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Nationalism and immigration control

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Abstract

Does the rise of nationalism lead to immigration policy change? By focusing on elite-led nationalism, this study offers a novel perspective: When top political leaders rely on nationalism as their legitimation strategy, they are more disposed to adopt policies aimed at strict immigration control, such as the imposition of sanctions on illegal immigrants, due to their hands being tied. We perform a battery of empirical tests using a cross-national, time-series data for 33 countries for the years 1980–2010. We find evidence that nationalist countries are positively associated with heightened immigration control. This finding is robust even after possible reverse causality is taken into account. The overall analysis illustrates that nationalism is a significant factor in explaining why countries are pushing for more restrictive immigration control in the contemporary world.

KEYWORDS
immigration, immigration control, nationalism, quantitative analysis, state theory/states

1 | INTRODUCTION

Globalization is out; nationalism is in. No other statement can better explain the recent global spread of nationalism. From Brexit to the election of President Donald Trump in the United States, nationalism has become a buzzword once again in domestic and international politics (Bieber, 2018). What is also frequently coupled with the discussion about the rise of nationalism is the issue of immigration policy. In the United Kingdom, immigration concerns were featured heavily in the Brexit campaign that eventually led to the country's vote to exit the European Union (Economist, 2016). In the United States, how to deal with illegal immigration has been the centre of public debate and a policy priority. As a way to deter inflows of illegal immigrants, for instance, President Donald Trump ordered the construction of walls along the border with Mexico (Davis et al., 2017). These examples suggest that rising

nationalism and immigration issues are intrinsically intertwined. Yet, to our surprise, the connection between nationalism and immigration policy has not yet been put under systematic scrutiny in the literature.

While there is growing research on the implications of nationalism in both domestic and international contexts (e.g., Gruffydd-Jones, 2017; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Li & Liu, 2019), the literature on nationalism and immigration remains incomplete. Most studies have examined the link between nationalism and immigration at the individual level (e.g., Ariely, 2012; Ceobanu & Escandell, 2008; Graeber et al., 2019; Green et al., 2011; Jeong, 2013; Lindstam et al., 2019; Mukherjee et al., 2011). Using survey data, these studies typically explore how nationalism affects individuals' views on immigration and find that those people who have strong national attachment and display feelings of national superiority are more likely to have an unfavourable attitude toward immigration. However, the literature is largely silent about whether nationalism influences a country's immigration policy per se. Only a few studies have investigated the impact of nationalism at the national level, but they tend to look at one or a few countries (e.g., Behdad, 1997; Gordon et al., 2019; Hutchins & Halikiopoulou, 2020; Solberg, 1969; Weiner, 1995; Zabalo et al., 2013) or explore the relationship with a narrow focus by looking at how special national historical experiences, such as colonialism or being a settler nation, influence a country's immigration policy (e.g., Breunig & Luedtke, 2008). Though analytically rich in detail, these qualitative studies are not ideal for generalizing the nationalism and immigration nexus across countries and across years. In this regard, quantitative research may offer a better approach. But such an approach is largely missing in the current literature due to the fact that "nationalism is hard to measure in a way that facilitates cross-country comparisons over time" (O'Leary & Sambanis, 2018, p. 420).

This study offers a novel theoretical argument about the relationship between nationalism and immigration policy at the national level and then conducts a battery of empirical analyses using large-*N* data. We argue that when top political leaders use nationalism as their legitimation strategy, they create nationalist governments in which they are likely to enforce restrictive immigration policy due to publicly declared policy commitments tying their hands. We test this argument using a cross-national, time-series dataset for 33 countries during the period from 1980 to 2010. As far as we know, no large-*N* studies have been conducted to date on the effect of nationalism on immigration policy. As such, our study provides a first-cut empirical analysis at the national level. The analysis shows that countries with nationalist governments are positively associated with stricter immigration control. This finding is robust even after reverse causality is considered.[1] Further, it holds true regardless of the presence or absence of other confounding factors such as democracy and the left–right political spectrum of parties. Overall, our study suggests that nationalism is a significant driving force that shapes immigration policy and thus is worth closer attention in the literature.

The remainder of this article proceeds in five parts: We first conceptualize nationalism as political leaders' legitimation strategy; next, we introduce a novel perspective on the relationship between nationalism and immigration control; we then lay out a research design with respect to statistical model building, operationalization and data sources; we present the empirical results and, finally, we discuss the implications of the findings.

2 | NATIONALISM AS A TOOL OF LEGITIMATION

Gellner (1983, p. 1) defines nationalism as "primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent." This principle has given birth to a large number of nation-states over the past two centuries. Nationalism has many different layers, including sentiments (e.g., feelings of national superiority and dominance, love of country and anti-foreign moods), political-social movements for independence and against foreign occupation and an ideology of the nation (Smith, 2001, p. 5). Nationalism also comes in various forms: civic in some countries while ethnic in others or secular in some places and religious in others. However, regardless of its form and expression, the fundamental essence of nationalism lies in the distinction between "us" and "them." A nation-state is "imagined" as a community that has a distinctive boundary between members and outsiders, and thus, not all people are welcome in the imagined community (Anderson, 1991).[2] Those who are incorporated into the

community of a nation-state develop a deep sense of belonging, and by differentiating themselves from others, they create internal solidarity. Nationalism thus binds people together under the name of a nation; it allows citizens to accept the existence of a nation-state and develop "we-ness" and loyalty to their nation-state. It also enables political leaders to undertake domestic and international projects on behalf of the community of people within a nation-state. Due to these positive functions, nationalism has been widely acknowledged as a source of political legitimacy.

