THE ELECTORAL EFFECTS OF EU SUBSIDIES FOR MIGRANT INCLUSION: ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND POPULIST RADICAL RIGHT VOTING ACROSS EUROPE

A. Julia Ross

ajross@ucsd.edu

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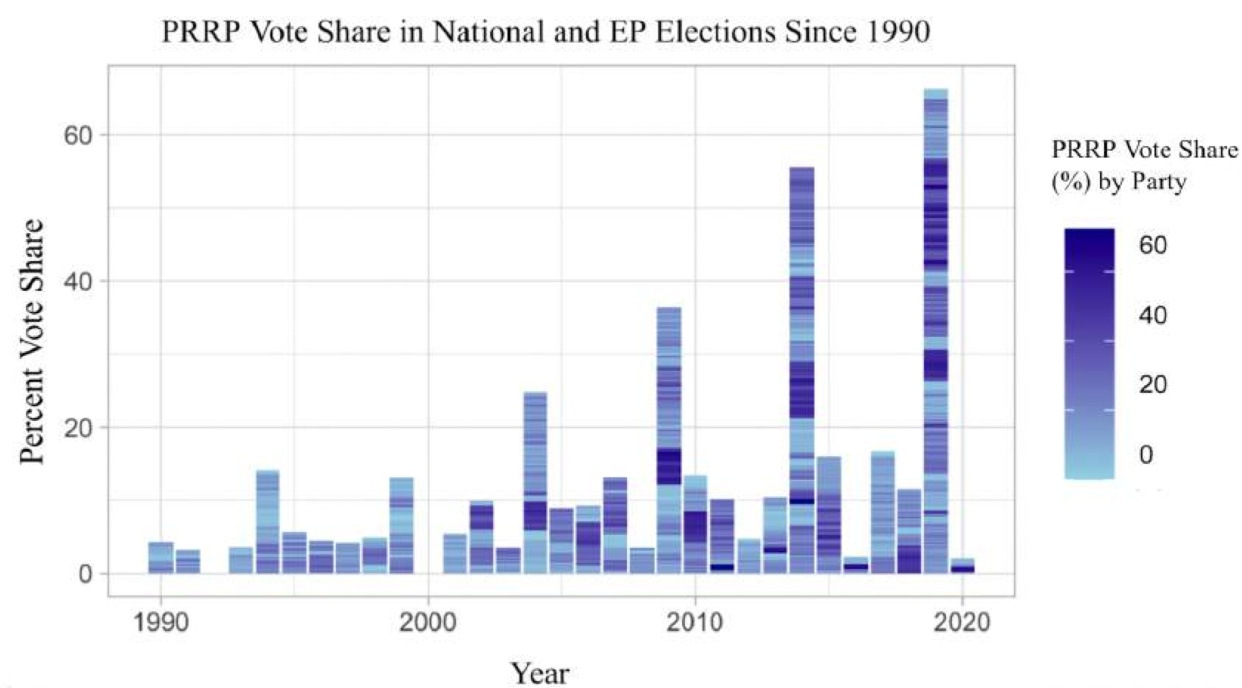
Executive Summary

