

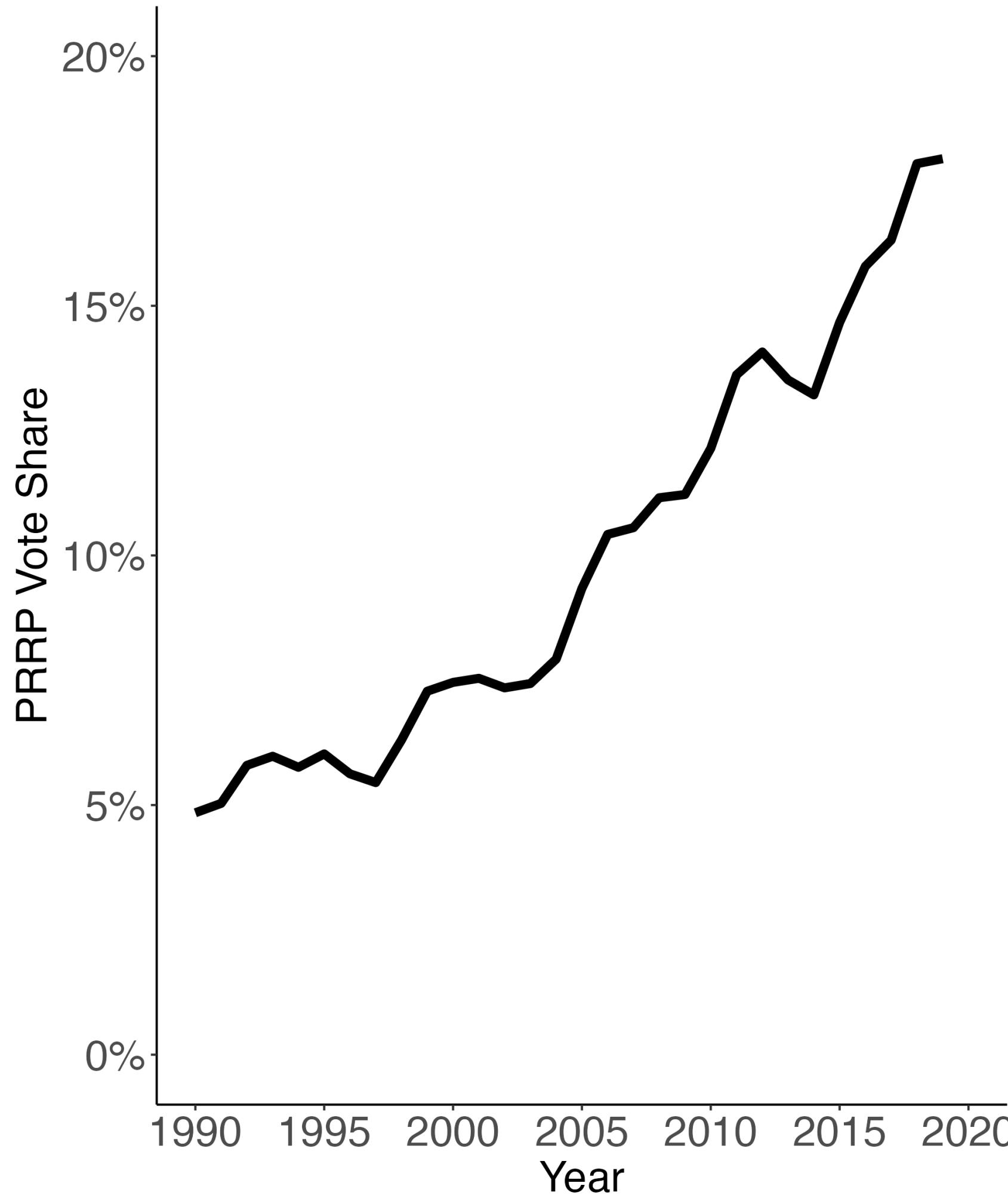
Decomposing the Rise of the Populist Radical Right

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Rise of Populist Radical Right

Average Vote Share for PRRP



- ▶ Surge of **Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRP)** in Europe
- ▶ Widespread implications
 - ▶ Joining/leading govt.
 - ▶ Affect policies
 - ▶ Erode democratic norms
- ▶ **No consensus on main drivers**

Goal: Decomposing the Rise of PRRP

Three Drivers:

- **Supply: Party Positions**
 - Ex. Mainstream parties shift too much to the left
- **Demand 1: Voters' demographics/opinions (“Voter Characteristics”)**
 - Ex. Growing hostility towards immigrants
- **Demand 2: Priorities at the ballot (“Voter Priorities”)**
 - Ex. Voters prioritize cultural issues more

What We Do

- **Merge** wide datasets on parties (CMP) and voters (WVS/IVS)
- **Estimate** voter priorities with a probabilistic voting model
- **Quantify** relative importance of each component
 - Decomposition method—common in Labor Economics (Inequality)

Finding: Voter priorities drive a large share (53%) of the recent PRRP rise

Contribution

- **Demonstrate that decomposition is an useful descriptive method**
 - Common in Labor, especially for inequality: (Juhn et al., 1993; DiNardo et al., 1996)
- **Know the What/How PRRP rise (which is important for knowing the Why PRRP rise)**
 - **Reject theories that are inconsistent with facts**
 - Supply: (Akkerman, 2015; Berman, 2021; Berman and Kundnani, 2021; Zeira, 2022)
 - Demand I: Voter characteristics (Hangartner et al., 2019)
 - Demand II: Voter priorities (Bartels, 2017; Sides et al., 2019; Magistro and Wittstock, 2021)
 - **Provide mechanisms for reduced-form analysis:** Tech., Financial Crises, Trade, Media,...
 - **Empirics on theory lit. on growing importance of cultural issues:** (Enke, 2020)

Today's Plan

1. Data & Framework

2. Results

(a) Party Positions

(b) Voter Characteristics

(c) Voter Priorities

Data: Parties

- ▶ CMP (Comparative Manifesto Project)
 - ▶ Share of sentences in manifesto (party platform) discussing topics in each lower-house election
 - ▶ For many issues positive and negative mention counted separately
 - ▶ This paper
 - ▶ Use all the 56 party positions [Sum Stat](#)
 - ▶ Show results using two established indices
 - ▶ “Economic” and “Cultural” positions [Econ Indices](#) [Cultural Indices](#)

Data: Voters

- ▶ Integrated Values Survey
 - ▶ Combination of the World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Survey (EVS)
 - ▶ Three waves: 2005-2009, 2011-2013, 2017-2020
 - ▶ Use over 100 variables that exist for vast majority of country-waves
 - ▶ Demographics
 - ▶ Opinions
 - ▶ Supported Parties

[Sum Stat](#)

Model: Probabilistic Voting Model

- ▶ Utility of voter i from party j

$$U_{ij} = z_j' w_i(x_i) + \zeta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

- ▶ Party positions: $z_j = \{z_j^1, \dots, z_j^L\}$
- ▶ Voter's weights: $w_i(x_i) = \{w_i^1, \dots, w_i^L\}$
- ▶ Party's valence: ζ_j
- ▶ Similar to a bliss point model

[Details](#)

Voting Weights

- ▶ Demand: voting weights

$$w_i(x_i) = x_i\phi + \beta$$

- ▶ Linear function of voter characteristics x_i with parameters ϕ, β
- ▶ x_i : opinions and demographics, directly observed in IVS
- ▶ ϕ, β : how characteristics map to weights
- ▶ Estimated [Estimation Details](#)

Predict PRRP vote share

- ▶ PRRP vote share at time t

$$S_t = \int P(\Pi | x_i ; \theta_t, Z_t, \zeta_t) f_t(x_i) dx_i$$

- ▶ $P(\Pi | x_i)$ —prob. of voting for PRRP

- ▶ $Z_t = \{z_{j,t}\}_{j \in J(c,t)}$: matrix of party positions z_j at time t

- ▶ $f_t(x_i)$: density of voter characteristics at time t

- ▶ $\theta_t = (\phi_t, \beta_t)$: set of priority parameters

- ▶ $\zeta_t = \{\zeta_{j,t}\}_{j \in J(c,t)}$: vector of residuals (including party entry)

Decomposing Changes in PRRP Support

$$\Delta_t^{t+1} S = \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_{t+1}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \zeta_t) f_t(x_i) dx_i \quad \text{Total}$$

Decomposing Changes in PRRP Support

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta_t^{t+1} S &= \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_{t+1}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \zeta_t) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \textbf{Total} \\ &= \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, \underline{Z_{t+1}}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_t(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, \underline{Z_t}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \textbf{Party Positions} \\ &\quad + \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) \underline{f_{t+1}}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) \underline{f_t}(x_i) dx_i && \textbf{Voter Characteristics} \\ &\quad + \int P(\Pi | x_i; \underline{\theta_{t+1}}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi | x_i; \underline{\theta_t}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i && \textbf{Voter Priorities} \\ &\quad + \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \underline{\zeta_{t+1}}) f_t(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi | x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \underline{\zeta_t}) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \text{Residual}\end{aligned}$$