A government needs political legitimacy to rule people.[3] Political scientists have long pointed out that different regimes have different sources of legitimacy. In democracies, where people select their leaders through elections, government legitimacy primarily comes from electoral accountability. In autocracies, where such electoral accountability is absent, the source of legitimacy varies from historical or religious right to rule to ideologies such as communism and fascism. Importantly, legitimacy is not automatically given to rulers through political institutions, history or ideology. Rulers constantly need to legitimize their rules (Barker, 2001), and such legitimation forms "the theoretical foundation of … governmental power; it contributes in both constituting it and defining it, even in the absence of widespread popular legitimacy" (Kailitz, 2013, p. 40). Legitimation, which refers to any strategy or activity employed by top leaders to legitimize their rule, can take place in any regime type (Barker, 2001, p. 24). In other words, both autocratic and democratic leaders engage in legitimation in various ways.

Nationalism is considered a very effective legitimation tool. As Kailitz (2013, p. 41) points out, credibility is an important element in legitimation: "claims about legitimacy are not merely seen as elite rationalizations of structures of rules chosen for other reasons. The justification of power is usually not merely window-dressing by rulers. To be a pillar of the stability and effectiveness of a political regime, the legitimation of the political regime must be credible." Nationalism provides inherent credibility as a tool for legitimation, due to its very nature of representing the "people" as a whole within a nation-state, who are clearly distinguished from those who do not belong. By emphasizing "we-ness" vis-à-vis the others, a regime that employs nationalism for legitimation can "justify itself continuously to its following, and its principal claim is that it represents that following" (Barker, 2001, p. 61). It is thus no surprise that nationalist governments readily highlight that they represent the "people" of their nation-state and that there is "the link between the people and their leaders" (Barker, 2001, p. 61). Throughout history and across the globe, we have frequently observed such nationalist governments, from democratic countries like the United States and Canada to democratized nations like Mexico, Slovakia and Estonia and to authoritarian regimes like China.

3 | NATIONALIST GOVERNMENTS AND IMMIGRATION CONTROL

We argue that nationalist governments are more likely to adopt a restrictive immigration policy than other types of governments that do not rely on nationalism. As noted, nationalism is based on the common understanding of "who we are" as a nation-state and a clear distinction between "us" and "them." However, identifying "We" and differentiating it from "Others" comes with consequences. An extensive body of research in social psychology shows that once an in-group and out-group distinction is made, it tends to fan in-group favouritism (see Tajfel, 1982; Turner et al., 1987).[4] For instance, researchers find that even when people form a group based on a meaningless criterion like a coin flip, they tend to exhibit a more favourable attitude toward their in-group versus the out-group (e.g., allocating more support/resources to in-group members than out-group members). The intergroup neuroscience literature also observes that people tend to perceive an in-group and an out-group in a different manner (e.g., Cikara & Van Bavel, 2014). These sharp distinctions also have been well recognized at the national level. In particular, international relations scholars have pointed out that a strong national identity can promote inter-state competition, affecting threat perception and alliance behaviours (e.g., Mercer, 1995). As such, scholars have frequently deemed nationalism as a driving force for military aggression and economic protectionism (e.g., Gilpin, 2001; Schrock-Jacobson, 2012; Snyder, 2000).

The negative ramifications of nationalism are also pronounced in the domain of domestic policy—immigration. When political leaders invoke the notion of "us" versus "them" and re-define "who we are," immigrants become victims of their nationalist politics. Nationalist leaders have no reservation singling out immigrants as the "Others" by

asserting that they are a group of people who are from the outside. In other words, nationalist leaders can easily portray immigrants as a common threat to the nation and serious harm to internal unity, rather than as legitimate and acceptable members of society. It is thus no surprise that nationalism often comes with xenophobic attitudes. Previous research has shown that there is a positive association between the two. For instance, using International Social Survey Programme, Hjerm (2001) analysed the attitude of individuals living in Australia, Britain, Germany and Sweden. Hjerm observes that people who have a strong social identity based on nationalism are more likely to agree with anti-immigration statements, such as "immigrants increase crime rates" or "immigrants take a job away from local people."[5]

We contend that political leaders who use nationalism to shore up their legitimacy are more likely to seek a restrictive immigration policy than non-nationalist ones. By fomenting nationalism as a way to boost their popularity, top leaders are likely to unite citizens under the national flag but alienate immigrants as the "Others." When nationalist leaders declare that they represent "the nation"—the "insiders" and "members" of the nation-state—they are less likely to adopt a non-restrictive, liberal immigration policy that is open to "outsiders" and "non-members," as doing so would go against what they have propagated since taking office. This means that by choosing nationalism as their legitimation strategy, nationalist leaders already tie their hands, increasing the likelihood of the restrictiveness of immigration policy. For nationalist leaders who underscore the importance of in-group identity, immigration is likely to become a more salient domestic issue that they have to defend vigorously. Once leaders' nationalist agendas are publicly announced, there will be great public scrutiny on immigration issues, which makes it very difficult for nationalist leaders to contradict themselves. Indeed, previous research shows that once an immigration issue becomes more salient, countries are likely to introduce more restrictive policy options regarding immigrant workers (Givens & Luedtke, 2005). In short, top leaders may have no alternatives but to seek strict restrictions on immigration once making it publicly known that their statecraft is dependent on nationalism. To be in line with their legitimation strategy, nationalist leaders have little or no choice but to seek tighter control over immigration policy.

