



university of
 groningen

faculty of spatial sciences

The EU and all its identities.

A statistical study into how voting behaviour is impacted by immigration and perceived identities within the Union.

Research Step 7

Final version of bachelor thesis.

Written by

Erin Houdijk

S4751388

Supervisor

M. L. C. Koeppen

Table of contents

Abstract	2
Introduction	3
Theoretical Framework	4
Table 1 [Political parties for The Netherlands].....	7
Table 2: [Political parties for Germany].....	7
Figure 1: [Conceptual model].....	8
Results	8
Figure 2 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for perception of immigrants ("better for a country if everyone shares customs and traditions")].	9
Figure 3: [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging ("feel close to country")].	10
Figure 4 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging ("how often do you socially meet")].	11
Figure 5 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging ("how many people can you socially discuss issues with")].	11
Figure 6 [Test for normality, The Netherlands].	12
Figure 7 [Multiple linear regression for The Netherlands].	13
Figure 8 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for perception of immigrants ("better for a country if everyone shares customs and traditions")].	14
Figure 9 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging ("feel close to country")].	15
Figure X [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging ("how often do you socially meet")].	15
Figure XI [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging ("how many people can you socially discuss issues with")].	16
Figure XII [Test for normality, Germany].	16
Figure XIII [Multiple linear regression for Germany].	17
Conclusion	18
Bibliography	19

Abstract

Taking into consideration how easy it is to move within the European Union for all Union citizens, this paper will examine to what extent voting behaviour is impacted by perception of immigrants as well as identity/ sense of belonging. The two EU countries that have been examined to study the extent of this were The Netherlands and Germany. ESS and CBS data from the year 2014 was used to collect data on the following variables; voting behaviour, perception of immigrants and identity/ sense of belonging. A multiple linear regression was then performed, with voting behaviour as dependent variable, and the results for The Netherlands and Germany were separately analysed. Statistics show a significant relationship between voting behaviour and perception of immigrants for both The Netherlands and Germany. Where in both countries, the less accepting the citizens were of immigrants, the closer they felt to right-wing political parties. Only in Germany did the variable of identity/ sense of belonging play a role in one's voting behaviour, where the less close citizens felt to their country the closer they felt to left-wing political parties. Although these results only give possible answers for these two chosen countries, rough ideas can be made for other countries within the EU. Ultimately, this research can help with policy making in the area of citizens voting behaviour by using this research as a guide.

Introduction

After World War 2 had come to an end, the catastrophic social and physical destruction of war brought about strong notions of peace and prosperity for most European countries. This resulted in multiple treaties being signed between various European countries. What first started as an aim for economic integration between these various countries later turned into something more complex. Evolving into a larger group of countries concerning a broader range of topics, such as climate, security, environment, migration, etc (European Commission, 2022). Today, this large group of European countries is now called the EU and consists of 27 countries, referred to as member states, with around 446 million citizens (2022) (Eurostat, 2023) all with their own identities and a shared EU citizenship.

Being a citizen of the EU means that certain freedoms are offered to you, the free movement of goods, capital, workers and to establish and/or provide services (European Parliament, 2019). These freedoms for citizens are backed up by European law, “[...] Member States shall grant Union citizens leave to enter their territory with a valid identity card or passport and shall grant family members who are not nationals of a Member State leave to enter their territory with a valid passport.” (TFEU, 2011, Article 5: Right of Entry) and “Every citizen of the Union has the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.” (EU charter, 2000, Article 45: Freedom of movement and residence). These laws provide evidence showing just how easy the EU has made it for the citizens to immigrate to other member states. Taking this into consideration, it could be assumed that due to what is offered, immigration rates have the possibility to drastically increase within the 27 member states.

May 1st 2004 marks the EU’s largest enlargement in people and countries, with a growth of roughly 74 million new citizens (European Council, 2024). The 10 new countries that were added were all located in the Eastern hemisphere of Europe, 8 of which being former communist countries. Before the enlargement, “Western Europeans were uneasy about extending Europe’s Eastern border” due to the possible “politicization of immigration” (Jeannet, 2020, p. 2). With this enlargement “The number of Eastern and Central Europeans living in Western Europe grew more quickly than the overall foreign population” (Jeannet, 2020, p. 2). This enlargement allowed inter-EU immigration from East to West to grow, with Jeannet (2020) pointing out that in Germany and the UK (before Brexit) the proportion of immigrants from the East outgrew the number of immigrants from the ‘older’ member states. With new immigrants comes new customs and ways of life “that are often perceived to be very different from (and inconsistent with) those of the native population.” (McLaren, 2015). With these new immigrants, and new customs and ways of life, possible tensions may arise between the newcomers and the native population. Such tensions may be seen through the voting behaviour of the natives, as McLaren (2015, p. 1) further mentions “public concern about immigration has fairly clear electoral and policy implications”.

It has been noted that in recent times, a rise of populism and nationalism has emerged throughout Europe (Pazzanese, 2017). This rise could be due to an influence of recent events in 2016, including Brexit and Donald Trump winning the presidential elections, but another strong reason for this is a response to immigration (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017). An increase in immigration within Europe may create new minorities due to the different ways of life mentioned earlier, and in turn a rise in popularity of right-wing nationalistic parties (Haller et al, 2006). Rodríguez-Pose (2017) would call these minorities ‘the places that don’t matter’, explaining that they often use their voting powers to take revenge. McLaren (2015, p. 6), mentions how with immigration, “the concern in the modern day is about threats to the job prospects of one’s countrymen and women”, and seeing how ‘the places left behind’ are often left behind when it comes to economic development, such places (‘minorities’) will use their voting powers to ‘take revenge’ to go against immigration due to the threats (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017).