Limitation, Clarifications, and Caveat

1. Descriptive Analysis

- Not causal, components could affect each other
- Guide future causal analysis

2. No strategic considerations

- Coordination effects, barriers to entry
- Attribute to the residual

3. No turnout

Today's Plan

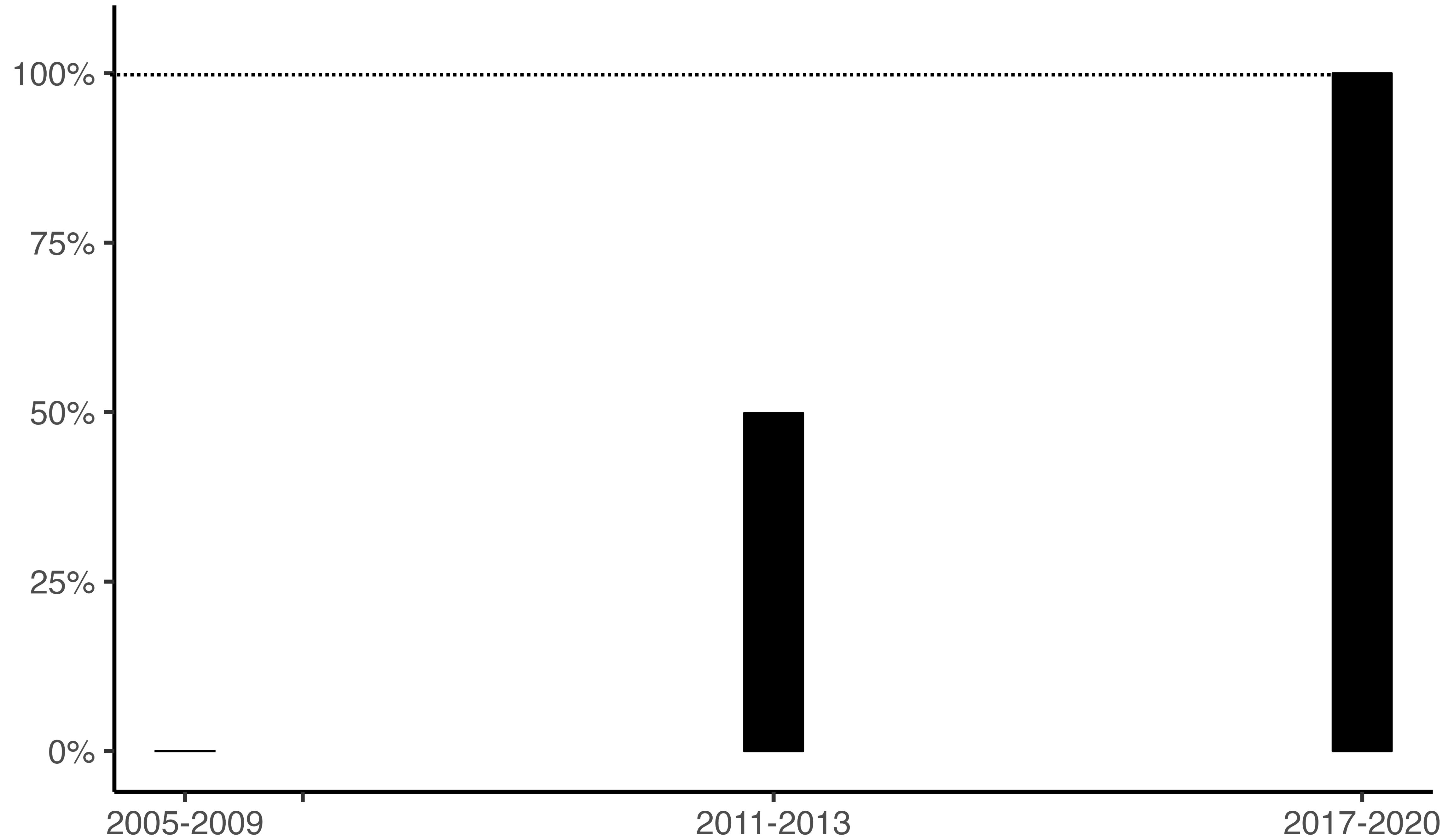
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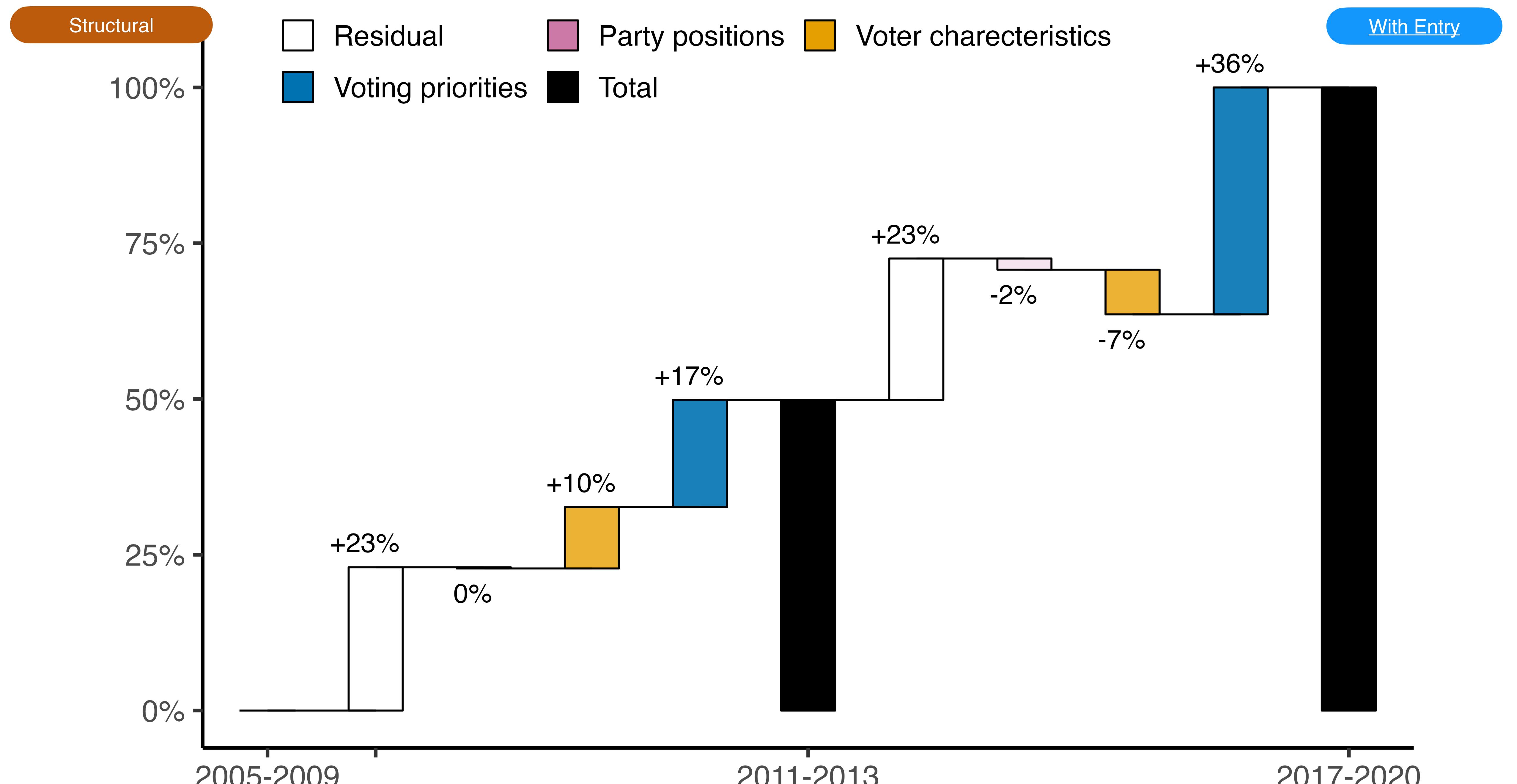
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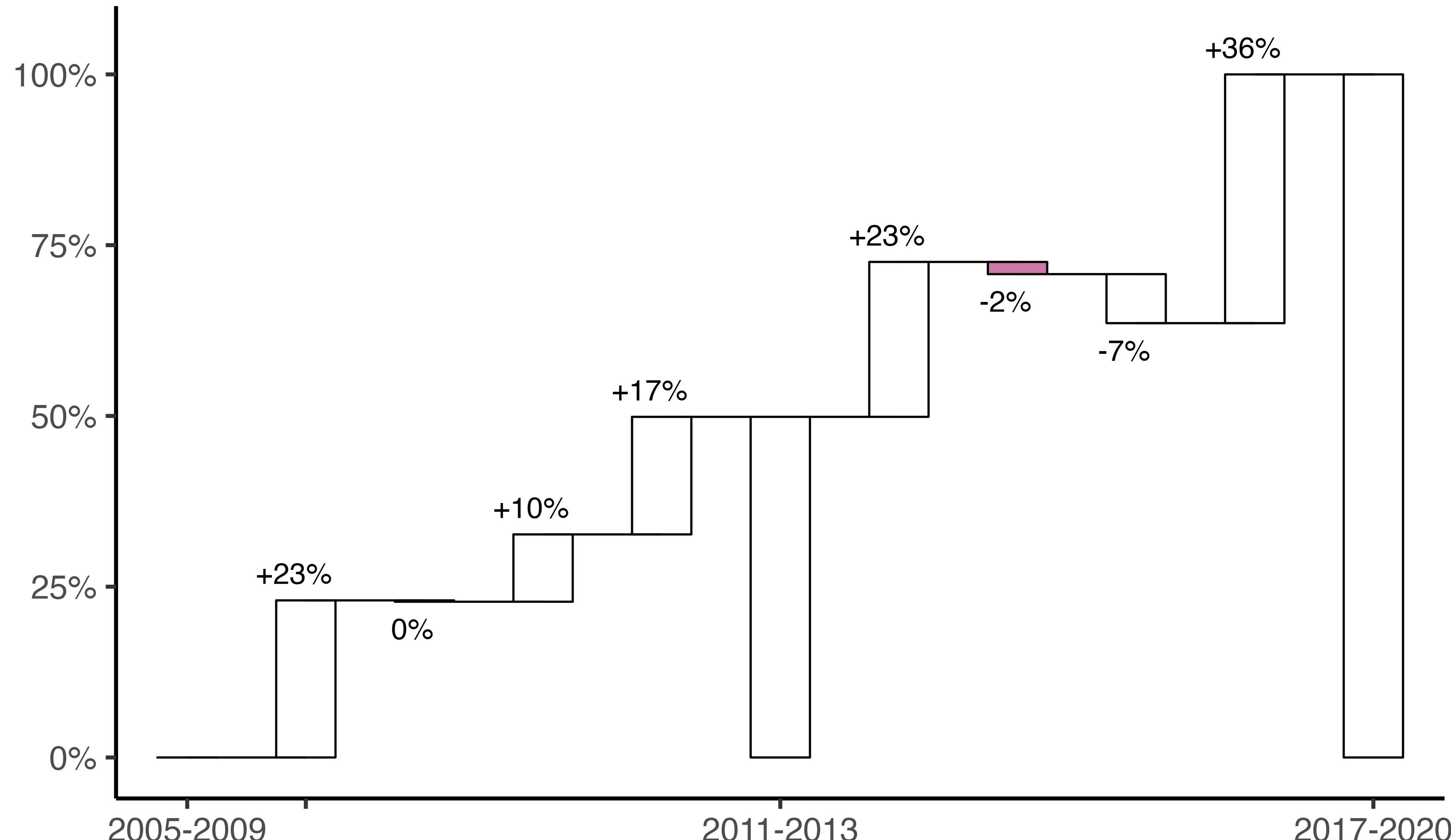
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(a) Party Positions