Existing studies have differentiated two types of policies with regard to immigration. One is immigration control policy, which includes policy areas such as "illegal immigration, political asylum/refugees, family reunification, and legal and labor immigration/visas"; the other is immigrant integration policy, which is more about citizenship and anti-discrimination (Givens & Luedtke, 2005, p. 4). For nationalist leaders, immigration control is likely to be a priority since it is related to shoring up their legitimacy by directly tackling the politically sensitive issue of illegal immigrants. Moreover, at the height of immigration debates, nationalist leaders are likely to pay more attention to how illegal immigrants should be controlled than how they should be regulated. There are subtle differences between control and regulation. While control mechanisms focus more on "how regulations operate," regulations refer to "binding legal provisions that create or constrain rights [of immigrants]" (Helbling et al., 2017, p. 85). Put differently, nationalist leaders are more likely to focus on controlling immigrants who have entered the country illegally than regulating immigrants who have entred the country legally. This is because the public is more sensitive to issues related to illegal immigrants, who are perceived to take away their domestic jobs, than legal immigrants, who come in with legitimate work permits; because it is easier for top leaders to scapegoat the former than the latter for their political gains and because the failure to control illegal immigrants may create a more serious threat to national security (Choi, 2019).[6]

It is not difficult to find top political leaders who use nationalism as their legitimation strategy across the world—charging the nation with anti-immigration sentiments. U.S. President Donald Trump is a prime example. With the slogan of "America First," President Donald Trump invoked nationalist appeals to claim his legitimacy. By deliberately choosing controversial words such as "invasion" and "killer" to describe immigrants (Fritze, 2019), President Donald Trump stressed the necessity for enforcing anti-immigration policies that helped keep his political base loyal. In particular, he made U.S. border control a highly contentious issue with his nationalistic tone. As is well known, President Trump was elected partly on his promise to build a substantial wall on the Mexico–U.S. border to stop illegal immigration. To keep his nationalist campaign promise and thus legitimize his political power backed by more "American" people, President Trump allocated $25 billion to expand border infrastructure consistent with his Executive Order 13767 (Gypson, 2018). In addition to the contentious border wall, he issued an executive order that temporarily

blocked the entry of citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries, linking immigration issues to national security (Shear & Cooper, 2017). European nationalists in France, Austria, Italy, Hungary and Poland rode on nationalist nostalgia at the expense of immigrants. For instance, the Hungarian nationalist government built fences on its southern borders in 2015 to "keep out refugees and migrants," and its prime minister Viktor Orban claimed that "liberal values and immigration could destroy Europe" (McLaughlin, 2019). Nationalism is not limited to the Western world. It is also central to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For instance, Modi's nationalist government declared that it will not "allow a single illegal immigrant to stay" in India (AFP, 2019). In line with this declaration, the Indian authority "rapidly expanded foreigner tribunals, forced people to prove their citizenship, and planned to build new detention camps to detain those who are arrested on suspicions of being a foreign migrant" (Gettleman & Kumar, 2019).

The above discussion leads us to formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H1. Nationalist governments are more likely to adopt restrictive immigration control than non-nationalist governments.

4 | RESEARCH DESIGN

To empirically test the above hypothesis about nationalism and immigration control, we use a cross-national, time-series data for 33 countries during the period from 1980 to 2010.[7] This pooled panel data structure designate the country-year as the unit of analysis. We fill missing observations with the information from previous years.

We operationalize the dependent variable, immigration control, in two ways: (1) level, and (2) change of, restrictiveness of immigration control. Data come from the Immigration Policies in Comparison (IMPIC) dataset.[8] In the dataset, immigration control refers to "mechanisms that monitor whether the [immigration] regulations are adhered to" (Schmid & Helbling, 2016, p. 5). Immigration control covers four policy areas: labour immigration (states may accept immigrants for economic reasons), family reunification (for social reasons), refugees and asylum seekers (for humanitarian reasons) and co-ethnics (for cultural and historical reasons); it also includes elements that refer to irregular immigrants. The IMPIC aggregates the different policy areas and creates an index of immigration control, ranging from 0 (*least restrictive*) to 0.880 (*most restrictive*), varying across countries and across years. Since the immigration control variable measures the variation across these diverse policy areas, it is not a homogeneous analytical category but an overall/averaged indicator for immigration control. This variable measures the level of restrictiveness of immigration control in a given year. As a robustness check, we used a second measure that captures the change of restrictiveness of immigration control.

The main independent variable—nationalism—comes from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project (2019).[9] This is a continuous index, fluctuating from 0 (*lowest nationalism*) to 1 (*highest nationalism*). The index is constructed based on the responses to the following expert survey question[10]: "To what extent does the current government promote [nationalism as] an officially codified set of beliefs in order to justify the regime in place?" "The government [refers to] as the chief executive along with the cabinet, ministries, and top civil servants" (The V-Dem Codebook V.10 2019, 208), which is consistent with our focus on the nationalist politics of leaders.[11] The index, for instance, shows that Donald Trump of the United States received a score of 1 during his 4-year term and Narendra Modi of India has scored 0.714 since he became the prime minister in 2014. Note that this survey question is not designed to relate nationalism to any specific issues such as immigration policy, right-wing populism or supranational institutions. The survey question captures the current status of the nationalist country by evaluating to what extent the current government uses nationalism to shore up their legitimacy, not asking why the government adopted such a strategy in the first place. This means that there is no direct connection between nationalism and the other issues mentioned above. Nonetheless, to assuage a concern about a possible reverse causality, we choose to set nationalism (predictor) at time $t-1$ and immigration policy (outcome variable) at time t. A more advanced approach of endogeneity bias will also be introduced as part of robustness tests.

To avoid possible omitted variable bias, we include three different sets of confounding variables in the model: (1) political (democracy, right-wing party, left-wing party, political instability and ethnic exclusion), (2) economic (gross domestic product [GDP] per capita, unemployment and population) and (3) security (terrorism and civil war). A lagged term for immigration control is also considered when we perform robustness tests.

4.1 | Political Factors

Since democratic political institutions protect the rights of immigrants better than autocracies (Piazza & Walsh, 2009), they should have less harsh immigration control. The democracy variable assesses the overall quality of democratic political institutions on the scale of −10 (*least democratic*) to 10 (*most democratic*). Data are collected from Polity (Marshall & Jaggers, 2014).