This paper will try to uncover to what degree this ‘revenge’ by minorities/ ‘the places that don’t matter’ is due to the fact that immigration for EU citizens has been made easy. This ‘revenge’ being populist

nationalistic right-wing voting. Due to the fact that Rodríguez-Pose (2017) mentions these minorities are often ones left behind, the factor of one's identity/ sense of belonging will also be analysed to find out to what degree one's perceived identity plays a role in nationalistic voting. Countries in the western half of the EU will be studied, these countries being The Netherlands and Germany, as they make good examples when it comes to looking into citizens voting behaviour. The Netherlands, with a rising number of immigrants from other EU countries (CBS) in combination with a rising popularity for right wing parties, and Germany, having the amount of 'new' Eastern immigrants outnumbering the 'old', and with a rise of right-wing attitudes, particularly with the rising popularity for a right-wing populist party AfD ('Alternative for Germany') (Ulrich et al, 2022). These countries will be separately studied to help uncover to what degree immigration and identity/ sense of belonging plays a role in this rise of populist nationalist voting behaviour of EU citizens.

The research question then arises:

- *“How do the perceptions of immigrants, and identity/ a sense of belonging impact voting behaviour of citizens in member states within the EU”*

Studying to what degree these factors influence each other, will give a deeper insight into what exactly influences one's voting behaviour. As a “rapid rise of populism represents a serious and real challenge to the current economic and political systems.” (Rodríguez-Pose. A, 2017, page 34), studying to what degree immigration and identity/ sense of belonging plays a role in the rise to populism will help in terms of policy making. A statistical analysis will be performed on these variables, and in combination with literature, possible explanations will be reached to answer this research question.

Theoretical Framework

“The rise of populism has massively grown since the 2016 Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump as president of the US” (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017, p. 17). Although there is no exact definition of what populism is, in the article by Anastasiou (2019), populism is referred to as for “the people”, which is closely associated with the ideology of nationalism, for “the nation's” people. Therefore with this in mind, when Rodríguez-Pose (2017) mentions ‘the rise of populism has massively grown’, this can also be linked to a rise in nationalism, due to how similar the two concepts are. Pazzanese (2017) explains that these two events proved to be ‘encouraging’ to other nationalist parties in Europe, that there is finally a shift away from international cooperation to focussing on the specific countries at hand. This ‘international cooperation’ can be linked with immigration, as part of this cooperation can be understood as other internationals moving to other countries, and how a shift away from ‘international cooperation’ can thus symbolise anti-immigration. Adding to this, Rodríguez-Pose (2017) explains that this rise in populism is a reaction to immigration, in other words, ‘international cooperation’, and that “over the last 20 years, sociologists have documented the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe” (Jeannet, 2020, p. 1). Given that populism is closely related to nationalism, and that this rise in populism is a reaction to immigration, a link between a rise in nationalism and immigration can be made. Further supporting this link, McLaren (2015, p. 7) explains how “In many European countries [...] some people who have concerns about immigration have supported parties that explicitly take anti-immigration platforms [...]”, thus, nationalistic parties, who are against immigration. Therefore, from the evidence stated above, it can be assumed that this rise in populism and nationalism in Europe is due to citizens being against immigration and being in favour of nationalistic parties who stand for anti-immigration.

Taking a closer look into Europe, Jeannet (2020) explains how a rise in anti-immigration has risen over the last 20 years and the fact that the EU was created with border free travel in the years 1990-1999 (European Union, 2024), a further link between immigration within the European Union specifically and nationalism can be made. In other words, does the Union play a role in the rise of nationalism in Europe

due to the immigration possibilities for Union citizens. A factor making immigration within the EU very easy is that all citizens can enjoy the benefits of free movement offered to them, “all EU citizens have the right and freedom to choose in which EU country they want to study, work, or retire” with help from the “the abolition of border controls between most EU countries, people can travel freely throughout most of the continent” (Directorate-General for Communication, 2022, p. 7). Although free travel for all citizens is very beneficial, all good things have consequences, as “a massive labour immigration led to the emergence of sizable new minorities in many of the rich West and North European countries. The rise of new right-wing parties in many European countries is partly a reaction to this immigration.” (Haller, et al, 2006, page 3). Although labour immigration is the most popular reason explaining why people immigrate within the EU, work reasons having the highest percentage of 36% in the year 2022 (European Commission, 2024), the definition of ‘work’ has been slowly expanding, meaning this labour immigration encompasses other reasons than just work. “The rulings of the court [...] have gradually shifted policy from protecting primarily free movement of *workers* to the free movement of *persons*.” (Koikkalainen, 2011, para. 3/13). For this reason, this research paper includes all types of immigration, and will not solely focus on labour immigration. Koikkalainen (2023) mentions that due to many unregistered border crossings by EU citizens to other member states, the statistics on the total number of immigrants are not accurate, therefore to combat this issue, perceptions of immigrants from locals will be studied instead of whole numbers.

Rodríguez-Pose (2017) explains how these places with high amounts of populism are “attacking the very factors on which recent economic growth has been based: open markets, migration, economic integration, and globalization” (p. 33). Rodríguez-Pose also brings about the notion of ‘the places that don’t matter’, describing that these places are often ones that are left behind in regards to economic growth. With what McLaren (2015) mentions, how the modern day concern about immigration is the threat it poses to job prospects to locals, and what Rodríguez-Pose (2017) mentions about being left behind due to economic growth, the places that don’t matter can be linked with minorities due to the economic insecurities. Rodríguez-Pose (2017) further mentions how these places “have increasingly used the ballot box [...] to rebel against the feeling of being left behind”, in other words voting more nationalistic. So if this term ‘populism’ is connected to nationalism, and how citizens rebel against being left behind by voting more nationalistic, the concept of national identity and an individual's sense of belonging comes into play through the notion of ‘being left out’. McLaren (2015) makes clear in their literature about immigration in Europe, that identities are very meaningful to individuals in a complex world that we now live in. It is then further explained by McLaren (2015) that “immigrants pose clear threats to these identities by bringing with them seemingly different values and ways of life.” (page 8) and is further explained that “many people feel immigration has negative effects on society as a whole - particularly on social cohesion [...]” (page 14). Therefore, with this in mind, it is of importance to study identities and a sense of belonging as well as immigration when looking into what impacts people voting choices and behaviour.