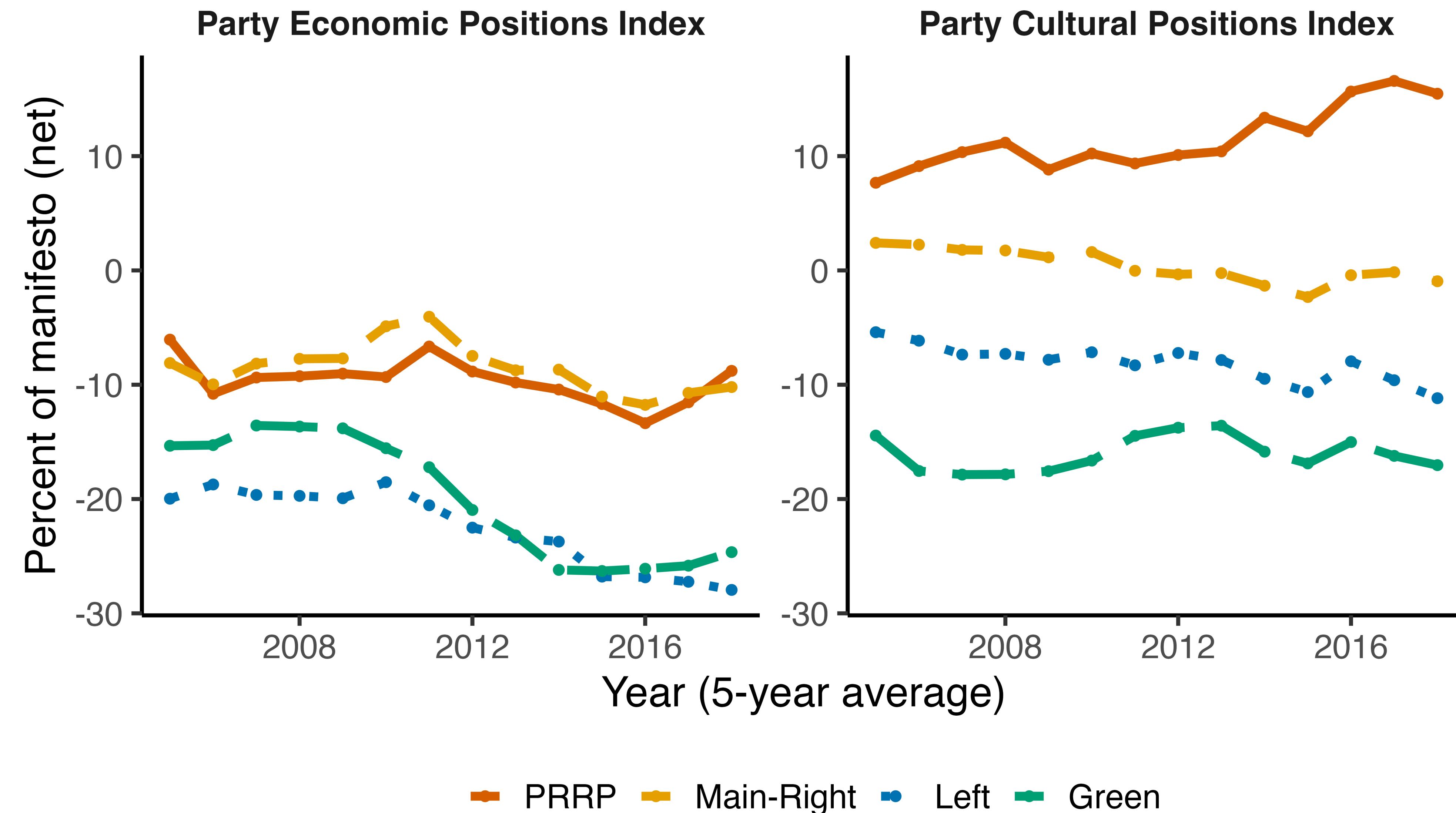
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Party Positions Do Not Drive PRRP Support



PRRP Do NOT Moderate Their Cultural Positions



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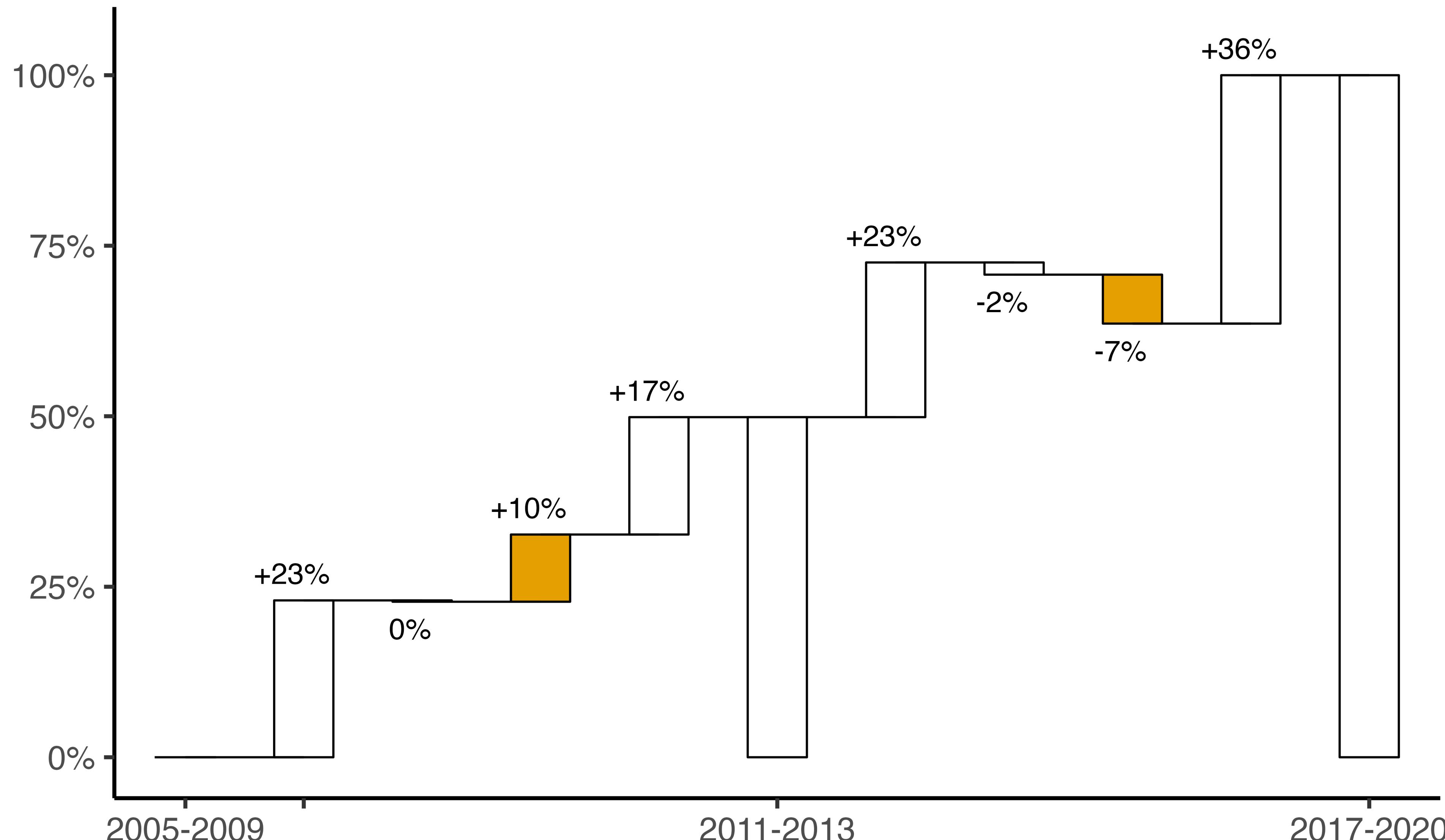
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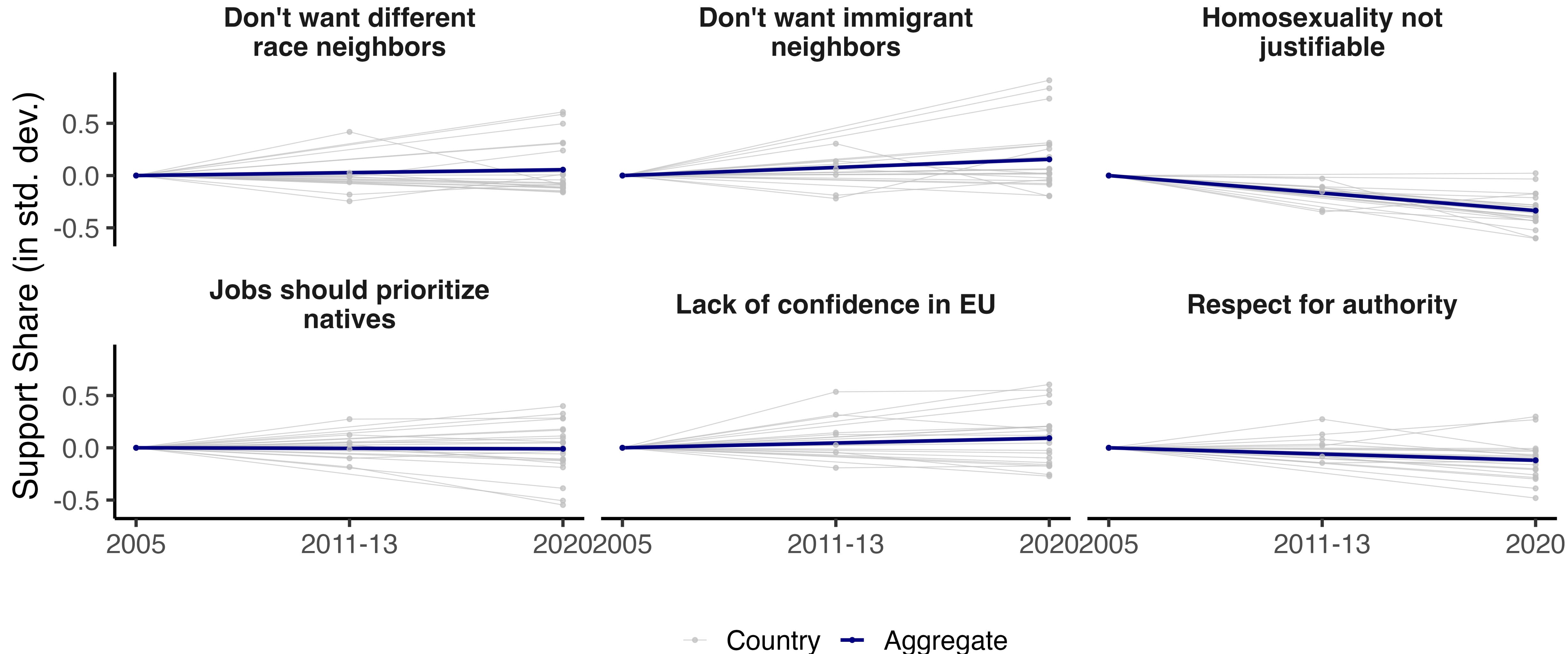
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(c) Voter Priorities