Right- or left-wing parties may lean toward immigration control to entertain their constituencies. Although right-wing parties may be more restrictive on immigration control than left-wing parties, the existing literature is inconclusive. For example, Alonso and da Fonseca (2012) contend that regardless of their ideology, political parties in Western Europe exploit anti-immigrant sentiments in the electorate (see also Breunig & Luedtke, 2008). We test how the left–right political spectrum of political parties affects immigration policy. We use the categories of right- and left-wing parties that are collected from Inter-American Development Bank's Database of Political Institutions (DPI).[12] The left–right political spectrum of parties is divided on the basis of preferences regarding greater or less state control of the economy. Parties on the right are those with the terms "conservative" or "Christian democratic" in their names or if they are labelled right-wing. Similarly, DPI classifies parties as left if their names include communist, socialist or social democratic or if its primary sources label them as left wing. It should be noted that because detailed information on party platforms or manifestos is unavailable for most countries (even though they exist), the DPI defines left and right parties by checking whether the orientation of a party was immediately obvious from its name. If it was not, it turned to multiple secondary sources.

When countries experience socio-economic and political turmoil, they are more likely to blame foreigners for their sufferings, leading to more regulatory controls for immigrants (Caplan, 2007; Weede, 2003). To capture the effect of political instability, we operationalize the variable by using the logged composite index from Banks' (2004) dataset of political events that include assassinations, general strikes, guerrilla warfare, government crises, purges, riots, revolutions and anti-government demonstrations.

Political leaders shape public policies that favour the majority population while imposing restrictions on immigrants. When leaders promote national identities that migrant populations do not share, nationalist fervour likely arises and support for new immigration restrictions becomes stronger than before (Schain, 2018). This is particularly true when the majority of the population wish to see minority groups excluded from high income, housing, employment and government social services (de Mesquita et al., 2003; Wimmer et al., 2009).

We test the impact of ethnic exclusion based on the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset.[13] It is the logged percentage share of the excluded population in the total population that is ethno-politically irrelevant. Being ethno-politically irrelevant refers to the condition in which ethnic groups are capable of achieving only a nominal level of political efficacy or are subjected to intentional political discrimination due to their ethnic background. Ethnic exclusion occurs when a particular ethnic group's members are barred from service or representation in any branch of government (Wimmer et al., 2009).

4.2 | Economic Factors

When a national economy grows fast, it produces a favourable environment for immigration since it creates a higher demand for labour in growing economic sectors (Morley, 2006). For example, while enjoying high levels of economic

growth, the East Asian Tigers loosened their immigration policy (Kaur, 2007). Logged GDP per capita is gathered from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2017*.

In times of economic crisis, political leaders often see restrictive immigration as a quick fix to resolve limited resources available to the nation. In particular, labour restrictions are a common policy response to worsening economic conditions (Schain, 2018). Research shows that as economic conditions deteriorate, political leaders are likely to scapegoat immigrants and introduce restrictive immigration control (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014; Weede, 2003). Unemployment is regarded as a major symptom of poor economic conditions. An unemployment rate variable is obtained from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2017*.

When countries experience high levels of population growth, they can avoid labour shortages and take advantage of an abundance of labour force based on their own citizens. Accordingly, they are unlikely to introduce strict immigration control (Ley & Hiebert, 2001). The logged population variable comes from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2017*.

4.3 | Security Factors

In times of security crisis, people are likely to move around out of fear, looking for a safe and stable place to live (Buzan, 2007; Choi, 2019). This security situation is likely to make immigration control looser than it should be. But security concerns may also create an opposite effect, tightening immigration laws. For example, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have prompted heightened airport security. Since security crises can cut either way depending on the scale of the crisis and the capacity of the state, we are agnostic about its impact on immigration. We capture the unfavourable security environment in two ways: terrorism and armed insurgency. Terrorism measures the total number of terrorist incidents that occurred within a country, and data are collected from LaFree and Dugan's (2007) Global Terrorism Database. Civil war occurs when rebel groups intend to topple the incumbent government. Civil war is coded as 1 if a country experienced a civil war with at least 25 battle-related deaths during the year and as 0 otherwise. The civil war variable is based on the Uppsala and PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset.

Descriptive statistics for all variables used in the study are produced in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics

Variable	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Immigration control$_{it}$	990	0.582	0.137	0.000	0.880
Nationalism$_{it-1}$	990	0.430	0.307	0	1
Political factors					
Democracy$_{it-1}$	990	8.799	3.199	−8	10
Right-wing party$_{it-1}$	990	0.493	0.500	0	1
Left-wing party$_{it-1}$	990	0.391	0.488	0	1
Political instability$_{it-1}$	990	3.058	3.580	0	10.657
Ethinic groups exclusion$_{it-1}$	990	1.324	1.306	0	3.807
Economic factors					
GDP per capita$_{it-1}$	990	10.121	0.692	8	11.626
Unempolyment$_{it-1}$	990	7.647	3.995	1	24.210
Population$_{it-1}$	990	17.010	1.514	13	20.235
Security factors					
Terrorism$_{it-1}$	990	1.741	1.764	0	6.958
Civil War$_{it-1}$	990	0.003	0.055	0	1

