

Immigration Attitudes and Support for Radical Left Parties in Europe

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Abstract

The relationship between immigration attitudes and support for radical left parties (RLPs) remains undertheorized and empirical findings are mixed. In this thesis, I improve on the existing literature by differentiating between economic and cultural threat perceptions towards immigrants. Using multinomial logistic regression, I find that while cultural threat perceptions decrease support for RLPs, economic threat perceptions may increase support for the radical left; perceived threat from immigrants to native jobs appears to be a particularly salient economic threat for RLP voters. Initial mediation analysis suggests that attitudes towards restricting immigration and redistribution mediate these relationships. My results suggest that the conventional wisdom that left-wing voters are uniformly pro-immigrant needs to be reassessed.

Contents

Introduction	3
Literature Review	7
Theory	9
Data and Methods	17
Results	20
Conclusion	29
Appendix	31

Introduction

For many contemporary analysts and scholars, the fall of the Soviet Union and Communist Bloc in 1989-1991 presaged the demise of anti-capitalist politics in general. Fukuyama reflected the beliefs of many when he declared that the world had reached ‘the end of history’, where liberal, capitalist democracy faced few ideological enemies.¹ Thus, Europe’s radical left parties (RLPs), with their anti-capitalist policies and ambivalent relationship to liberal democracy, would be consigned to irrelevance.

Indeed, many RLPs, did see their influence wane in this era,² and still others moderated their hardline economic stances.³ However, despite undergoing what March and Mudde term ‘decline and mutation’,⁴ RLPs retain significant popular support across Europe: from 2000 to 2011, RLPs averaged 8.3% support across Europe; in comparison, radical right parties (RRPs) received 9.6%.⁵ RLPs also increasingly help form and support governments: while prior to 1990, RLP participation in government was rare,⁶ from 1990 to 2011, 16 European RLPs participated in or provided parliamentary support to governments in 15 countries.⁷ This trend has only increased in recent years with the ascension of RLPs such as SYRIZA and Podemos to governments in Greece and Spain, respectively. Moreover, RLPs show substantial opportunities for growth; March and Rommerskirchen suggest that RLPs can benefit from high levels of unemployment⁸ and popular animosity towards austerity,⁹ conditions which have prevailed throughout Europe in recent years and may continue given the economic shock brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, despite this, RLPs have received relatively scant scholarly attention, particularly compared to oft-studied RRP. March argues that much of the research on RLPs has focused on single case studies and that the cross-national literature that does exist focuses primarily on Communist parties.¹⁰ Recent years have seen March’s critiques of the literature partially answered: Santana and Rama,¹¹ Rooduijn et al.,¹² March and Rommerskirchen,¹³ and Visser et al.¹⁴ (among others) all provide large-N, cross-national studies of the radical left. However, results are often contradictory, and many gaps remain in our knowledge.

This thesis attempts to fill one such gap by investigating the relationship between immigration attitudes and support for RLPs. This question is of both scholarly and practical importance. From a scholarly perspective, understanding how immigration opinions shape support for the radical left not only furthers our understanding of RLPs specifically but also furthers our understanding of the mechanisms connecting immigration attitudes to policy opinions and party support in general. Practically, both immigration and RLPs play substantial and growing roles in European politics; understanding the connection between immigration opinions and RLP support may prove important in understanding the trajectory of parties, policies, and politics across the continent.

After briefly conceptualizing and defining both the radical left and immigration attitudes, I argue that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the relationship between immigration attitudes and RLP support is puzzling. Then, I review the empirical literature on this question, arguing that findings are mixed and plagued by inconsistencies in how immigration attitudes are measured and who supporters of RLPs are compared to. In

¹Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", *National Interest*, Summer 1989, p. 4.

²Luke March and Cas Mudde, "What's Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left After 1989: Decline and Mutation," *Comparative European Politics* 3 (2005), p. 24.

³Andreas Fagerholm, "What is Left for the radical left? A comparative examination of the policies of radical left parties in Western Europe before and after 1989", *Contemporary European Studies* 25 (2016), pp. 24-5.

⁴March and Mudde, "What's Left of the Radical Left?", p. 24.

⁵Luke March and Charlotte Rommerskirchen, "Out of left field? Explaining the variable electoral success of European radical left parties," *Party Politics* 21 (2015), p. 40.

⁶Ibid., p. 40.

⁷Luke March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 208.

⁸March and Rommerskirchen, "Out of left field?", p. 48.

⁹Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe*, p. 4.

¹¹Andrés Santana and José Rama, "Electoral support for left wing populist parties in Europe: addressing the globalization cleavage", *European Politics and Society* 19 (2018).

¹²Matthijs Rooduijn, et al., "Radical distinction: Support for radical left and radical right parties in Europe", *European Union Politics* 18 (2017).

¹³March and Rommerskirchen, "Out of left field?".

¹⁴Mark Visser, et al., "Support for Radical Left Ideologies in Europe", *European Journal of Political Research* 53 (2014).

my next section, I outline my theoretical argument, arguing that while cultural threat perceptions are likely to decrease support for RLPs, the effects of economic threat are ambiguous. Then, I outline my empirical strategy; improving on past research, I use multinomial logistic regression to model the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLP support. I then present my three main findings: first, cultural threat perceptions are associated with lower support for the radical left; second, economic threat perceptions, and perceived threat to jobs in particular, are associated with greater support for RLPs; and, third, policy preferences on restricting immigration and redistribution mediate these relationships. Finally, I conclude by noting both the limitations and implications of my work and avenues for future research.

Defining the Radical Left

In line with the preponderance of the literature, I use March and Mudde's conceptualization of the radical left.¹⁵ As left parties, RLPs emphasise economic inequality as a principal component of contemporary social relations and advocate for redistribution and collective economic rights. March and Mudde define parties as radical if they pursue 'root and branch' systemic reform of the prevailing political or economic system rather than marginal changes. As such, RLPs are radical insofar as they reject 'the underlying socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism and its values and practices'.¹⁶ In practice, RLP radicalism varies from the relatively mild rejection of consumerism to the complete rejection of capitalism. In their radicalism RLPs may violate norms of liberalism (e.g., property rights), but they are not extremist in that they do not reject democracy per se.¹⁷ Thus, while there is substantial diversity among RLPs,¹⁸ they are generally class-focused, redistributive, and anti-capitalist. Paradigmatic examples of these parties thus range from old, orthodox Communist parties (e.g., French Communist Party) to the more moderate democratic socialists (e.g., Swedish Left Party) to newer, more populist left-wing parties (e.g., Germany's Die Linke).¹⁹

Defining Immigration Attitudes

Immigration attitudes are multidimensional: People have beliefs about how immigration affects/will affect their country, how many immigrants ought to be permitted, what kinds of immigrants ought to be permitted in, and how immigrants ought to be treated when they arrive.²⁰ Here, however, I focus on one dimension: sociotropic immigration threat perceptions, defined as the degree to which someone believes that immigration will damage, or benefit, the national interest.

The Puzzle

The relationship between immigration attitudes and support for the radical left may seem obvious: the left is typically associated with being both economically egalitarian and socially liberal. Accordingly, we might expect that supporters of the radical left are relatively comfortable with immigration. However, as Lipset argues, the association between economic and social egalitarianism is more an accident of history than ideological necessity.²¹ Indeed, there are several reasons to doubt a simple relationship between immigration attitudes and RLP support.

The issue of immigration particularly stresses underlying tensions in leftist ideology. Marxist, communist, and socialist intellectuals have long been committed to internationalism and cross-national class solidarity, based in the idea that the working classes in all countries are united in their exploitation by capitalists. Hence, Marx and Engel's famous slogan 'Working men of all countries, unite!'²² and the founding of numerous

¹⁵March and Mudde, "What's Left of the Radical Left", p. 25.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁸Raul Gomez et al., "Varieties of Radicalism: Examining the Diversity of Radical Left Parties and Voters in Western Europe", *West European Politics* 39 (2016), pp. 361-4.

¹⁹March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe*, pp. 17-8

²⁰Jens Hainmueller and Daniel Hopkins, "Public Attitudes Towards Immigration", *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 17 (2014), p. 228.

²¹Seymour M. Lipset, "Democracy and Working-Class Authoritarianism", *American Sociological Review* 24 (1959), p. 483.

²²Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Minneapolis: First Avenue Classics, 2018), p. 42.

international socialist groups. Indeed, while Marx himself was not opposed to national liberation struggles,²³ he was concerned that national feeling could undermine class solidarity. Thus, Marx criticized anti-Irish racism among the English working class, arguing that English nationalism served the interests of the dominant classes by preventing the development of class consciousness and solidarity.²⁴ In the present, RLPs have, with some exceptions, continued this ideological tradition.²⁵ On the other hand, as political parties based in states, RLPs have (at least implicitly) accepted national boundaries and committed themselves to bettering the circumstances of the marginalized *within* their own countries. Generally, the dual commitments to cross-national solidarity and improving conditions in the nation state need not conflict, but in the case of immigration policy, they might. Accepting, for instance, relatively poor migrants might demonstrate cross-national class solidarity; however, the same decision could undermine (or be perceived to undermine) the fortunes of domestic workers or welfare states.

Historically and presently, left-wing parties have reckoned with the challenges this tension represents. Fielding argues that arguments over the British Labour Party's immigration policy in the 1960s stemmed from fundamental disagreements about the purpose of left-wing politics; some members saw Labour's purpose as espousing progressive, universalistic values, while others saw Labour as a vehicle for promoting the more narrow political interests of manual workers and trade unionists.²⁶ While Labour is not an RLP, this example nevertheless demonstrates the challenges that immigration represents for leftist ideology. This tension continues to be expressed in RLPs' policies, which do not universally demonstrate liberalism or internationalism. Krause finds that while the majority of RLPs are located in the left-libertarian space, there is significantly greater dispersion on the non-economic dimension compared to economic issues, with some RLPs taking conservative positions on social issues including minority rights.²⁷ On nationalism in particular, Halikiopoulou et al. investigate RLPs' positions on nationalism in particular, finding that while RLPs do not express significant degrees of ethnic, cultural, or territorial nationalism, they are *economically* nationalistic, in that they often support the maintenance of trade barriers and domestic national currencies.²⁸ While trade protectionism is qualitatively different from immigration restriction, this still demonstrates a willingness to prioritize the domestic economy over international integration. Specific cases demonstrate these general trends: In Spain, Raul and Gomez find that the RLP Podemos often makes appeals to Spanish national identity by criticizing perceived German hegemony and invoking Spanish national symbols.²⁹

Moreover, sociologically, the groups that support RLPs are not conventionally liberal. In 1959 Lipset illustrated the tension between leftist ideology and leftist constituencies with his finding that, across several Western democracies, the working classes tended to be more socially authoritarian than the middle class while also holding the left-wing economic preferences that characterize the radical left.³⁰ Many of Lipset's insights still hold true today. For instance, O'Malley finds that demographically, Sinn Féin supporters resemble the supporters of the highly exclusionary radical right; supporters of the party are more likely to be male, poorer, and less well educated.³¹ Cross-nationally, RLP supporters are more diverse. However, their support coalitions still contain groups who are, on average, relatively ambivalent towards social liberalism and internationalism. For example, Visser et al. find that while the highly educated are most likely to hold radical left ideological views, education has non-monotonic effects: those with the lowest levels are also more likely than average to support radical left ideology.³² Given that education is strongly predictive of

²³Kevin B. Anderson, "Nationalism, Class, and Revolution", in *The Oxford Handbook of Karl Marx*, ed. Matt Vidal, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 464.

²⁴Ibid., p. 470.

²⁵March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe*, p. 9.

²⁶Steven Fielding, "Brotherhood and the brothers: responses to 'coloured' immigration in the British Labour Party c. 1951-1965", *Journal of Political Ideologies* 3 (1998), p. 79.

²⁷Werner Krause, "Appearing moderate or radical? Radical left party success and the two-dimensional political space", *West European Politics* 43 (2020), pp. 1374-5 .

²⁸Daphne Halikopoulou et al., "The paradox of nationalism: The common denominator of radical right and radical left euroscepticism", *European Journal of Political Research* 51 (2012), p. 526.

²⁹Luis Ramiro and Raul Gomez, "Radical-Left Populism during the Great Recession: Podemos and Its Competition with the Established Radical Left", *Political Studies* 65 (2017).

³⁰Lipset, "Democracy and Working-Class Authoritarianism", pp. 485-7.

