



Migration: *Policy & Politics*

25 March, 2025

CIVICA

Showcase Presentation
Sudha Jagatheesh Jayanand LSE PBS'25

AGENDA

THEORY
THE WHAT
THE HOW
THE RESULTS
TAKEAWAYS
MY CIVICA JOURNEY

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS + DATASETS

MEASURES AND METHODS

MIGRATION POLICY & POLITICS GOVERNANCE CLUSTERS

PERFORMATIVE POLICIES INTENTIONAL POLITICS

???? RANDOM YAP



THE WHY

THE WHAT

THE HOW

TLDR RESULTS

TAKEAWAYS

MY CIVICA JOURNEY

FOUNDATIONAL
CONCEPTS

DATASETS +
METHODOLOGY

POLICY
IMPLICATIONS

RESEARCH
QUESTIONS

KEY RESULTS

THEORETICAL
FOUNDATIONS

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+ DATASETS

MEASURES AND
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INTENTIONAL POLITICS

And yet, migrant integration infrastructure and social response to immigrants have been far from ideal.

Anti-immigration mood sweeping EU threatens its new asylum strategy

The bloc's migration pact, finally agreed after a decade of talks, is already in peril as states outdo each other in efforts to get tough



Growing anti-immigration sentiment among the young has the potential to significantly shift EU policy. Indications that these sentiments will continue to grow over time could force mainstream political parties to adopt a harder stance in order to stop bleeding votes to Right-wing forces, such as by adopting "Rwanda-style"

including migrants and refugees.

Although presented as "a set of new rules managing migration and establishing a common asylum system at EU level, that delivers results while remaining grounded in our European values," the New Pact largely reinforces the narrative of migration as a threat that must be controlled and mitigated.

By emphasising border protection, stringent screening processes, and externalising asylum procedures through agreements with non-EU countries, the New Pact frames migration in terms of security risks and burden management.

NEWS > POLITICS

If you think Trump's migration policies are extreme, look at the EU's

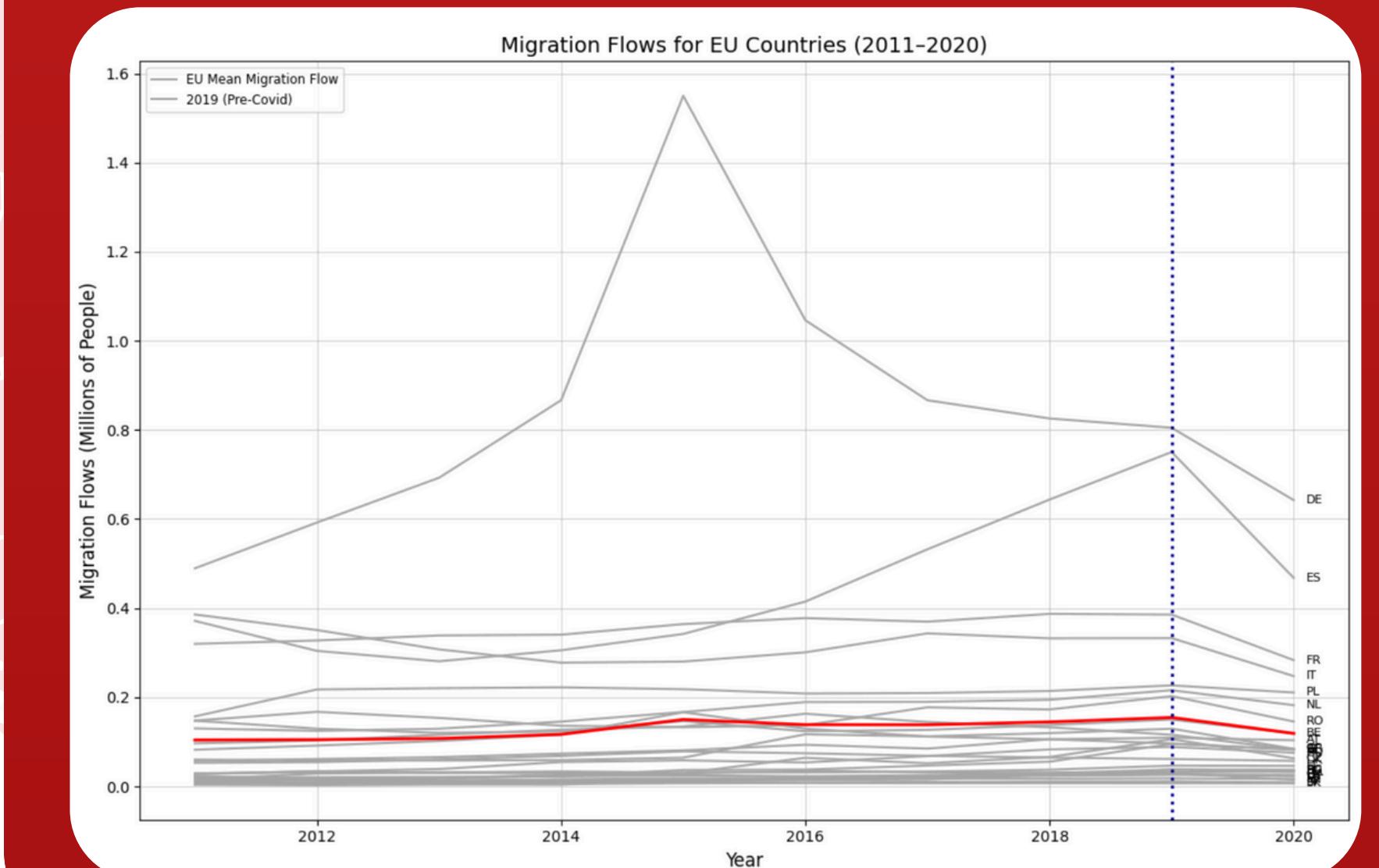
As anti-immigrant sentiment surges in Europe, under-threat leaders are embracing formerly taboo approaches to their borders.