Do EU subsidies for migrant inclusion lower populist radical right voting across Europe? Over the last few decades, there has been a surge of populist radical right party (PRRP) support among EU states. The literature attributes this to cultural threat, economic threat, lack of intergroup contact, and less inclusive migrant integration policies. However, migrant inclusion policies have not been analyzed at the subnational level throughout the EU. With evidence from Finland and Portugal suggesting that EU Cohesion Funds lower populist radical right support, I hypothesized that active inclusion subsidies made migrant employment rates increase, which reduced PRRP vote shares. To test this theory, I analyzed vote shares for 84 parties in national and EU Parliament elections at the subnational, NUTS 2 level from 2014 to 2020 (n = 1494). Using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and causal mediation analyses, I determined that targeted funds for inclusion did not have any statistically significant impact on PRRP vote shares over time. In addition, every ~43.7 million EUR in inclusion transfers marginally increased economic integration (~0.029 percentage points). While migrant employment negatively affected populist radical right voting, this effect was not significant. Thus, I implore the political science community to further investigate the use of these funds and other methods to improve economic integration among migrants. With this, supranational institutions will be better equipped to support migrant communities upon arrival. Finally, I urge the European Union to expand data collection on other objective integration measures (e.g., civic, social) at the subnational level. This will allow for more comprehensive assessments of funding's efficacy moving forward.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Is history doomed to repeat itself in Europe? The European Union intends to counter intergovernmental conflict, nationalism, and authoritarian rule. Yet, thousands of EU citizens are gathering to protest mainstream political institutions in Germany, Greece, Hungary, and Austria (Mudde 2019, 15; 138-139). These protestors often chant nativist slogans that mimic those preceding an authoritarian rise to power in the mid 20th century (54-55). Is it possible that this is no longer an effective model for the new era (Leonard 2005, 46-47)? The statistics certainly suggest so. Voting for populist radical right parties (PRRPs) has increased exponentially since the 1990s (i.e., 64% and 599% in national and European Parliament elections, respectively). Figure 1 displays these electoral changes below.

Figure 1.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5) and Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/). For a list of PRRPs included, see the Appendix A.2. Throughout this paper, European Parliament will be referred to as “EP”.

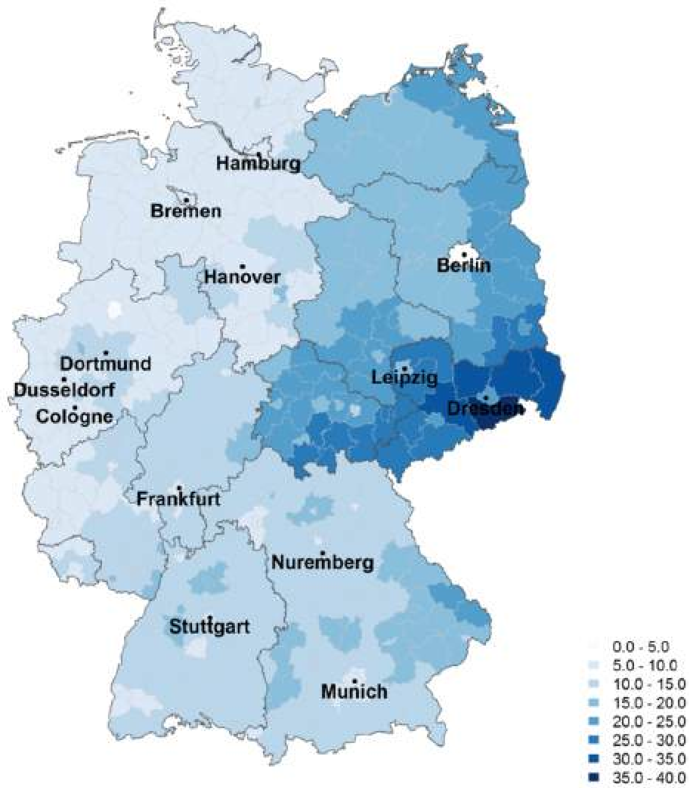
Note: The overall increase in PRRP vote shares across the EU is on the y-axis, whereas colored lines within each bar display the variance in vote shares by party. As each bar contains more dark blue, the size of the bar (i.e., overall PRRP vote share for that election year) becomes larger.

EU-NED includes national (i.e., citizens of member-states vote for parties that will represent them on domestic issues) and EP (i.e., all EU citizens vote for parties that will represent them on EU-wide issues, such as the budget, migration policy, environmental standards) election results (Hix and Høyland 2022). The filtering process and merger is detailed in my overview of Chapter 3.

In 2024, populist radical right parties secured ~180 seats in EU Parliament (EP). This means that they make up around ¼ of the EU's only directly elected body (Zankina and Ivaldi 2024). Thus, populist radical right representatives have a large say in immigration policies and the EU's budget (European Parliament 2025). Since PRRPs run on an anti-immigrant, nationalist platform, increased populist radical right representation has led to stricter immigration policies, nativist social redistribution, and challenges to EU integration among prospective member states (Röth et al 2017, 326; Mudde 2019, 193). As a result, it is important to determine what drives their electoral appeal to maintain the EU's legitimacy as a democratic, supranational institution.