Therefore, in relation to what has been touched upon in the literature, the following expectations and assumptions about the voting behaviour in The Netherlands and Germany in relation to immigration and identity/ sense of belonging have been made:

- 1.) *The more negative the perception and less allowing citizens are of immigrants, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.*
- 2.) *The more a citizen identifies and has a sense of belonging within their country, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.*

This paper relies on the connections drawn between the EU, in regards to making it easy for EU citizens to immigrate within the Union, how this impacts one's identity and sense of belonging, and ultimately how this impacts one's voting behaviour. Concluding that one's voting behaviour is impacted by immigration and one's identity and sense of belonging.

Methodology

For this research, the use of secondary data will be used to give possible answers to the research question: *“How do the perceptions of immigrants, and identity/ a sense of belonging impact voting behaviour of citizens in member states within the EU”*. Due to the fact that this research deals with sensitive data, such as political views, collecting primary data through interviews may not be successful as people may not wish to share their opinions on such matters, and if asked may be considered unethical. Therefore, to keep this research ethical and ensure results of the same scale, only secondary data will be collected, remaining anonymous. Collecting secondary data for such research may also prove to be much more useful, as asking people questions about their identity may differ from person to person as the definition is different for everyone, therefore by collecting numerical data on this subject will make it possible to successfully analyse. Seeing as all the data that will be collected is free for public viewing and anyone can access all the data, there will be no issues about the storage or again ethical considerations. The secondary numerical data will be used in a statistical analysis to test the relationship between the variables and prove or disprove the expectations mentioned earlier.

The statistical test chosen to test this relationship will be a multiple linear regression, due to the fact that there are multiple independent variables being tested against a dependent variable. The variables include a dependent variable of voting behaviour (party affiliation) and independent variables; immigration (perception of immigrants), identity/ sense of belonging, age and gender. All these variables are and will be collected from the ESS - European Social Survey for both The Netherlands and Germany, in combination with CBS data about immigration rates for the Netherlands. The Chapel Hill Expert Survey will be used to collect data surrounding the political parties for both The Netherlands and Germany. Data will be collected from ESS round 7 (2014) due to the presence of the chosen variables.

The proxy “which party do you feel closer to” will be used for the dependent variable voting behaviour. The data will be collected from ESS for both The Netherlands and Germany, then the political parties will be organised into categories ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’. To organise these political parties, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey will be used, where they have data on all political parties. The trend file 1999-2019 will be looked at where data on the chosen year 2014 is present.

Political Party	Results	Position
VVD	7.9	right
PvdA	3.7	left
PVV	9.3	right
SP	1	left
CDA	6.8	right
D66	5.6	center
CU	5.4	center
GL	2.3	left
SGP	8.1	right
PvdD	2.9	left

Political Party	Results	Position
50PLUS	5.3	center

Table 1 [Political parties for The Netherlands]

Political Party	Results	Position
CDU & CSU	(5.9 & 7.2) ≈ 6.6	right
SPD	3.8	left
Die Linke	1.2	left
GRUNEN	3.6	left
FDP	6.5	right
AFD	8.9	right
Piraten	3.3	left
NPD	10	right

Table 2: [Political parties for Germany]

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey organises each political party with a rating from 1-10 on each party's ideological stance. 1 being 'extreme left', 5 being 'center' and 10 being 'extreme right'. For this paper, the chosen categories will go as follows, parties with a score falling between 1 and 4 will be categorised as 'left', 5 will be categorised as 'center' and 6 to 10 will be categorised as 'right'. The categories are visible in tables 1 & 2. Due to the fact that this paper only concerns 'left-' and 'right-wing' voting patterns, the political parties falling under the category 'center' will be coded as missing variables. In the statistical program SPSS, 'left' will be coded as 0 and 'right' will be coded as 1.

The proxy *“is it better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions”* will be used for the independent variable 'perception of immigrants'. McLaren (2015) explains how new immigrants bring customs and ways of life that are very different from those of the native people, thus if the native citizens believe the country is better if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions, this can be seen as being less accepting of immigrants, and vice versa. The scale of this proxy goes from 1 being 'agree strongly' to 5 being 'disagree strongly', and will be kept the same in SPSS.

The Proxies chosen for the next independent variable identity and sense of belonging are as follows: “how close do you feel to your country”, “How often do you socially meet with friends, relatives or colleagues” and “How many people with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters”. These proxies are in line with a study revolving around meaningful daily life participation where it is explained how someone's sense of belonging is “[...] how she/he relates to others or a community, with an emphasis on the relationship's quality and the nature of mutual trust and reciprocity [...]” (Haim-Litevsky, et al, 2023, page 2). In this study a sense of belonging was studied among other things, and further connections were

made with one's identity: “The prevalent theoretical framework for a sense of community addresses four core elements. ‘Membership’ (1) addresses feelings of belonging, emotional security, and identification” (Haim-Litevsky, et al, 2023, page 2). Therefore the independent variable is called ‘identity and a sense of belonging’. These variables will not be combined and instead used as 3 separate independent variables due to the fact that identity/ a sense of belonging is not black and white, and there are many layers and factors impacting them.

The bottom line of this research is to study whether citizens' perception of immigrants, identity and sense of belonging impact one's voting behaviour, therefore the proxies chosen stayed very closely related to the relevant literature to get the most reliable results. All the data collected was of great quality with little to no missing values. Due to the fact that the answers were collected from a European wide survey, cases reached over a thousand, giving more than enough cases to perform a successful statistical analysis of great quality to give possible answers to the research question.