Voters' Characteristics Cannot Explain the Rise



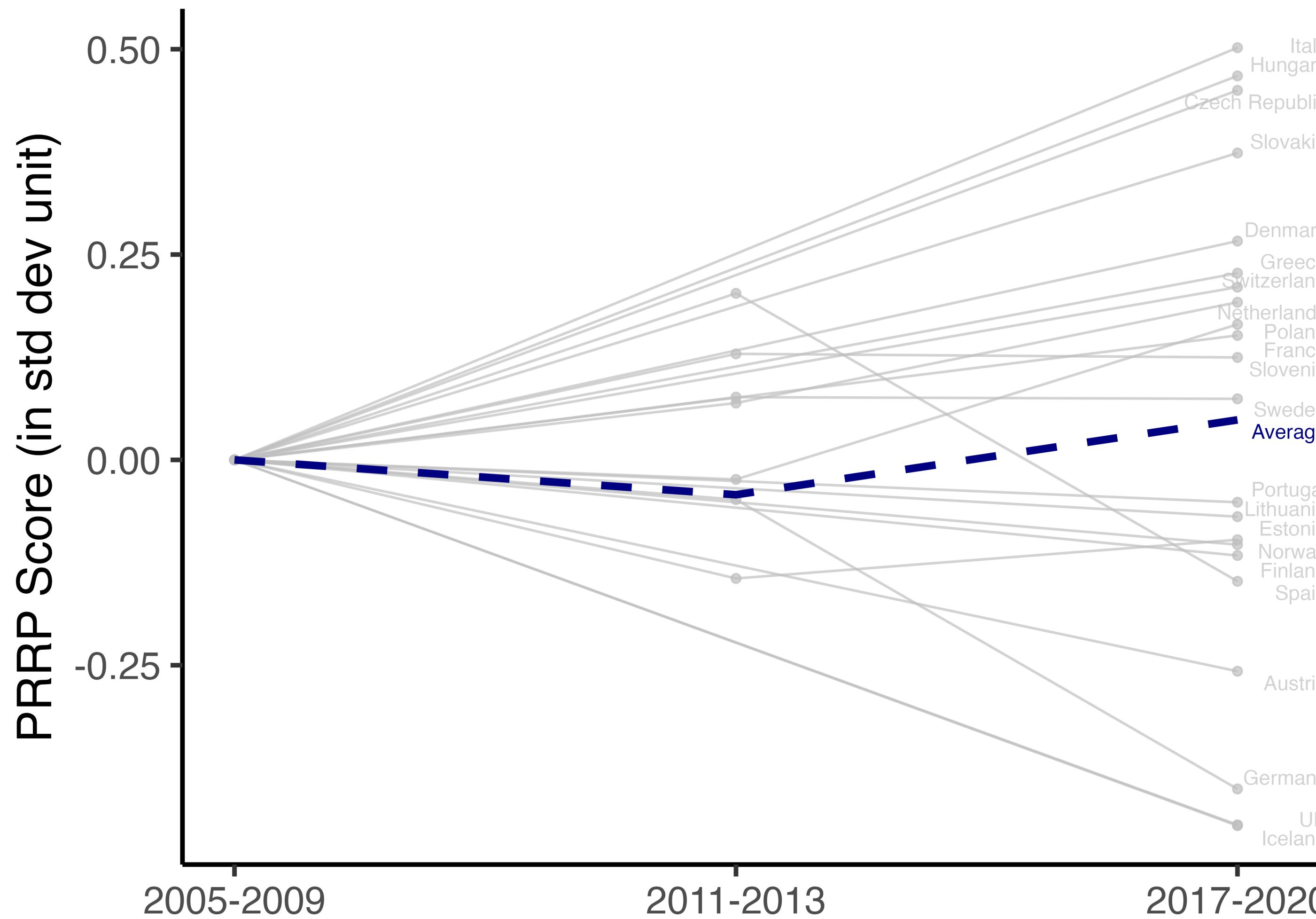
Voters' Cultural Opinions are Stable on Average



Going More Data-Driven...

- Run LASSO predicting PRRP support at voter level using IVS
 - Use most recent wave + country FE
 - Use all IVS variables (options and demographics)
- Construct PRRP score at voter level
- Important variables:
 - “Jobs should prioritize natives”
 - Against “Trust other people”
 - Against “Don’t want heavy-drinking neighbors”

Voters's Characteristics are Not Toward PRRP on Average



- ▶ PRRP score did not increase on average
- ▶ Heterogeneity across country
- ▶ Hypothetically, PRRP score increase can explain cross-country variations
- ▶ Insignificant for changes in voting share for PRRP ($R^2=0.06$)
- ▶ Decomposition would have told us if it were the case

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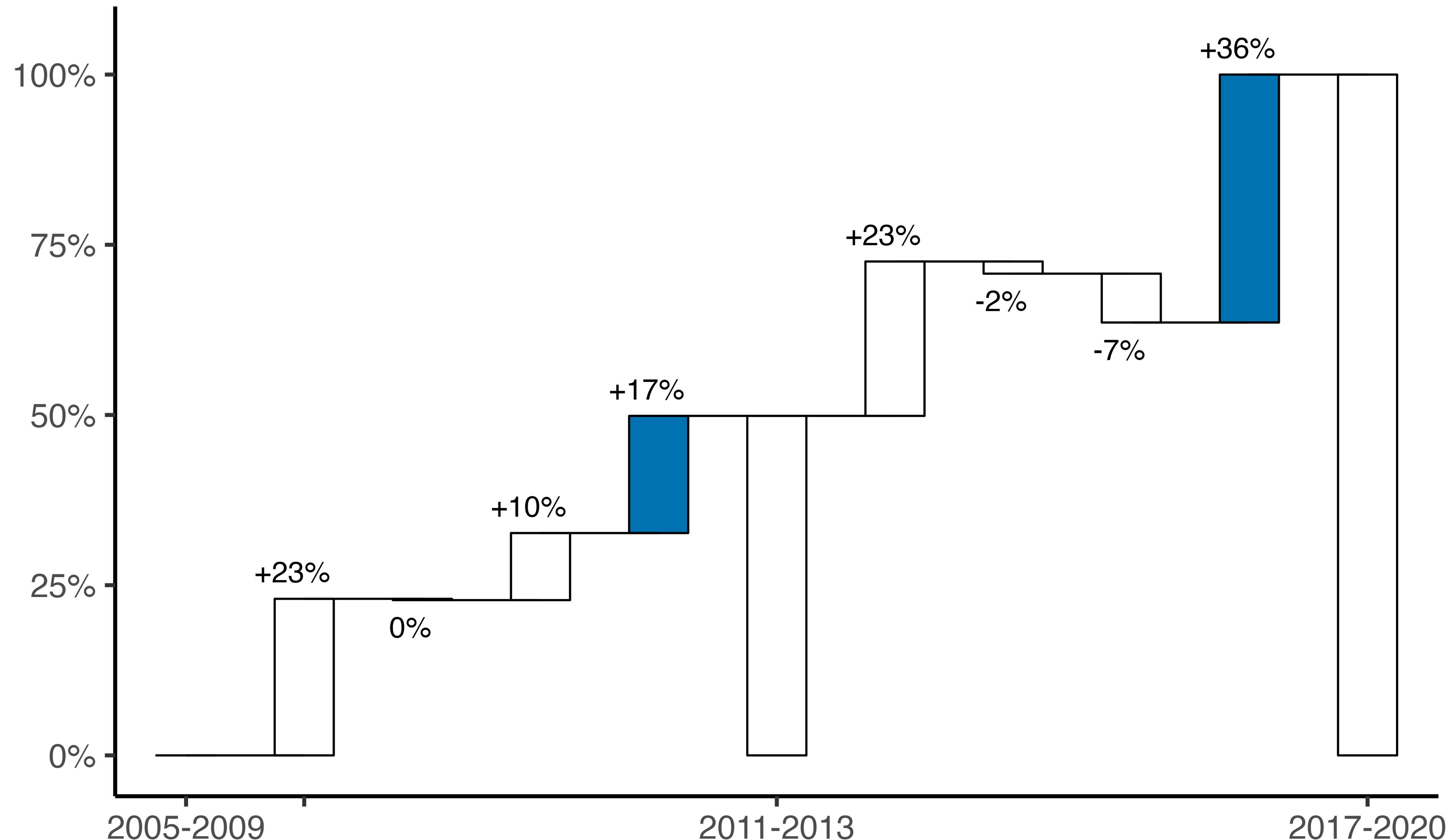
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Voters' Priority is Important for the Rise



re: Voters' Priority...