Populist radical right voting skyrocketed with migrant influxes and relocations following the 2015 "crisis" (Hatton 2020, 3; 6; Chueri 2023, 89-90; Lutovac 2022, 38). PRRPs often use anti-immigrant rhetoric to draw in native populations, but there are several explanations for ultimate shifts in voting behavior across subnational regions. In German provinces (Bundesländer), the Alternative für Deutschland's (AfD's) vote shares were exacerbated by economic hardship (Dorn et al. 2020, 23), socio-cultural differences based on historical contexts (Ziblatt et al. 2024, 1481), and social isolation from migrants and minorities. Each factor supposedly increases the native population's perceived threat from migrants across the EU (Sachweh 2020, 376; Mehic 2020, 1402). In Figure 2, I present the distribution of AfD vote shares in Germany's 2017 elections.

Figure 2.



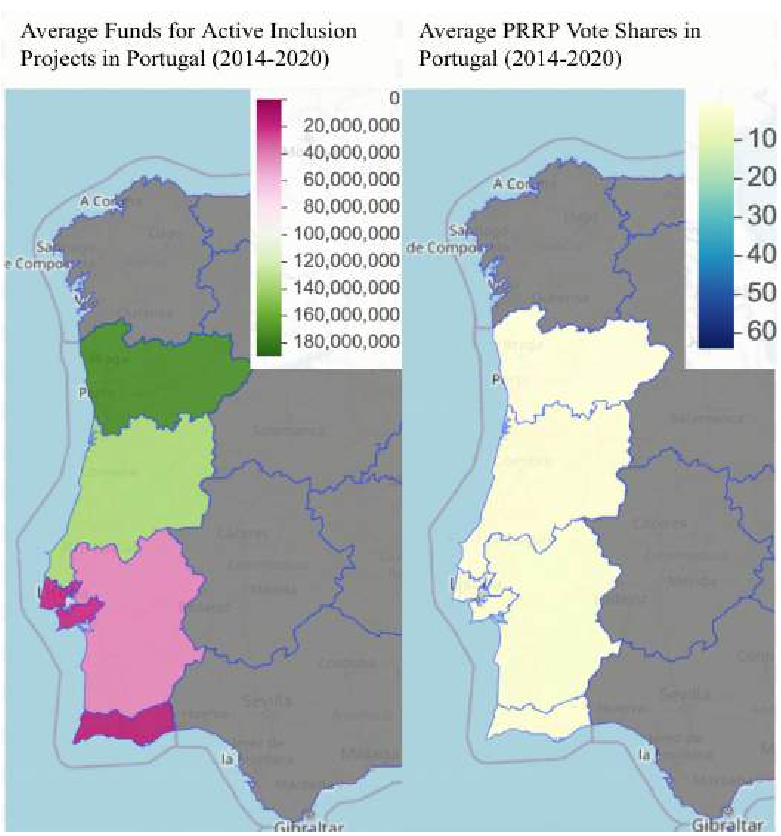
Source: Dorn, Florian; Fuest, Clemens; Immel, Lea; Neumeier, Florian (2020) : Economic deprivation and radical voting: Evidence from Germany, ifo Working Paper, No. 336, ifo Institute - Leibniz Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich, Munich.

Note: Eastern regions are depicted in dark blue because they have a higher percentage of votes for the populist radical right. Some believe this has to do with poorer economic conditions in Eastern Germany after the fall of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Dorn et al. 2020, 23). Others believe individuals differed socially, culturally, and politically because of their former affiliations with the GDR and proximity to the Eastern border Ziblatt et al. 2024, 1481). The final group claims that these regions are mainly rural, so individuals interact less with immigrants than those in cities (Sachweh 2020, 376; Mehic 2020, 1402).