Trapped by Italy's Policy Paradox, Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants Can Fall into Exploitative Farm Labor

AUGUST 21, 2024 FEATURE | By Nasibul Hoque



Asylum seekers and other migrants crossing the Mediterranean irregularly often view Italy as both a transit and host country. Italy has in recent years received the largest number of trans-Mediterranean migrants, prompting opposition from many Italians and heated rhetoric from politicians, while also enabling the rise of the far right.



THE WHY

01. MIGRANT INFLUX

“The sheer scale of migration places undue strain on socio-economic frameworks, reducing the efficacy of even well-designed policies in domains of public services, labour markets, and social cohesion”

02. RHETORIC

"the failure to control external immigration and the inability to effectively integrate newcomers risk elevating into power parties that are not only nativist... [but] (in some cases) **outright racist.**"

03. POLICY

"the lack of a coherent understanding of integration undermines policy design, creating barriers to welcoming and assimilating newcomers."

KEY

DEFINING THE
LANDSCAPE
(REPHRASE LOL)

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

*what should we **really** be asking?*

1

How do migrant influx, political rhetoric, and integration policies interact to shape public attitudes on migrants?

2

How effective are integration policies in buffering against migrant hostility?

3

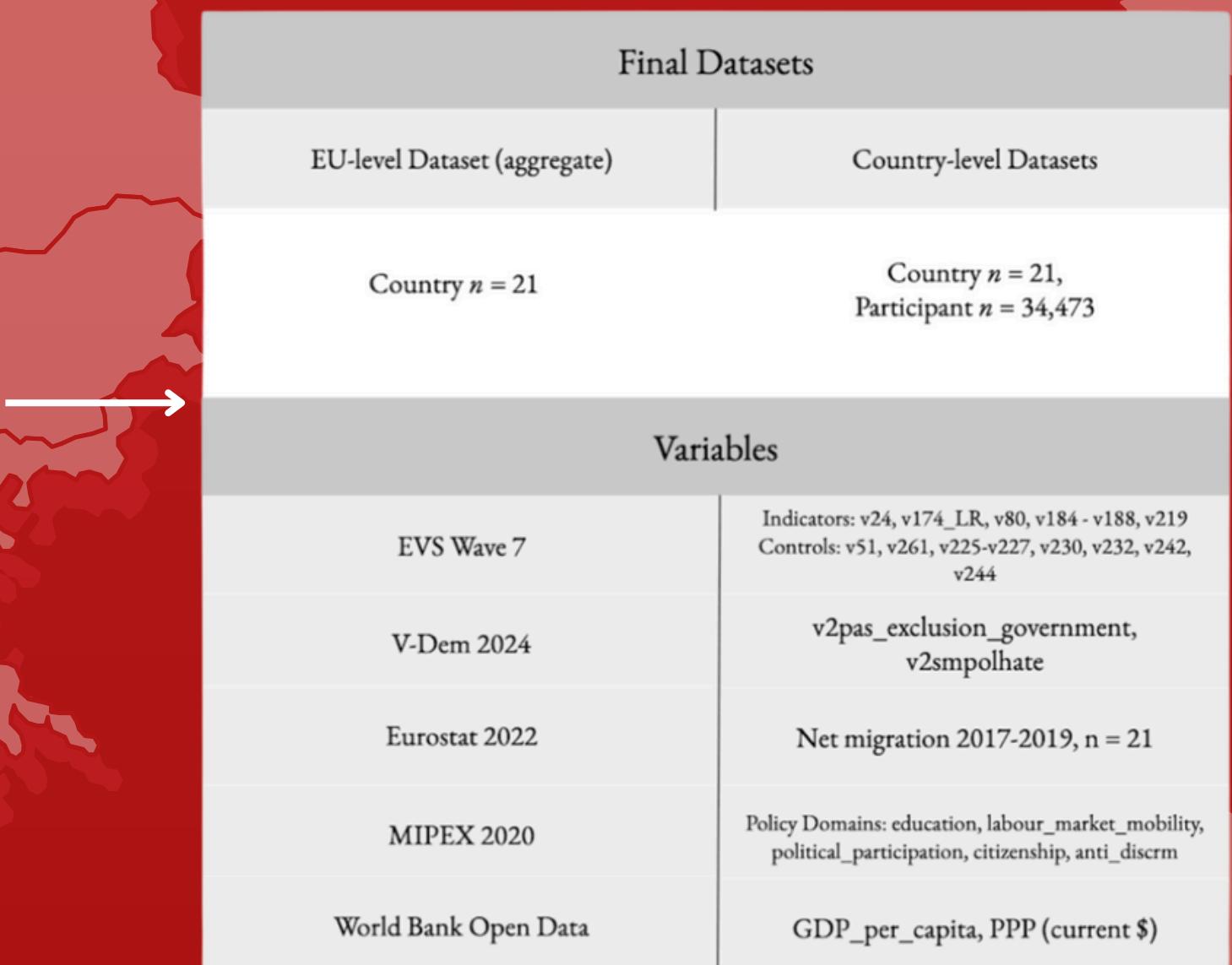
Are there distinct migration governance topologies across the EU? (i.e., are some policy designs better than others? what countries do well in which policy domains?)

DATA

THE WHAT

what countries? what policies? what data?

European Values Study (EVS) Wave 7
Country n = 36, Participant n = 59,438 Timeframe = 2017 - 2022
Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) 2024
Country n = 202 Timeframe = 1789-2022
Eurostat Migration & Asylum Dataset
Country n = 36 Timeframe = 2011-2022
Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 2020
Country n = 52 Timeframe = 2011-2019
World Bank Open Data
Country n = 189 Timeframe = 1990 - 2024



FIVE PUBLIC DATASETS
34,473 PARTICIPANTS
21 COUNTRIES
5 POLICY DOMAINS
2 GOVT. RHETORIC INDICATORS
8 PUBLIC ATTITUDE MEASURES

KEY THEORY THE WHAT THE HOW

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TL;DR RESULTS TAKEAWAYS MY CIVICA JOURNEY