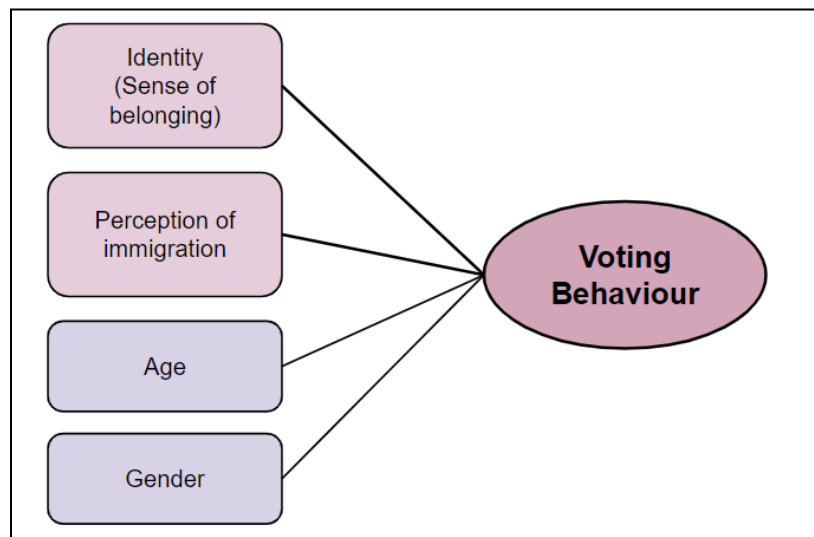


Figure 1: [Conceptual model]

Above, the conceptual model with the underlying themes and flow of the paper can be seen. Here, the independent variables of identity and sense of belonging, perceptions of immigration, age and gender can be seen on the left hand side. On the right hand side the dependent variable voting behaviour can be seen. This model reiterates the research question showing how the paper will be testing if any of the independent variables have an impact on the dependent variable. Results will then show to what extent each independent variable will influence/ have effect on voting behaviour.

Results

The Netherlands and Germany are the EU countries chosen to find out to what extent, if any, perception of immigrants and identity/ sense of belonging play a role in citizens voting behaviour. Both these countries will be separately analysed.

1.) The Netherlands

Before performing any statistical test on variables, it is important to study the different variables to make sure no outliers or abnormalities are present. The dependent variable voting behaviour (left- or right-wing) was compared against all the independent variables.

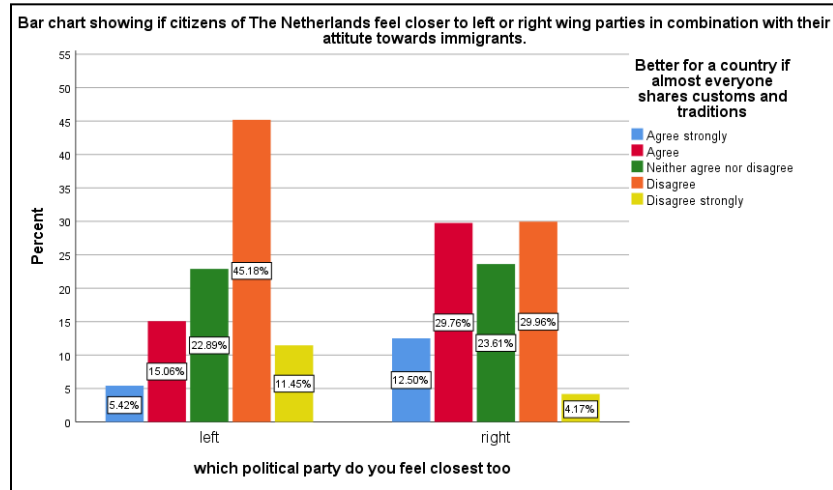


Figure 2 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for perception of immigrants (“better for a country if everyone shares customs and traditions”)]

Figure 2 displays if the citizens of The Netherlands feel closer to left- or right-wing political parties, in comparison to what extent these citizens agree with the statement “it is better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions”. This independent variable being a proxy for the perception of immigrants, the more they agree with this statement, the less allowing they are of immigrants. The proportion for ‘agree strongly’ and ‘agree’ for citizens who feel closer to left-wing parties (20.48%) is substantially lower than for citizens who feel closer to right-wing parties (42.26%). This being said, the opposite is evident with citizens who ‘disagree strongly’ and ‘disagree’. The percentage for citizens who feel closer to left-wing parties is 56.63% and for right-wing parties 34.13%. These findings fall in line with assumption 1 of this paper: “*The more negative the perception and less allowing citizens are of immigrants, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.*”

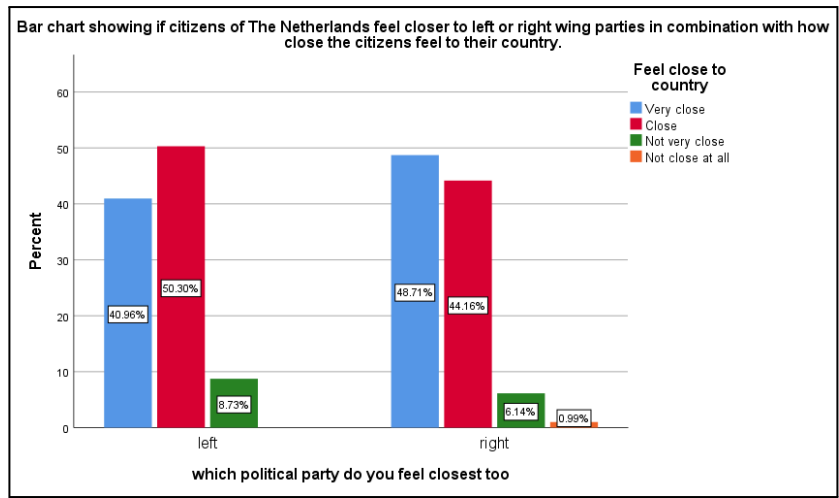


Figure 3: [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging (“feel close to country”)]

Figure 3 displays the voting behaviour of citizens in comparison to how close they feel to their country, one of the proxies for independent variable identity and sense of belonging. At first glance, there seems to be almost no difference between ‘very close’ and ‘close’ between citizens who feel closer to left- or right-wing parties. Although close to nothing, a difference is present. For citizens who feel closer to right-wing parties, there are 1.61% more citizens who feel ‘very close’ or ‘close’ to their country. The same story goes for ‘not very close’ and ‘not close at all’, for citizens who feel closer to left-wing parties, there are 1.6% more citizens. Although, only for citizens who feel close to right-wing parties, there are some citizens (0.99%) who feel ‘not close at all’ with their country. Even with this difference, these findings still support assumption 2 of this paper: “The more a citizen identifies and has a sense of belonging within their country, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.”

