

# UNDERSTANDING RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT



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**‘What to do about  
right-wing populism?’**

**Next Left Series**

**June 8<sup>th</sup> 2023, Brussels**

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Halikiopoulou  
University of York***

# OUTLINE

- 1. The big picture: rise of RWPPs**
- 2. Argument**  
RWPP multi-faceted and not only cultural issue
- 3. Empirical analyses**
  - (a) Demand: People level
  - (b) Supply: Party level
  - (c) Policy level
- 4. How should progressives respond?**

## Risks, Costs and Labour Markets: Explaining Cross-National Patterns of Far Right Party Success in European Parliament Elections\*

DAPHNE HALIKIOPOULOU and TIM VLANDAS  
University of Reading

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## When economic and cultural interests align: the anti-immigration voter coalitions driving far right party success in Europe

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Eur Polit Sci (2019) 18:421–438  
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-018-0161-z>



SYMPOSIUM

## Does unemployment matter? Economic insecurity, labour market policies and the far-right vote in Europe

Tim Vlandas<sup>1</sup> · Daphne Halikiopoulou<sup>1</sup>



West European Politics



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fwep20>

## Welfare state policies and far right party support: moderating 'insecurity effects' among different social groups

Tim Vlandas & Daphne Halikiopoulou

NATIONS AND NATIONALISM

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM



Invited Submission |  Full Access

## What is new and what is nationalist about Europe's new nationalism? Explaining the rise of the far right in Europe

Daphne Halikiopoulou  Tim Vlandas



Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies



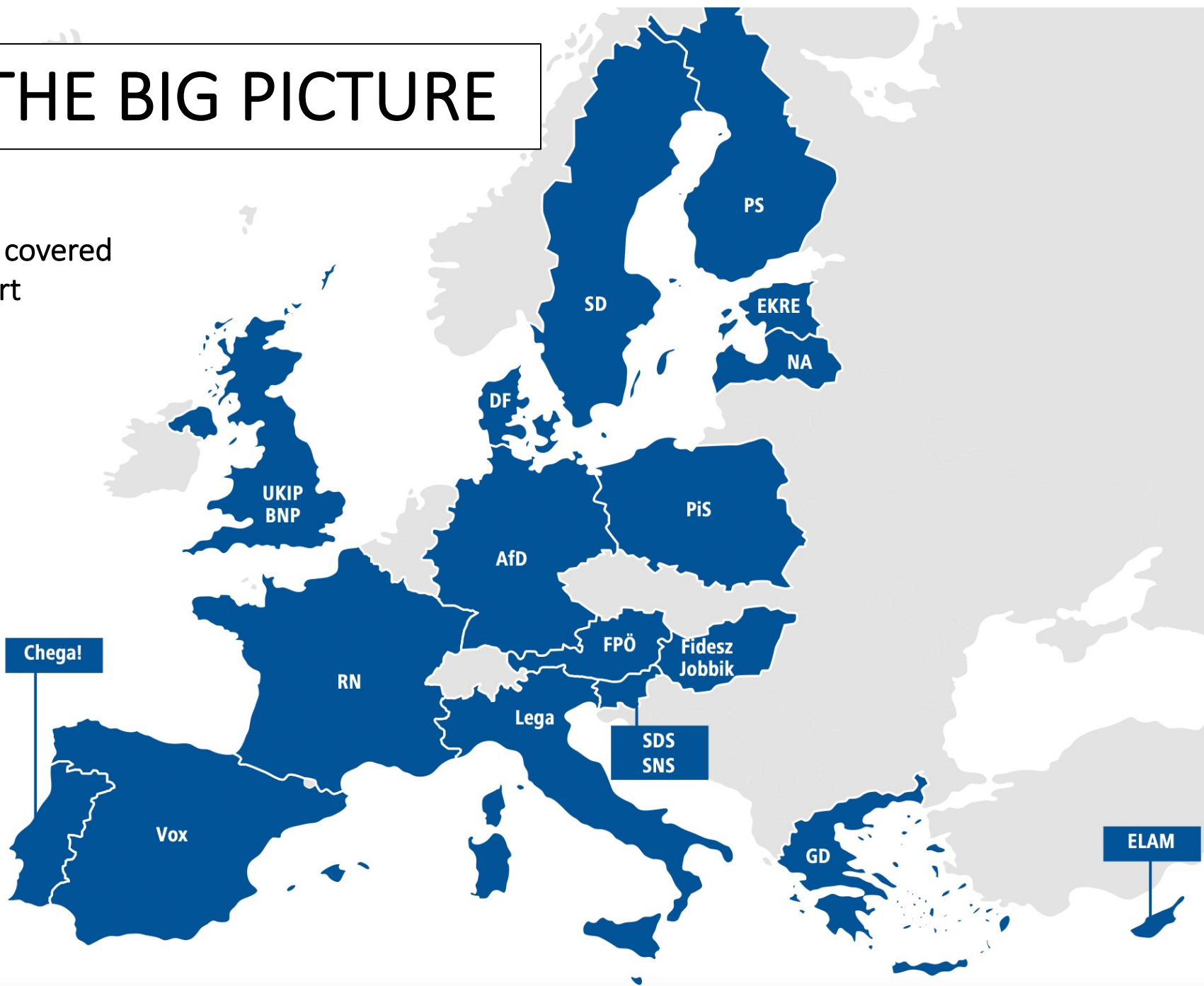
ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjms20>

## 'Birds of a feather'? Assessing the prevalence of anti-immigration attitudes among the far right electorate

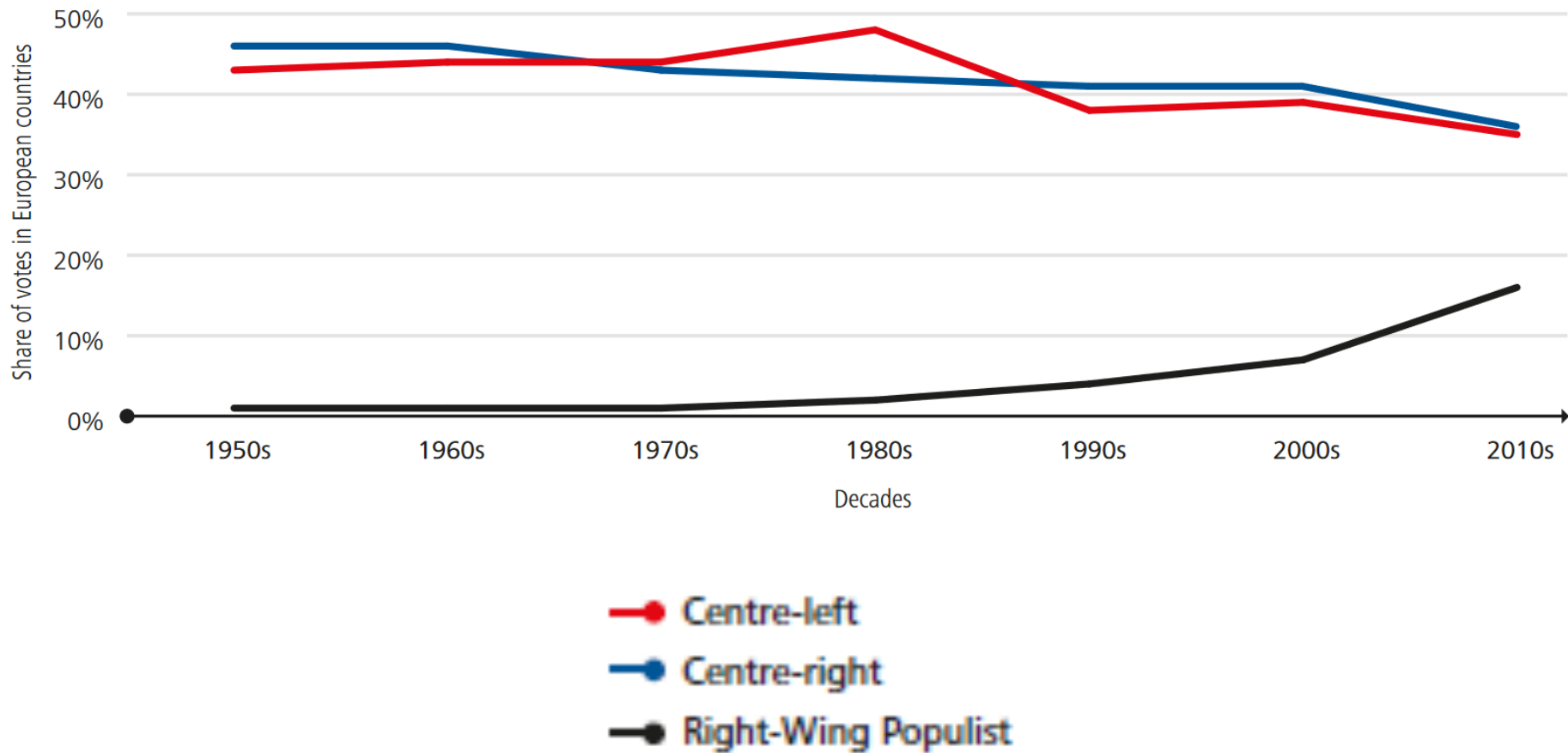
Daniel Stockemer, Daphne Halikiopoulou & Tim Vlandas