³¹O'Malley, "Why is there no Radical Right Party in Ireland?", p. 969.

³²Visser et al., "Support for Radical Left Ideologies in Europe", p. 550.

liberalism generally³³ and views on immigration in particular³⁴, this suggests a complicated relation between immigration attitudes and RLP support.

Thus, it is far from clear that the simple heuristic that left-wing parties and their supporters are pro-immigration will universally apply to RLPs. Both ideologically and sociologically, immigration presents a challenging issue for RLPs. Thus, the relationship between immigration attitudes and RLP support requires careful theoretical and empirical consideration.

³³Paula Surridge, "Education and liberalism: pursuing the link", *Oxford Review of Education* 42 (2016), p. 146.

³⁴Hainmueller and Hopkins, "Public Attitudes", p. 228.

Literature Review

The ambiguous relationship between immigration attitudes and support for the radical left is further reflected in the available empirical literature. Findings are often statistically weak and, in aggregate, contradictory:

First, several works examine the cross-national relationship between immigration attitudes and RLP support. Rooduijn et al. find that compared to both mainstream parties and the radical right, radical left voters are less anti-immigrant.³⁵ Rooduijn and Burgoon's findings are similar, with radical left voters less likely than mainstream voters to express anti-immigrant views.³⁶ However, in both papers, the effects of immigration attitudes are relatively small. In contrast, Charalambous and Lamprianou find a more variable relationship; the authors find that anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with increased RLP support in some countries and decreased or unchanged support elsewhere.³⁷ Unlike Rooduijn et al. and Rooduijn and Burgoon, Charalambous and Lamprianou use social democratic and green voters as their comparison group, which may account for their difference in findings. Other authors find that radical left supporters are relatively hostile towards immigration. Santana and Rama find that supporters of left-wing populist parties tend to express more restrictionist stances on immigration than mainstream left supporters.³⁸ Furthermore, Rama and Santana find that supporters of left-wing populist parties and right-wing populist parties express similar scepticism towards immigration, particularly its economic effects;³⁹ however, these conclusions are drawn from a relatively small sample of parties, mostly confined to Eastern Europe. Finally, van Hauwaert and van Kessel find that supporters of left-wing populist parties are less likely than supporters of non-populist parties to believe that immigrants damage the country's cultural life but are *not* less likely to believe they damage the economy.⁴⁰

Second, several authors examine the relationship between immigration preferences and support for particular RLPs. O'Malley finds that Sinn Féin voters are relatively anti-immigrant compared to the Irish electorate,⁴¹ though he attributes this to Ireland's unique nationalist history, rather than Sinn Féin's radical leftism.⁴² In Greece, Karyotis et al. find that SYRIZA voters hold relatively moderate opinions on immigration, approximately in line with social democrat voters (and much more moderate than the decidedly pro-immigrant opinions of SYRIZA MPs).⁴³ In the case of the Dutch radical left Socialist Party, Akkerman et al. find that while Socialist Party supporters are less anti-immigrant than Dutch radical right voters, they are no more pro-immigrant than the supporters of non-radical parties.⁴⁴

Third, some authors investigate the relationship between immigration attitudes and professed radical or far-left ideology. Visser et al. find that adhering to far left ideology is associated with being more pro-immigrant.⁴⁵ However, Kopyciok and Silver find a non-monotonic relationship: those on the extreme right *and* extreme left are more likely to hold xenophobic attitudes than more moderate respondents.⁴⁶ In addition, they find that those who place themselves on the extreme left are particularly worried about the effects of immigrants on the welfare state.⁴⁷ Given the strong relationship between professed left-right ideology and RLP support,⁴⁸

³⁵Rooduijn et al., "Radical Distinction", pp. 549, 551.

³⁶Matthijs Rooduijn and Brian Burgoon, "The Paradox of Well-being: Do Unfavorable Socioeconomic and Sociocultural Contexts Deepen or Dampen Radical Left and Right Voting Among the Less Well-Off?", *Comparative Political Studies* 51 (2017), p. 1738.

³⁷Giorgos Charalambous and Iasonas Lamprianou, "The (non) particularities of West European radical left party supporters: comparing left party families", *European Political Science Review* 9 (2017), p. 391.

³⁸Andrés Santana and José Rama, "Electoral support for left wing populist parties in Europe", p. 566.

³⁹José Rama and Andrés Santana, "In the name of the people: left populists versus right populists", *European Politics and Society* 21 (2020), p. 25

⁴⁰Steven M. van Hauwaert and Stijn van Kessel, "Beyond protest and discontent: A cross-national analysis of the effect of populist attitudes and issue positions on populist party support", *European Journal of Political Research* 57 (2018), p. 71.

⁴¹O'Malley, "Why is there no Radical Right Party in Ireland?", p. 972.

⁴²Ibid., p. 974.

⁴³Georgios Karyotis et al., "Representation and Austerity Politics: Attitudes of Greek Voters and Elites Compared", *South European Society and Politics* 19 (2014), p. 445.

⁴⁴Agnes Akkerman et al. "‘We the People’ or ‘We the Peoples’? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left in the Netherlands", *Swiss Political Science Review* 23 (2017), p. 391.

⁴⁵Mark Visser, et al. "Support for radical left ideologies in Europe" *European Journal of Political Research* 53 (2014), p. 552.

⁴⁶Svenja Kopyciok and Hilary Silver, "Left-Wing Xenophobia in Europe", *Frontiers in Sociology* 6 (2021), p. 7

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁸Rooduijn and Burgoon, "The Paradox of Well-being", p. 1738

these two findings give conflicting expectations for the effects of immigration attitudes on support for RLPs.

A final strand of the literature examines the influence of actual immigration flows on RLP voting. Edo et al. use an instrumental variable strategy to estimate the causal effect of immigration on support for the far-left in France, finding that increased immigration is associated with decreased vote shares for the far-left, but the findings are fragile and depend on model specification. In addition, the authors find no evidence in survey data that increased immigration decreases the probability of RLP support.⁴⁹ Harmon uses a similar strategy to estimate the political effects of immigration in Denmark, concluding that ethnic diversity damages the electoral fortunes of left parties;⁵⁰ however, the paper does not distinguish between the radical left and mainstream left, making it difficult to draw conclusions about how immigration flows affect the *radical* left specifically. Alesina and Tabellini summarize that immigration tends to decrease support for both mainstream and radical left parties.⁵¹ Thus, the literature suggests higher immigrant flows decrease support for radical left parties, though the finding is much less corroborated than the association between immigration and increases in support for the far-right. If we assume that increasing immigration increases the salience of immigrant threat, this suggests that perceived threat from immigration may decrease RLP support.

Thus, in aggregate, the empirical literature suggests that anti-immigration views, including perceived threat from immigration, exert weak negative effects on support for the radical left. However, these findings are not universal and sensitive to model specification. In particular, I identify two features of the literature that make the current findings difficult to interpret:

First, different works compare RLP supporters to different comparison groups, often without any explanation as to why a particular comparison group is chosen. In various works, RLP supporters are compared to voters for the radical right, mainstream left, or all other voters. While no comparison group is perfect and there are valid reasons to prefer different comparisons, this is nonetheless problematic because the choice of comparison group affects the ultimate conclusion. For instance, RLP supporters are almost certainly less anti-immigration than RRP supporters, but this does not necessarily mean that supporters of RLPs are pro-immigrant. Conversely, comparing RLP supporters to all other voters, as is common, risks concealing important nuances. In particular, this strategy prohibits an exploration of effects *within* the left bloc: immigration attitudes may have relatively small effects on aggregate RLP support but nonetheless shift the relative balance of power of RLPs versus the mainstream left. Such effects are not only of academic interest but is substantively important for European politics and governance. I attempt to address this by using multinomial logistic regression, which allows me to compare RLP supporters to the supporters of multiple other party families. This allows me to explore both how immigration attitudes affect overall RLP support and how immigration attitudes affect RLP support compared to other specific party families.

Second, different works conceptualize and measure immigration attitudes differently. In particular, it is common to combine multiple variables into an index of immigration hostility or ethnic threat. This approach obscures important relationships; for instance, null results for an aggregate anti-immigration index may conceal that different attitudes exert different effects. Theoretically, as I demonstrate below, different kinds of immigration attitudes may have divergent effects on party support. Empirically, the importance of this distinction is validated by multiple authors (e.g., Lucassen and Lubbers⁵², Card et al.⁵³). To rectify this I focus on immigration threat perceptions specifically and differentiate between different kinds of threat in both my theoretical argument and empirical analysis.

⁴⁹Anthony Edo, et al. "Immigration and electoral support for the far-left and the far-right", *European Economic Review* 115 (2019), pp. 115, 130

⁵⁰Nikolaj A. Harmon, "Immigration, Ethnic Diversity, and Political Outcomes: Evidence from Denmark", *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 120 (2018), p. 1066

⁵¹Alberto Alesina and Marco Tabellini, "The Political Effects of Immigration: Culture or Economics?", Harvard Business School Working Paper (2021), p. 7.

⁵²Geertje Lucassen and Marcel Lubbers, "Who Fears What? Explaining Far-Right-Wing Preference in Europe by Distinguishing Perceived Cultural and Economic Ethnic Threats", *Comparative Political Studies* 45 (2012), p. 564

⁵³David Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", *Journal of the European Economic Association* 101 (2012), p. 95

Theory

In order to more precisely theorize the mechanisms connecting immigration threat perceptions to RLP support, I differentiate between two categories of threat: perceived cultural threat and perceived economic threat. Lucassen and Lubbers define cultural threat as fundamentally symbolic, concerning competition over values, language, religion, and other non-material goods.⁵⁴ Those who perceive high cultural threat from immigrants believe that immigrants will undermine the symbolic character of the nation. In contrast, economic threat concerns competition over material resources, such as access to jobs and social services. Those who perceive high sociotropic economic threat worry that immigration damages the nation's economy by, for instance, damaging native labour market prospects or overwhelming social service provision. I justify this distinction theoretically below by showing that cultural and economic threat may have opposing influences on RLP support. Other works also provide empirical justification for the distinct effects of these variables: Lucassen and Lubbers find that while high ethnic and economic threat both increase support for the radical right, the effects of ethnic threat are much larger.⁵⁵ Similarly, Card et al. find that concern about 'compositional amenities' (i.e., preferences about the ethnic makeup of society) are between two and five times more important in determining desired level of immigration restriction than concerns about immigrants' effect on the economy,⁵⁶ while Lubbers finds that Euroscepticism is driven more by concerns about national identity than material well-being.⁵⁷ Thus, while there is some concern about collinearity between economic and cultural threats (e.g., Sniderman et al. find that the two are indistinguishable factorally in the Netherlands⁵⁸), the preponderance of evidence suggests that cultural and economic threat have distinct effects and need to be considered separately when modelling the impacts of immigration threat perceptions. Of course, additional categories of threat could be considered; for instance, concern about crime or terrorism. However, the literature and available data focus on cultural and economic threat perceptions. For both types of threat, I focus on sociotropic threat perceptions (i.e., how an individual believes immigration will affect the country as a whole) rather than individual threat perceptions (i.e., how an individual believe immigration will affect them personally).

Cultural Threat

There are two main mechanisms through which cultural threat perceptions could influence RLP support:

Cultural Mechanism One: Cultural Threat Leads to Preferences for Immigration Restriction:

People who perceive high cultural threat are likely to prefer lower levels of immigration since fewer immigrants pose less of a cultural threat. Numerous authors (e.g., Card et al.,⁵⁹ Sniderman et al.⁶⁰, Citrin et al.⁶¹) confirm this intuition empirically. So, we expect that people with high cultural threat perceptions will be relatively more supportive of parties that advocate restricting immigration and less supportive of parties which favor more liberal immigration policies.

Some individual RLP politicians have expressed relatively hostile views towards immigration based in cultural threat. For instance, French RLP leader Jean-Luc Melenchon advocated expelling Chechen migrants if they expressed support for political Islam on social media,⁶² and in 2008 the leader of the Danish Socialist People's Party admonished some Danish Islamic organizations for causing violence.⁶³ However, despite such comments, generally, RLPs hold relatively liberal immigration policies. The boxplots in Figure 1 shows the distribution

⁵⁴Lucassen and Lubbers, "Who Fears What?", pp. 549-50.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 564

⁵⁶Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", p. 95

⁵⁷Marcel Lubbers, "Regarding the Dutch 'nee' to the European Constitution: A test of the identity, utilitarian, and political approaches to voting 'no'", *European Union Politics* 9 (2008), p. 345.