- Voters have a weight for each party position (issue)

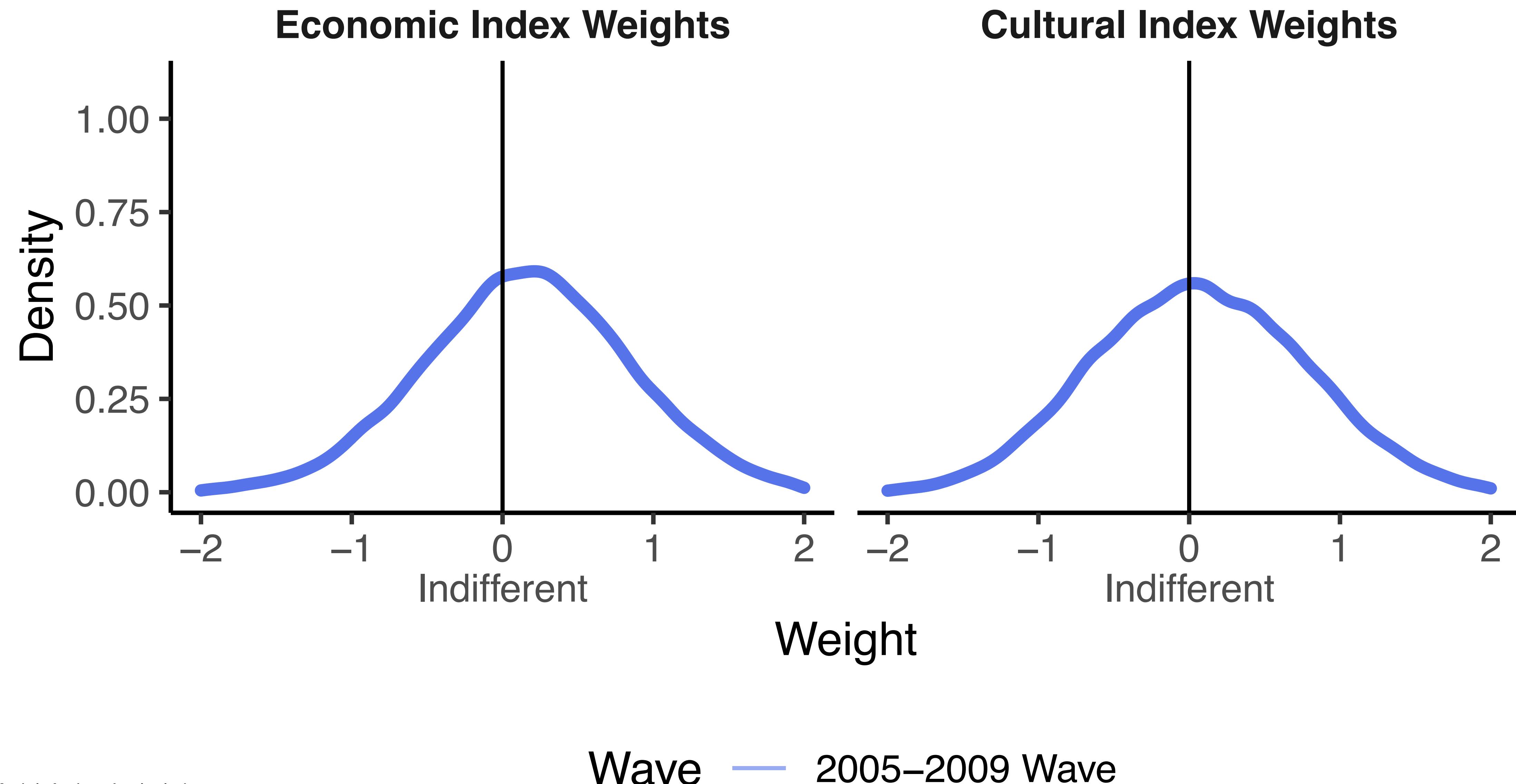
$$U_{ij} = z_j' w_i(x_i) + \zeta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

- Suppose we hold voters' characteristics constant at 2017-2020 level

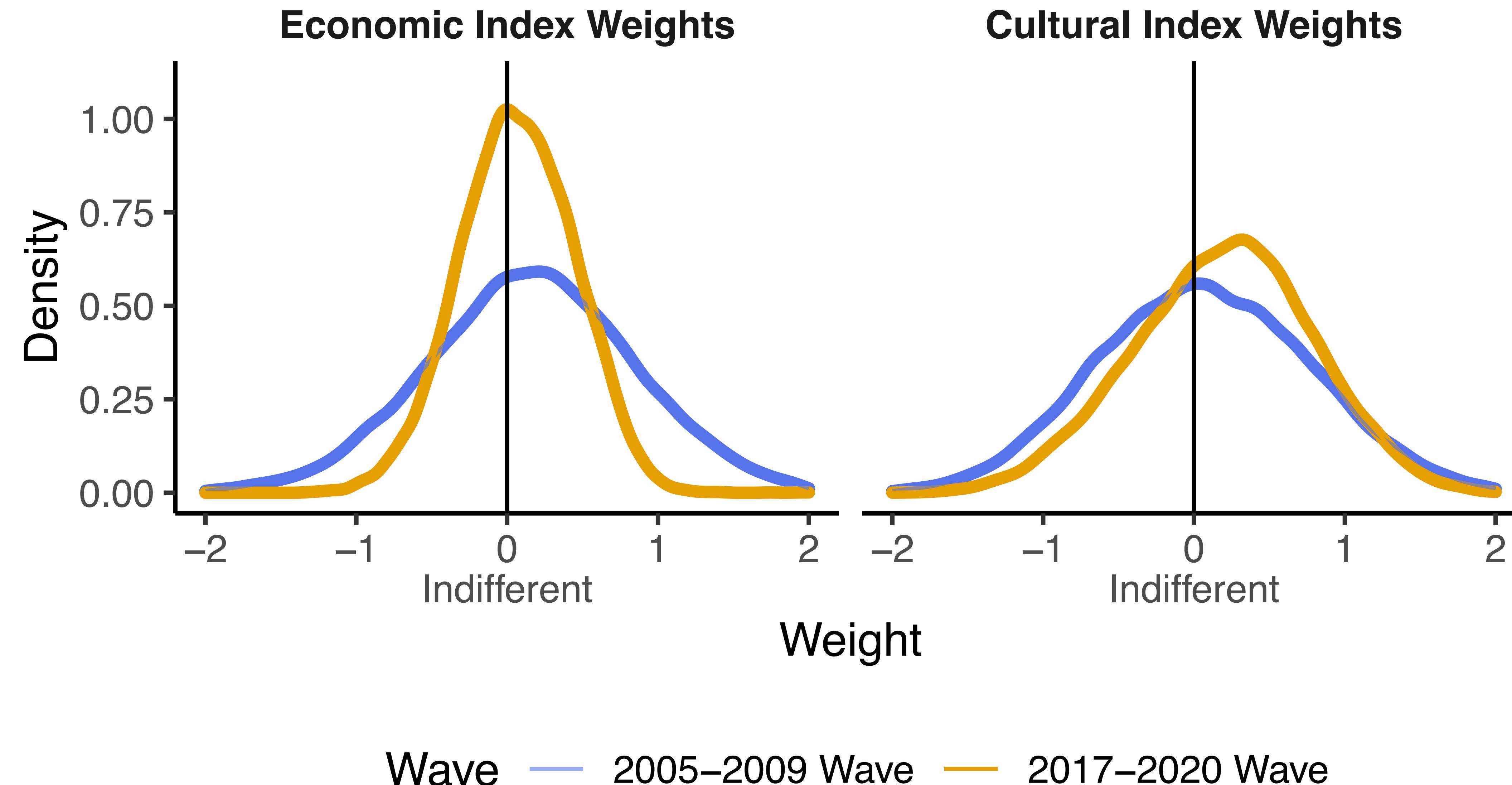
$$\tilde{w}_i(x_i) = x_i^{2020} \phi_t + \beta_t$$

- See distribution of weights on two established indexes (**high = more right**)
 - Economic index: $\tilde{w}_i^E(x_i)$
 - Cultural index: $\tilde{w}_i^C(x_i)$