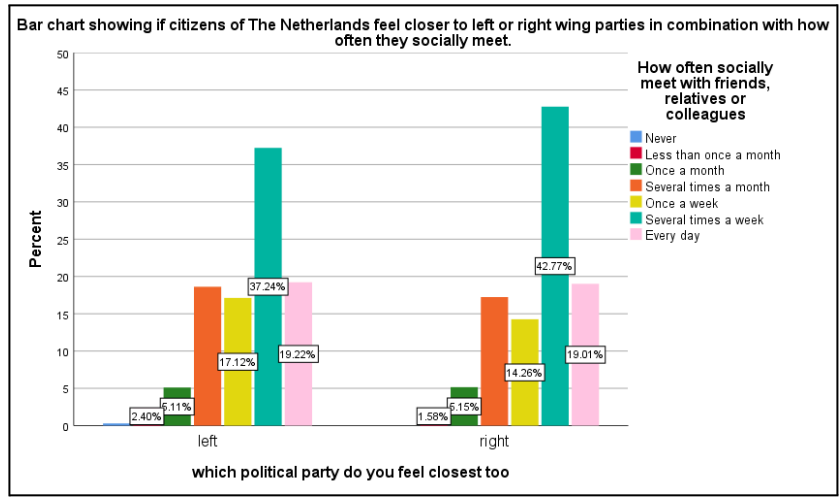


Figure 4 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging (“how often do you socially meet”)]

Figure 4 displays the voting behaviour in comparison to how often the citizens socially meet, another proxy for the independent variable identity and sense of belonging. The difference between how often they meet and if the citizens feel closer to left- or right-wing parties is not that big. The biggest difference being that citizens who feel closer to right-wing parties meet “several times a week” 5.53% more than citizens who feel closer to left-wing parties. Although not the strongest argument, these results still support assumption 2.

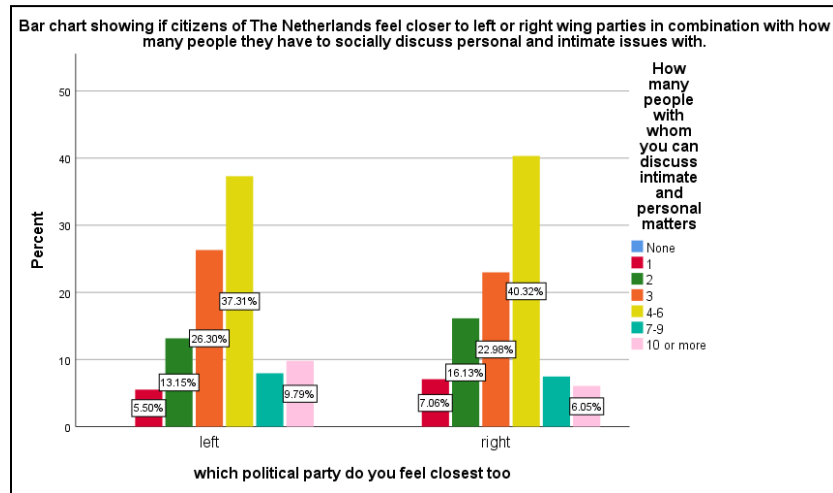


Figure 5 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging (“how many people can you socially discuss issues with”)]

Figure 5 displays voting behaviour in comparison to how many people the citizens have to discuss personal and intimate issues with, the third and last proxy for the independent variable identity and sense of belonging. The results indicate that there are more citizens who have fewer people to discuss issues with (1 or 2 people) who feel closer to right-wing parties, being 23.19%, whereas for citizens feeling closer to left-wing parties the percentage is 18.65%. The percentage for citizens who have ‘10 or more’ people to communicate with is higher for citizens feeling close with left-wing parties (9.79%) than for citizens feeling closer with right-wing parties (6.05%). Meaning that this is the only variable that goes against the expectations of the paper, specifically expectation 2, as the expectation assumes that citizens who feel closer to right-wing parties will have more people with whom they can communicate with, meaning that they have more identity and a sense of belonging associated with their country.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
which political party do you feel closest too	.394	819	.000	.621	819	.000
Better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions	.230	819	.000	.894	819	.000
Feel close to country	.289	819	.000	.756	819	.000
How many people with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters	.202	819	.000	.921	819	.000
How often socially meet with friends, relatives or colleagues	.271	819	.000	.879	819	.000
Gender	.353	819	.000	.636	819	.000
Age of respondent, calculated	.066	819	.000	.981	819	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure 6 [Test for normality, The Netherlands]

After all the different variables have been studied to check for abnormalities or outliers, a test for normality needs to be performed before continuing to perform the multiple linear regression. This will check if the different variables are normally distributed or not. Figure 6 displays the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests done of the dependent variable, independent variables and the two control variables age and gender. Due to the high number of cases, over a thousand, the results from the Shapiro-Wilk test will be looked at, as this test deals best with large amounts of data. The significance level for all variables is equal to 0.000 which is below the test value of 0.05, meaning each variable is significant. This significance means that the H0 of this test, “all variables are not normally distributed”, may be rejected and that it can be assumed with 95% confidence that these variables are normally distributed.

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.061	.141		7.537	.000		
	Better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions	-.109	.015	-.249	-7.314	.000	.976	1.024
	Feel close to country	-.044	.027	-.058	-1.663	.097	.935	1.069
	How often socially meet with friends, relatives or colleagues	.022	.014	.055	1.545	.123	.902	1.108
	How many people with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters	-.015	.014	-.039	-1.113	.266	.918	1.089
	Gender	-.081	.033	-.083	-2.456	.014	.990	1.010
	Age of respondent, calculated	.000	.001	.005	.147	.883	.880	1.136

a. Dependent Variable: which political party do you feel closest too

Figure 7 [Multiple linear regression for The Netherlands]

As well as checking if the variables are all normally distributed, the multicollinearity of the variables also need to be tested. The VIF statistic, visible in Figure 7, shows the multicollinearity level for each variable. This score ranges from 1-10, and the closer this score is to 1 the less multicollinearity this variable has. Each of the variables in this regression is close to 1, therefore low multicollinearity can be assumed, and that the variables are not highly correlated with each other which could impact the results.