⁵⁸Paul Sniderman et al., "Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers, Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities", *American Political Science Review* 98 (2004), p. 35.

⁵⁹Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", p. 95

⁶⁰Sniderman et al., "Predisposing Factors", p. 35.

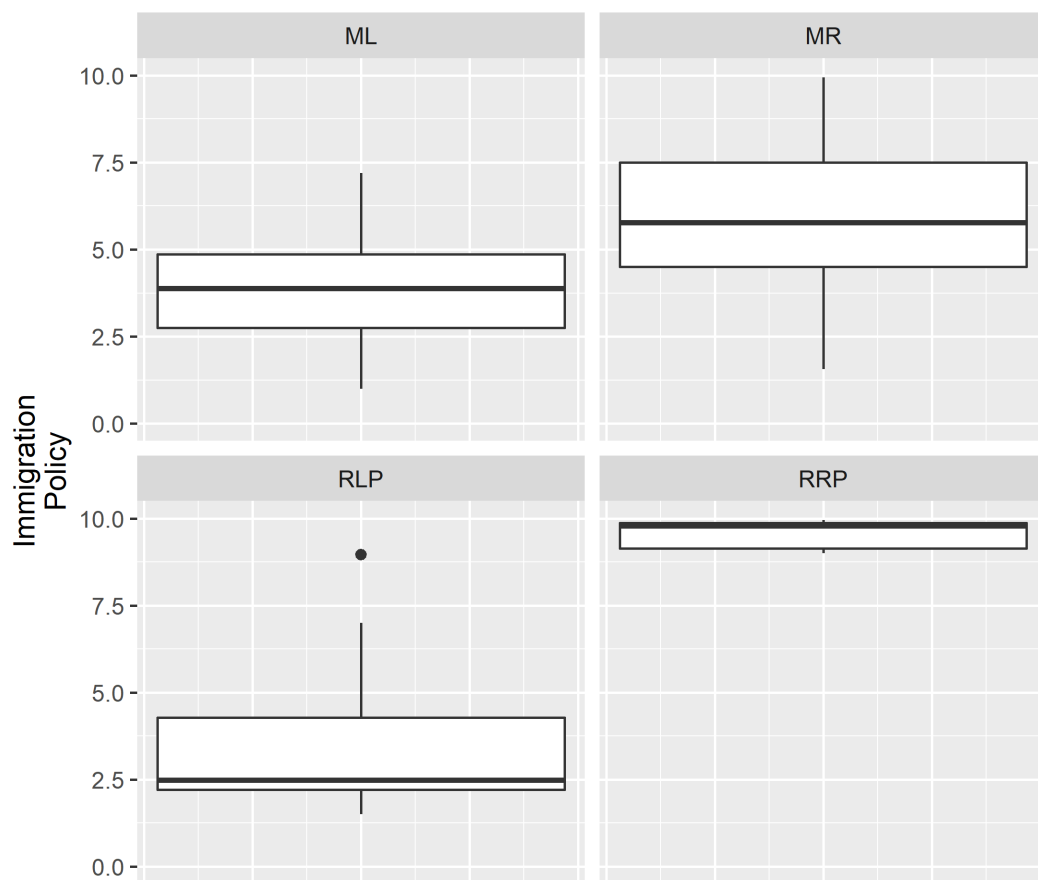
⁶¹Jack Citrin et al., "Public opinion toward immigration reform: the role of economic motivations", *Journal of Politics* 59 (1997), p. 858.

⁶²Kopcycki and Silver, "Left-Wing Xenophobia in Europe", p. 1.

⁶³March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe*, p. 106.

of immigration policies for European mainstream left (ML), mainstream right (MR), radical left (RLP), and radical right (RRP) parties as rated by the 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (lower numbers suggest more lenient policies). As the figure shows, while there are some unusually restrictive RLPs, most hold relatively liberal policies on immigration compared to right-wing parties and are approximately as liberal as the mainstream left.

Thus, based on this mechanism, higher cultural threat perceptions will *decrease* RLP support.



Note: Data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Figure 1: Immigration Policies by Party Family

Cultural Mechanism Two: Cultural Threat Decreases Support for Redistribution:

Individuals who perceive high cultural threat from immigrants will likely be less willing to dedicate money to supporting those immigrants. Combined with the (common) belief that immigrants are significantly more reliant on welfare than natives,⁶⁴ this implies that high cultural threat perceptions will decrease support for government redistribution. Finseraas refers to this as an ‘anti-solidarity’ effect, in which a dislike of immigrants results in natives demanding less redistribution.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Alberto Alesina et al., "Immigration and Redistribution", NBER Working Paper 24733, National Bureau of Economic Research (2021), pp. 16-7

⁶⁵Henning Finseraas, "Immigration and Preferences for Redistribution: An Empirical Analysis of European Survey Data", *Comparative European Politics* (2008), p. 408.

A large empirical literature provides support for this intuition:

In the United States, ethnic diversity is associated with lower support for redistribution. Luttmer finds that Americans exhibit greater support for welfare spending when their own race makes up a higher proportion of local welfare recipients.⁶⁶ Moreover, this relationship appears to be driven at least partially by racial resentment: Alesina and Glaeser find that whites who hold negative stereotypes of African Americans are less supportive of redistribution.⁶⁷ Conceptually, racial resentment is similar to cultural threat, suggesting that cultural threat may also drive opposition to redistribution.

Other works show that immigration, specifically, undermines support for the welfare state. Alesina et al. find that across European regions, support for redistribution is lower where concentrations of immigrants are higher.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the effect is particularly strong for immigrants from the Middle East, suggesting that the influence of cultural threat perceptions. Senik et al. find that natives who do not want an immigrant to marry into their family are less supportive of the welfare state.⁶⁹ In addition, Finseraas finds some empirical support for the anti-solidarity effect, finding that those who believe immigrants should be denied the same rights as natives are less supportive of redistribution.⁷⁰ The link between anti-immigrant attitudes and attitudes towards redistribution may be weakened as some parties (particularly on the radical right) campaign on a platform of welfare chauvinism, in which generous welfare benefits are restricted to natives.⁷¹ However, the empirical evidence still suggests that cultural threat perceptions reduce demand for redistribution.

Thus, we should expect people who perceive high cultural threat to become less supportive of pro-redistribution parties. But, a defining feature of RLPs is their strong support for redistribution and the welfare state. Figure 2 shows the distribution of redistribution positions for European party families, as reported by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (higher values indicate more generous redistribution policies). Indeed, as the figure shows, almost all RLPs take more left-wing positions on redistribution than even the most pro-redistribution mainstream and radical right parties. Accordingly, higher cultural threat perceptions should *decrease* support for RLPs.

Both mechanisms suggest the same effect of cultural threat, yielding the hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Higher cultural threat perceptions decrease support for RLPs.*

Economic Threat

There are three main mechanisms through which economic threat perceptions may influence support for RLPs:

Economic Mechanism One: Economic Threat Leads to Preferences for Immigration Restriction:

Fears about immigrants' impact on the economy are likely to decrease support for immigration while low economic threat perceptions will induce more liberal immigration positions. If someone believes that immigrants will harm the economic prospects of the country, then fewer immigrants will pose less of a threat. Conversely, if someone believes that immigrants will enrich the economy, then allowing more immigrants allows more of these benefits to be realized. Card et al. empirically confirm this intuition, finding that higher economic threat perceptions are associated with preferences for a more restrictive immigration policy, though the effects are considerably smaller in magnitude than the effects of cultural threat perceptions.⁷²

⁶⁶Erzo F. P. Luttmer, "Group Loyalty and Taste for Redistribution", *Journal of Political Economy* 109 (2001), p. 17.

⁶⁷Alberto Alesina and Edward Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 150.

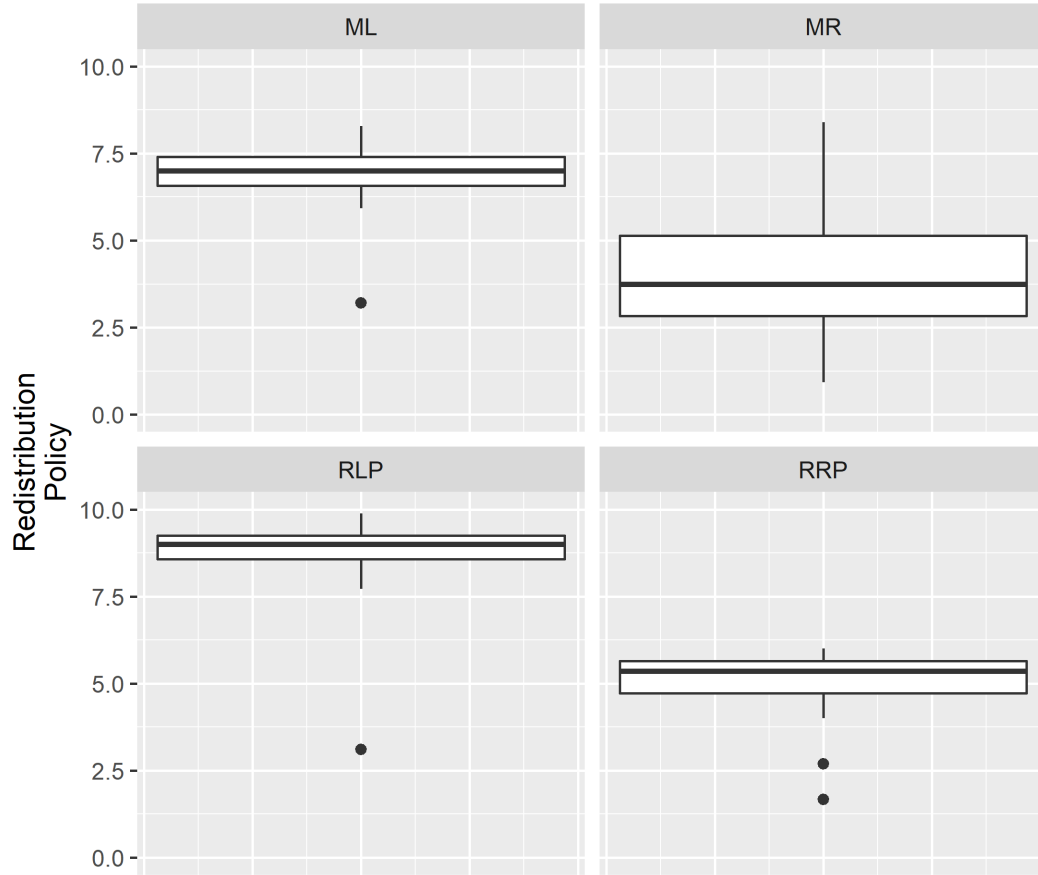
⁶⁸Alberto Alesina et al., "Immigration and Preferences for Redistribution in Europe", NBER Working Paper 25562, National Bureau of Economic Research (2019), p. 30.

⁶⁹Claudia Senik et al., "Immigration and Natives' Attitudes towards the Welfare State: Evidence from the European Social Survey", *Social Indicators Research* 91 (2009), p. 357.

⁷⁰Finseraas, "Immigration and Preferences for Redistribution", p. 420

⁷¹Gijs Schumacher and Kees van Kerbergen, "Do mainstream parties adapt to the welfare chauvinism of populist parties?", *Party Politics* 22 (2016), p. 300.

⁷²Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", p. 95.



Note: Data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Figure 2: Redistribution Policies by Party Family

Some leaders of RLPs do advocate immigration restriction to protect against what they see as the deleterious economic impacts of migration. For instance, Die Linke's Sahra Wagenknecht earned the ire of some of her party members when she advocated for greater immigration restrictions to protect the jobs and wages of German workers.⁷³ However, as shown above, RLPs generally have inclusive immigration policies. Thus, this mechanism implies that higher economic threat perceptions will *decrease* RLP support.

Economic Mechanism Two: Economic Threat Undermines Support for the Welfare State:

High economic threat perceptions from immigration may undermine support for the welfare state. If immigrants present a net economic burden to the country, then they may be reliant on government assistance while not contributing to tax revenues. This could result in higher taxation on natives or an unacceptable fiscal burden on the state. To avoid these perceived harms, natives may reduce their demand for redistribution. There is empirical evidence for this. Senik et al. find that concern about immigrants' economic impact is associated with lower support for the welfare state.⁷⁴ Moreover, Dahlberg et al. find that immigration not only decreases support for redistribution, but that this effect is stronger for those with high incomes,

⁷³Guy Chazen, "German left launches new movement to break Merkel's grip", *Financial Times* September 4, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/b906c3f4-b03d-11e8-8d14-6f049d06439c>

⁷⁴Senik et al., "Immigration and Natives' Attitudes towards the Welfare State", p. 357.

suggesting the influence of a self-interested desire to avoid paying higher taxes to support immigrants.⁷⁵

Given the universal support for high levels of redistribution by RLPs, this mechanism suggests that higher economic threat perceptions *decrease* support for the radical left.