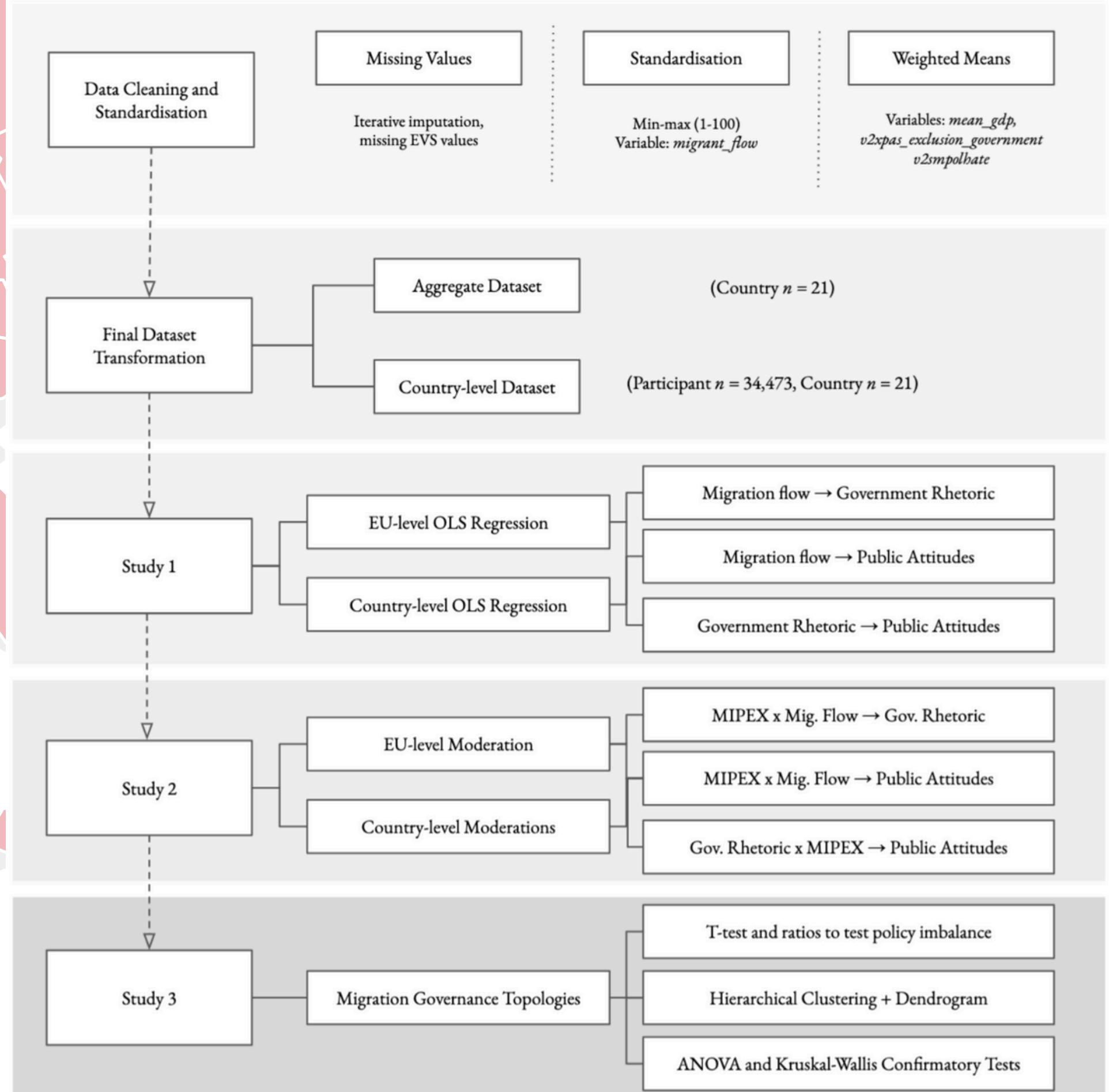
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STUDY 1: MIGRATION FLOWS AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

MORE MIGRATION

≠

MORE HOSTILITY

Cultural threat narrative is weakened, not strengthened, by migration flow

"More migration = More hostility" narrative
doesn't hold up across the board.

In fact, higher average immigration has a significant but **extremely small positive** impact on attitudes toward migrants, especially when controlling for income, GDP, and demographic factors [Adj. R² = 0.03, P < 0.05]

Public concerns about welfare, crime, or even development value of migrants aren't clearly driven by actual migration flows. This challenges the idea that migration automatically shifts societies rightward.

Where Migration Has No Significant Effect: Welfare threat, crime, development benefits, hate speech index: All not statistically significant.

STUDY 1: RULING PARTY RHETORIC AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

POPULIST RHETORIC

=

PUBLIC HOSTILITY

Ruling party rhetoric does shape public attitudes, particularly in **economic and development-related domains.**

More exclusionary rhetoric leads to

- ↑ Fear over welfare and job competition

Anti-immigrant rhetoric significantly predicts fears that migrants "steal jobs" ($\beta = -2.12$, $p = 0.04$, $R^2 = 0.70$).

- ↓ Belief in migrants contributing to national development

Public belief in migrants' contribution to development drops in populist regimes ($\beta = -0.72$, $p = 0.03$, $R^2 = 0.67$)

[NB: R^2 values indicate stronger predictive power than migration flows alone]

However, rhetoric has less consistent influence on
cultural and ideological attitudes.

(so does populist rhetoric fuel economic concerns over
emotional/social reactions?)



influence of political rhetoric is both statistically and substantively significant in countries

STUDY 1

Migration flows don't predict exclusionary rhetoric — but rhetoric strongly shapes public attitudes across the EU*

Political discourse has more power to mobilise anti-migrant sentiment than migrant numbers themselves

STUDY 2

STRONGER ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES DO NOT BUFFER THE PUBLIC FROM ADOPTING HOSTILE ATTITUDES TOWARD MIGRANTS

Despite theorised buffering effects, anti-discrimination frameworks (MIPEX) did not moderate the influence of exclusionary rhetoric on public attitudes (e.g., *immig_concern, immig_crime, immig_stole_jobs*; all $p > 0.19$)

What does this mean?