Figure 7 displays the multiple linear regression testing the dependent variable of voting behaviour with all independent variables, perception of immigrants and identity/ sense of belonging. The H0 for this regression is “In the population, there is no linear relationship between the dependent variables and all the independent variables”. Due to the fact that two of the independent variables have a Sig value below the test value of 0.05, the H0 can be rejected, meaning there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The first significant independent variable is the proxy for the perception of immigrants, “*better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions*”. With a B score of -0.109, this negative relationship shows that with every 1 unit increase with the independent variable, means that there will be a -0.109 change in the dependent variable, voting behaviour. For the perception of immigrants, with 1 signifying ‘agree strongly’ and 5 signifying ‘disagree strongly’, a 1 unit increase means more allowing of immigrants. For voting behaviour, where 0 means ‘left’ and 1 means ‘right’, this 1 unit increase (more allowing) means a closer feeling to left wing political parties. This result is in favour of assumption 1: “*The more negative the perception and less allowing citizens are of immigrants, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.*” The second significant variable is gender, with a B statistic of -0.081. Where 1 signifies male and 2 signifies female, a 1 unit increase (going to female) means that there will be a 0.081 decrease in voting behaviour. What can be taken from this result is that more females feel closer to left wing parties. This result does not align with any assumptions of the paper.

With this being said, for the independent variable identity and sense of belonging, no proxies proved to be significant with regards to the dependent variable. Therefore it can be assumed, for the Netherlands, that identity/ sense of belonging does not play a role in whether citizens feel closer to left- or right-wing parties. Although, what has been made visible in figures 3, 4 and 5 about how the proxies do have an influence on voting behaviour, statistically there is no evidence of this. Therefore assumption 2 is not true for The Netherlands.

2.) Germany

Once again, the variables will be studied separately first to make sure no outliers and abnormalities are present. This will also give a first glimpse into what the outcomes might be.

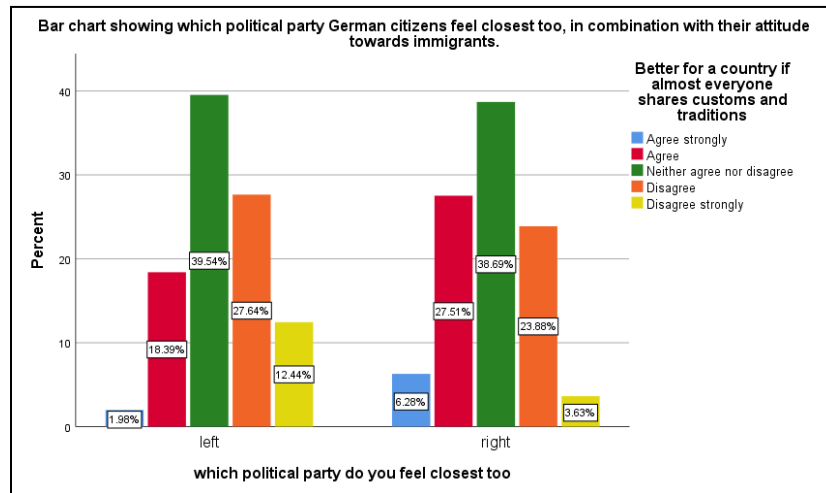


Figure 8 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for perception of immigrants (“better for a country if everyone shares customs and traditions”)]

Figure 8 displays whether citizens of Germany feel closer to left- or right-wing parties in combination to what extent they agree with the statement that it’s better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions, a proxy for perception of immigrants. Here it is visible that most of the citizens, whether feeling closer to left- or right-wing parties, neither agree or disagree with this statement, a different outcome than in The Netherlands. For the citizens that ‘agree’ and ‘agree strongly’, it is 33.79% for citizens feeling closer to right-wing parties and only 20.37% for citizens feeling closer to left-wing parties. With that being said, it is clear that citizens who are less accepting of immigrants feel closer to right-wing parties than those who are more accepting. These results are in line with assumption 1.

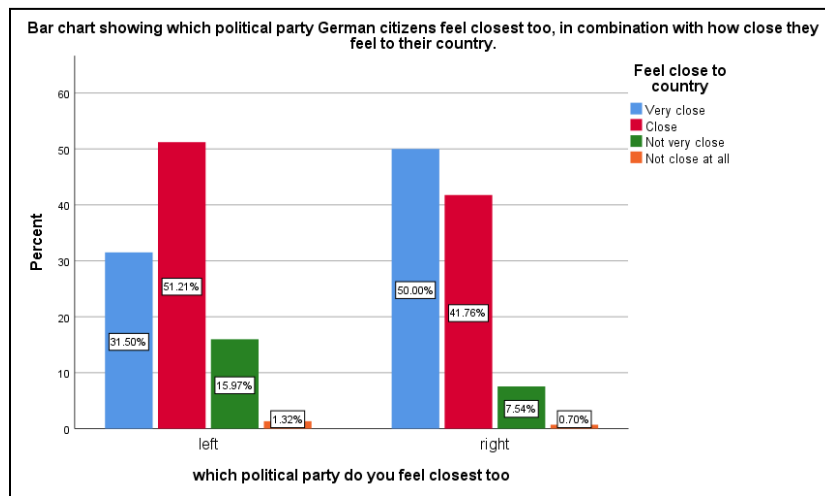


Figure 9 [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging (“feel close to country”)]

Figure 9 displays the voting behaviour in comparison to how close the citizens feel to their country, a proxy for identity/ sense of belonging. What is clear from the clustered bar chart is that for the citizens who feel closer to left-wing parties, 31.50% of them feel ‘very close’ to their country, while for right-wing parties this is 50%. With this being said, these results support the second assumption of this paper on how identity and a sense of belonging impact one’s voting behaviour.