Economic Mechanism Three: Economic Threat Increases Support for the Welfare State:

Alternatively, economic threat perceptions may *increase* support for social insurance and redistribution by inducing perceptions of economic insecurity. The compensation hypothesis argues that exposure to globalization increases demand for social insurance and redistribution as individuals attempt to compensate for the increased risk to jobs and wages that globalization entails.⁷⁶ As immigration is one dimension of globalization, this suggests that perceived risk from immigration should increase support for redistribution. Intuitively, individuals who fear immigrants will damage the job and wage prospects of natives may increase their support for redistribution to insure against the perceived risk of immigration.

Walter gives empirical evidence for the causal chain implied by the compensation hypothesis, finding that feelings of economic insecurity induced by globalization are associated with increased support for expanding the welfare state.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Finseraas gives evidence that concerns about immigration's economic impacts specifically increase support for redistribution, finding that anxiety about immigrants' impact on jobs and wages is associated with increased support for redistribution.⁷⁸

Thus, the compensation hypothesis literature suggests that economic anxiety around immigration should increase support for redistribution, which, given RLPs' strong support for redistribution, suggests that perceived economic threat from immigration should *increase* RLP support.

Of course, RLPs are not the only possible beneficiaries of support for redistribution induced by economic anxiety about immigration. For instance, welfare chauvinist RPs might also benefit. Nevertheless, the increased support for redistribution that this mechanism suggests may also be particularly beneficial to RLPs for several reasons. First, RLPs are among the most supportive of redistribution across Europe, so an increase in demand for redistribution should benefit them most. In addition, support for redistribution is the central ideological tenant of RLPs. In contrast, other pro-redistribution parties have competing ideological commitments. For instance, Green parties center environmental policy. Figure 3 thus shows the distribution of how much salience party families attach to redistribution, as coded by the Chapel Hill expert survey. As the figure shows, RLPs almost universally attach much greater salience to redistribution than the average party. This again suggests increased support for redistribution will disproportionately benefit RLPs. Finally, even though RLPs do not necessarily address the perceived harms posed by immigration specifically, both through policy and discursively, they address the perceived harms of globalization more than much of the center-left. On policy, RLPs are often Eurosceptic and protectionist.⁷⁹ Discursively, some RLPs (e.g., Podemos⁸⁰) critique the perceived 'loss of sovereignty' presented by the European Union and castigate global 'elites' for their perceived abandonment of the working class (e.g., Polk et al. find that RLPs exhibit high levels of anti-elite rhetoric salience⁸¹). For those who find immigration economically threatening, this broader critique of globalization may make RLP's policies more credible solutions to perceived harms of immigration.

It is worth noting that Mechanisms Two and Three are, if not contradictory, nonetheless in tension. It is theoretically plausible for both mechanisms to be active in a given individual, perhaps resulting in them decreasing their demand for programs viewed the benefit immigrants while increasing their demand for programs viewed the benefit natives. However, given that RLPs support increases in funding and scope of the welfare state in general, much hinges on whether economic threat increases or decreases support for the welfare state as a whole.

⁷⁵Matz Dahlberg et al., "Ethnic Diversity and Preferences for Redistribution", *Journal of Political Economy* 120 (2012), p. 68.

⁷⁶Stefanie Walter, "Globalization and the Welfare State: Testing the Microfoundations of the Compensation Hypothesis", *International Studies Quarterly* 54 (2010), p. 403.

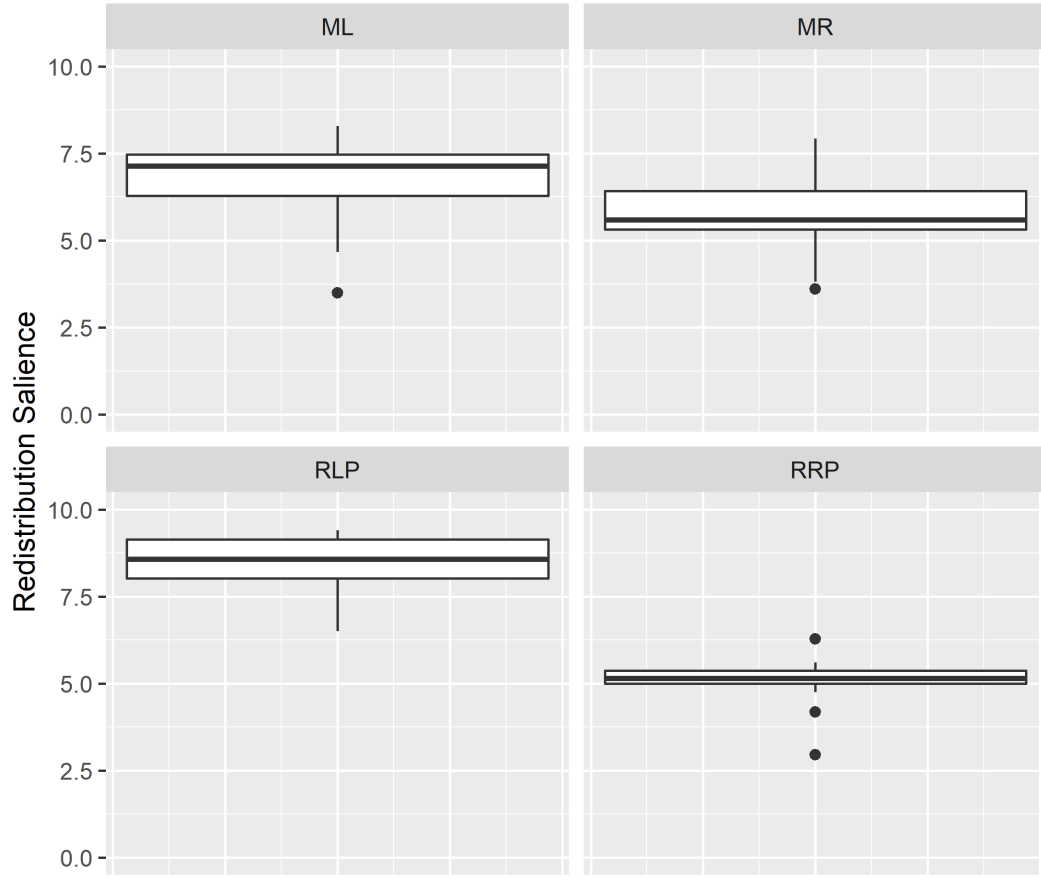
⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 417-20.

⁷⁸Finseraas, "Immigration and Preferences for Redistribution", p. 421.

⁷⁹Halikopoulou et al., "The paradox of nationalism", p. 526.

⁸⁰Raul and Gomez, "Radical-Left Populism", p. 115.

⁸¹Jonathan Polk et al., "Explaining the salience of anti-elitism and reducing political corruption for political parties in Europe with the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey data", *Research and Politics* 4 (2017), p. 4.



Note: Data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Figure 3: Redistribution Salience by Party Family

Thus, these three mechanisms give contradictory expectations for the effects of economic threat perceptions on support for RLPs. If Mechanisms One and Two prevail, then we should expect economic threat perceptions to be associated with lower support for the radical left, yielding:

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): *Higher economic threat perceptions decrease support for RLPs.*

On the other hand, if Mechanism Three outweighs the influence of Mechanisms One and Two, then economic threat perceptions will be associated with *higher* support for the radical left, yielding:

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): *Higher economic threat perceptions increase support for RLPs.*

The discussed mechanisms also suggest distinct effects for different *kinds* of economic threat. Concern about immigrants' impact on the welfare state unambiguously decreases support for RLPs both by increasing desire for immigrant restriction and by decreasing support for redistribution, implying:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Higher perceived threat from immigrants to the welfare state decreases support for RLPs.*

On the other hand, the effect of concern about immigrants' impact on labour market prospects for natives is ambiguous and dependent on whether increased demand for immigration restriction or increased support for redistribution and social insurance dominates. This yields two opposing hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a (H4a): *Higher perceived threat from immigrants to native labour markets decreases support for RLPs.*

Hypothesis 4b (H4b): *Higher perceived threat from immigrants to native labour markets increases support for RLPs.*

In sum, the discussed mechanisms give clear expectations for the effects of cultural threat on RLP support (H1) but ambiguous expectations for the effects of economic threat (H2a and H2b). With regards to the different *kinds* of economic threat, the discussion gives clear expectations for the effects of perceived threat to the welfare state (H3) but ambiguous expectations for the effects of perceived threat to native labour market prospects (H4a and H4b).

My theoretical argument also suggests possible *mediators* for the relationship between economic immigration threat perceptions and RLP support; in particular, my argument implies that attitudes towards restricting immigration and redistribution mediate this relationship. Figure 4. shows a stylized mediation model. Path 1 shows that economic threat increases support for restricting immigration which in turn decreases the probability of supporting an RLP; thus, through Path 1, economic threat decreases RLP support. Path 2 shows that economic threat has ambiguous effects on support for redistribution, while high support for redistribution increases RLP support; thus, through Path 2, economic threat has ambiguous effects on RLP support. This not only suggests that the effects of economic threat on support for RLPs are ambiguous, but that attitudes towards restriction and redistribution mediate this relationship:

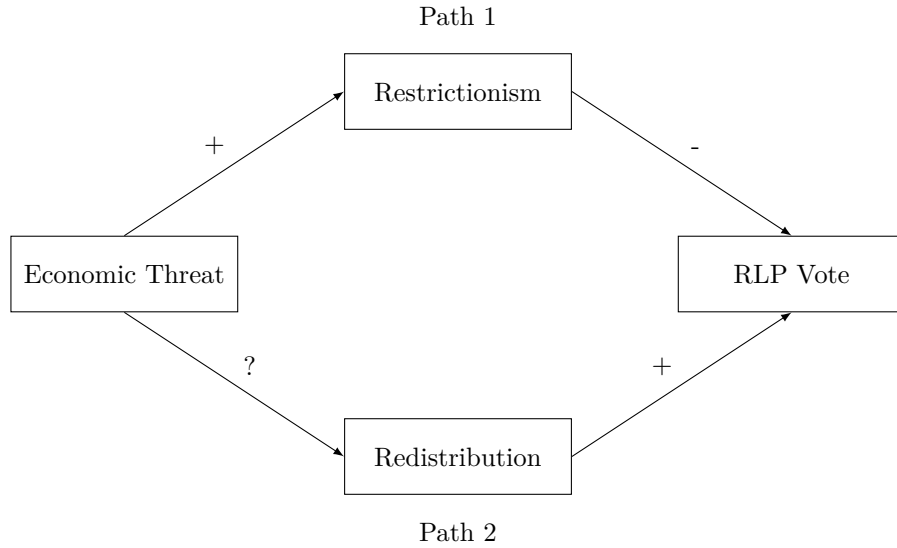


Figure 4: Economic Threat Perceptions Mediation Model

Since economic threat is theorized to decrease RLP support through its effects on restrictionism, removing the influence of Path 1 by holding restrictionism fixed should result in a more positive relationship between economic threat perceptions and support for RLPs:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *Controlling for immigration restrictionism results in a more positive relationship between economic threat perceptions and voting for RLPs*

However, because the effects of economic threat on redistribution attitudes are uncertain, the effects of controlling for redistribution attitudes are also uncertain. If economic threat decreases support for redistribution, as suggested by Mechanism Two, then economic threat will have a negative effect on RLP support through redistribution and controlling for redistribution should result in a more positive relationship between economic threat and support for RLPs:

Hypothesis 6a (H6a): *Controlling for redistribution attitudes results in a more positive relationship between economic threat perceptions and voting for RLPs*

If, on the other hand, economic threat increases support for redistribution and the welfare state as suggested by Mechanism Three, then economic threat will have a *positive* effect on RLP support through redistribution. Then controlling for this positive pathway will result in a more negative relationship between economic threat perceptions and support for RLPs.