# 1. THE BIG PICTURE

RWPPs covered  
in report



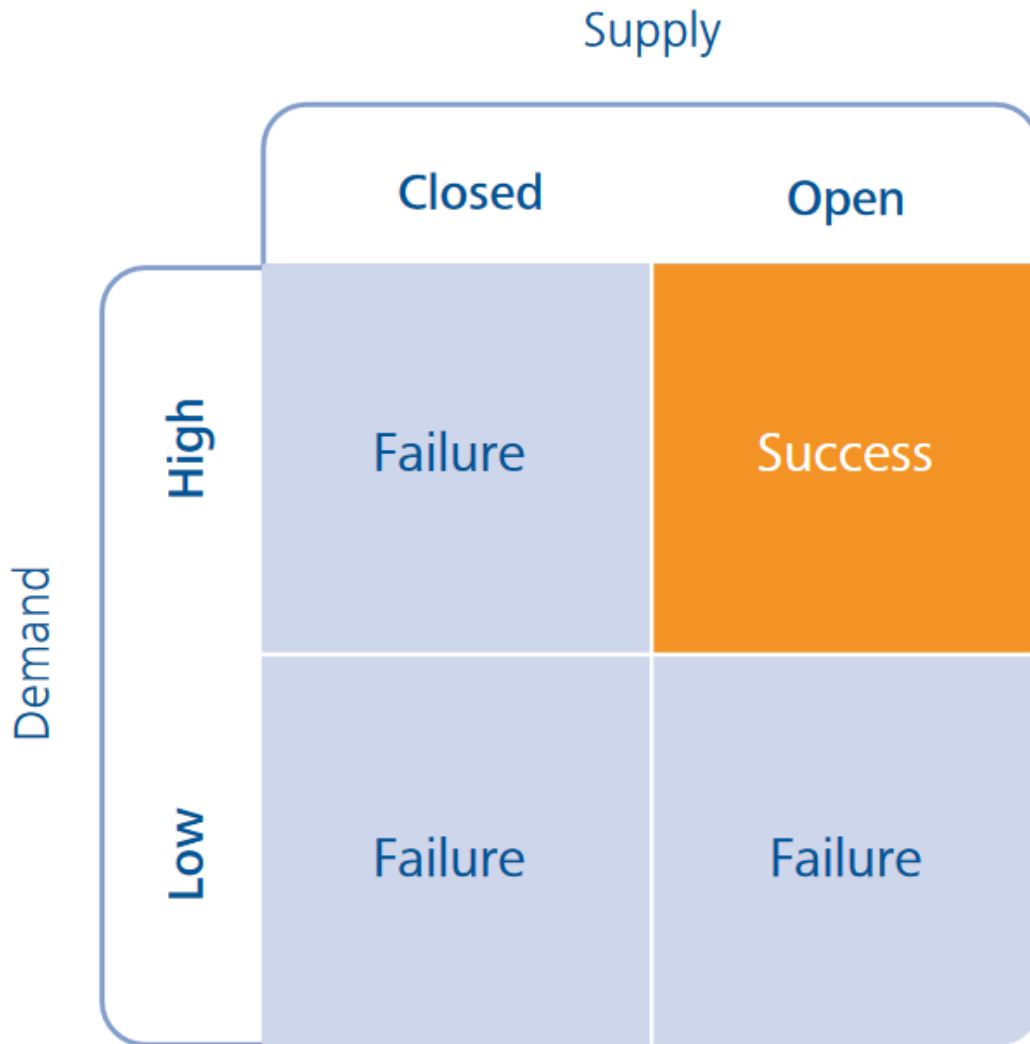
# 1. THE BIG PICTURE



# 1. THE BIG PICTURE: WHY?

- Conventional wisdom
  - Cultural backlash: predominance of a new value cleavage
  - The left should copy RWPPs?
- Where does this argument come from?
  - Salience of immigration
  - Authoritarian values
  - Increasing identification along TAN axis

## 2. OUR ARGUMENT: CHALLENGING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM



### **PEOPLE:**

RWPP electorate is diverse

Main point: Group size is overlooked

### **PARTIES:**

Nationalism + welfare chauvinism

Main point: multi-faceted nationalist appeals

## 2. OUR ARGUMENT: CHALLENGING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM



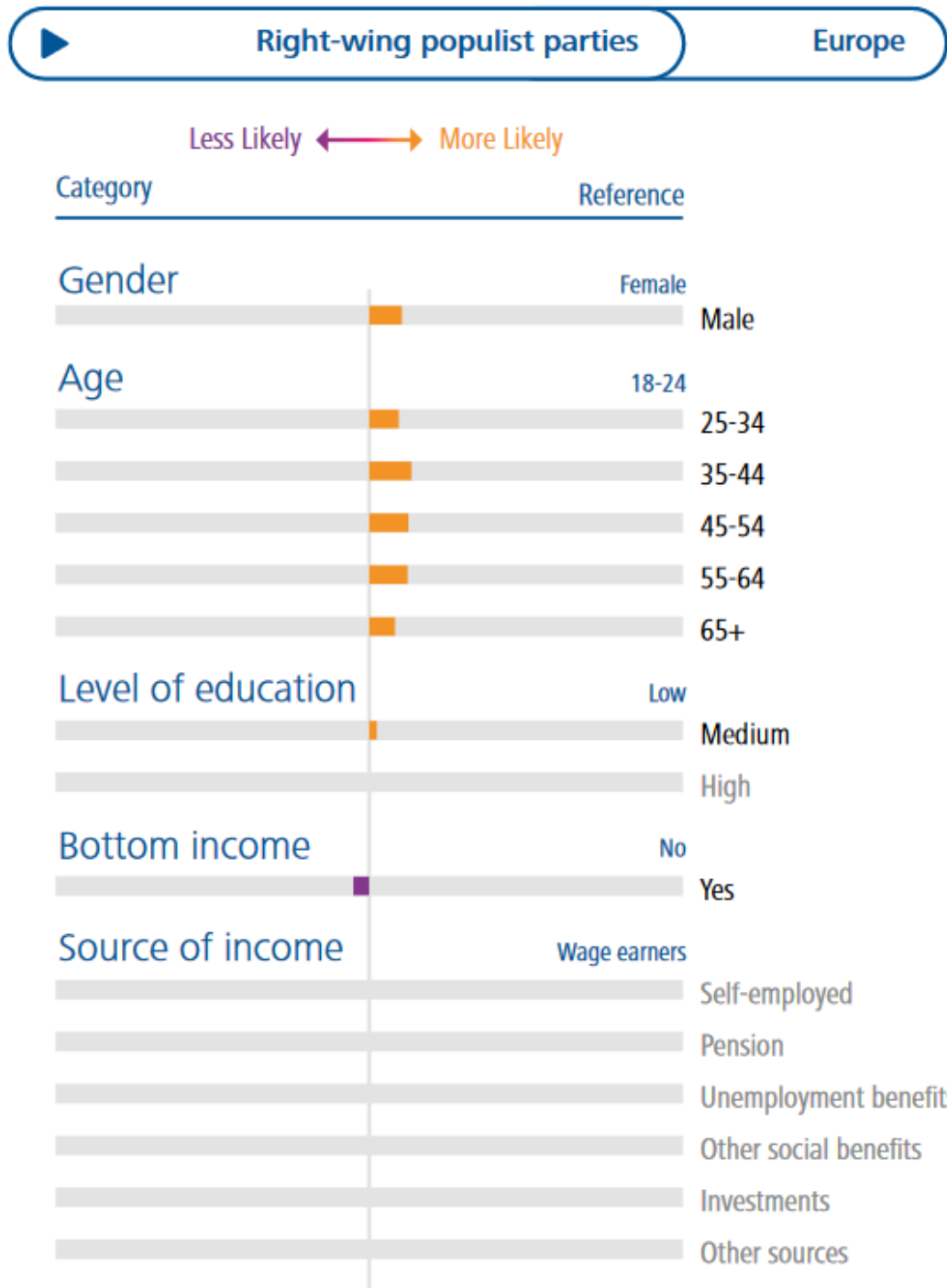
**POLICIES:**  
Moderate insecurities

Main point: the extent to which intervenes efficiently to prevent and compensate certain social and economic risks.