In Finland, PRRP voting was also tied to economic and cultural "threats" following migrant influxes to each region. However, these relationships were insignificant in areas that relied on EU Cohesion transfers (Patana 2018, 725). The EU adopted a "recommendation on active inclusion" in 2008, which allowed them to directly transfer funds to regions for economic and social integration (European Commission 2008). Countries with more inclusive policies towards migrants (e.g., those supporting language acquisition, labor market participation, civic participation, educational attainment, etc.) should have lower support for the populist radical right (Zagórski et al. 2024). Given this funding assists with inclusion, it may be dramatically shifting PRRP vote shares at the subnational level.

Evidence from Portugal also demonstrates that inclusion funds may influence populist radical right support. Portuguese regions were the highest receivers of active inclusion funds and had the lowest average PRRP vote shares between 2014 and 2020. While scholars often attribute low PRRP support in Portugal to lower levels of immigration, this overlap suggests that funding might play a large role as well (Quintas da Silva 2018, 4). In Figures 3 and 4, I map the average PRRP vote shares and active inclusion funds to each region from 2014 to 2020. Figure 3 focuses on Portugal, while Figure 4 shows the subnational variation across Europe. Since migrant inclusion and PRRP voting have not been analyzed sub-nationally throughout the EU, my study aims to determine (i) whether integration lowers PRRP voting and (ii) funds for inclusion facilitate this relationship at the provincial level.

Figure 3.