Hypothesis 6b (H6b): *Controlling for redistribution attitudes results in a more negative relationship between economic threat perceptions and voting for RLPs*

This argument does not necessarily preclude additional variables mediating the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLP support. I merely argue that attitudes towards restrictionism and redistribution are important mediators of the relationship between immigration attitudes and support for the radical left.

Data and Methods

Data

To test the above hypotheses, I use data from nine waves of the European Social Survey (ESS), a large cross-national survey conducted every two years since 2002 which collects data on respondents' political attitudes and behaviour. The ESS has several advantages over alternative data sources. First, the ESS's large number of variables allow for a rich set of controls. Second, two ESS waves have immigration specific modules which ask more detailed questions about immigration attitudes. This allows for the exploration of more complex and specific hypotheses than other sources. Third, the ESS includes data from virtually all European radical left parties (RLPs) over multiple years, mitigating the risk that findings are driven by the inclusion or exclusion of particular parties or years. Finally, multiple other authors⁸² have used ESS data to research the connection between immigration attitudes and RLPs, facilitating the comparability of my findings.

Variables

I analyze the voting patterns of respondents in 10 European countries that had at least one radical left, radical right, mainstream left, and mainstream right party between 2002 and 2018. Parties were primarily classified as radical left based on March,⁸³ Rooduijn et al.,⁸⁴ and Rooduijn and Burgoon.⁸⁵ Where the sources disagreed in their classification of a party as radical left, the party was generally included; robustness checks (results available upon request) indicated that the exclusion of such cases does not substantially alter results. Additionally, in some countries new RLPs have emerged since the publication of party classifications. These parties were classified as RLPs based on their connections with other RLPs (for instance, splinter and successor parties). Table 1 shows the list of included countries and RLPs and notes where my classification differs from one or more of the source classifications.

The dependent variable is based on the vote choice of respondents in the most recent national election. Respondents were classified into four categories based on their party choice: non-radical left (social democratic and green parties), non-radical center/right (conservative, Christian democratic, liberal, and agrarian parties), radical left, and radical right. Respondents who voted for a different party or did not vote were excluded from the analysis. These comparison groups allow consideration of nuances of the relationship between immigration attitudes and RLP support (e.g., whether the relationship varies between the mainstream left and right) without using so many comparison groups that statistical power is lost. The comparison parties were classified primarily on the basis of ParlGov's party family variable, with the exception of RRP, which were classed based on Rooduijn et al.⁸⁶

I use four independent variables to measure different kinds of perceived immigration threat. All are measured on 0-10 scales and were recoded so that higher values correspond to greater levels of perceived threat. Two independent variables were constructed to examine H1, H2a, and H2b. Perceived cultural threat was measured by a question that asked "Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?". Overall perceived economic threat was measured by a question asking "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?". These two questions were asked in every ESS wave, allowing the inclusion of a large range of countries and years. The first and seventh waves of the ESS include additional questions on immigration that I use to examine H3, H4a, and H4b. I measure perceived threat to the welfare state with the question "On balance do you think people who come here take out more [in health benefits and welfare services] than they put in [in taxes]?". Finally, I use the question "Would you say that people who come to live here generally take jobs away from workers in [country], or generally help to create new jobs?" to measure perceived threat to natives' labour market prospects. All of these questions are commonly used

⁸²Rooduijn et al., "Radical Distinction", p. 547; Sarah Wagner, "Eurocepticism as a radical left party strategy for success", *Party Politics*, 1 (2021)

⁸³March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe*, pp. 2-3

⁸⁴Rooduijn et al., "Radical Distinction", p. 547.

⁸⁵Rooduijn and Burgoon, "The Paradox of Well-being", p. 1731.

⁸⁶Rooduijn et al. "Radical Distinction", p. 547.

Table 1: Selected Countries and Parties

Country	RLP(s)
Denmark	EL, SF
Finland	VAS
France*	PCF, LO, LCR, FDG, FI
Germany	PDS, Linke
Greece [†]	KKE, Syriza
Hungary	MP
Italy	PRC/PcDI
Netherlands	SP
Spain**	PCE, IU, Podemos
Sweden	V

*: LO and LCR are not classified as RLPs by March; FDG was an alliance that included PCF; FI was founded after the publication of the reference classifications, but is a member of the GUE/NGL group in the European parliament, whose constituent parties are almost exclusively RLPs.

†: Rooduijn et al. consider KKE as a possible *extreme* left party

** : IU is not classified as an RLP by March; Podemos was founded after the publication of the reference classifications but is widely considered an RLP in case studies (e.g., Ramiro and Gomez)

in the literature to measure perceived threat from immigration. Rooduijn et al. use a index composed of the first two questions to measure overall immigration threat.⁸⁷ Both Lucassen and Lubbers⁸⁸ and Card et al.⁸⁹ use the latter two as part of indices to measure cultural and economic threats, respectively. It is important to note that all of these threat variables are sociotropic rather than individual. Thus, my results do not necessarily speak to whether those who feel *personally* threatened by immigration are more or less likely to support RLPs.

To test my argument that restrictionism and redistribution attitudes mediate the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and support for RLPs, I present models before and after controlling for these two variables. Restrictionism is measured by whether the respondent thinks many or few immigrants should be permitted to enter the country and support for redistribution is measured by the extent to which the respondent thinks the government should reduce differences in income.

I include country-year fixed-effects in all models. These are standard in prior work and account for important time and space heterogeneity in immigration attitudes and support for RLPs. For instance, March⁹⁰ observes an upward trend in support for RLPs over time and immigration salience has increased since the early 2000s,⁹¹

⁸⁷Rooduijn et al., "Radical Distinction", p. 548.

⁸⁸Lucassen and Lubbers, "Who Fears What?", p. 558.

⁸⁹Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", p. 86.

⁹⁰March, "Radical Left Parties in Europe"

⁹¹James Dennison and Andrew Geddes, "A Rising Tide? The Salience of Immigration and the Rise of Anti-Immigration

I further control for respondents' sociodemographic characteristics: I measure occupational class using Oesch's eight-class schema.⁹² I measure education using the ISCED index, which harmonizes various countries' educational qualifications to allow cross-national comparison. I further include controls for immigrant status, unemployment status, unionization, urban/rural residence, gender, age, and religiosity. All of these demographic factors have been consistently associated with both immigration attitudes⁹³ and support for RLPs.⁹⁴

Some authors include further controls for political attitudes and ideologies in case these variables confound the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLP support (e.g., Rooduijn et al.⁹⁵, Rama and Santana⁹⁶). It is certainly plausible that certain political attitudes are correlated with immigration threat perceptions and exert an independent affect on RLP support. For instance, Euroscepticism is associated greater support for radical parties, including RLPs,⁹⁷ and is likely correlated with immigration attitudes. However, these attitudes may also *mediate* the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLPs. For instance, feeling the country is threatened by immigration may increase Euroscepticism since the EU facilitates immigration; then, Euroscepticism could mediate rather than confound the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and support for RLPs. Because this problem is common to many political attitudes, I elect to only control for socio-demographic characteristics, which are more plausibly exogenous. I conduct robustness checks including attitudinal variables including measures of Euroscepticism, political trust, environmentalism, social liberalism, egalitarianism, altruism, and authoritarianism. These results, included in the appendix, do not substantially alter conclusions.

Empirical Strategy

I use multinomial logistic regression to model the effects of immigration threat perceptions on RLP vote. While multinomial regression carries some disadvantages compared to the more conventional binary logistic regression (it is computationally intensive and somewhat reduces statistical power), in this case multinomial regression is advantageous because it allows the supporters of RLPs to be compared to the supporters of multiple other party families. Schwab's⁹⁸ recommendation that there be a minimum of 10 cases per included independent variable is easily met and VIF analysis of binary logistic regression models revealed little evidence of high multicollinearity, suggesting the data can be well modelled using multinomial logistic regression. Finally, I employ analysis weights and compute standard errors clustered at the country-year.

To test my mediation hypotheses, I estimate models controlling for the hypothesized mediators. While computing a mediation model would be preferable, existing mediation models are generally incompatible with multinomial modelling.

Political Parties in Western Europe", *The Political Quarterly* 90 (2018)

⁹²Daniel Oesch, "Coming to Grips with a Changing Class Structure; An Analysis of Employment Stratification in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland", *International Sociology* 21 (2006), p. 269.

⁹³Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", p. 22.

⁹⁴Santana and Rama, "Electoral support for left wing populist parties", p. 559; Rooduijn et al. "Radical distinction", p. 547; Ramiro "Support for radical left parties in Western Europe", pp. 10-12.

⁹⁵Rooduijn et al. "Radical distinction", p. 547.

⁹⁶Santana and Rama, "Electoral support for left wing populist parties", p. 559.

⁹⁷Wagner, "Euroscepticism", p. 1.

⁹⁸Arthur Schwab, "Multinomial logistic regression: Basic relationships and complete problems", (2002).

Results

Main Results

Table 2 shows the results of multinomial logistic regressions estimating the effects of perceived economic and cultural threats from immigrants on voting for RLPs using the full sample where RLPs are the reference category. Model A reports the results of a model including only the threat perception variables, demographic characteristics, and country-year fixed effects; Model B adds a measure of restrictionism, and Model C further adds a measure of redistribution attitudes.

The results for cultural threat are generally in line with H1, that perceiving higher cultural threat from immigrants decreases support for the radical left. As model A shows, compared to voters for the radical left, mainstream right and radical right voters perceive significantly greater cultural threat ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient for the mainstream left is small and statistically insignificant. However, given that both radical and mainstream left parties tend to be relatively pro-immigration (as Figure 1. shows) and eschew appeals to cultural threats, this is not surprising.

Figure 5 shows the substantive impact of this on RLP support; the figure shows the predicted probability of voting for an RLP as functions of the four kinds of immigration threat with demographic variables held at the mean values and country-year set to France-2002 (note that because the French radical right received relatively low support in this wave, RRP support is relatively low regardless of threat perceptions). Histograms showing the distribution of threat perceptions in the sample are also shown. The upper left graph shows the results for cultural threat from model A. As the figure shows, higher cultural threat perceptions are associated with a lower probability of supporting an RLP, with moving from the lowest to highest level of cultural threat decreases the predicted probability of voting for an RLP by approximately 8 percentage-points, roughly halving RLP support. A smaller change in threat perception, from the first to third quartile, results in decrease in predicted probability of RLP support of approximately 3 percentage-points, a more modest decrease but nonetheless a substantive change. Thus, the results are favorable for H1.

The results for economic threat are more mixed, but provide weak support for H2b. As model A shows, compared to radical left voters, mainstream left voters perceive significantly less economic threat from immigrants ($p < 0.05$), while radical right voters perceive significantly greater economic threat ($p < 0.001$). Compared to the radical left, mainstream right voters do not perceive significantly more or less economic threat from immigrants. This suggests ambiguous effects of economic threat on overall RLP support.

The lower left graph in Figure 5 shows the overall impact of economic threat on RLP support. As the figure shows, the effect of economic threat on RLP support is positive, albeit small; moving from the lowest to highest level of economic threat increases the predicted probability of voting for an RLP by approximately 2 percentage-points; this supports H2b, that higher economic threat perceptions increase support for RLPs. While this effect is small in absolute magnitude, given that European RLPs often receive relatively low support in national parliamentary elections (e.g., March and Rommerskirchen report that RLPs receive on average 8.3% of the vote in European parliamentary elections⁹⁹), it still represents an interesting shift. The change is particularly notable when we look at support within the left bloc. Among voters with the lowest level of economic threat perceptions, RLP supporters comprise about 15% of voters for left-of-center parties; however, among voters with the highest level of economic threat perceptions, RLP supporters comprise about 20% of voters for left-of-center parties, representing a substantial shift in relative power within the left bloc. Overall, these results favour H2b over H2a, though the effects of generic economic threat are substantively quite small.

⁹⁹March and Rommerskirchen, "Out of Left Field", p. 40.