Two things:

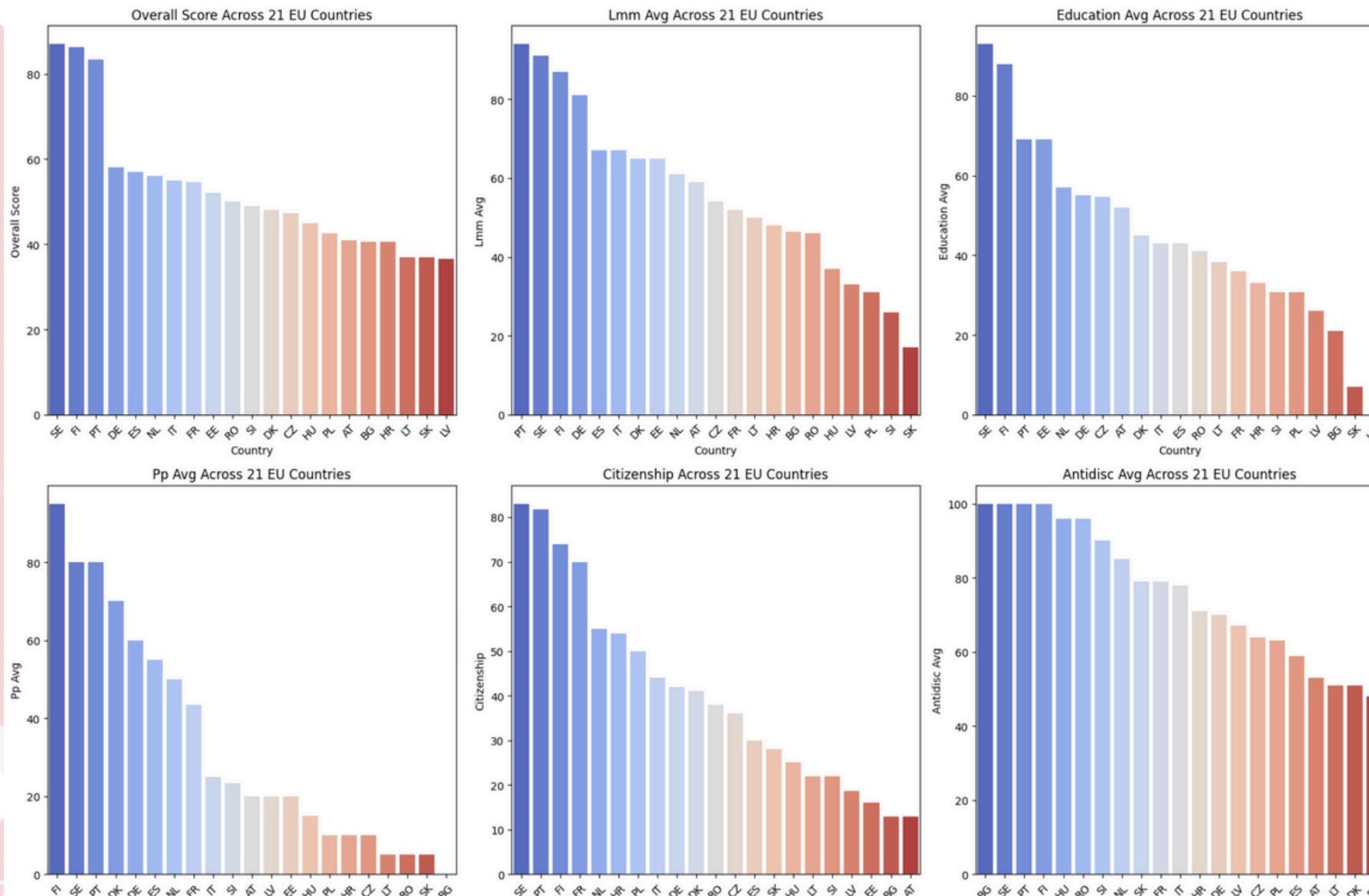
1. Could highlight a possible disconnect between institutional protections and discursive realities. i.e., rhetorical choices of governments influence public sentiment over existing structural safeguards.
2. Could mean that symbolic policies may not be sufficient, or sufficiently supported by integration policies across other domains to be effective.

SO...WHAT EXACTLY IS GOING ON?

If migrant influx isn't influencing rhetoric and attitudes,
and seemingly strong anti-discrimination policies don't seem to be doing much to buffer against anti-immigrant sentiment,
then is there something wrong with (a) policy design, or (b) policy implementation?

hint: yes, there is.