# 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: PEOPLE

## Who votes for RWPPs in Europe?



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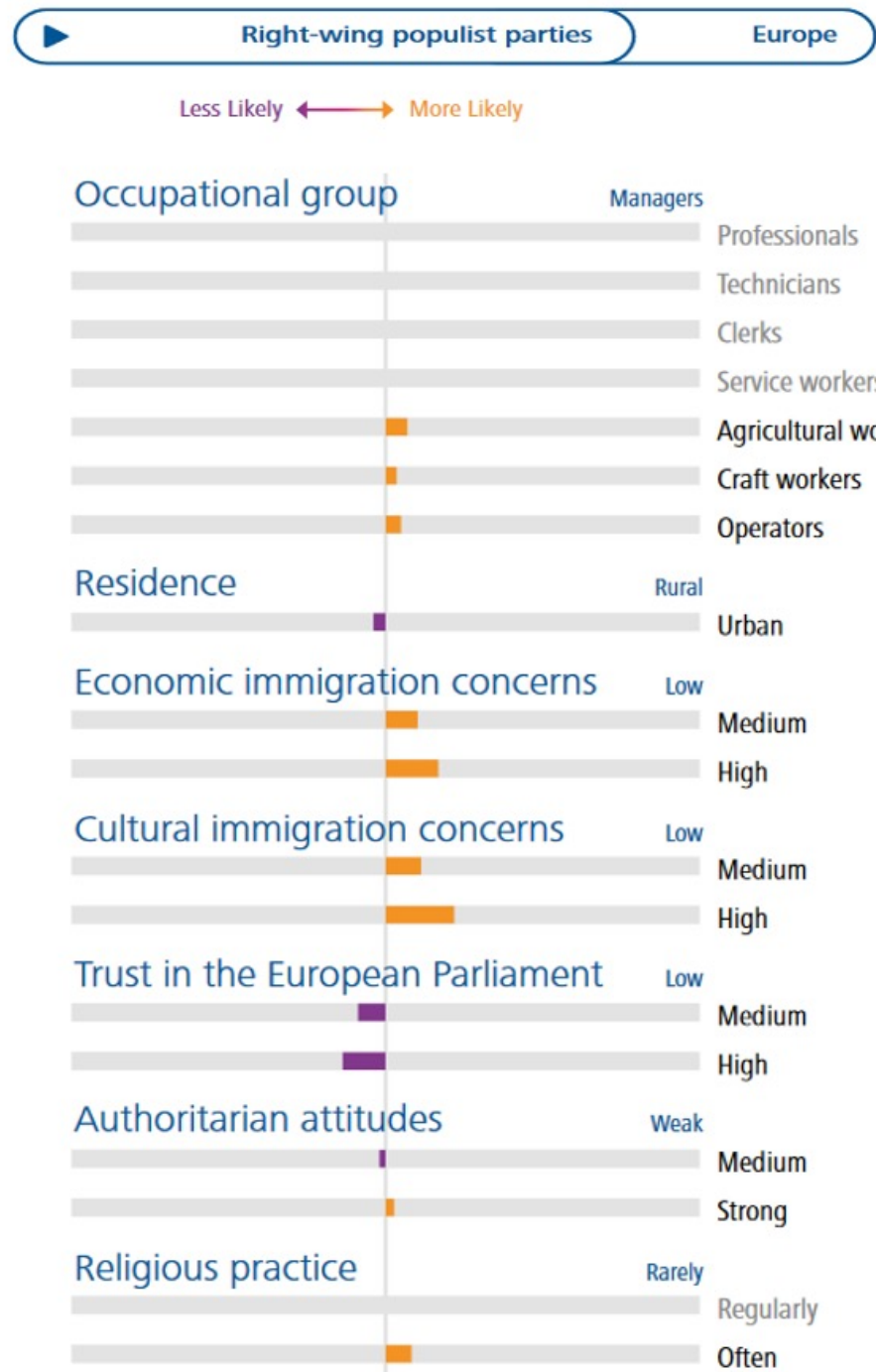


Figure 4: Who is the most likely right-wing populist party voter?

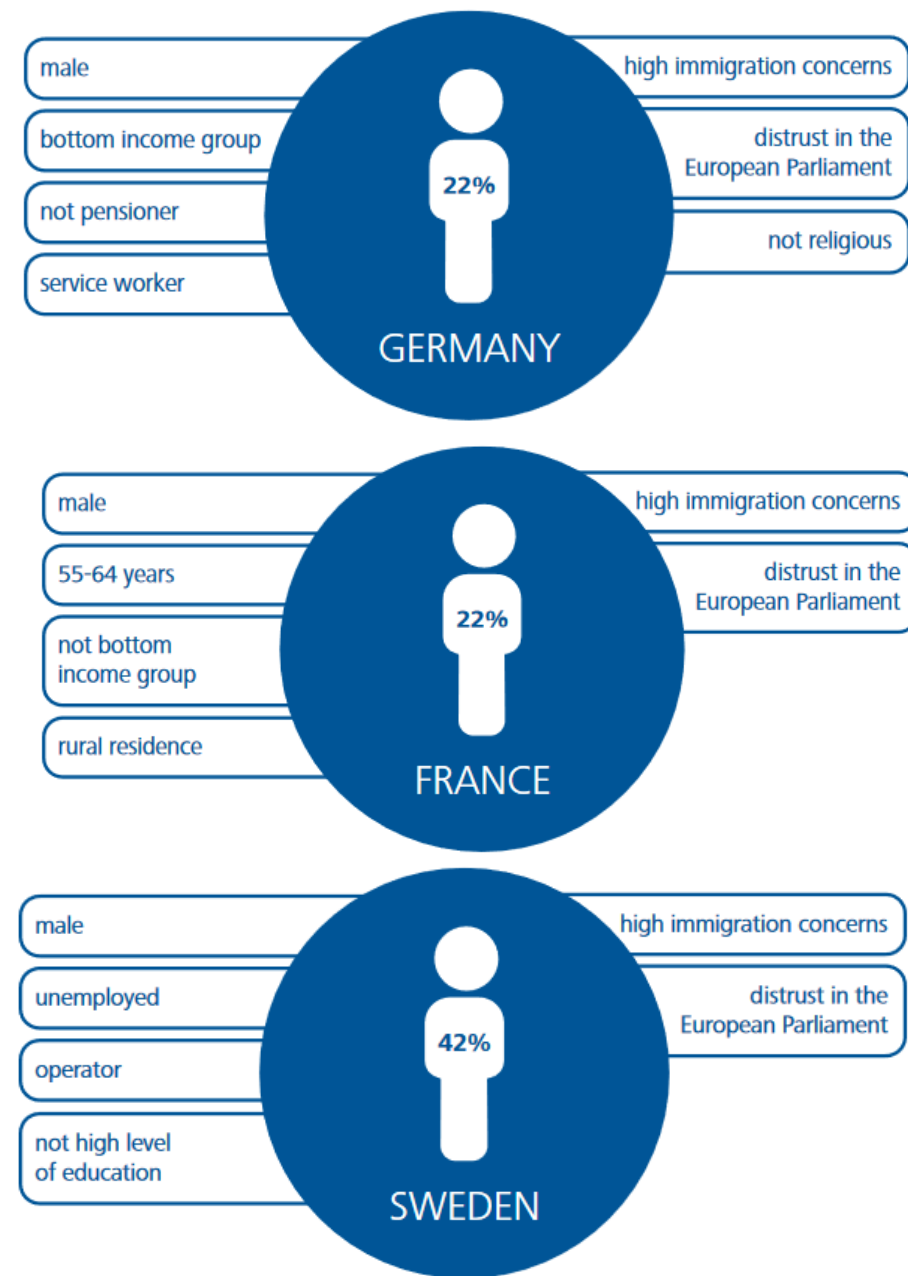


Figure 5: Who is the least likely right-wing populist party voter?