Table 2: Effects of Perceived Economic and Cultural Immigration Threat on Support for RLPs

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>								
	A: Baseline			B: A + Restrictionism			C: B + Redistribution		
	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP
Economic Threat	−0.031* (0.012)	−0.009 (0.014)	0.172*** (0.022)	−0.036** (0.012)	−0.042** (0.015)	0.101*** (0.021)	−0.033*** (0.012)	−0.030 (0.016)	0.110*** (0.022)
Cultural Threat	0.016 (0.016)	0.154*** (0.015)	0.349*** (0.022)	0.011 (0.015)	0.122*** (0.013)	0.289*** (0.021)	0.008 (0.015)	0.117*** (0.014)	0.286*** (0.021)
Restrictionism				0.044 (0.043)	0.332*** (0.052)	0.670*** (0.044)	0.022 (0.042)	0.290*** (0.051)	0.0639*** (0.044)
Redistribution							0.435*** (0.047)	0.864*** (0.037)	0.687*** (0.036)
Observations	70282	70282	70282	70282	70282	70282	70282	70282	70282
Country-Years	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	137,221.60	137,221.60	137,221.60	136,307.60	136,307.60	136,307.60	132,389.0	132,389.0	132,389.0

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 through 9 of the ESS for countries with at least one of MLP, MRP, RLP, RRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses

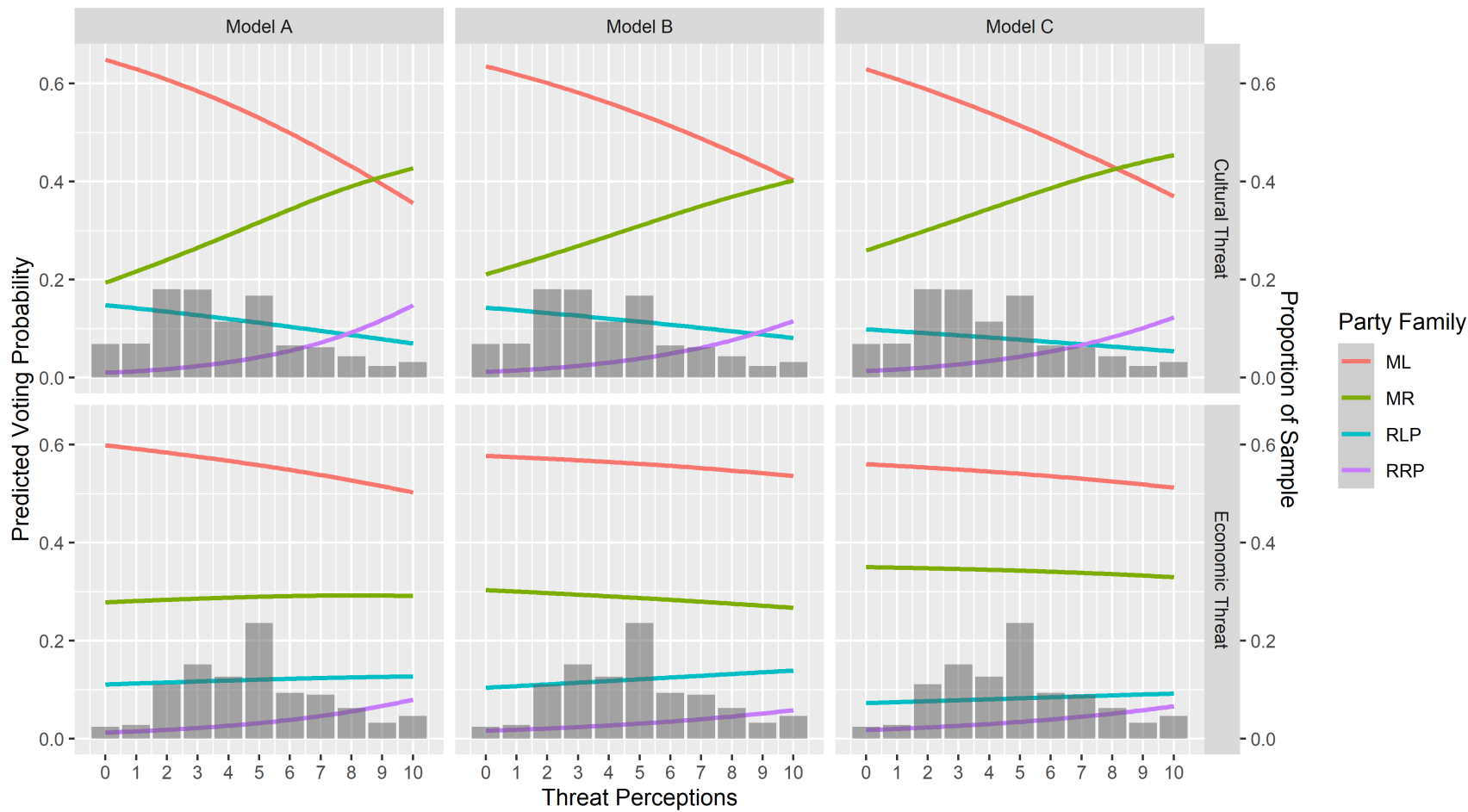


Figure 5: Predicted Probabilities of RLP Voting by Economic and Cultural Threat Perceptions

We can use further models B and C to test H5, H6a, and H6b. Model B controls for attitudes towards restricting immigration and model C further controls for attitudes towards redistribution. In both cases, the included variables have the expected effects on RLP support. Restrictionism tends to decrease RLP support, though the coefficient on mainstream left is insignificant; this is perhaps unsurprising given that both RLPs and mainstream left parties tend to support relatively pro-immigration policies. Support for redistribution is associated with greater support for RLPs.

The results from model B tend to support H5. Controlling for restrictionism in model B slightly increases the magnitude of the coefficient on economic threat for the mainstream left and the coefficient on economic threat for the mainstream right becomes negative and significant, implying that controlling for restrictionism, supporters of the radical left perceive greater economic threat from immigrants than supporters of the mainstream right. The coefficient on economic threat for the radical right remains positive and significant, but the coefficient is considerably smaller. The lower middle graph in Figure 5 shows how controlling for restrictionism changes the substantive impact of economic threat on RLP support. Using the predicted probabilities generated from model B, moving from the lowest to highest level of economic threat increases the predicted probability of supporting an RLP by 4 percentage-points, compared to 2 in model A. Again, while this change appears small, it is substantively important given the small vote totals of RLPs.

This suggests that RLPs gain particular support from voters who perceive high economic threat but nonetheless have relatively liberal attitudes towards immigration. One possible objection here is that in practice, threat perceptions and restrictionist attitudes are so correlated, that there are very few high-economic threat, low-restrictionism voters; indeed, economic threat perceptions and restrictionism are positively correlated ($\rho = 0.50$). However, as Blinder et al. point out, prejudice need not result in support for restricting immigration, particularly in societies with strong anti-prejudice norms.¹⁰⁰ To explore the empirical basis for this objection, I coded dichotomous variables for economic threat perceptions and restrictionism. Respondents were coded as 'low' in a variable if their reported value was less than the scale's middle-value. I calculated the proportion of the sample which was: low in both; low in economic threat but high in restrictionism; high in economic threat but low in restrictionism; and high in both, weighted using analysis weights. Figure 8 shows the results. As the figure shows, while most of the sample is either high or low in both economic threat perceptions and restrictionism, a substantial proportion are cross-pressured. In particular, more than 20% are high in economic threat but low in restrictionism. My results suggest this group represents a potential electorate for RLPs.

The results from model C provide some support for H6b. The coefficients on economic threat all increase compared to model B, and the coefficient on mainstream right is now insignificant. This implies that holding redistribution constant results in a less positive relationship between economic threat and RLP support. Thus, as the lower right graph in Figure 5 shows, moving from the lowest to highest level of economic threat increases the predicted probability of supporting an RLP by 2 percentage-points, less than in model B and approximately the same effect as observed from model A. This provides some support for the idea that redistribution attitudes mediate the relationship between economic threat perceptions and RLP support.

While these models provide suggestive evidence that both of the hypothesized mediators do mediate the relationship between economic threat perceptions and RLP support, the coefficients on economic threat remain significant for both the mainstream left and radical right, implying that additional variables are important in mediating this relationship.

However, economic threat is a multidimensional concept and aggregate results may conceal divergent trends. Thus, Table 3 shows the results of multinomial logistic regressions estimating the effects of perceived threats to cultural life, jobs, and the welfare state from immigrants on RLP support. These models were estimated using only data from rounds 1 and 7, the only rounds that ask more detailed questions about respondents' attitudes towards immigration. Model D gives the results of the baseline specification, including only the threat perception variables with demographic and country-year controls; Model E adds restrictionism; Model F adds redistribution attitudes.

The results from model D for cultural threat are generally in line with the results from model A: Compared

¹⁰⁰Scott Blinder et al., "The Better Angels of Our Nature: How Antiprejudice Norm Affects Policy and Party Preferences in Great Britain and Germany", *American Journal of Political Science*, 57 (2013), p. 846.

to supporters of RLPs, supporters of mainstream and radical right parties perceive greater cultural threat from immigrants ($p < 0.001$), with no statistically significant difference between supporters of RLPs and the mainstream left.

Disaggregating between threat to jobs and threat to the welfare state in model D shows that different kinds of economic threat exert distinct effects on RLP support. Contrary to H3, the results for perceived threat to the welfare state are generally null: Compared to supporters of RLPs, neither supporters of the mainstream left or mainstream right perceive significantly more or less threat to the welfare state from immigrants. RRP voters perceive significantly greater threat to the welfare state from immigrants than RLP voters ($p < 0.01$), but the coefficient magnitude is less than half of that on generic economic threat in model A.

In accordance with these results, Figure 6 shows that RLP support is virtually invariant to perceived threat to the welfare state. The upper left graph in the figure shows the predicted probability of supporting an RLP as a function of perceived threat to the welfare state. As the figure shows, moving from the lowest to highest level of perceived threat only increasing the predicted probability of supporting an RLP by 0.1 percentage-points. Thus, we can reject H3.

In contrast to the null result for perceived threat to welfare states, the results from model D suggest that perceived threat to jobs from immigrants is a particularly salient variety of economic threat for RLP supporters. In contrast to the results for general economic threat from model 1.1, where only supporters of the mainstream left perceived significantly less economic threat than RLP voters, both mainstream left and mainstream right voters perceive significantly less threat to jobs than RLP voters ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient on threat to jobs for mainstream left is significantly larger in magnitude than the coefficient on generic economic threat in model A, suggesting that threat to jobs is more important driver of RLP support than generic economic threat. The coefficient on threat to jobs for RRP is small and statistically insignificant. However, given the large body of evidence showing that RRP supporters are very hostile towards immigrants and immigration and the finding in model A that RRP supporters perceive greater generic economic threat from immigrants compared to RLP supporters, this null finding is still substantively interesting.

Furthermore, as the lower left graph in Figure 6 shows, this effect is substantively important: moving from the lowest to highest level of threat perceptions resulting in the predicted probability of RLP support increasing by approximately 9 percentage-points; a more modest increase in threat from the first to third quartile increases the predicted probability of RLP support by about 4 percentage-points. Again, given that many European RLPs receive relatively low support, this represents a substantively large change. The change in relative support within the left bloc is also notable. At the lowest level of perceived threat to jobs, RLP supporters comprise approximately 13% of voters for left parties, but at the highest level of perceived threat to jobs, RLP supporters comprise nearly 27% of voters for left bloc parties. This again suggests that the appeal of RLPs among left voters is particularly shaped by perceived threat of immigrants to jobs. Overall the results support H4b, that perceiving higher threat to the labour market from immigrants increases support for the radical left.

We can use models E and F in table 3 to provide further tests for H5 and H6. As before, the coefficients on restrictionism and redistribution are in the expected directions, with restrictionism decreasing RLP support and support for redistribution increasing RLP support.