AVERAGE POLICY DOMAIN SCORES ACROSS COUNTRIES



*Anti-discrimination policy scores significantly higher than all other domains

(MIPLEX, 2020)

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION SCORES ARE CONSISTENTLY MUCH HIGHER THAN SCORES FOR OTHER DOMAINS LIKE CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

So, do countries underperform in structural inclusion?

NB: MIPLEX measures (mostly) policy design

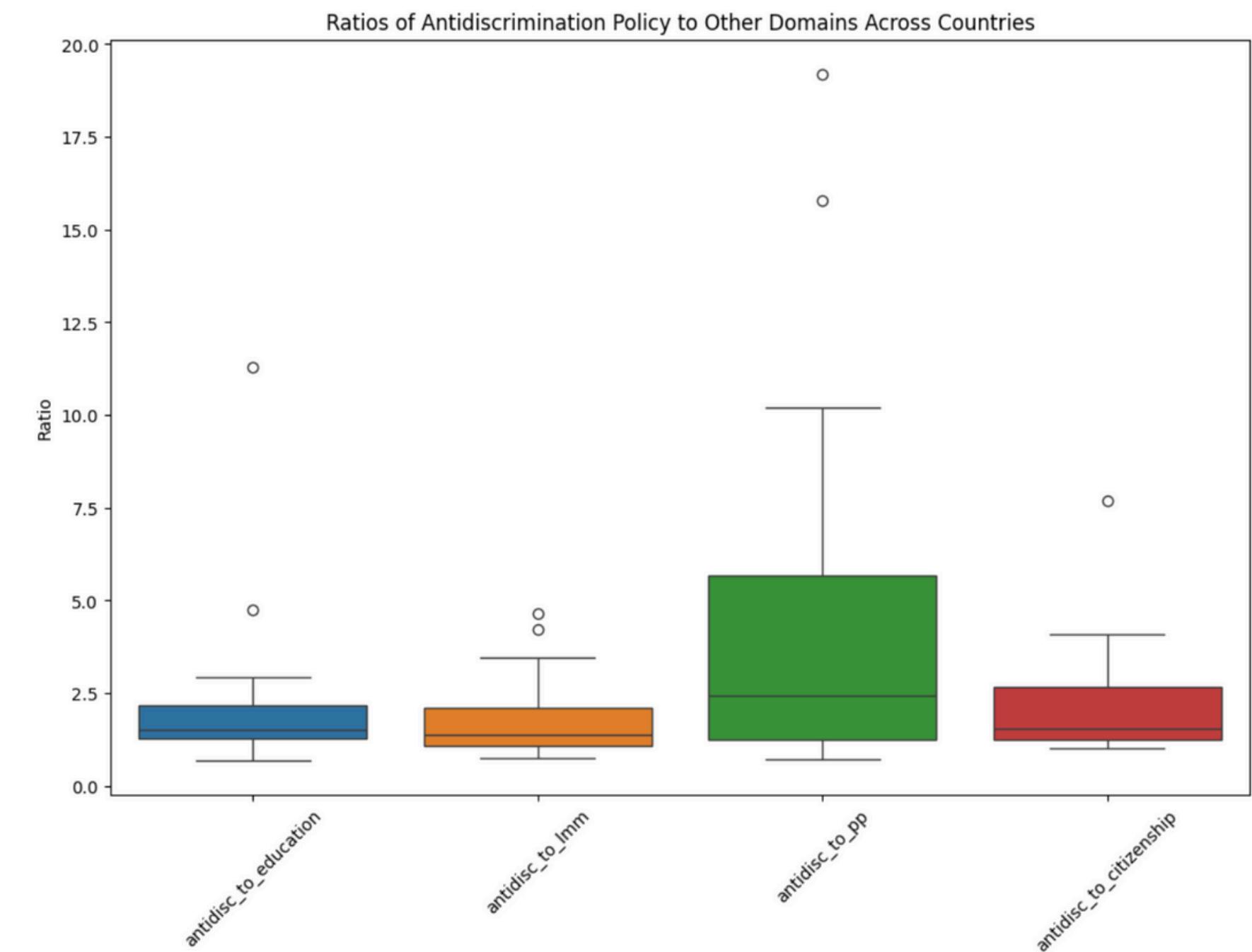
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS DO SEEM TO MASK DEFICITS IN DEEPER INCLUSION.

The ratio of anti-discrimination to political participation scores exceeds 5:1 in several countries, with some outliers above 10:1 (bottom boxplot).

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN SYMBOLIC -STRUCTURAL INCLUSION IS WIDEST IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE.