The above discussion leads us to build a statistical model that tests the determinants of immigration control as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Immigration Control}_{it} = {} & \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \textit{Nationalism}_{it-1} + \beta_2 * \textit{Democracy}_{it-1} + \beta_3 * \textit{Right}- \\ & \textit{wing Party}_{it-1} + \beta_4 * \textit{Left} - \textit{wing Party}_{it-1} + \beta_5 * \textit{Political Instability}_{it-1} + \\ & \beta_6 * \textit{Ethnic Groups Exclusion}_{it-1} + \beta_7 * \textit{GDP per capita}_{it-1} + \\ & \beta_8 * \textit{Unemployment}_{it-1} + \beta_9 * \textit{Population}_{it-1} + \beta_{10} * \textit{Terrorism}_{it-1} + \\ & \beta_{11} * \textit{Civil War}_{it-1} + \varepsilon_{it}, \end{aligned}$$

where subscript $i = 1, \ldots, N$ indicates the country, and subscript $t = 1, \ldots, T$ indexes the time period. *Immigration Control*$_{it}$ is the dependent variable; β_0 is a constant term; β_1 through β_9 are coefficients for independent variables and ε_{it} is an error term. To ensure the causal time order that the events of the explanatory variables occurred before the outcome variable, all the variables on the right-hand side are lagged by 1 year. Since variables of interest in social science are often hard to measure accurately, the model may be vulnerable to random measurement error [that] "concerns the relationship between an observed variable and a specific concept it is intended to capture" (von Borzyskowski & Wahman, 2021, p. 231).[14]

To ensure the robustness of our findings, we estimate the model with four different statistical methods: (1) an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression that uses cluster-robust standard errors accounting for intra-country correlation, (2) a two-limit Tobit regression with the lower and upper limits (0 and 1) for censoring, (3) an OLS regression with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) and (4) feasible generalized least squares (FGLS) with an AR(1) process as well as a heteroskedastic and correlated error structure. To deal with the unique characteristics of each country and each year, we include country and year fixed-effects in those estimations.

5 | EMPIRICAL RESULTS

This section is divided into three parts: baseline analysis, graphical presentation and robustness tests.

5.1 | Baseline Analysis[15]

Table 2 lists four base models of immigration control and nationalism. Each model specification is identical, except for the estimation method. Model 1 uses an OLS regression, considering the dependent variable to be continuous.[16] Note that given that R^2 is 0.78, the model fits the data very well.[17] Model 2 introduces a two-limit Tobit regression that treats the degree of immigration control as a censored continuous variable. A two-limit Tobit model is appropriate when there is no excessive amount of censoring (values of 0 and 1), as in our case (see Long, 1997; McDonald & Moffitt, 1980). Model 3 calculates the panel-corrected standard error (PCSE) estimates given that the sample is a panel data characterized as having repeated observations over countries across years. Model 4 is a feasible generalized least squares (FGLS) estimator that improves inference and estimation efficiency by addressing heteroscedasticity and serial correlation in the sample data.

It turns out that the Nationalism variable is significantly different from zero across the board and the sign is in the expected direction. Consistent with our main hypothesis, nationalist countries are, all other things being equal, more likely to move toward restrictive immigration control. They are inclined to strongly enforce immigration regulations and impose stricter sanctions on irregular migrants. Note that the results of the statistical analysis do not cover recent developments (for instance, those related to the so-called "refugee crisis") linked to rising nationalism, negative framing of immigration and proposals to further restrict immigration policy (such as the ones post-2010 in the United States, Unired Kingdom, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Italy, etc.). The inclusion of these influential events should

TABLE 2 Effect of nationalism on immigration control

Variable	OLS Model 1	Two-Limit Tobit Model 2	PCSE Model 3	FGLS Model 4
$Nationalism_{it-1}$	0.125***	0.128***	0.125***	0.037***
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.003)
Political factors				
$Democracy_{it-1}$	−0.006***	−0.006***	−0.006***	−0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Right-wing $party_{it-1}$	−0.022	−0.022	−0.022	−0.004*
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.002)
Left-wing $pary_{it-1}$	−0.032*	−0.031*	−0.032*	−0.007***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.002)
Political $instability_{it-1}$	0.002*	0.002**	0.002*	0.000***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Ethinic groups $exclusion_{it-1}$	0.019***	0.019***	0.019**	0.011***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.002)
Economic factors				
GDP per $capita_{it-1}$	0.129***	0.132***	0.129***	0.052***
	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.007)
$Unempolyment_{it-1}$	−0.002	−0.001	−0.002	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.000)
$Population_{it-1}$	−0.259***	−0.265***	−0.259***	−0.273***
	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.037)	(0.011)
Security factors				
$Terrorism_{it-1}$	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003	−0.002***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.000)
Civil War_{it-1}	−0.010	−0.010	−0.010	−0.001
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.027)	(0.002)
Constant	2.599**	3.457***	2.599***	4.415***
	(0.795)	(0.857)	(0.487)	(0.198)
Country fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.78		0.78	
Observations	990	990	990	990

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001, two-tailed tests.

have made the estimated results more favourable to our theoretical expectation. Ironically, the unavailability of such data gives more credence to the validity of our theoretical claim that nationalism is a significant determinant of immigration control.

Among the control variables, Democracy, Left-wing Party, Ethnic Groups Exclusion, GDP per capita and Population appear to be associated with Immigration Control in a consistent manner. As expected, democracies are less likely to enforce strict immigration control than autocracies. When the top executive comes from a

left-wing party, he or she is more likely to relax immigration control. When countries exclude certain ethnic groups from political power, they tend to restrict the rights of immigrant workers. On the other hand, developed economies are more likely to implement strict immigration control than underdeveloped economies. This is a counterintuitive result. We speculate that GDP per capita, rather than the level of economic growth, may capture countries' capacity to regulate and control immigration. As GDP per capita increases, countries can devote more resources to immigration control compared to underdeveloped countries where the resources are used for other pressing issues. The results also indicate that countries with large populations are less likely to implement restrictive immigration control.

5.2 | Graphical Presentation

Although tabulating regression coefficients and standard errors has long been a standard way of communicating results with readers, it does not show the marginal/substantive effects of variables. We offer a graphical presentation. We plot average marginal effects in Figure 1 based on Model 1 in Table 2. Average marginal effects give us an effect on the probability of restrictive immigration control, ranging from 0 to 1. They represent the average change in the probability when each variable increases by one unit. Figure 1 displays the analysis of the marginal effects. The figure indicates a significant and positive relationship between nationalism and immigration control—as nationalism increases, the restrictiveness of immigration increases linearly among the 33 sample countries during the period from 1980 to 2010. When nationalism increases by one standard deviation from the mean, 0.58, we expect a 6.6% increase in immigration control. When nationalism increases by two standard deviations, we expect a 13% increase in immigration control. This visual pattern confirms our main hypothesis—nationalist countries are more likely to adopt restrictive immigration controls.