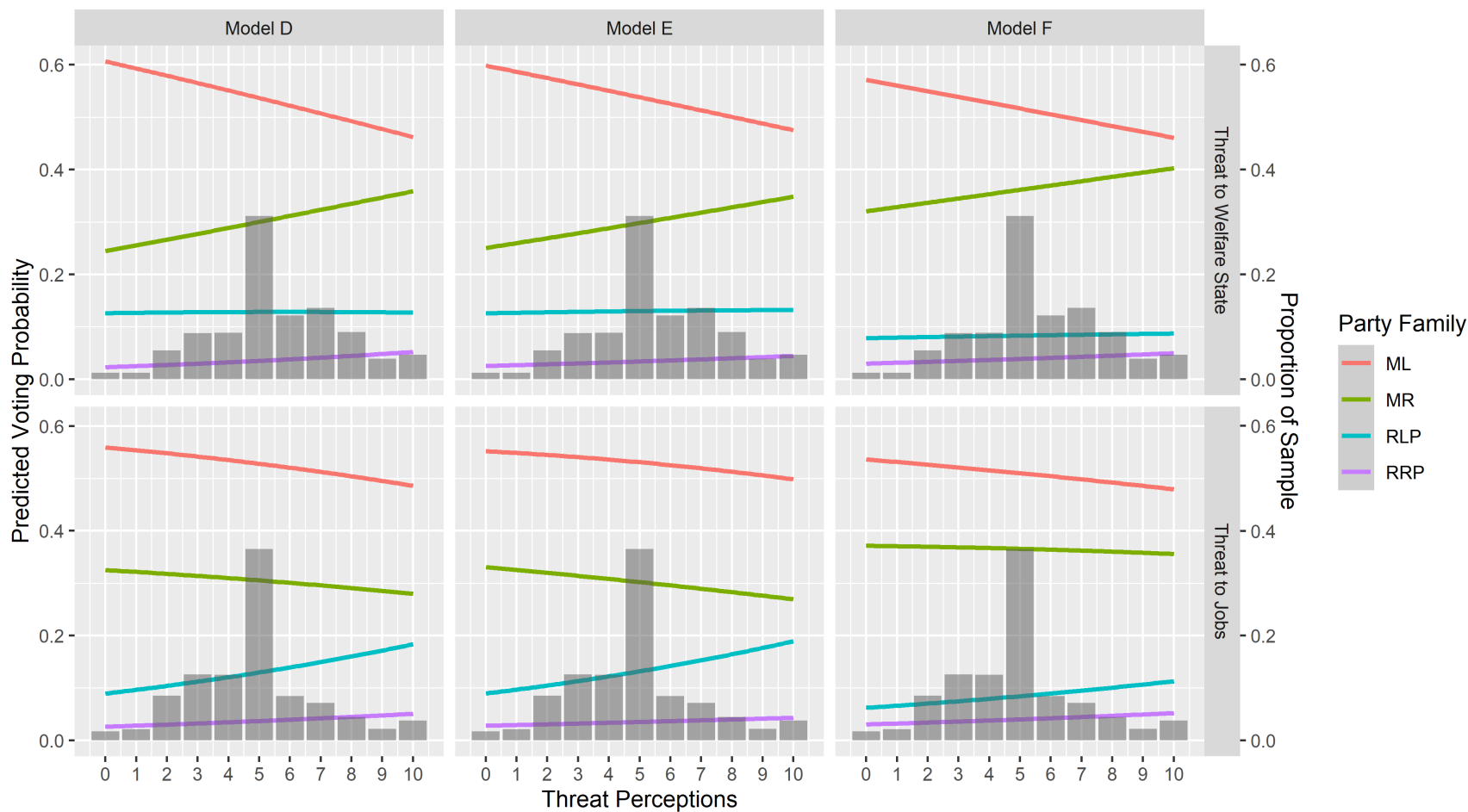
Controlling for restrictionism in model E somewhat increases the effect of threat to jobs on support for RLPs, in accordance with H5. While the coefficient on mainstream left remains essentially unchanged, the coefficient for mainstream right increases slightly, and the coefficient for radical right increases considerably but remains insignificant. Thus, as the lower left quadrant of Figure 6 shows, moving from the lowest to highest level of threat to jobs increases the probability of supporting an RLP by approximately 10 percentage-points, a slight increase compared to the results from model D.

Table 3: Effects of Perceived Threat to Jobs and Welfare State on Support for RLPs

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>								
	D: Baseline			E: D + Restrictionism			F: E + Redistribution		
	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP
Threat to Jobs	−0.086*** (0.013)	−0.087*** (0.016)	−0.005 (0.051)	−0.085*** (0.013)	−0.095*** (0.015)	−0.031 (0.049)	−0.071*** (0.011)	−0.064*** (0.019)	−0.006 (0.049)
Threat to Welfare State	−0.028 (0.042)	0.037 (0.034)	0.082** (0.029)	−0.028 (0.041)	0.028 (0.036)	0.052 (0.030)	−0.032 (0.040)	0.031 (0.034)	0.041 (0.027)
Cultural Threat	0.002 (0.040)	0.156*** (0.033)	0.351*** (0.057)	0.005 (0.038)	0.136*** (0.030)	0.297*** (0.055)	0.001 (0.033)	0.131*** (0.031)	0.293*** (0.055)
Restrictionism				−0.019 (0.052)	0.178** (0.055)	0.582*** (0.072)	−0.029 (0.049)	0.158** (0.053)	0.569*** (0.066)
Redistribution							0.454*** (0.089)	0.885*** (0.060)	0.739*** (0.033)
Observations	14685	14685	14685	14685	14685	14685	14685	14685	14685
Country-Years	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	28,617.90	28,617.90	28,617.90	28,480.84	28,480.84	28,480.84	27,646.31	27,646.31	27,646.31

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 and 7 of the ESS for countries with at least one of MLP, MRP, RLP, RRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses



Note: Figures show predicted probabilities of voting for party families as a function of immigration threat perceptions. Probabilities are generated from multinomial logistic regressions that control for demographic characteristics and country-year fixed effects

Figure 6: Predicted Probabilities of RLP Voting by Perceived Threats to Welfare State and Jobs

In model F, controlling for redistribution results in a considerably less positive relationship between threat to jobs and RLP support. The coefficients on threat to jobs all decrease in magnitude compared to model E. This is further reflected in the predicted probabilities shown in the lower left quadrant of Figure 6; now moving from the lowest to highest level of perceived threat to jobs only increases the probability of supporting an RLP by approximately 5 percentage-points, half the effect observed in model E. While not conclusive, this provides suggestive evidence that perceiving high threat to jobs from immigrants increases voters' desire for redistribution, thus increasing their probability of supporting an RLP.

In sum, my results suggest that, in line with my theoretical argument and prior research, cultural threat tends to decrease RLP support, though compared to supporters of the mainstream left, the effects are insignificant. Contrary to much of the conventional wisdom, economic threat has small, but nonetheless positive effects on RLP support, particularly when considering that economic threat decreases support for the mainstream left. Perceived threat to the welfare state appears to have relatively minor implications for support for RLPs. The largest and most interesting results are observed for threat to jobs, where perceiving higher threat to jobs has large, positive effects on the probability of supporting an RLP; not only do supporters of RLPs tend to perceive greater threat to jobs from immigrants than supporters of mainstream parties, they perceive equivalent levels of threat as supporters of the radical right, whom prior research has shown are highly hostile towards immigrants. These findings challenge the conventional wisdom that hostility towards immigrants or immigration universally decreases support for left-wing parties. Instead, the impacts of immigration threat perceptions on RLP support are nuanced, with some kinds of economic threat in particular increasing RLP support.

My results also suggest that attitudes towards both restricting immigration and redistribution mediate the relationship between economic threat perceptions and RLP support. However, even after controlling for these variables, economic threat perceptions often remain significant, suggesting additional mechanisms connect threat perceptions to support for RLPs.

Robustness Checks

In order to test the robustness of my findings, I conducted five additional analyses, with tables reported in the appendix:

First, given the divergent histories of Eastern and Western Europe (and particularly given the historical connection of RLPs to Communist parties), it is possible that immigration attitudes have divergent effects by region. Tables A1 and A2 present results for models estimated separately on East and West Europe. For Eastern Europe, neither cultural nor economic threat perceptions are generally significant determinants of RLP support, though the coefficients are generally in the same direction as previously. Caution is warranted in interpreting these results, however, given the relatively small number of country-years these models are estimated on. For Western Europe, the results discussed above remain essentially unaltered.

Second, Finseraas¹⁰¹ proposes that the structure of the welfare state affects how immigration threat perceptions are translated into redistribution attitudes. In particular, he argues that because in Social Democratic welfare states, universalism requires that immigrants be granted welfare benefits, people who think the country is economically threatened by immigrants are less likely to translate this threat into support for further redistribution. In contrast, in Conservative welfare states, where benefits are often insurance based and financed using earnings-based contributions, economic threat perceptions will translate into higher support for social insurance. Given the connection between redistribution and RLP support, this suggests that in Conservative welfare states, the relationship between economic threat perceptions and RLP support should be more positive than in Social Democratic welfare states. Thus, Tables A3 and A4 present results for models estimated separately on countries with Social Democratic and Conservative welfare states (countries were classified on the basis of Esping-Andersen¹⁰²). Broadly, my results support Finseraas's thesis: coefficients on economic threat for all party families are more negative in Conservative welfare states than Social Democratic ones, and for the mainstream left the coefficient is significantly negative for Conservative welfare states but is insignificant and positive for Social Democratic ones. The results are similar for threat to jobs, with

¹⁰¹Finseraas, "Immigration and Preferences for Redistribution", p. 421.

¹⁰²Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990).

coefficients on this variable universally more negative in the model estimated on countries with Conservative welfare states. Interestingly, in Social Democratic welfare states, supporters of the mainstream and radical right both perceive significantly greater threat to the welfare state, as H3 suggests, while in the original models, the coefficient for mainstream right was insignificant. This suggests, unsurprisingly, that fear about immigrants' impact on the welfare state is primarily activated in universalistic welfare states where immigrants are most likely to have access to benefits.

Third, because country-year fixed effects perfectly predict non-voting for party families that do not field a party in a given country-year, including country-years that lack one of the four considered party families results in perfect multicollinearity. Thus, I only included country-years where all four party families competed; in practice, this meant excluding country-years that lack an RRP. Thus, it is possible results are unique to cases that have RRP. Thus, Tables A5 and A6 present models estimated using only country-years without RRP. In these models, neither coefficients on economic threat or threat to jobs are significant, implying that the relationship between these variables and RLP support is stronger in countries with RRP. This may be an artifact of country characteristics; for instance, countries without RRP are more likely to be in Eastern Europe. Alternatively, the presence of RRP may indicate that immigration is a more salient electoral issue, therefore increasing its impact on vote choice.

Fourth, the results could be driven by my party classification choices. In particular, the inclusion of green parties in the mainstream left and liberal parties in the mainstream right is contestable. Thus, Tables A9 and A10 give the results of models estimated excluding green and liberal voters. Here, while coefficients change slightly in magnitude, the direction and size of effect are essentially unaltered.

Fifth, as discussed above my models do not include attitudinal controls because of the possibility that these factors mediate rather than confound the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLP support. Neither strategy is without flaws, so Tables A11 and A12 give the results of models that, in addition to controlling for demographic characteristics and country-year fixed effects, control for: social liberalism, environmentalism, political interest, political trust, trust in the European Union, egalitarianism, and preference for a strong government, all of which have previously been associated with RLP support.¹⁰³ As table A11 shows, the coefficients on economic threat are no longer significant for the mainstream left and right. However, the results for threat to jobs in Table A12 are essentially unchanged in direction as in the original model. This provides further confidence that perceiving high threat to jobs from immigrants increases RLP support.

Overall, while these robustness checks do not cast significant doubt on the main findings presented above, they may suggest heterogeneous effects across countries due to factors such as the historical legacy of Communism, the welfare state structure, and the party system.

¹⁰³Rooduijn, "Radical Distinction", p. 547.

Conclusion

Conventionally, both researchers and the public have assumed that left-wing parties, and their supporters, are almost universally pro-immigrant. Thus, it is assumed that the supporters of radical left parties will be relatively supportive of immigrants and immigration. However, I argue that the conventional association between economic leftism and social liberalism is not an essential component of left-wing ideology. Indeed, immigration poses problems for left-wing parties because it stresses an underlying tension in leftist ideology: do left-wing parties exist to support the marginalized, whatever their national origin, or should they focus on bettering conditions for the marginalized within their own countries?¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, past empirical results on this question are inconclusive. Different authors have found different results depending on how they operationalise immigration attitudes and to whom they compare RLP supporters.

My contribution to this literature is two-fold:

Theoretically, I go beyond the heuristic that supporters of left-wing parties are pro-immigrant. I distinguish between cultural and economic threat perceptions. Past research suggests that high cultural threat perceptions are associated with wanting to restrict immigration and with reduced demand for the welfare state; because RLPs hold relatively liberal positions on immigration and are very left-wing on redistribution, I argue that perceiving high cultural threat will decrease RLP support. However, while economic threat also tends to increase support for restricting immigration, the effects of economic threat on demand for the welfare state are more complex. Some authors¹⁰⁵ argue that concern about immigrants' economic impacts decreases demand for redistribution, as voters worry about the fiscal harms of welfare dependency. On the other hand, the compensation hypothesis suggests that feeling threatened by immigration may increase demand for social insurance to offset the perceived economic harms. Thus, I argue that theoretically the effect of perceived economic threat from immigrants on support for RLPs, as major promoters of the welfare state, is ambiguous.