Latvia, Hungary, and Bulgaria consistently rank lowest across MIPEX domains, with steepest drop-offs in education and political participation, despite middling anti-discrimination scores.

TESTING POLICY IMBALANCE



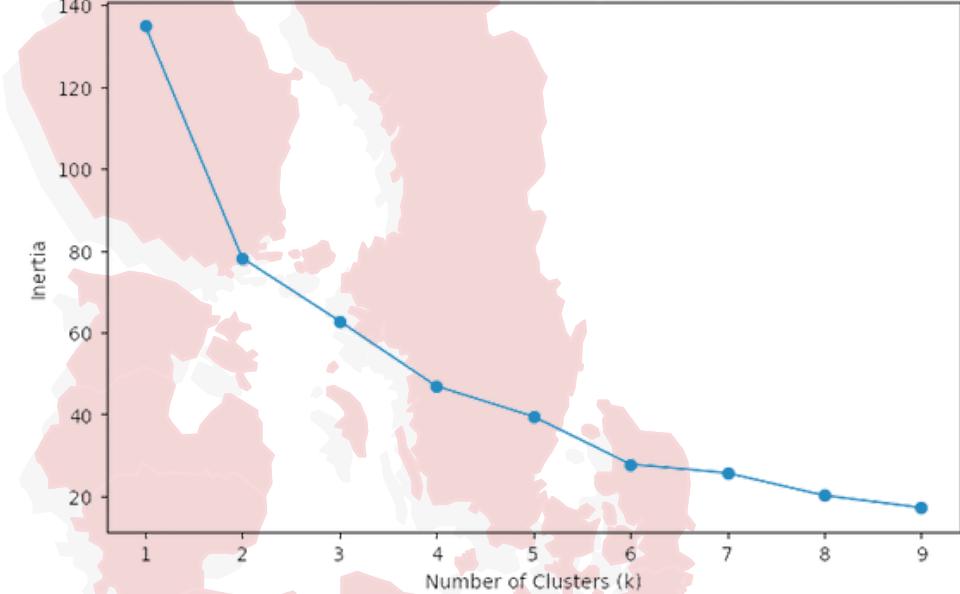
*T-tests statistically significant at p<0.01

**THIS SUGGESTS A PATTERN OF
PERFORMATIVELY INCLUSION—
STRONG LEGAL PROTECTIONS ON
PAPER, WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO
CIVIC OR POLITICAL POWER.**

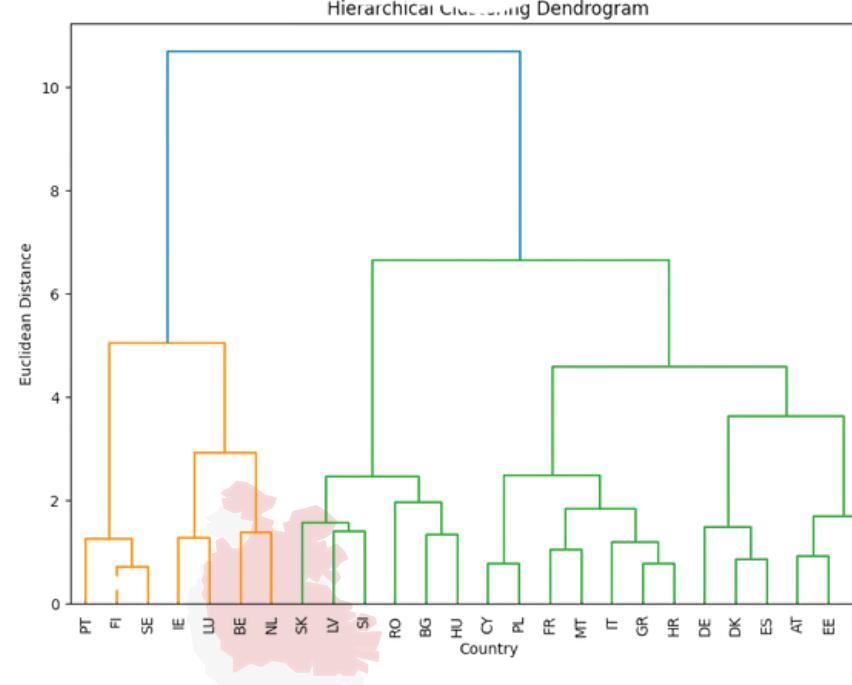
How do we understand the prevalence of this? Are all countries struggling with migration governance at a policy level?