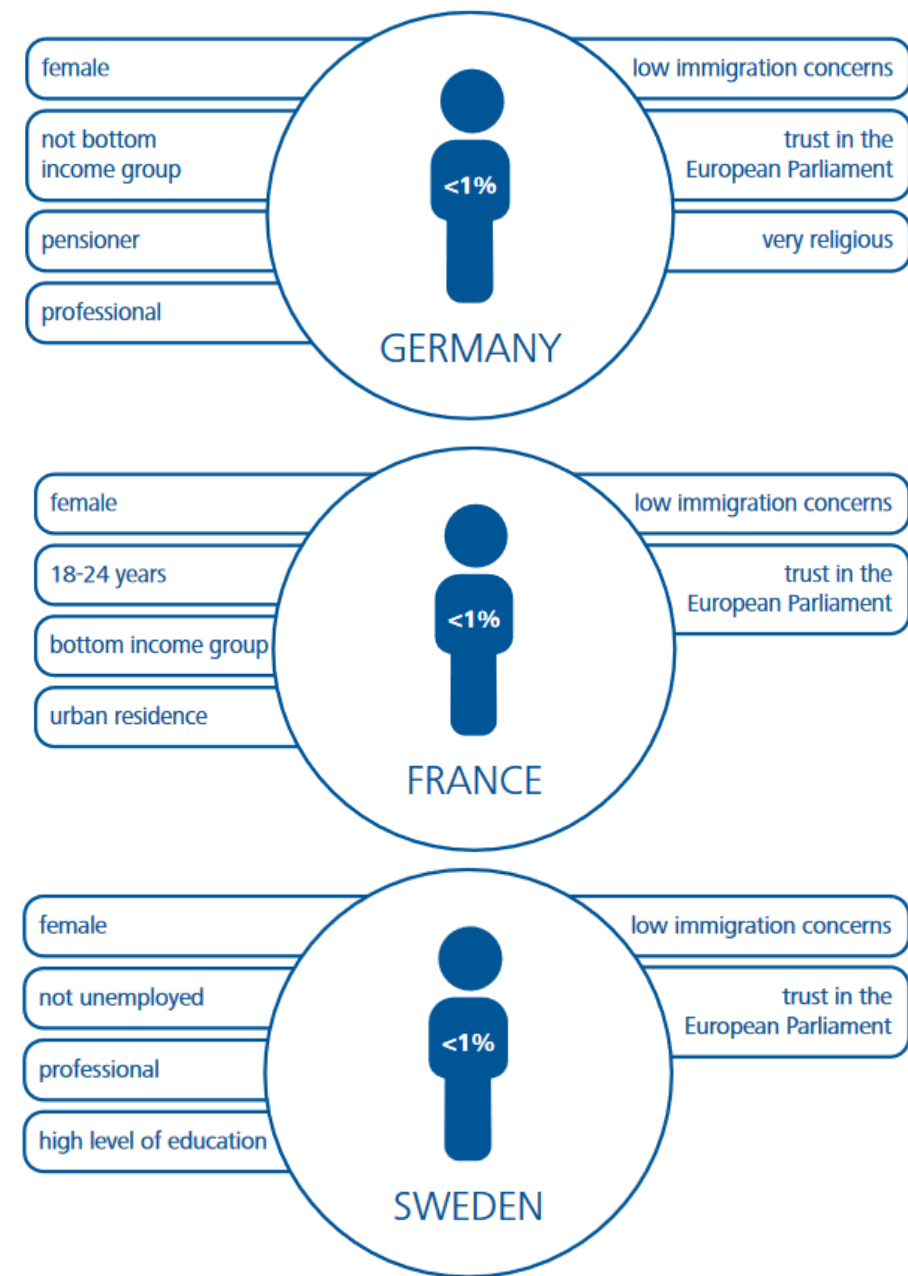


Figure 105: **Who is the most likely right-wing populist party voter?**

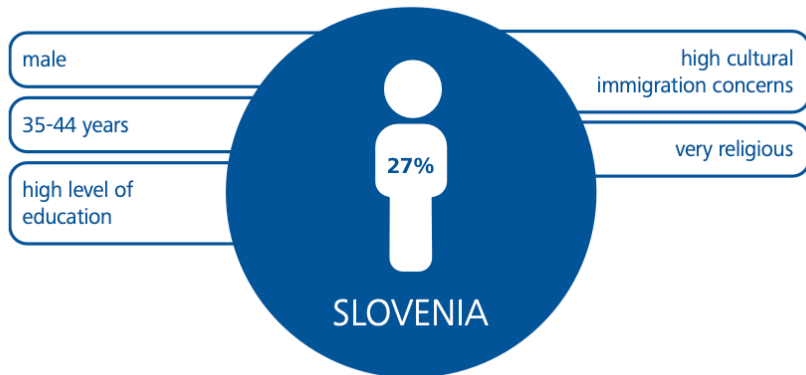
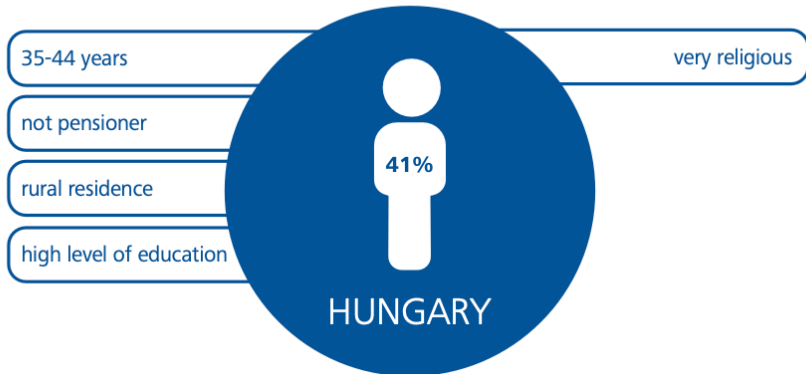
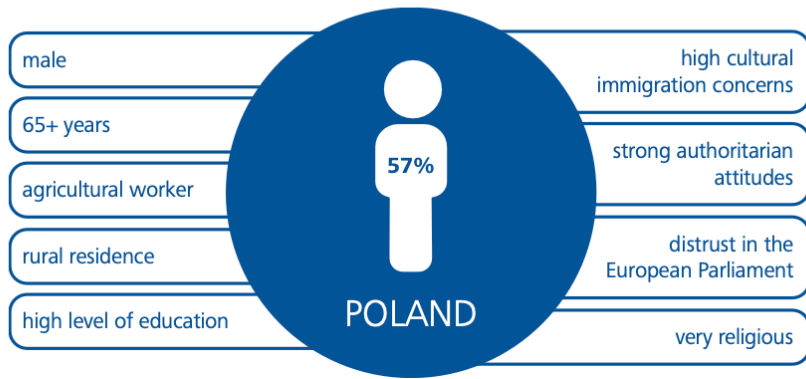
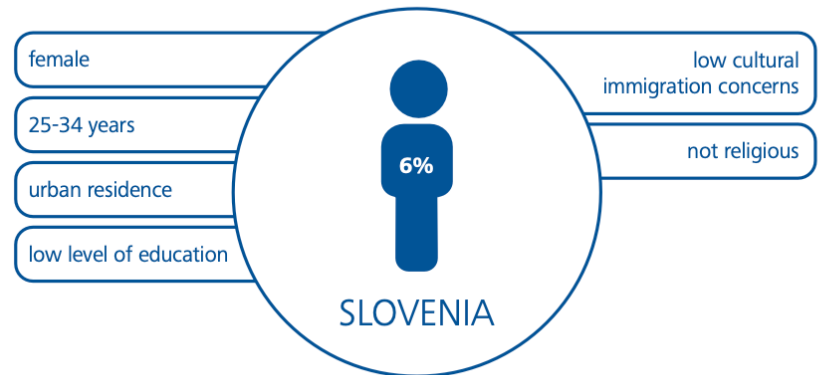
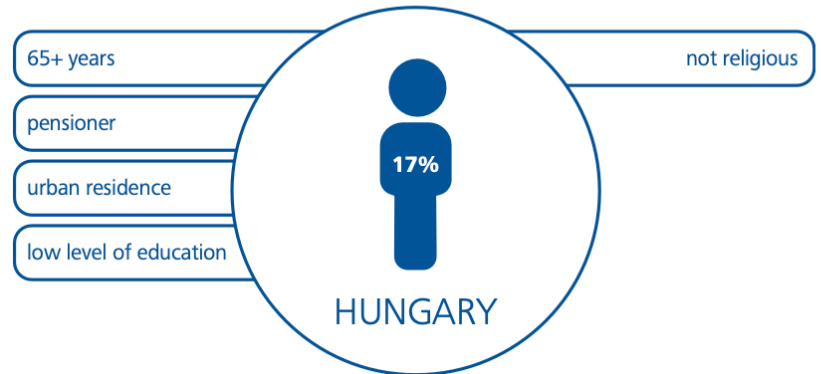
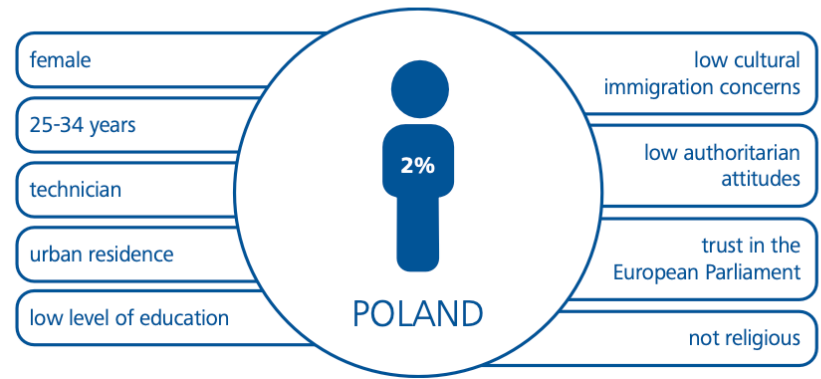


Figure 106: **Who is the least likely right-wing populist party voter?**



# ROLE OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES?

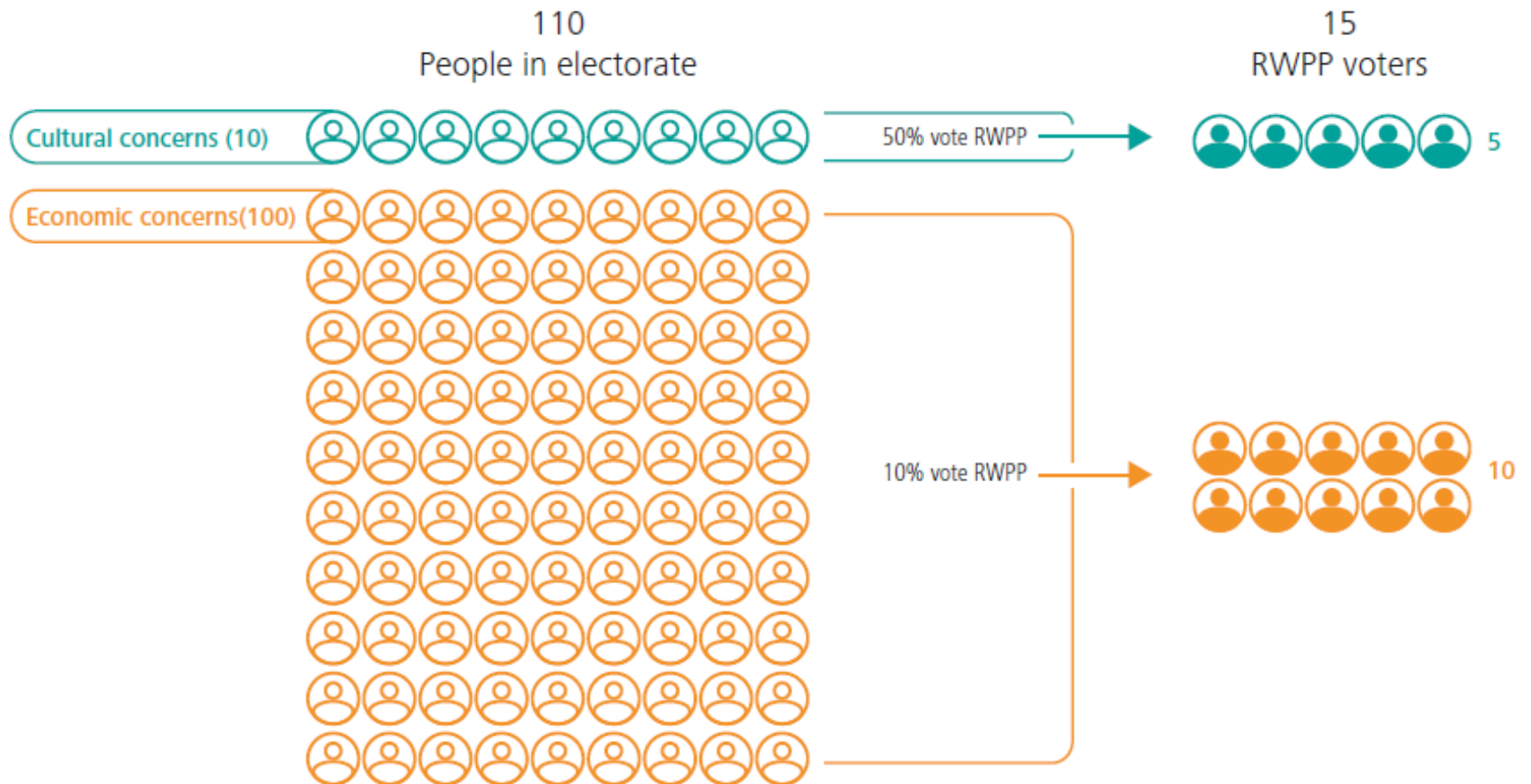
- Anti-immigration attitudes = strong predictor of RWPP party support
- New post-material cleavage = prominence of cultural grievances?