Weights on Econ/Cultural Positions used to be Similar

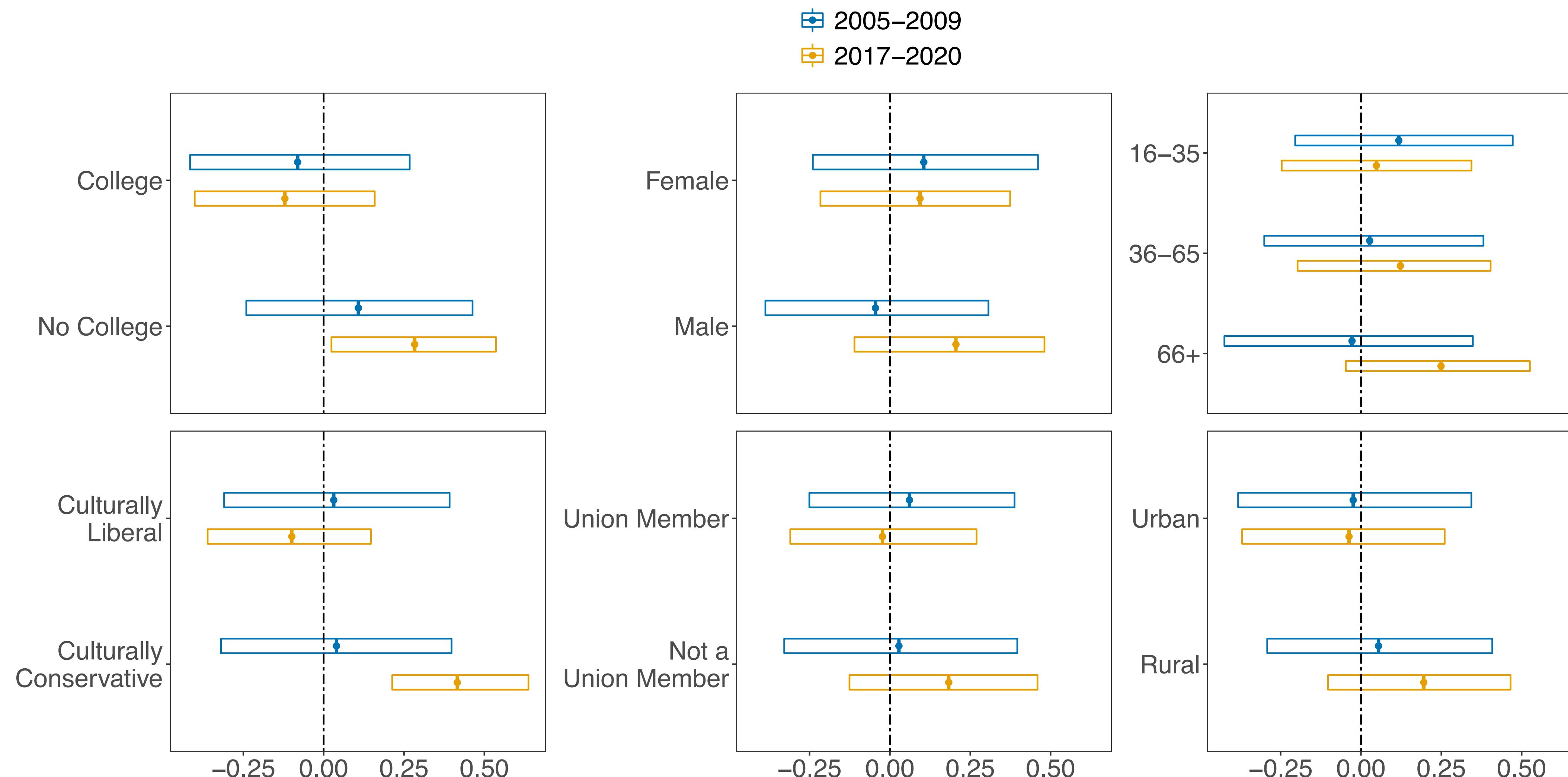


Voters Now More Prioritized on Cultural Issues



Cultural Priorities are Polarized

Changes in Weights on Cultural Index by Subgroups



Conclusion

- ▶ **Changes in voter priorities drive recent populist support**
- ▶ **Inconsistent** with theories emphasizing the following as drivers
 - ▶ Party positions changes
 - ▶ Waves in public opinion
- ▶ Future Research
 - ▶ Why do priorities change?
 - ▶ Apply the same methodology to decompose additional political trends (Green?)

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Manifesto Summary Stats

| | 2005-2009 | | 2017-2020 | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| | PRRP | Other Parties | PRRP | Other Parties |
| Party Economic Positions Index | -6.4 | -8.1 | -6.4 | -14.8 |
| Party Cultural Positions Index | 13.2 | -6.7 | 19.7 | -6.7 |
| Top 5 Distinctive Variables | | | | |
| European Community/Union: Negative | 2.8 | 0.3 | 3.4 | 0.5 |
| National Way of Life: Positive | 6.1 | 1.9 | 10.8 | 2.6 |
| Internationalism: Negative | 1.2 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 0.2 |
| Multiculturalism: Negative | 3.2 | 0.5 | 2.6 | 0.9 |
| Law and Order: Positive | 7.0 | 4.4 | 6.9 | 4.0 |

Manifesto Economy Index

| Variable | Description | Sign |
|--|--|------|
| Free Market Economy (per401) | Favourable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model | + |
| Incentives: Positive (per402) | Favourable mentions of supply side oriented economic policies | + |
| Market Regulation (per403) | Support for policies designed to create a fair and open economic market | - |
| Economic Planning (per404) | Favourable mentions of long-standing economic planning by the government | - |
| Corporatism/Mixed Economy (per405) | Favourable mentions of cooperation of government, employers, and trade unions simultaneously | - |
| Protectionism: Positive (per406) | Favourable mentions of extending or maintaining the protection of internal markets | - |
| Protectionism: Negative (per407) | Support for the concept of free trade and open markets | + |
| Keynesian Demand Management (per409) | Favourable mentions of demand side oriented economic policies | - |
| Controlled Economy (per412) | Support for direct government control of economy | - |
| Nationalisation (per413) | Favourable mentions of government ownership of industries, either partial or complete; calls for keeping nationalised industries in state hand or nationalising currently private industries | - |
| Marxist Analysis (per415) | Positive references to Marxist-Leninist ideology and specific use of Marxist-Leninist terminology by the manifesto party | - |
| Anti-Growth Economy: Positive (per416) | Favourable mentions of anti-growth politics | - |
| Welfare State Expansion (per504) | Favourable mentions of need to introduce, maintain or expand any public social service or social security scheme | - |
| Welfare State Limitation (per505) | Limiting state expenditures on social services or social security | + |

Manifesto Cultural Index

| Variable | Description | Sign |
|--|---|------|
| Military: Positive (per104) | The importance of external security and defence | + |
| Military: Negative (per105) | Negative references to the military or use of military power to solve conflicts | - |
| Peace (per106) | Any declaration of belief in peace and peaceful means of solving crises absent reference to the military | - |
| Internationalism: Positive (per107) | Need for international co-operation, including co-operation with specific countries other than those coded in Foreign Special Relationships | - |
| Internationalism: Negative (per109) | Negative references to international co-operation | + |
| Environmental Protection (per501) | General policies in favour of protecting the environment, fighting climate change, and other green policies | - |
| Equality: Positive (per503) | Concept of social justice and the need for fair treatment of all people | - |
| National Way of Life: Positive (per601) | Favourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history, and general appeals | + |
| National Way of Life: Negative (per602) | Unfavourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation and history | - |
| Traditional Morality: Positive (per603) | Favourable mentions of traditional and/or religious moral values | + |
| Traditional Morality: Negative (per604) | Opposition to traditional and/or religious moral values | - |
| Law and Order: Positive (per605) | Favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime | + |
| Multiculturalism: Positive (per607) | Favourable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies | - |
| Multiculturalism: Negative (per608) | The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration | + |
| Underprivileged Minority Groups (per705) | Very general favourable references to underprivileged minorities who are defined neither in economic nor in demographic terms | - |

IVS Summary Stat

| | 2005-2009 | | 2017-2020 | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| | PRRP | Other Parties | PRRP | Other Parties |
| Demographics | | | | |
| College education | 0.16 | 0.28 | 0.22 | 0.40 |
| Age | 45.83 | 50.04 | 51.01 | 52.48 |
| Male | 0.53 | 0.47 | 0.53 | 0.45 |
| Right Wing | 0.66 | 0.41 | 0.74 | 0.42 |
| Urban | 0.21 | 0.27 | 0.18 | 0.24 |
| Most Distinctive Opinions | | | | |
| Confidence in EU | -0.13 | 0.07 | -0.53 | 0.04 |
| Jobs should prioritize natives | 0.46 | -0.03 | 0.55 | -0.13 |
| Don't want immigrant neighbors | 0.14 | -0.08 | 0.55 | -0.04 |
| Confidence in press | -0.11 | 0.05 | -0.36 | 0.03 |
| Confidence in UN | -0.14 | 0.06 | -0.42 | 0.04 |

IVS Data

Table: IVS Data Analyzed

| Wave | Countries | Parties | Radical Right Parties | Observations |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|
| 2005–2009 | 22 | 151 | 19 | 26,153 |
| 2011–2013 | 7 | 53 | 6 | 6,377 |
| 2017–2020 | 22 | 173 | 28 | 27,105 |

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Our Model is Similar to Bliss Point Model

- Assume that voters have a bliss point, which is linear in their observables

$$U_{ij} = \|z_j - Ax_i\|^2 + \zeta_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \text{ with norm } \|a\|^2 = \sum_k \beta_k^2 a_k^2$$

- Then, we can rewrite as

$$U_{ij} = x_i \phi z'_j + \delta_j \text{ with } \phi = A * \text{diag}(\beta) \text{ and } \delta_j = z^2 \beta^2 + \zeta_j$$

- Our model misspecified δ_j
 - This would be attributed to ζ_j

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Estimation: Two-Steps

- Define δ_j as the utility gain from party j that is common across voters

$$U_{ij} = \underbrace{x_i' \phi z_j + \beta' z_j + \zeta_j}_{\delta_j} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

- Assume ε_{ij} has a Gumbel (logit) distribution, the prob. of voting for party j

$$P(z_j | x_i) = \frac{\exp(x_i' \phi z_j + \delta_j)}{\sum_k \exp(x_i' \phi z_k + \delta_k)}$$

- Step 1: estimate $\hat{\phi}_t$ and all $\hat{\delta}_{j,t}$ separately for each wave t using penalized-MLE
 - Reduce dimension using nuclear norm and solve using proximal gradient descent
- Step 2: estimate $\hat{\beta}_t$ using estimates $\hat{\delta}_{j,t}$ for all waves

Step 1: Penalized MLE

- Challenge: ϕ has a large dimension ($\approx 5,000$)
- Solution: penalize $\|\phi\|$ with nuclear norm

$$\max_{\Phi, \delta} L(\Phi, \delta) - \lambda \|\Phi\| = \max_{\Phi, \delta} \sum_i \log \frac{\exp [x_i \Phi z_{j(i)} + \delta_{j(i)}]}{\sum_k \exp [x_i \Phi z_k + \delta_k]} - \lambda \|\Phi\|$$

- Nuclear norm
 - Generate low-rank solutions, individuals expected to vote based on a few dimensions
 - Computationally easier to solve
- Solve using proximal gradient descent
- Choose penalty λ using cross validation