CLUSTERING

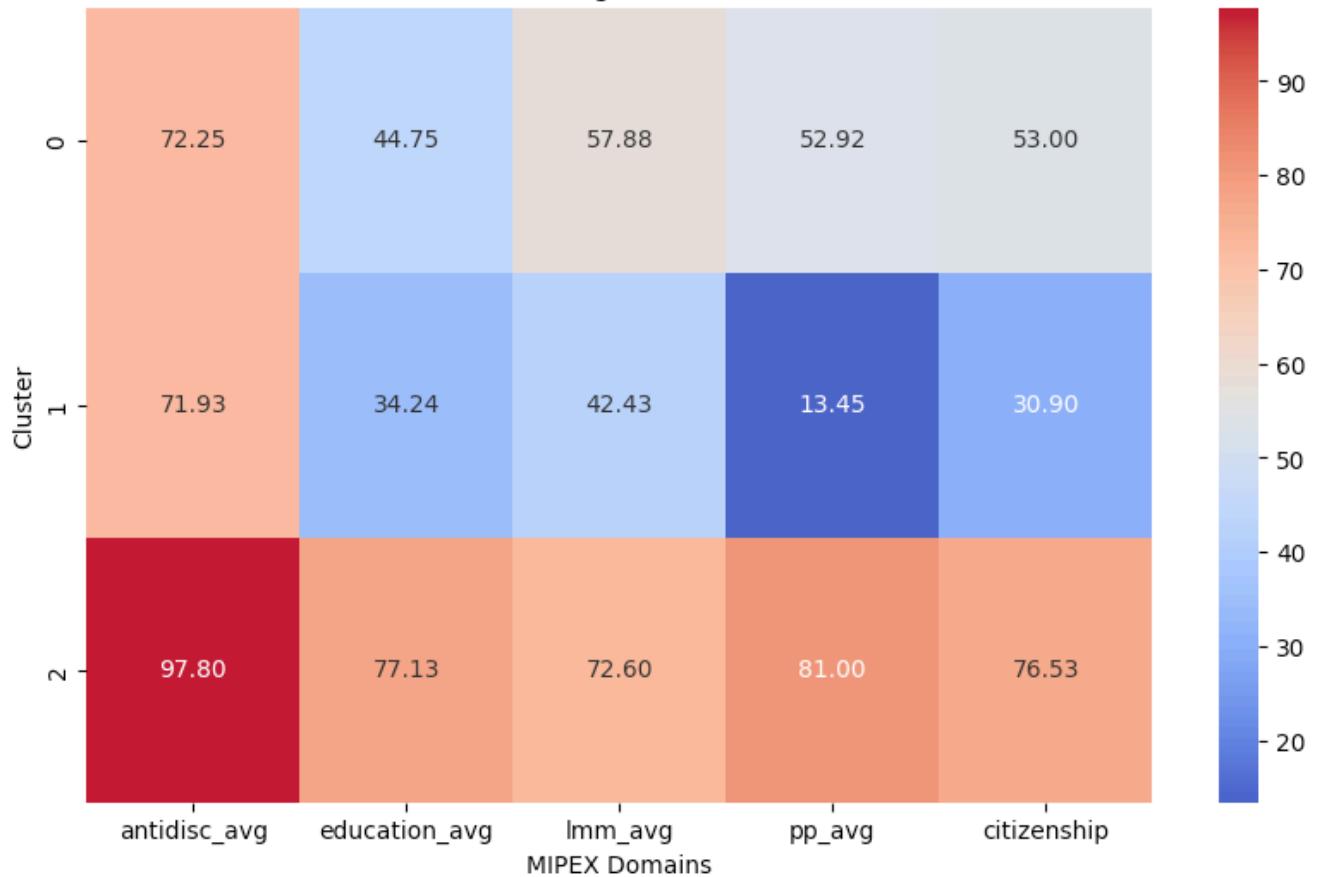
Elbow Method for Optimal k



Hierarchical Clustering Dendrogram



Cluster-wise Averages of MIPEX Domains



CLUSTER 0: SELECTIVE INCLUSION

Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands

Antidiscrimination remains relatively high (72.3), but education (44.8) and political participation (52.9) are notably weaker. migrants may be protected from discrimination but not actively empowered to thrive or participate.

CLUSTER 1: SYMBOLIC INCLUSION

Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia

Disconnect between legal frameworks and lived realities—a pattern of tokenistic policy where migrants are legally protected but excluded from pol. participation and labour market mobility

CLUSTER 2: MODEL MIGRATION GOVERNANCE?

Belgium, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden

Countries with strong, multidimensional integration policies. They're not only legislatively protective (antidiscrimination) but also enable active inclusion of migrants into the civic and political fabric.