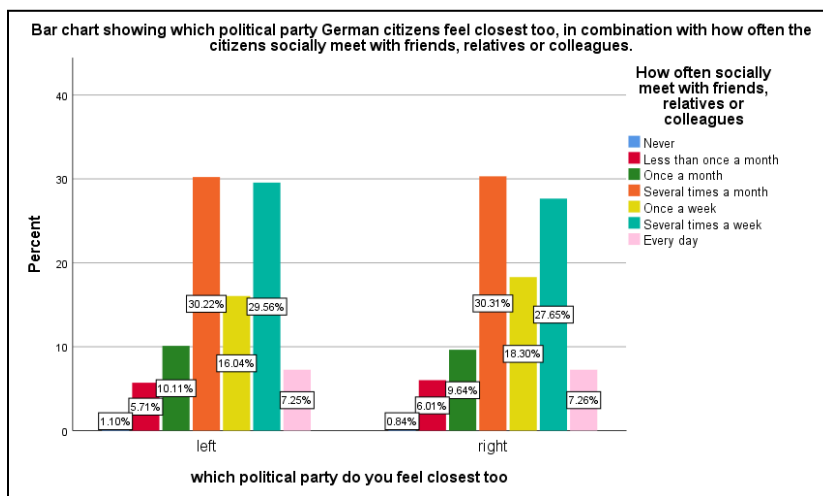


Figure X [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging (“how often do you socially meet”)]

Figure X displays citizens' voting behaviour in combination with how often they socially meet with friends, family and colleagues, another proxy for identity/ sense of belonging. From what is visible from the figure, there are no main differences between the citizens who feel closer to left- or right-wing parties. Therefore nothing strong can be said about how voting behaviour is impacted by this proxy for identity/ sense of belonging.

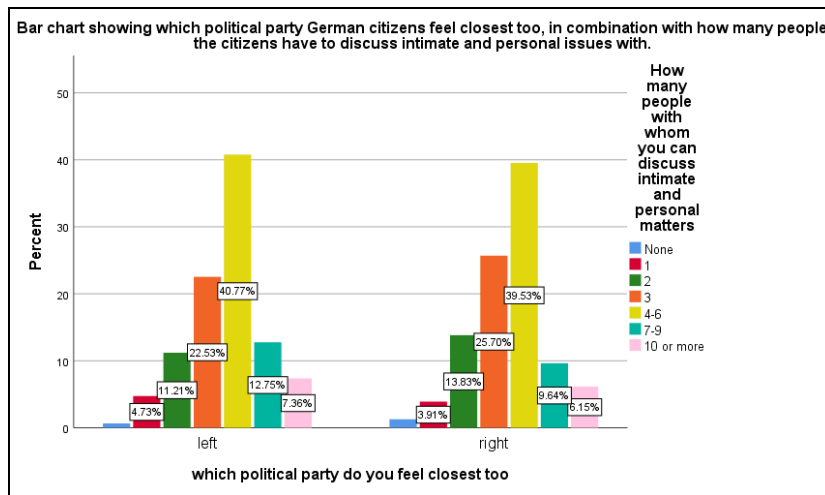


Figure XI [Dependent variable (voting behaviour) & proxy for identity/sense of belonging (“how many people can you socially discuss issues with”)]

Figure XI displays voting behaviour in combination with how many people they can discuss personal issues with, the last proxy for identity/ sense of belonging. Once again, just like figure X, there are almost no differences in how many people the citizens have to discuss intimate and personal issues with. Again, nothing can be said about voting behaviour in Germany being impacted by how many people they can discuss issues with.

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
which political party do you feel closest too	.372	1620	.000	.632	1620	.000
Better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions	.207	1620	.000	.907	1620	.000
How often socially meet with friends, relatives or colleagues	.184	1620	.000	.925	1620	.000
How many people with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters	.214	1620	.000	.926	1620	.000
Feel close to country	.252	1620	.000	.794	1620	.000
Gender	.358	1620	.000	.635	1620	.000
Age of respondent, calculated	.061	1620	.000	.977	1620	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Figure XII [Test for normality, Germany]

After looking at all the variables for Germany, before the multiple logistic regression can be performed, the variables need to be normally distributed. Figure XII shows the statistics for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Once again, the Shapiro-Wilk test will be chosen due to the high number of cases. All ‘Sig.’ statistics for all variables are below the test value of 0.05, therefore the H0, “all variables are

not normally distributed”, may be rejected and it can be assumed with 95% confidence that these variables are normally distributed. With enough cases and normal distribution for the variables, only multicollinearity needs to be examined before looking at the regression results.

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	.875	.092		9.542	.000		
	Better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions	-.084	.012	-.166	-6.731	.000	.947	1.056
	Feel close to country	-.119	.018	-.169	-6.781	.000	.932	1.073
	How often socially meet with friends, relatives or colleagues	.013	.009	.035	1.383	.167	.904	1.106
	How many people with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters	-.018	.010	-.043	-1.777	.076	.962	1.040
	Gender	.001	.024	.001	.023	.982	.988	1.012
	Age of respondent, calculated	.001	.001	.027	1.036	.301	.879	1.137

a. Dependent Variable: which political party do you feel closest too

Figure XIII [Multiple linear regression for Germany]

The multicollinearity can be tested looking at the VIF statistics present in figure XIII, seeing as all these statistics are closer to 1 than 10, low multicollinearity can be assumed for all variables. Meaning that all variables for Germany are not correlated with each other, therefore the results of the regression will be reliable.

Figure XIII displays the results for the multiple linear regression for Germany. Due to the fact that two of the variables turn out to be significant, the H0 of “In the population, there is no linear relationship between the dependent variables and all the independent variables” can be rejected, therefore indicating a relationship being present. The first significant independent variable being ‘better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and tradition’, being the proxy for perception of immigrants. This significance indicates that voting behaviour is indeed impacted and influenced by the perception of immigrants in Germany. The B statistic for this variable is -0.084, this implies that the more accepting you are of immigrants, the closer citizens feel to left-wing parties. These results support expectation 1 of this paper: *The more negative the perception and less allowing citizens are of immigrants, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.* The second significant independent variable is ‘feel close to country’, one of the three proxies for identity/ sense of belonging. The B statistic for this variable being -0.119 with 1 indicating ‘very close’ and 4 ‘not very close at all’, a 1 unit increase (decreased feeling) signifies a closer feeling to left-wing parties. This result can be linked to what is made evident in figure 9, where 50% of citizens who feel closer to right-wing parties feel ‘very close’ to their country and where 31.5% of citizens who feel closer to left-wing parties feel ‘very close’ to their country. This regression backs up figure 9 with significance. Although none of the other proxies for identity/ sense of belonging turned out to be significant, it can be assumed to a certain extent that in Germany, voting behaviour is impacted by a citizen's identity/ sense of belonging. This result supports to some extent expectation 2 of this paper: *“The more a citizen identifies and has a sense of belonging within their country, the more right wing and nationalistic the voting behaviour will be of these citizens, and vice versa.”*