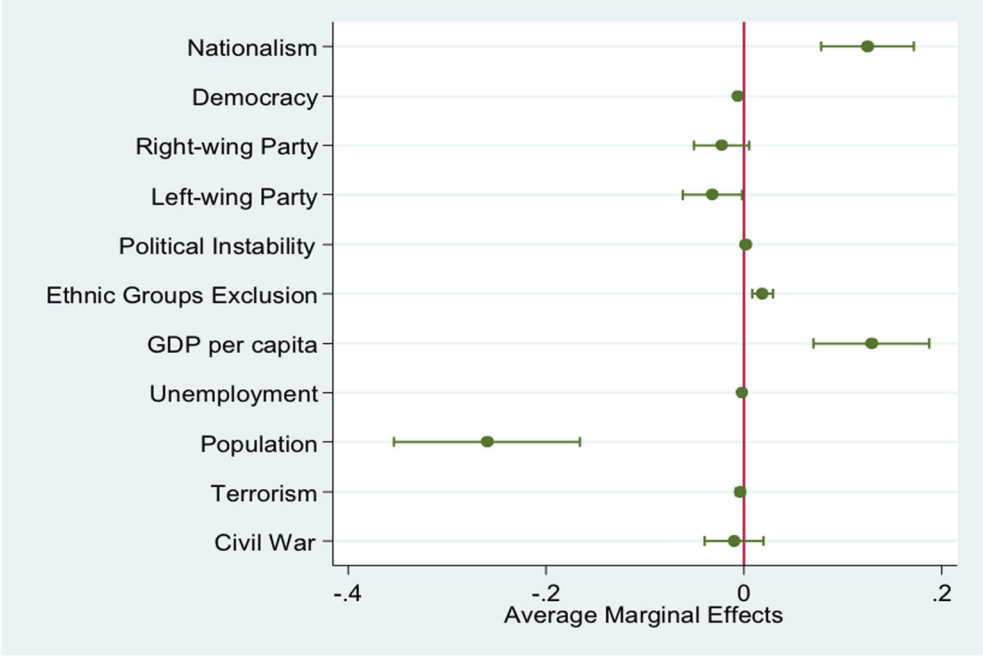

FIGURE 1 Predicted values of immigration control by nationalism [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

5.3 | Robustness Tests

Based on the last model specification in Table 2, we provide three robustness tests in Table 3. As Achen (2000) warns, a lagged dependent variable on the right-hand side of an equation often generates undesirable results as it may soak up the explanatory power of theoretically interesting independent variables. Against this warning, we choose to re-estimate the FGLS model after adding a lagged term for Immigration Control. We report the results under Model 1. The rationale is that past policy is an important foundation of a country's current immigration policy. This means that one of the best predictors of today's policy should be yesterday's policy. The past immigration policy variable is operationalized as a lagged term for immigration policy. Not surprisingly, the Lagged Immigration Control variable achieves significance in the expected direction, but it does not alter the significance of the main variable—nationalism. Once again, as countries become more nationalistic, they appear to implement stricter regulatory controls on immigration.

Model 2 also re-estimates the FGLS model after changing the dependent variable from the level of Immigration Control to its change (first difference). This model purports to explore the question of whether nationalism brings about the change in immigration control. The result indicates that it does.

By lagging all the predictors 1 year behind the outcome variable, we have addressed the possibility of reverse causality—a tighter immigration regime may lead to an increase in nationalism. Lagging is the most common practice among political scientists seeking to establish a causal relationship. Yet we further investigate the endogeneity issue by introducing an advanced estimation method. Following Dreher et al. (2010) and Roodman (2009), we employ Arellano–Bond panel-data estimation (Arellano & Bond, 1991), with one-step difference generalized method of moments (GMM). The GMM model effectively deals with the problem caused by endogenous explanatory variables by using their lagged levels as instruments for the difference equation and lagged differences as instruments for the level equations (Roodman, 2009). We treat nationalism and immigration control as endogenous but all other regressors in the model as exogenous. We check AIC and BIC statistics regarding Model 1 in Table 3 and the GMM model as fit measures for comparison purposes (Heinrich, 2020). We choose Model 1 since it includes a lagged term for nationalism that also appears in the GMM model. Since the AIC and BIC statistics are smaller for Model 1 than the GMM model, the former appears to be a better estimator for the immigration control data. Nonetheless, to alleviate the endogeneity concern, we report the GMM results in Model 3, which are consistent with those in the main analysis. Nationalism is a significant predictor of immigration control even after the reverse causality issue is taken into account.

6 | CONCLUSION

Whether nationalism heightens immigration control is a hotly debated topic. Yet there have been no systematic empirical studies with large-*N* data, but rather a plethora of anecdotal policy debates, case-based research and survey-oriented studies. Here, we address this gap in the literature by presenting a novel theoretical perspective and building a first-cut cross-national, time-series model. We find evidence that nationalist governments are more prone to impose restrictive immigration control. This finding is robust to whether or not we take potential endogeneity bias into consideration. Our finding is largely in line with general sentiments that are expressed in various media outlets and social networks: Nationalism that is fomented by political leaders to prop up their legitimacy is a significant driving force that tightens control over inflows of (illegal) immigrants. Our overall analysis suggests that we may witness a rise in immigration restrictions such as border walls as political leaders press hard on their nationalist agenda. This is not good news for human rights advocates. Just as all men and women are created equal, people should enjoy travelling from place to place within the territory of a country. This freedom of movement includes not only visiting places but also changing the place where people reside or work (Gilbert, 2014). Unfortunately, our analysis suggests that surging nationalism across the globe may be counterproductive for immigrants.