Empirically, I improve on past research by using multinomial models, which allow me to compare the supporters of RLPs to the supporters of multiple other party families. My findings are generally in line with my theoretical expectations. I find that cultural threat is associated with lower overall RLP support and that this effect is substantively important. Moreover, I find that there are small positive effects of economic threat perceptions on RLP support, and that perceiving high threat to jobs has particularly large effects on RLP support. This makes sense of the literature's mixed findings: ambiguous overall results concealed important nuance.

My findings have implications for both the literature on RLPs and immigration attitudes more generally:

First, my findings reaffirm the conclusions of Lucassen and Lubbers¹⁰⁶, Card et al.,¹⁰⁷ and others that different kinds of immigration attitudes must be disaggregated. Perceived economic and cultural threat from immigrants have different effects on RLP support, both in magnitude and direction. Subsuming these measures into a single measure of hostility to immigration conceals important differences in the effects of these variables. Furthermore, my results suggest that different kinds of economic threat also exert distinct effects. For RLPs, believing that immigrants threaten the labour market prospects of natives appears to increase support for radical left parties, while generic economic threat and perceived threat to the welfare state are less important. While I do not explore variation among different types of cultural threat, it is also possible that different kinds of cultural threat (e.g., to language versus religion) could affect party support differently. Generally, research must move beyond conceptualizing immigration attitudes as unidimensional and recognize that this a broad category of beliefs.

Second, my results imply that RLP supporters are particularly motivated by labour market concerns. The greater significance of threat to jobs compared to generic concern for the economy may appear puzzling given that the labour market constitutes a large portion of the economy. While my results cannot demonstrate why threat to jobs proves more important, I suggest that RLP supporters are particularly motivated by jobs and wages. Given the focus of RLPs on the working class, this makes sense, but it has implications for RLPs

¹⁰⁴Fielding, "Brotherhood", p. 79.

¹⁰⁵Senik et al., "Immigration and Natives' Attitudes towards the Welfare State", p. 357.

¹⁰⁶Lucassen and Lubbers, "Who Fears What?", p. 564

¹⁰⁷Card et al., "Immigration, Wages, and Compositional Amenities", p. 95

beyond immigration. RLPs may attract support from people who are concerned about the labour market for reasons other than immigration. This combined with the increased precarity of European labour markets suggests RLPs may have a large and growing constituency to capitalize on.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, my results suggest the importance of a hitherto underconsidered group who perceive relatively high levels of economic threat from immigrants but do not translate this threat into high support for immigration restriction. While some (e.g., Blinder et al.¹⁰⁸) have noted that the relationship between perceived threat and restrictionism is not one-for-one, this group remains understudied. My work suggests RLPs may be able to mobilize this group by instead translating this perceived economic threat into support for redistribution, but more work is necessary to understand the political preferences and behaviour of this group. More broadly, we must consider how immigration threat perceptions can influence political behaviour beyond their influence on restrictionism.

Further work can improve on my findings and explore the additional puzzles my work reveals:

First, my analysis is necessarily observational and thus I cannot conclude that the relationships between threat perceptions and RLP support are causal. There may be confounding variables driving the relationships I observe. Nonetheless, the fact that most results are robust to the inclusion of attitudinal controls including important factors like political trust and Euroscepticism is encouraging. Further research could utilize techniques such as survey experiments or panel data to attempt to more accurately estimate the causal relationship.

Second, my findings do not consider variation among RLPs or how party strategies influence these relationships. Given Ivarsflatten's¹⁰⁹ and Meguid's¹¹⁰ findings that both radical and mainstream strategies affect the success of niche parties, considering these strategies would be an important next step in understanding the relationship between immigration attitudes and support for RLPs.

Third, greater attention is needed to disentangle the mechanisms connecting perceived immigration threat to RLP support. My results suggest that while attitudes towards restrictionism and redistribution mediate some of the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLP support, threat perception variables are still significant. This suggests that additional mechanisms mediate the relationship between threat perceptions and support for RLPs. Additional theoretical and empirical work is necessary to clarify and understand these mechanisms.

Finally, my robustness checks suggest considerable heterogeneity in the effects of immigration attitudes across countries. In particular, immigration variables vary with geography, welfare state structure, and the party system. Future research should explore these cross-national differences, as well as the role of other cross-national factors such party strategies in shaping the relationship between immigration attitudes and RLP support.

Overall, my results suggest that the relationship between immigration threat perceptions and RLP support is nuanced. Cultural threat decreases support for RLPs, but perceived economic threat (particularly threat to jobs) increases support for the radical left. Future work should bear in mind these nuances while considering the possible mechanisms driving these effects and heterogeneities across countries and parties.

¹⁰⁸Blinder et al., "Better Angels", p. 846.

¹⁰⁹Elizabeth Ivarsflatten, "What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe?: Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases", *Comparative Political Studies*, 41 (2007), p. 3.

¹¹⁰Bonnie Meguid, "Competition between unequals: The role of mainstream party strategy in niche party success", *American Political Science Review*, 99 (2005), p. 347.

Appendix

Table A1: Effects of Perceived Economic and Cultural Immigration Threat on Support for RLPs in East and West Europe

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>					
	East			West		
	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP
Economic Threat	−0.036 (0.193)	0.019 (0.200)	0.070 (0.197)	−0.031** (0.012)	−0.010 (0.014)	0.180*** (0.022)
Cultural Threat	−0.205 (0.165)	−0.155 (0.149)	−0.096 (0.171)	0.014 (0.016)	0.156*** (0.015)	0.357*** (0.022)
Observations	5131	5131	5131	35184	35184	35184
Country-Years	7	7	7	54	54	54
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	8,559.194	8,559.194	8,559.194	127,202.60	127,202.60	127,202.60

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 through 9 of the ESS for countries with at least one of each party type. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A2: Effects of Perceived Threat to Jobs and Welfare State on Support for RLPs in East and West Europe

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>					
	East			West		
	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP
Threat to Jobs	−0.200 (0.272)	−0.256 (0.271)	−0.065 (.0276)	−0.091*** (0.018)	−0.083*** (0.016)	−0.004 (0.063)
Threat to Welfare State	0.316 (0.276)	0.391 (0.275)	0.344 (0.280)	−0.028 (0.042)	0.035 (0.033)	0.101*** (0.029)
Cultural Threat	−0.192 (0.238)	−0.105 (0.237)	0.025 (0.241)	0.003 (0.040)	0.158*** (0.032)	0.360*** (0.069)
Observations	707	707	707	13469	13469	13469
Country-Years	1	1	1	12	12	12
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,448.809	1,448.809	1,448.809	26,216.84	26,216.84	26,216.84

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 and 7 of the ESS for countries with at least one of each party type. All models applied analysis weights; models for Eastern Europe do not apply country-year fixed effects because of small number of country-years. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A3: Effects of Perceived Economic and Cultural Immigration Threat on Support for RLPs by Welfare Regime

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>					
	Social Democratic			Conservative		
	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP
Economic Threat	0.004 (0.021)	0.034 (0.017)	0.296*** (0.034)	−0.041* (0.016)	−0.024 (0.019)	0.141*** (0.027)
Cultural Threat	0.082*** (0.024)	0.151*** (0.020)	0.335*** (0.031)	−0.002 (0.018)	0.151*** (0.018)	0.375*** (0.033)
Observations	25963	25963	25963	35184	35184	35184
Country-Years	22	22	22	28	28	28
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	51,850.04	51,850.04	51,850.04	77,534.930	77,534.930	77,534.930

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 through 9 of the ESS for countries with at least one of each party type. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A4: Effects of Perceived Threat to Jobs and Welfare State on Support for RLPs by Welfare Regime

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>					
	Social Democratic			Conservative		
	ML	MR	RRP	ML	MR	RRP
Threat to Jobs	−0.035 (0.018)	−0.053 (0.047)	0.064*** (0.041)	−0.100*** (.020)	−0.090*** (0.018)	−0.016 (0.089)
Threat to Welfare State	0.014 (0.047)	0.081*** (0.024)	0.176*** (0.046)	−0.042 (0.051)	0.021 (0.045)	0.074* (0.038)
Cultural Threat	0.134*** (0.034)	0.191*** (0.027)	0.442*** (0.056)	−0.012 (0.042)	0.152*** (0.043)	0.345** (0.115)
Observations	5819	5819	5819	7650	7650	7650
Country-Years	5	5	5	7	7	7
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	11,927.56	11,927.56	11,927.56	14,690.20	14,690.20	14,690.20

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 and 7 of the ESS for countries with at least one of each party type. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A5: Effects of Perceived Economic and Cultural Immigration Threat on Support for RLPs in Countries without RRP

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>	
	ML	MR
Economic Threat	−0.016 (0.011)	−0.018 (0.013)
Cultural Threat	0.012 (0.018)	0.063** (0.020)
Observations	50816	50816
Country-Years	59	59
Demographic Controls	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	87,857.90	87,857.90

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 through 9 of the ESS for countries with at least one RLP, MLP, and MRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year year are reported in parentheses.

Table A6: Effects of Perceived Threat to Jobs and Welfare State on Support for RLPs in Countries without RRP

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>	
	ML	MR
Threat to Jobs	0.018 (0.027)	-0.017 (0.031)
Threat to Welfare State	-0.00 (0.031)	0.071 (0.044)
Cultural Threat	0.021 (0.029)	0.101** (0.034)
Observations	10916	10916
Country-Years	13	13
Demographic Controls	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	19,112.79	19,112.79

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 and 7 of the ESS for countries with at least one RLP, MLP, and MRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year year are reported in parentheses.

Table A7: Effects of Perceived Economic and Cultural Immigration Threat on Support for RLPs Excluding Greens and Liberals

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>		
	ML	MR	RRP
Economic Threat	-0.031* (0.012)	-0.010 (0.014)	0.173*** (0.022)
Cultural Threat	0.016 (0.017)	0.154*** (0.015)	0.349*** (0.022)
Observations	70282	70282	70282
Country-Years	61	61	61
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	137,221.6	137,221.6	137,221.6

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0). Data comes from rounds 1 through 9 of the ESS for countries with at least one MLP, MRP, RLP, and RRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A8: Effects of Perceived Threat to Jobs and Welfare State on Support for RLPs Excluding Greens and Liberals

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>		
	ML	MR	RRP
Threat to Jobs	−0.086*** (0.013)	−0.087*** (0.016)	−0.005*** (0.051)
Threat to Welfare State	−0.028 (0.042)	0.037 (0.034)	0.082** (0.029)
Cultural Threat	0.023 (0.040)	0.156*** (0.033)	0.355*** (0.057)
Observations	14685	14685	14685
Country-Years	13	13	13
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	28,617.9	28,617.9	28,617.9

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0).

Data comes from rounds 1 and 7 of the ESS for countries with at least one MLP, MRP, RLP, and RRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A9: Effects of Perceived Economic and Cultural Immigration Threat on Support for RLPs With Attitudinal Controls

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>		
	ML	MR	RRP
Economic Threat	−0.004 (0.011)	0.021 (0.012)	0.162*** (0.018)
Cultural Threat	0.021 (0.018)	0.131*** (0.015)	0.295*** (0.020)
Observations	61829	61829	61829
Country-Years	61	61	61
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y
Attitude Controls	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	115,351.5	115,351.5	115,351.5

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0).

Data comes from rounds 1 through 9 of the ESS for countries with at least one MLP, MRP, RLP, and RRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.

Table A10: Effects of Perceived Threat to Jobs and Welfare State on Support with Attitudinal Controls

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote Recall (RLP = 0)</i>		
	ML	MR	RRP
Threat to Jobs	−0.061** (0.022)	−0.078*** (0.014)	0.015 (0.033)
Threat to Welfare State	−0.051 (0.036)	0.030 (0.023)	0.032 (0.037)
Cultural Threat	0.013 (0.031)	0.118*** (0.019)	0.339*** (0.035)
Observations	12558	12558	12558
Country-Years	13	13	13
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y
Attitude Controls	Y	Y	Y
Country-Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y
Akaike Inf. Crit.	22,511.33	22,511.33	22,511.33

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from multinomial logit models predicting whether the respondent voted for an RLP (0).

Data comes from rounds 1 and 7 of the ESS for countries with at least one MLP, MRP, RLP, and RRP. All models applied country-year fixed effects and analysis weights. Standard errors clustered at the country-year are reported in parentheses.