Conclusion

What can be concluded from this research is that for the two chosen EU countries, voting behaviour was impacted by different variables. In The Netherlands, out of all the variables, voting behaviour is impacted to some degree by the citizens perception of immigrants and by their gender. The less accepting citizens of The Netherlands are of immigrants, the closer they felt to right-wing political parties, and that females felt closer to left-wing political parties. In Germany, out of all the variables, voting behaviour is somewhat impacted by perception of immigrants and how close the citizens feel with their country. The less accepting German citizens are of immigrants and the closer they feel to their country, the closer they feel to right-wing political parties. Although both countries share similarities with voting behaviour and perceptions of immigrants, other factors, such as identity and a sense of belonging, seem to differ. These results fall in line with Jeannet's (2020) findings on how anti-immigration is rising in Europe, and McLaren (2015) stating that people who are concerned about immigration are now supporting anti-immigration political parties. What is less evident in these results is Rodríguez-Pose's (2017) theory on the places that don't matter, and how they are taking revenge through the ballot boxes.

In regards to *"How do the perceptions of immigrants and identity/ a sense of belonging impact voting behaviour of citizens in member states within the EU"*, it can be concluded that the two variables, perceptions of immigrants and identity/ sense of belonging, do in fact play a role when it comes to one's voting behaviour. With this being said, these possible answers have been drawn from only two countries situated within the European Union in the year 2014, being one of the short-comings of this paper. Although both countries provide enough evidence to what exactly impacts citizens voting behaviour, statistical claims cannot be made for all countries situated in the Union. However, even if no statistical claims can be made for all countries situated within the Union, this paper does provide rough ideas as to what could impact citizens voting behaviours in other member states. With this in mind, these results can help future policy making in terms of what causes citizens to act a certain way when it comes to voting. Although it's clear from the chosen countries, perceptions of immigrants play a role in voting behaviour, identity/ sense of belonging does not have such a large impact. Suggestions for future research include further research into what parts of one's identity and sense of belonging plays a role in their voting behaviour, if any at all.

Bibliography

Almazawi, A. (2023). *Right-Wing Populism Succeeds in the Netherlands: What does it mean for the EU?*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/right-wing-populism-succeeds-netherlands-what-does-it-mean-eu>

Anastasiou, M. (2019). Of Nation and People: The Discursive Logic of Nationalist Populism. *Javnost - The Public*, 26(3), 330–345.

Biswas, F., Khan, N. and Ahamed, M.F. (2023) “Punjab electoral politics and voting behaviour in assembly election from 2012 to 2022,” *GeoJournal : Spatially Integrated Social Sciences and Humanities*, 88(6), pp. 5973–5995. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-023-10952-0>.

Europa.eu. (2019). *Home*. [online] Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/>.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, (2022) *The European Union : what it is and what it does*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/5377>

European Commission (n.d). *Statistics on migration to Europe*. Accessed on: 13.06.2024. Retrieved from: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en#migration-to-and-from-the-eu.

European Commission (n.d). *Free movement and residence*. Accessed on: 13.06.24. Retrieved from: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/eu-citizenship-and-democracy/free-movement-and-residence_en#:~:text=Digital%20COVID%20Certificate-.

Eurostat (2023). *Demography 2023 edition - Interactive publications - Eurostat*. [online] ec.europa.eu. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/demography-2023>.

European Parliament (2019). *Free movement of workers | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European Parliament*. [online] Europa.eu. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/41/free-movement-of-workers>.

European Union (n.d.). *History of the EU*. [online] european-union.europa.eu. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en.

European Union (2023). *Your gateway to the European Union*. [online] european-union.europa.eu. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en.

Haim-Litevsky, D., Komemi, R., & Lipskaya-Velikovsky, L. (2023). Sense of Belonging, Meaningful Daily Life Participation, and Well-Being: Integrated Investigation. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 20(5), 4121. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20054121>

Jeannet, A. (2020). A Threat from within? Perceptions of immigration in an enlarging European Union. *Acta Sociologica*, volume 63 (issue 4), pages 343-360.

Jolly, Seth, Ryan Bakker, Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2022. "Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File, 1999-2019." *Electoral Studies* 75 (February). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102420>

Koikkalainen, S. (2011). *Free Movement in Europe: Past and Present*. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/free-movement-europe-past-and-present>

Kuo, A., & Margalit, Y. (2012). Measuring Individual Identity: Experimental Evidence. *Comparative Politics*, 44(4), 459–479. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23211822>

McLaren, L.M. (2015). *Immigration and Perceptions of Nation Political Systems in Europe*. 1st Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Pazzanese, C. (2017). *In Europe, nationalism rising*. [online] Harvard Gazette. Available at: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/02/in-europe-nationalisms-rising/>.

Rodríguez-Pose, Andrés (2017) The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11 (1). pp. 189-209. ISSN 1752- 1378 DOI: 10.1093/cjres/rsx024

Rydgren, J. (2017) "Radical right-wing parties in Europe : What's populism got to do with it?," *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(4), pp. 485–496. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.17024.ryd>.

Seveno, V (2024). *Germany vs the Netherlands: An expat's guide*. [online] IamExpat. Available at: <https://www.iamexpat.nl/expat-info/dutch-expat-news/germany-vs-netherlands-expats-guide> [Accessed 31 May 2024].

Søholt, S., Stenbacka, s., Nørgaard, H. (2018). Conditioned receptiveness: Nordic rural elite perceptions of immigrant contributions to local resilience. *Journal of Rural Studies*, volume 64, pages 220-229.

Ulrich, A., Kramer, O., Till, D. (2022). Populism and the Rise of the AfD in Germany. In: Kock, C., Villadsen, L. (eds) *Populist Rhetorics. Rhetoric, Politics and Society*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.