRP given the positions of voters on immigration and redistribution issues. Panels correspond to three groups of countries: with low redistribution (*Social Justice* index in the first tercile), medium redistribution (second tercile) and high redistribution (third tercile). We can observe that, compared to countries with low and middle levels of the welfare state, the probability of voting for the PRRP increases for the voters whose stance on immigration is further away from the party in countries with high social justice. In other words, voters in high-redistribution countries are more likely to vote for the PRRP even if they have a more moderate view on migration, compared to countries with lower levels of redistribution, where voters for the populist right are predominantly those who very strongly oppose migration.

4. Conclusions

There is an ongoing discussion in the literature about the role of socioeconomic factors as a driver of success for right-wing populist parties. We focus on two strands of argument relating to the welfare state and its impact on PRRP support. On the one hand, generous social policy regimes may mitigate the adverse economic effects of globalization and thus make workers less vulnerable to the appeal of populist radical right parties. On the other hand, generous welfare regimes may make voters more concerned about increased numbers of

Table 7: Interaction of welfare state measures and ideological distance on immigration

	Voted populist		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Age	−0.024*** (0.002)	−0.023*** (0.002)	−0.024*** (0.002)
Female	−0.282*** (0.064)	−0.283*** (0.064)	−0.273*** (0.064)
ISCED 2	0.557*** (0.132)	0.549*** (0.132)	0.605*** (0.133)
ISCED 3	−0.062 (0.118)	−0.074 (0.118)	0.005 (0.119)
ISCED 4	−0.296* (0.175)	−0.347** (0.175)	−0.226 (0.175)
ISCED 5+	−0.296** (0.129)	−0.371*** (0.129)	−0.261** (0.130)
Inflow Foreign-Born	27.454*** (7.350)	14.720** (7.028)	19.781*** (7.107)
Stock Foreign-Born	−0.191*** (0.011)	−0.191*** (0.011)	−0.182*** (0.011)
Immigration	0.277*** (0.072)	−0.055 (0.066)	0.048 (0.055)
Redistribution	−0.089*** (0.018)	−0.088*** (0.018)	−0.094*** (0.018)
Anti-Elite	−0.115*** (0.017)	−0.153*** (0.017)	−0.114*** (0.017)
Social Lifestyle	−0.008 (0.015)	−0.015 (0.015)	−0.020 (0.014)
Social Justice	0.725*** (0.040)		
Relative Redistribution		17.115*** (0.850)	
Poverty Prevention			0.745*** (0.040)
IncSub	0.437 (1.032)	0.944 (0.737)	1.059 (0.760)
IncSub:Immigration	0.066* (0.036)	0.097*** (0.032)	0.041 (0.037)
Social Justice:IncSub	−0.084 (0.139)		
Social Justice:Immigration	−0.113*** (0.012)		
Relative Redistribution:IncSub		−4.959** (1.955)	
Relative Redistribution:Immigration		−1.188*** (0.224)	
Poverty Prevention:IncSub			−0.181* (0.094)
Poverty Prevention:Immigration			−0.078*** (0.009)
Observations	14,414	14,414	14,414

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01: Standard errors clustered at country level in parentheses. Base category: social-democratic party in each country. Base education: ISCED 1. Inflow and stock of foreign-born population expressed as a percentage of the local population.

low-skilled immigrants entering a country and potentially claiming benefits paid for largely by the taxes and contributions of the native population.

Summarizing our results, we can conclude that more than one effect is in fact in place when considering the role of the welfare state on votes for the populist right. Firstly, social protection seems to moderate the economic vulnerability. In countries with higher relative redistribution and/or poverty prevention, the economically vulnerable are less likely to vote for the PRRP. Secondly, the direct effect of social welfare measures on the populist vote is indeed positive when considering individual voters' positions. Thirdly, a stronger welfare state contributes to the increasing salience of the immigration platform for voting decisions. As a result, voters in high-redistribution countries are more likely to vote for the PRRP if they have a more moderate view on migration.

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Appendix

Table 8: Specification with *IncSub* and interactions with political stances.

	Voted Populist
Inflow Foreign-Born	26.133*** (7.497)
Stock Foreign-Born	-0.191*** (0.012)
Age	-0.024*** (0.002)
Female	-0.279*** (0.064)
ISCED 2	0.551*** (0.132)
ISCED 3	-0.067 (0.118)
ISCED 4	-0.301* (0.175)
ISCED 5+	-0.302** (0.130)
Immigration	0.436*** (0.079)
Redistribution	0.062 (0.199)
Anti-Elite	-0.113*** (0.017)
Social Lifestyle	-0.009 (0.015)
Social Justice	0.735*** (0.041)
IncSub	0.189 (1.040)
Social Justice:IncSub	-0.087 (0.140)
Social Justice:Immigration	-0.137*** (0.013)
IncSub:Immigration	0.082** (0.036)
IncSub:Redistribution	0.171*** (0.049)
Social Justice:Redistribution	-0.027 (0.030)
Observations	14,414

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01: Standard errors clustered at country level in parentheses. Base category: social-democratic party in each country. Base education: ISCED 1. Inflow and stock of foreign-born population expressed as a percentage of the local population.