Step 2: Beta and Zeta

- Want to decompose changes in mean utility $\delta_j = \beta' z_j + \zeta_j$
 - Could be due to party positions, weights, or residual
- Estimate the following learn model for all waves jointly

$$\hat{\delta}_{j,t} = \beta_t z_{jt} + \eta_j + \nu_{jt}$$

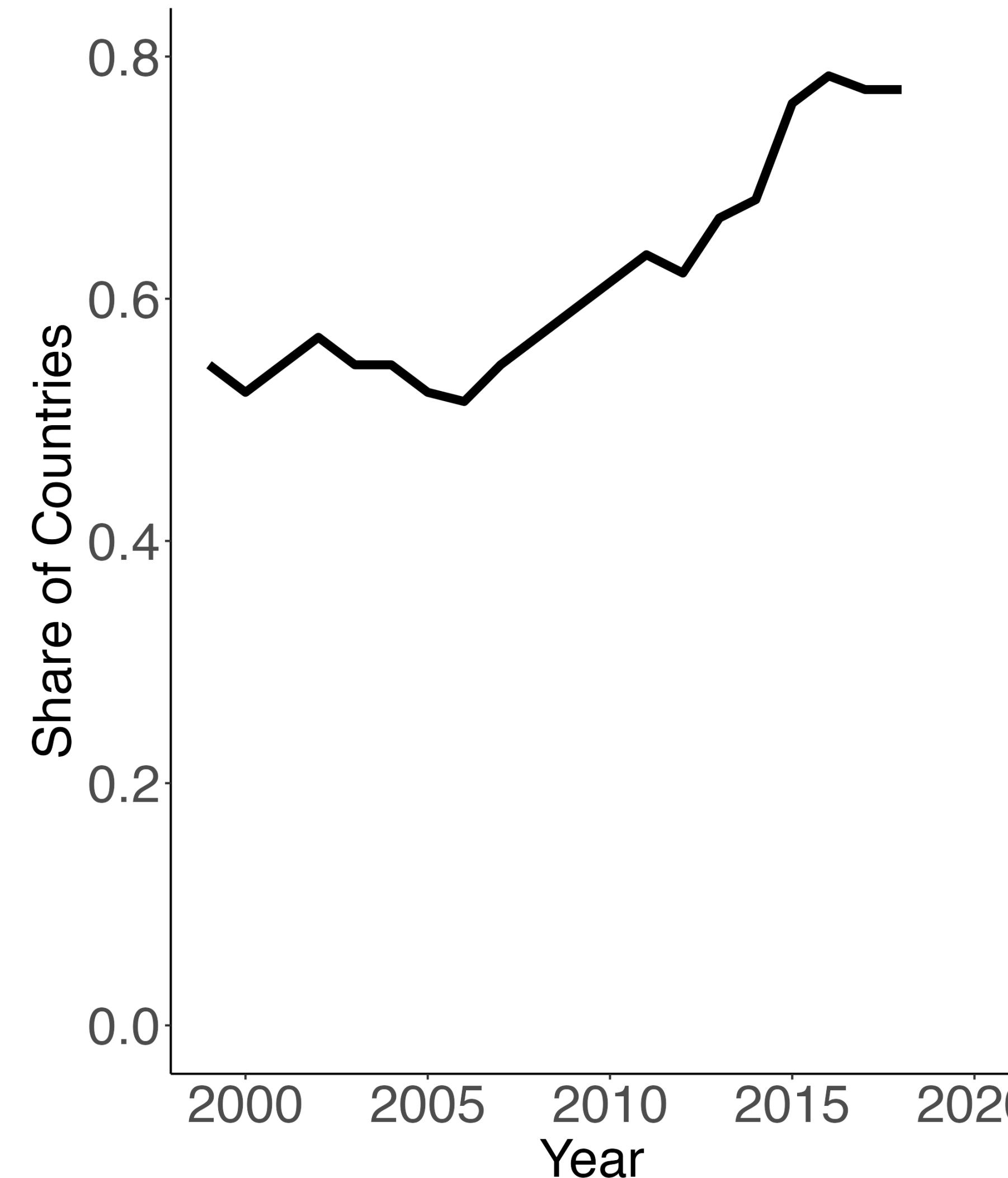
- Control party FE η_j
- Add additional waves for more power
- $\hat{\zeta}_{jt} = \hat{\eta}_j + \hat{\nu}_{jt}$: party valence

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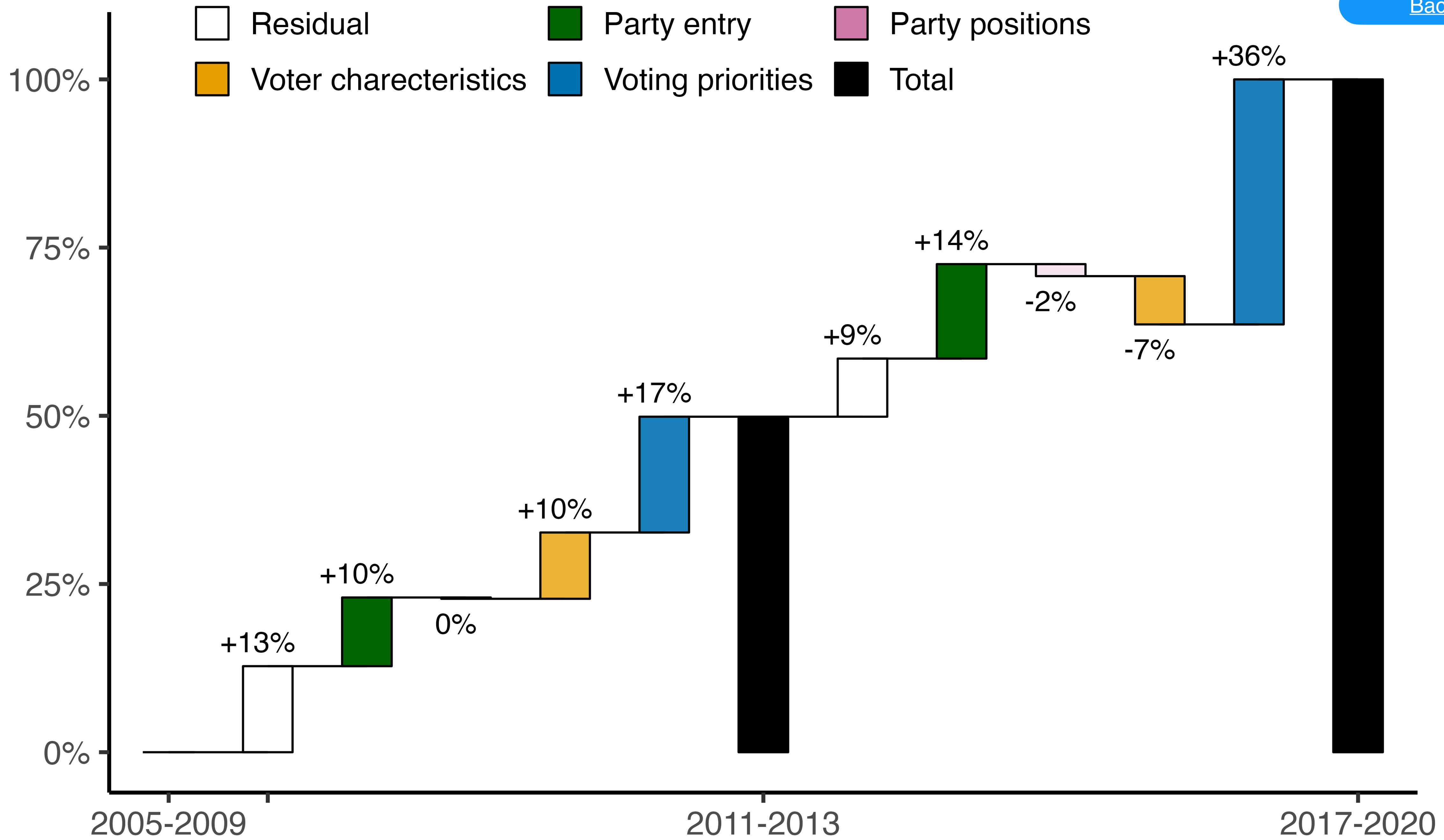
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More and More Countries Have PRRP