## **But:**

- Immigration is multi-dimensional
- Group size matters!
- Non-immigration related route to RWPP voting

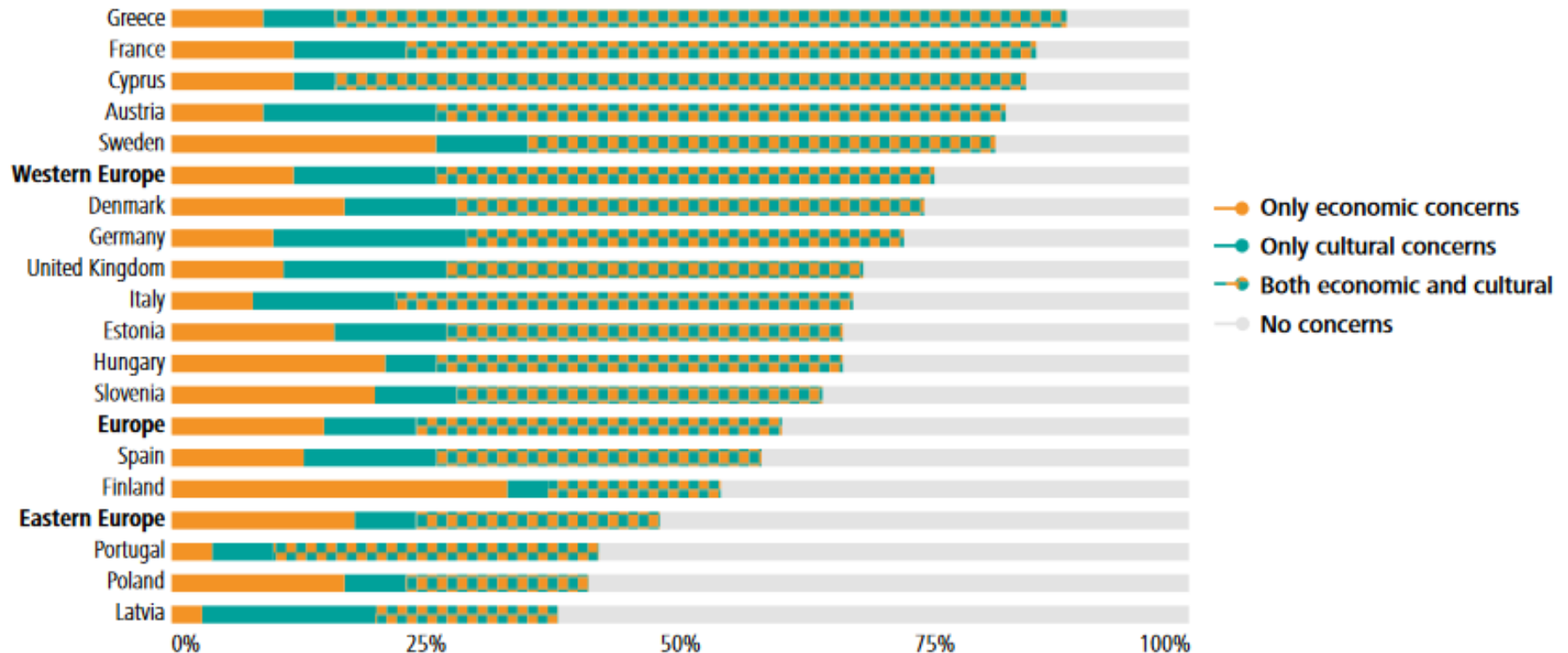
# HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE

Figure 4: Hypothetical representation of difference between predictive power and substantive importance



# DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRATION CONCERNS

as a percentage of right-wing populist electorates



# KEY POINT: THE RWPP ELECTORATE IS DIVERSE

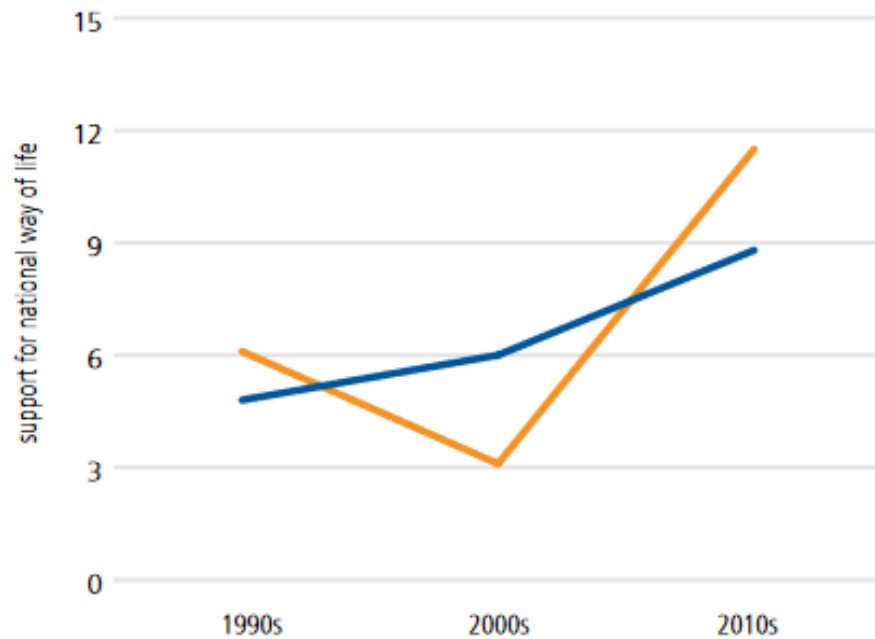
## **Differentiate between core versus peripheral RWPP voters:**

- Distinction between ‘galvanising a core constituency and mobilising a broader public’
- Voter coalitions drive RWPP success: Electoral potential is associated with mobilisational capacity beyond a party’s core voting group