TABLE 3 Effect of nationalism on immigration control: Robustness tests

Variable	FGLS		GMM
	Lagged dependent variable included Model 1	First difference dependent variable used Model 2	Reverse causality Model 3
Nationalism$_{it-1}$	0.018***	0.009***	0.027*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.014)
Political factors			
Democracy$_{it-1}$	−0.001***	−0.000*	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Right-wing party$_{it-1}$	−0.002	−0.002**	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)
Left-wing pary$_{it-1}$	−0.005**	−0.005***	−0.003
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)
Political instability$_{it-1}$	0.000***	0.000	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Ethnic groups exclusion$_{it-1}$	0.003	0.003	0.005
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.011)
Economic factors			
GDP per capita$_{it-1}$	0.022***	0.008***	0.018
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.016)
Unempolyment$_{it-1}$	−0.001***	−0.001***	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Population$_{it-1}$	−0.017*	0.000	−0.018
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.027)
Security factors			
Terrorism$_{it-1}$	−0.001***	−0.002***	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Civil War$_{it-1}$	0.000	−0.006	−0.011
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.019)
Lagged immigration control$_{it-1}$	0.890***		0.828***
	(0.011)		(0.024)
Constant	0.105	−0.090	
	(0.127)	(0.064)	
Country fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	990	957	957

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001, two-tailed tests.

One potential alternative explanation regarding the determinants of immigration policy may be the left–right political spectrum of parties. Right-wing political parties, which typically emphasize domestic security, are claimed to seek restrictive immigration policies, whereas leftist parties, which deem potential immigrants as a political asset, are

considered to favour non-restrictive immigration measures. But the empirical evidence is mixed (Breunig & Luedtke, 2008; Duncan & Van Hecke, 2008; Givens & Luedtke, 2005). The impact of extreme right-wing parties on immigration is also found to be inconclusive (Akkerman, 2012; Lutz, 2019; Semyonov et al., 2006, p. 429). Moreover, we observe that different party ideologies are not as useful in explaining immigration control as our nationalism variable. For example, Donald Trump's party affiliation has little to do with his nationalist politics; the platform of the Republican Party stipulates no anti-immigration clauses.

More importantly, nationalism is neither synonymous with the political right nor with populism. It is often thought that nationalism is associated with the political right and especially the extreme right but nationalism is essentially not about right or left. It can be combined with the right as well as the left. A recent rise of right-wing nationalists across the world may make it appear as if there are no left-wing nationalists, but countries like Spain and Russia have experienced the rise of nationalist leftist parties in the past (Lancaster & Lewis-Beck, 1989). It is thus important not to conflate the two concepts. Likewise, nationalism is not coterminous with populism. While populism is about the distinction between "up" (political elites) and "down" (the people), nationalism is about how to distinguish between "us" and "them" (de Cleen, 2017). Nonetheless, since we do not deny some potential effect of right-wing parties on immigration policy, we have tested the connection after controlling for the presence of right-wing parties and reported the results in the empirical section. Contrary to popular belief, right-wing parties are not associated with immigration policy, though left-wing parties are likely to lower the restrictiveness of immigration control.

In short, we demonstrate that nationalism needs attention in the literature as a significant determinant of immigration policy. While we primarily focus on immigration control in this study, future research should explore how nationalism influences other areas of immigration policy. Specifically, scholars can further examine how nationalism interacts with the type of migration. For instance, it is possible that the articulation of the distinction between in-group and out-group (or the "us" versus "them" dichotomy) is affected by the type of migrants arriving. Some migrants (such as recently arrived lower-skilled migrants, undocumented, those originating from countries that are socio-economically, politically or culturally distant from the host country) may more easily be singled out as the "Other." Studies have found, for instance, that the public holds a different attitude toward high-skill versus low-skill immigrants (e.g., Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Malhotra et al., 2013; see also Heinrich, 2020). Consequently, different migrant groups (apart from being targeted by different immigration policies) may also be perceived differently by leaders, with some of them being more easily viewed as a potential threat to internal unity. Investigating the interaction between nationalism and the type of migration would therefore be one fruitful direction for future research.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Several studies have examined how immigration influences nationalism (e.g., Kaufmann, 2019; Polynczuk-Alenius, 2020).

[2] This is true even in civic nationalism, which is often believed to be a less exclusive form of nationalism compared to others. Note that civic nationalism also makes a distinction between who belongs to a nation and who does not.

[3] There is no clear, agreed-upon definition of political legitimacy (see Weatherford, 1992).

[4] For an overview of social identity theory, see Huddy (2001). While earlier studies suggest that ingroup favouritism brings about outgroup derogation (e.g., Sumner, 1940), subsequent studies claim that they do not necessarily go hand in hand. For example, Brown (2000, p. 763) points out that social identity theory "is a theory about intergroup differentiation rather than out-group derogation." This is in line with Tajfel (1982) that the out-group members were rewarded, but only to a lesser degree than the fellows of the in-group. Yet social psychologists generally do not deny a possibility that strong ingroup attachment can become a ground for negative attitudes toward those who are outside of the group boundaries (Brewer, 1999).

[5] See also Saideman and Ayres (2008) for a national level analysis.

[6] To be clear, we do not deny the possibility that nationalist leaders may adopt different policies to regulate different types of migration (low-skilled vs. high-skilled migration, family reunification, irregular migration, admission of asylum seekers, minors, etc.). Yet nationalist leaders can, in general, adopt more restrictive immigration control. As such, we confine ourselves to some key variations regarding immigration control policies.

[7] The sample countries and study period are determined by the data availability of the dependent variable, immigration control. Table A1 displays a list of 33 sample countries.