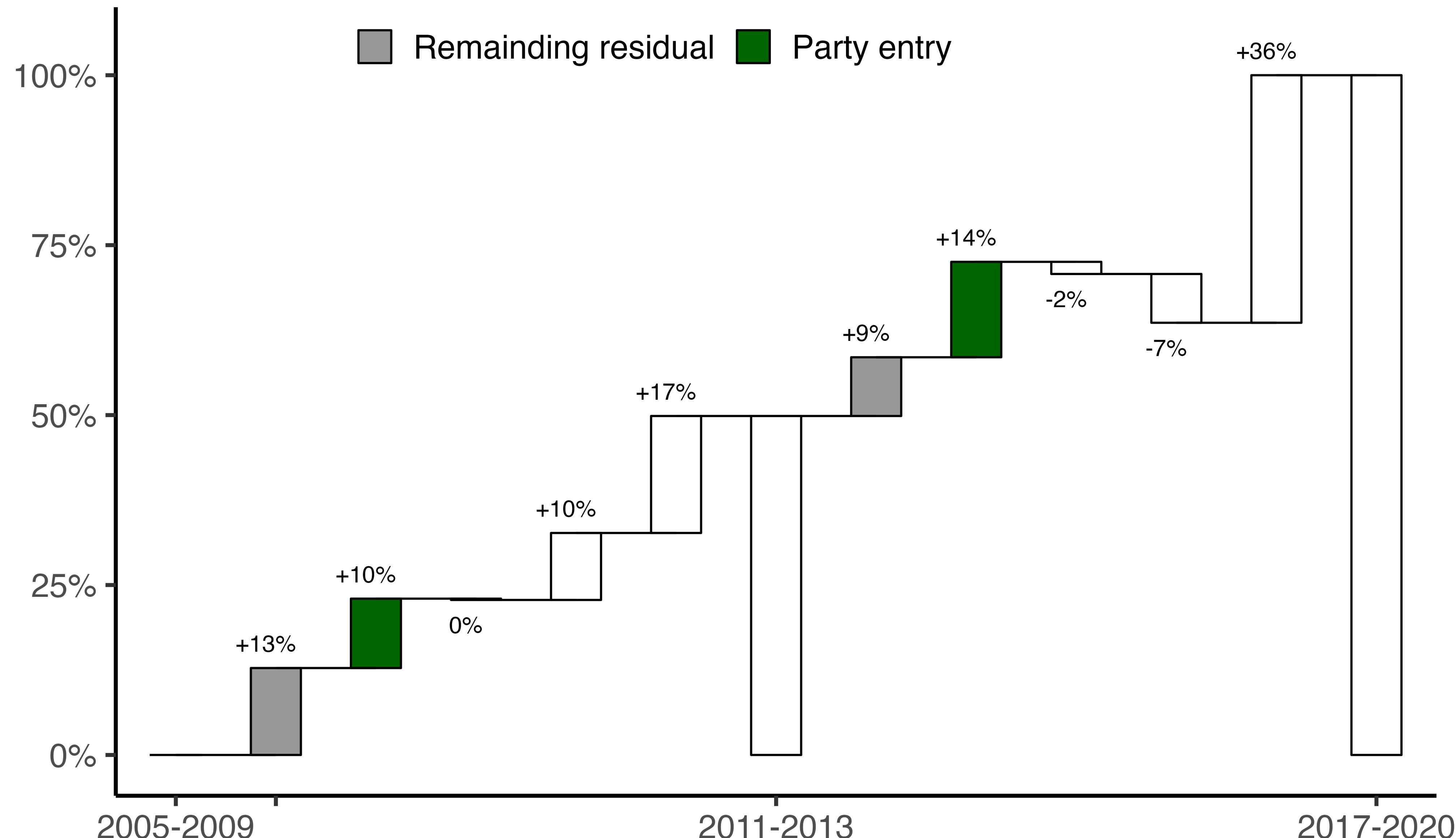
Share of Countries with PRRP



- ▶ About 80% of the 22 countries have at least one PRRP in 2020
- ▶ Increasing trends
- ▶ Swedish Democrats first got seats in 2010
- ▶ AfD in Germany founded 2013



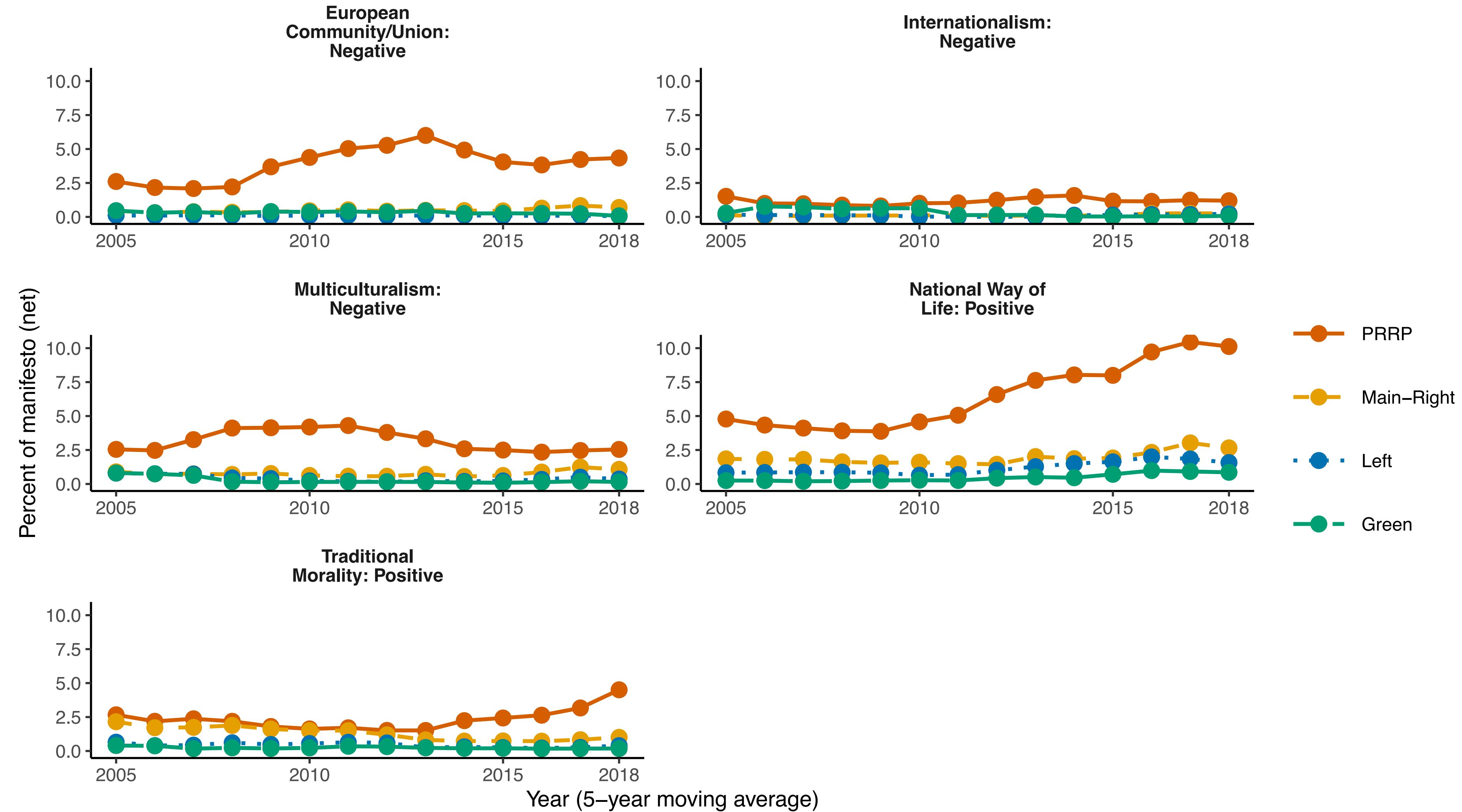
Party Entry is Also Important



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PRRP are Becoming More and More Culturally Right

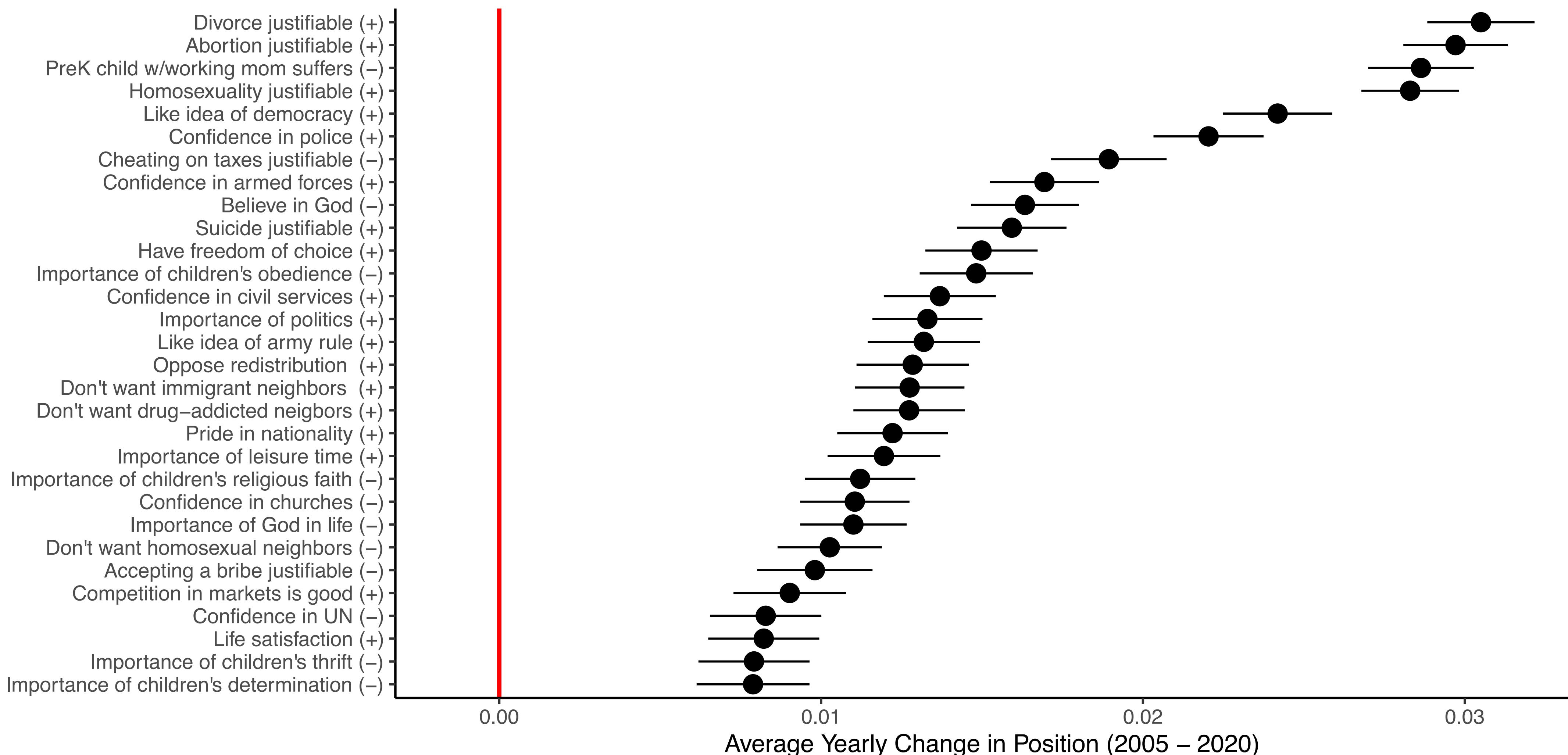


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People are Not Quite Going to Right

Opinions which have changed the most between 2005-2020; global average



Source: IVS data for 22 European countries

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