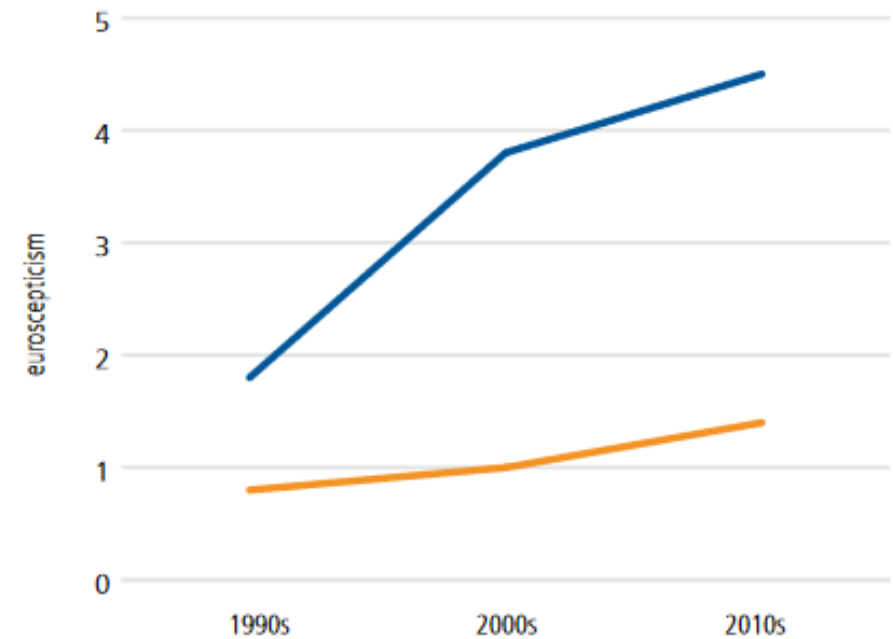


# 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: PARTIES

THE NATIONAL WAY OF LIFE HAS BECOME VERY IMPORTANT FOR RWPPS - ESPECIALLY IN EASTERN EUROPE



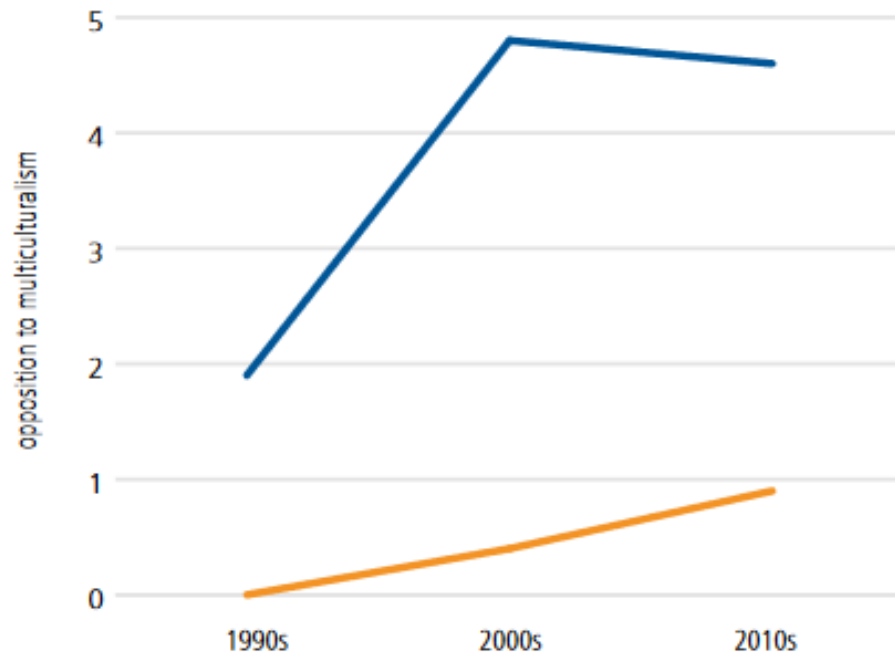
WESTERN EUROPEAN RWPPS ARE MORE EUROSCEPTIC THAN EASTERN EUROPEAN ONES



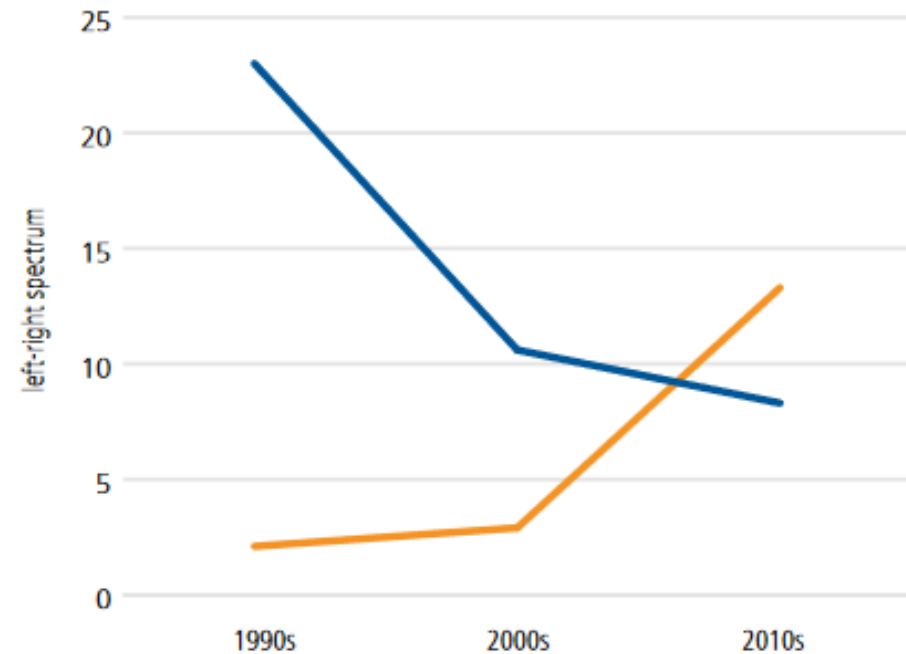
- Western European RWPPs
- Eastern European RWPPs

# 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: PARTIES

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS MULTICULTURALISM ARE A DEFINING FEATURE OF WESTERN EUROPEAN RWPPS



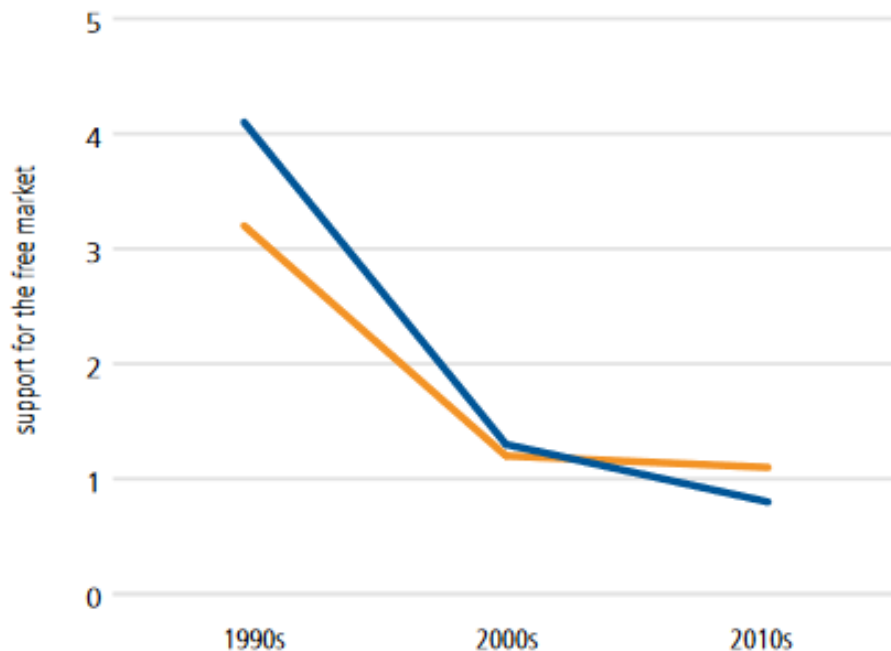
EASTERN EUROPEAN RWPPS HAVE BECOME MORE RIGHT-WING IN THE PAST DECADE



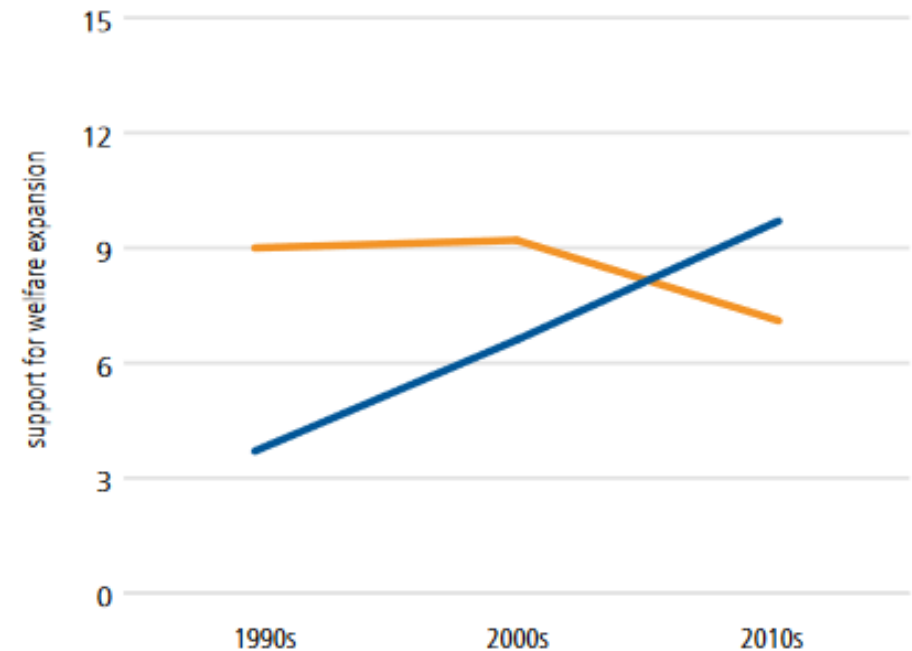
- Western European RWPPs
- Eastern European RWPPs

# 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: PARTIES

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN RWPPS REGARDING FREE MARKETS

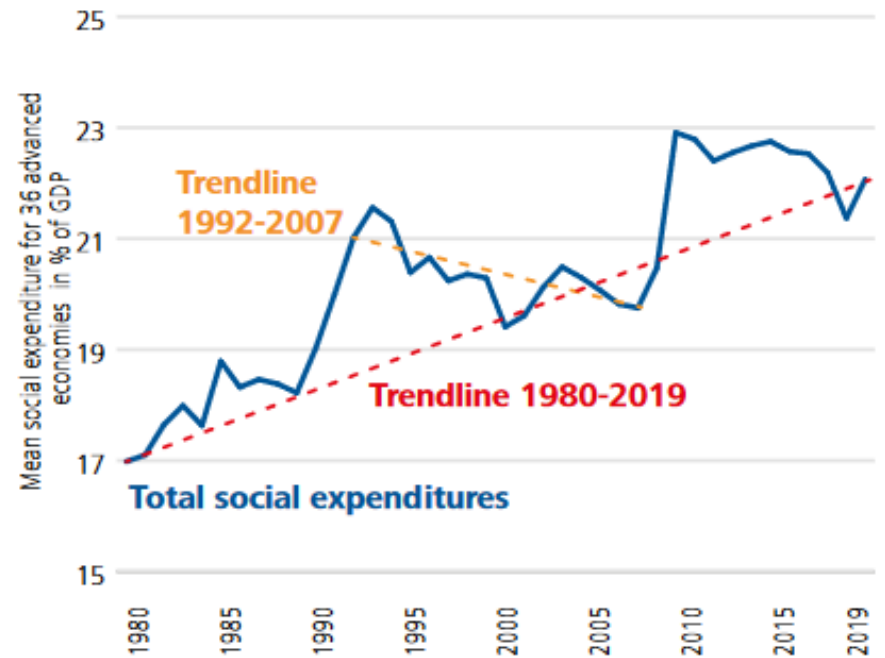
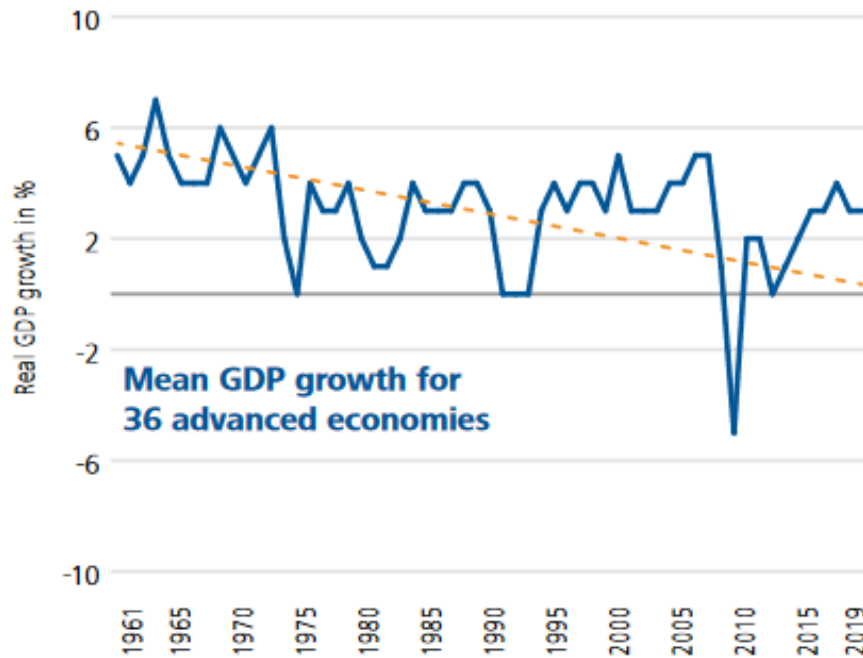