[8] For more detailed information, see http://www.impic-project.eu/ and Schmid and Helbling (2016).

[9] See https://www.v-dem.net/en/. The V-Dem Project produces one of the largest-ever social science data collection efforts with a database containing over 19 million data points. The V-Dem Project is the recipient of the 2016 Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award.

[10] The survey question has little to do with people's opinions. "Governments make legitimacy claims—provide justifications for the form of rule under which they govern. In the following section, we are interested in the nature of the legitimacy claims made by the sitting government. Please note that the government's claims to legitimacy—their legitimation strategies—are the object of inquiry here. We are not asking you to assess how ordinary people judge the legitimacy of their rulers" (V-Dem Codebook V.10 2019, 208).

[11] The nationalism variable is constructed from the opinion of country experts at the micro-level. But the variable assesses the level of nationalism at the macro-level/government level since the survey asked about what ideology the government espouses. For the discussions on the integration of micro- and macro-perspectives, see Blossfeld (1998).

[12] For more information, see https://mydata.iadb.org/Reform-Modernization-of-the-State/Database-of-Political-Institutions-2017/938i-s2bw.

[13] The data and the codebook can be found at http://www.epr.ucla.edu/.

[14] However, we find that there is no evidence of measurement error. Using the Stata command, dgmtest, with its default settings except for the increase of the number of bootstrap samples to 5,000, we performed Delgado and Manteiga's (2001) test for the presence of measurement error. The test produces a p value of 0.327, so we cannot reject the null of no measurement error.

[15] By performing three sets of rigorous diagnostic tests (R^2 statistics, variance inflation factors, eigenvalues and condition index), we check multicollinearity problems among the predictors. Table A2 shows that none of the predictors that appear in Model 1 of Table 2 indicate severe multicollinearity.

[16] A main assumption of the OLS regression model that guarantees the validity of all tests (p, t, and F) is that residuals follow a normal distribution. Based on Model 1, we conduct a normality test. First, we obtain the residuals from the OLS regression model. Second, we draw a histogram plot to check the normality of residuals. In Figure A1, a bell-shaped curve shows the normal distribution of the data. While the X axis shows the residuals, the Y axis represents the density of the data set.

[17] When we regress immigration control on nationalism in Model 2, we obtain the R^2 of 0.75.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A1 List of sample countries

Australia	Greece	Norway
Austria	Hungary	Poland
Belgium	Iceland	Portugal
Canada	Ireland	Slovakia
Chile	Israel	South Korea
Czech Republic	Italy	Spain
Denmark	Japan	Sweden
Estonia	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Finland	Mexico	Turkey
France	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Germany	New Zealand	United States

TABLE A2 Muliticollinearity diagnostics

	R^2	Variance Inflation Factors	Square Root of VIFs
Nationalism$_{it-1}$	0.41	1.69	1.30
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.36	1.25	0.64
Right-wing party$_{it-1}$	0.65	1.69	0.35
Left-wing party$_{it-1}$	0.68	1.76	0.32
Political instability$_{it-1}$	0.37	1.26	0.63
Ethnic groups exclusion$_{it-1}$	0.62	1.62	0.38
GDP per capita$_{it-1}$	0.51	1.42	0.49
Unempolyment$_{it-1}$	0.21	1.12	0.79
Population$_{it-1}$	0.24	1.15	0.76
Terrorism$_{it-1}$	0.44	1.33	0.56
Civil War$_{it-1}$	0.01	1.01	0.99
Mean variance inflation factor		1.89	
	Eigenvalues	Condition Index	
1	8.04	1.00	
2	1.09	2.72	
3	0.99	2.85	
4	0.74	3.29	
5	0.44	4.29	
6	0.24	5.78	
7	0.17	6.90	
8	0.15	7.37	
9	0.08	9.75	
10	0.06	11.24	
11	0.00	41.94	
12	0.00	87.23	
Condition number		87.23	
Eigenvalues and condition Index computed from the scaled raw sscp with an intercept.			
Det (correlation matrix)		0.03	

Note: A general rule of thumb: A serious multicollinearity problem is suspected if R^2 is greater than 0.80, if the mean of all the variance inflation factors is considerably larger than 10 or if condition number exceeds 1,000.

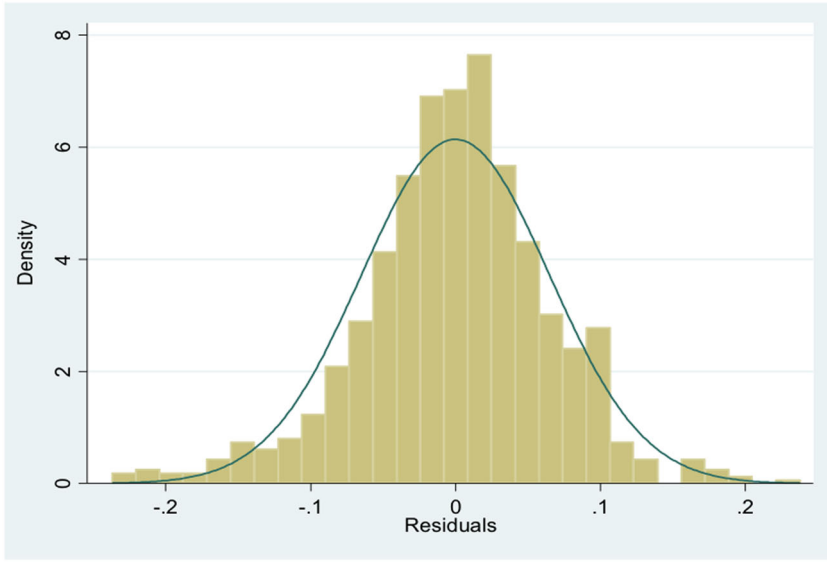

FIGURE A1 Histogram plot indicating normality [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]