WESTERN EUROPEAN RWPPS HAVE EMBRACED WELFARE EXPANSION MORE THAN EASTERN EUROPEAN ONES

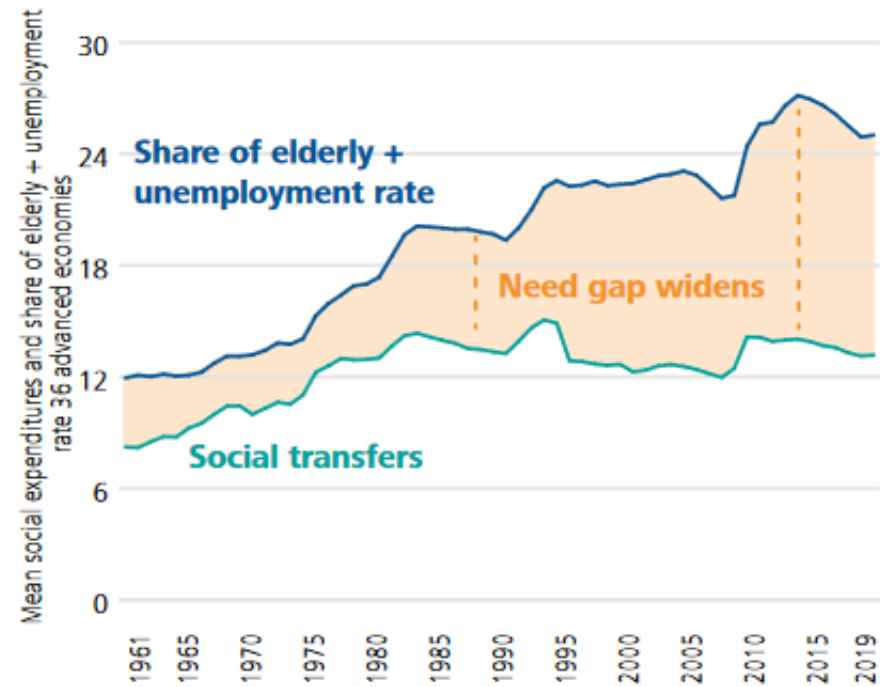
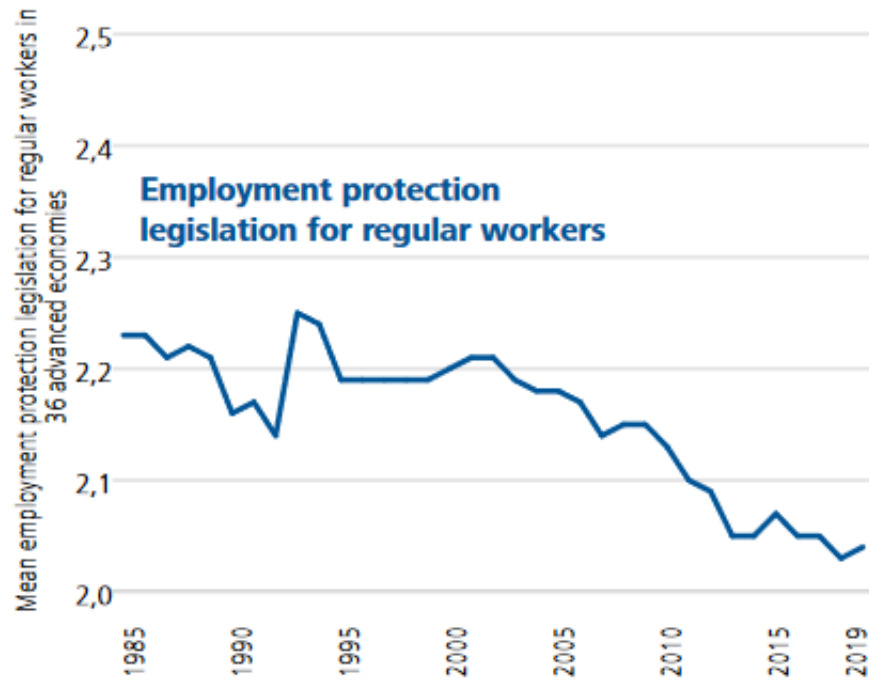


● Western European RWPPs  
● Eastern European RWPPs

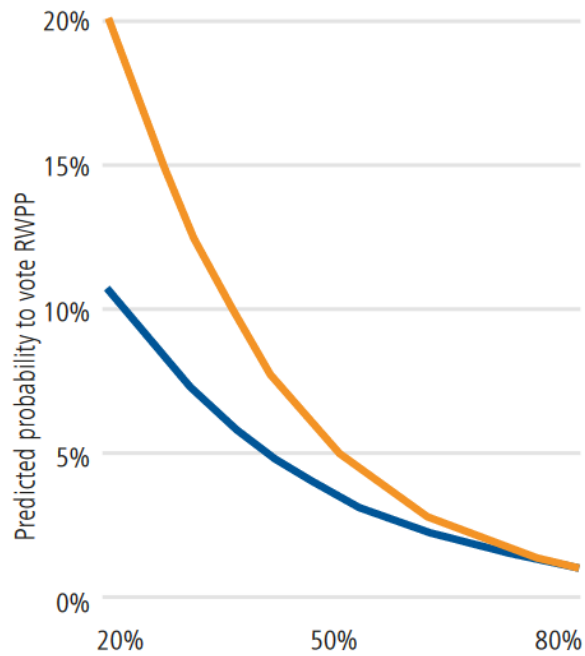
# 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: POLICIES



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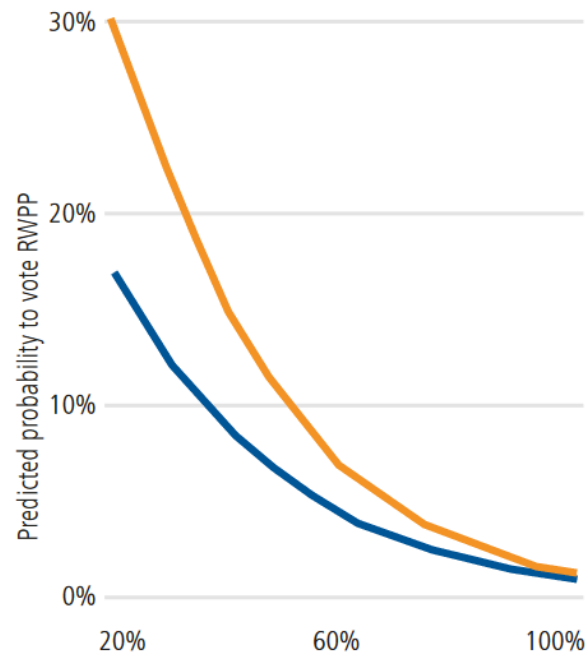


# 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: POLICIES



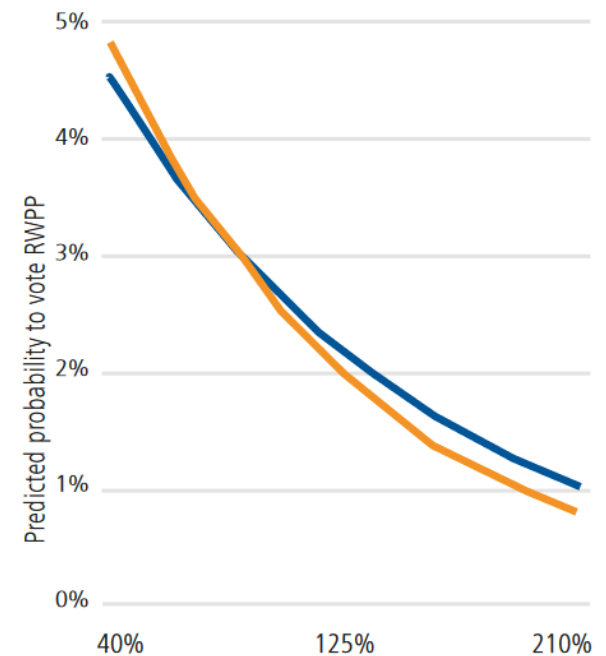
Unemployment benefit replacement rate

● employed  
● unemployed (>3 months)



Sickness benefit replacement rate

● not sick or disabled person  
● sick or disabled person

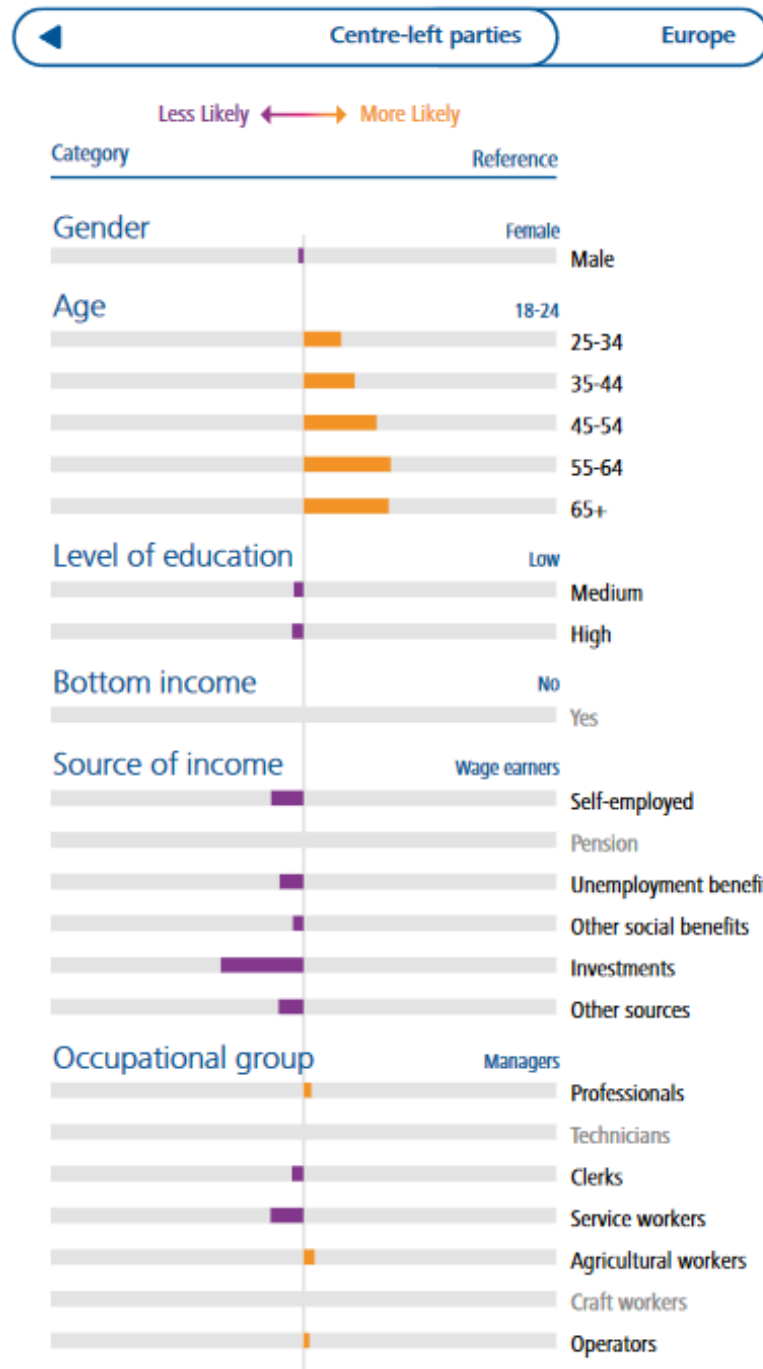


Spending on family benefits

● individual without children  
● individual with children

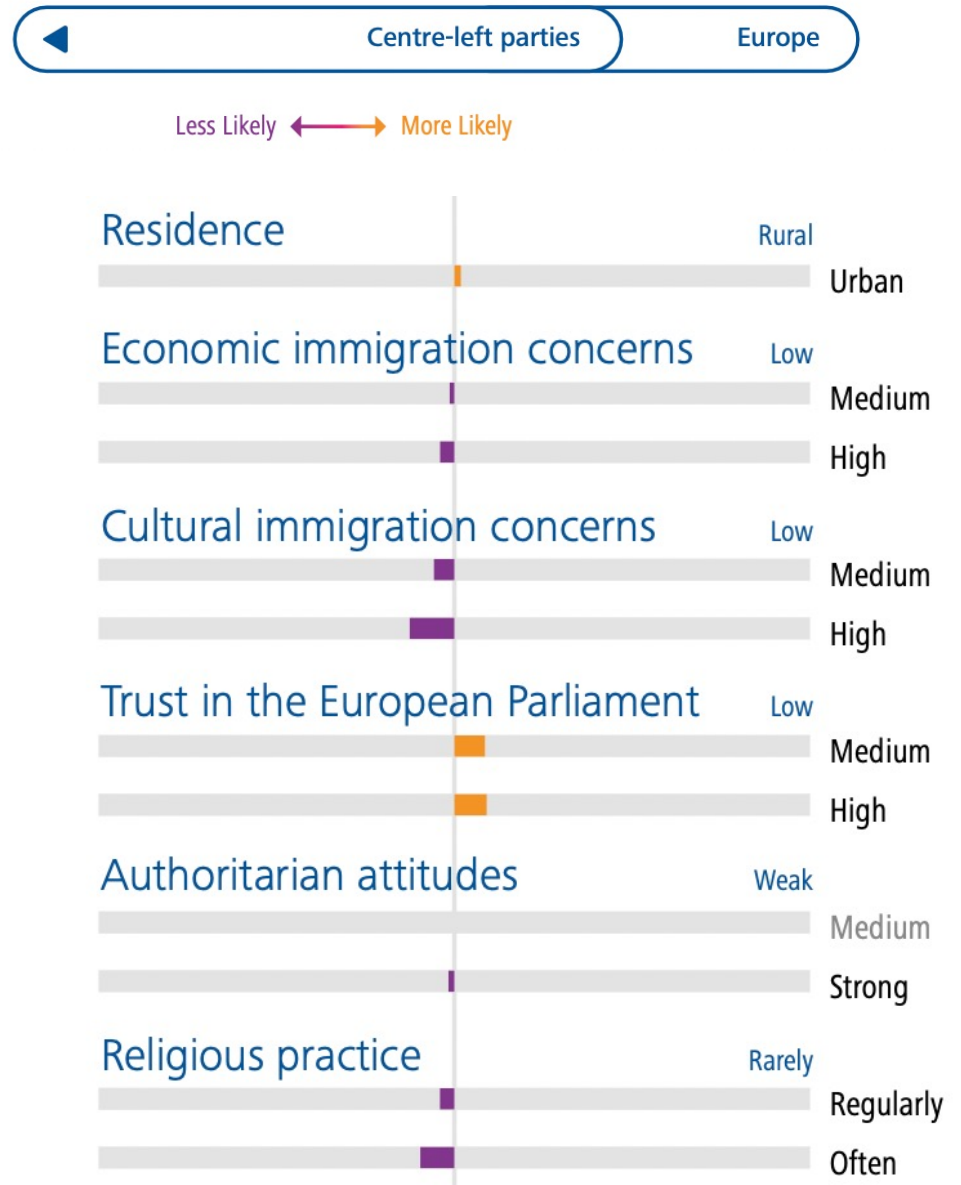
# 4. HOW CAN PROGRESSIVES RESPOND?

- Centre-left electorate is considerably different to the RWPP electorate
- Broaden base without alienating this core?



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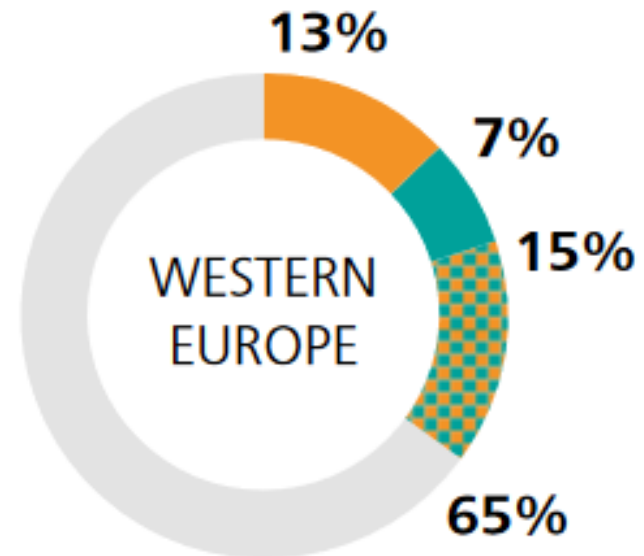
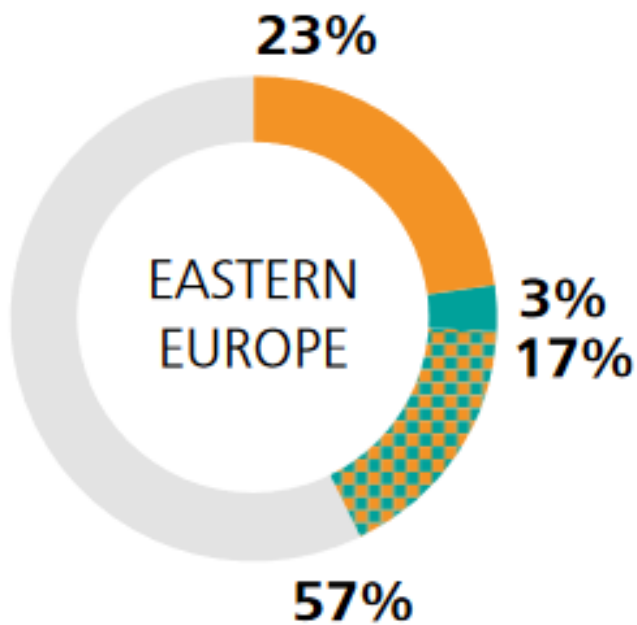


Only statistically significant results are shown.



# 4. HOW CAN PROGRESSIVES RESPOND?

Distribution of immigration concerns as a percentage of centre-left electorates



- Only economic concerns
- Only cultural concerns
- Both economic and cultural concerns
- No concerns

# CONCLUSION

## **Academic contributions**

- Multiple grievances
- Group size and voter coalitions
- Supply multi-faceted nationalist appeals
- Role of social policies

## **Policy implications**

- Co-optation doesn't work!
- If the centre-left goes RWPP it will likely
  - ✓ Gain few FR voters and/or
  - ✓ Lose too many of its own voters
- Best strategy: focus on issues the the left owns

THANK  
YOU!