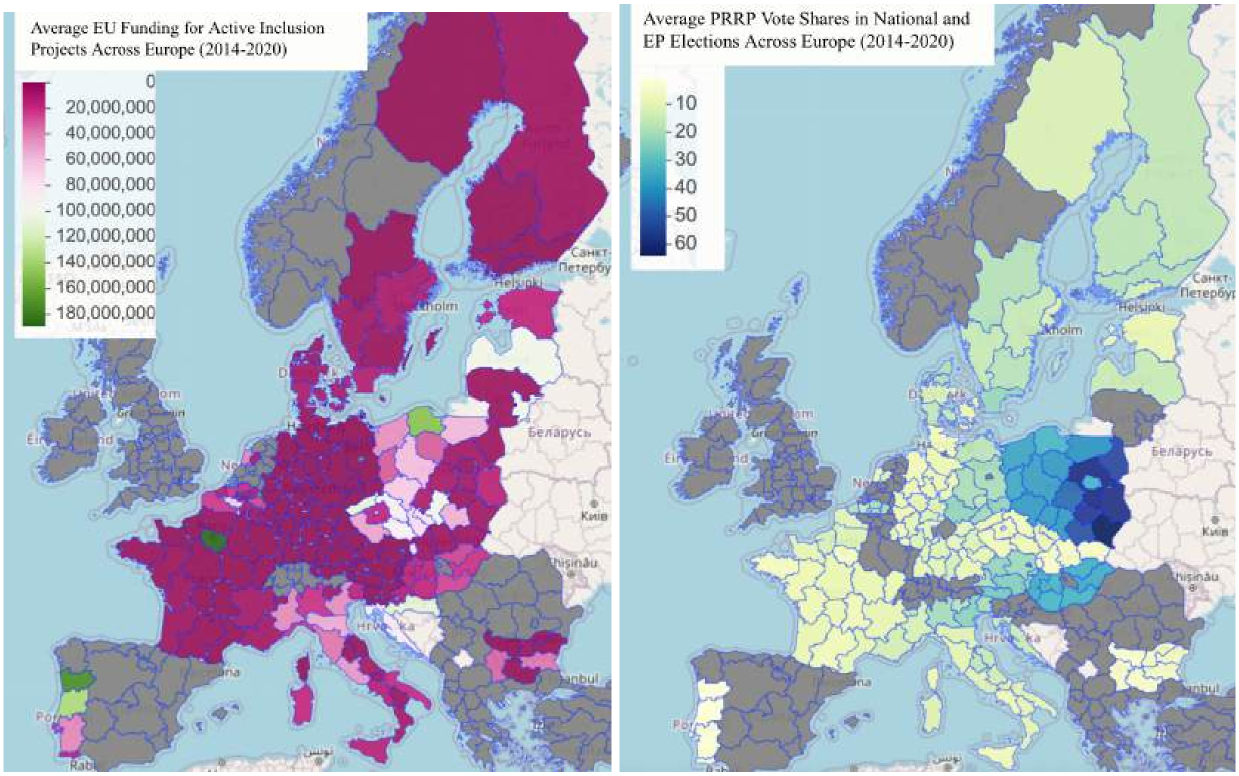


Source: Map by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5), Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/), EU Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and EU Kohesio data on NUTS 2 regions (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: Colors on the left-most scale show that Portuguese regions received high funding within the range of regions included, with the exception of the Algarve region (PT15), despite the fact that Portugal has low levels of immigration (Quintas da Silva 2018, 4). At the same time, PRRP voting is extremely low. While I would expect PRRP vote shares in PT15 to be much higher than other Portuguese regions, it is possible that the extreme amount of funding in neighboring regions has consequences for inclusion that spillover slightly.

Note: All maps use the “leaflet” package in RStudio to match NUTS 2 regions with quality geospatial data.

Figure 4.



Source: Map by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5), Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/), EU Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and EU Kohesio data on NUTS 2 regions (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

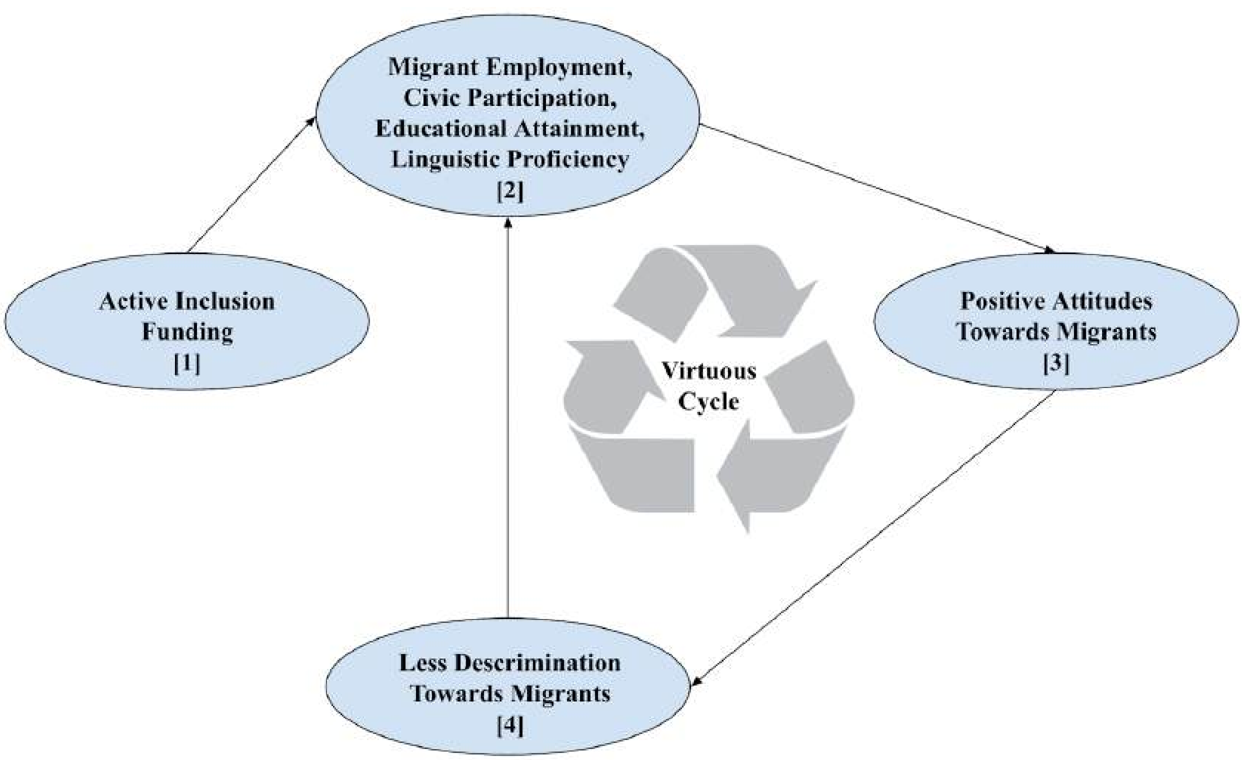
Note: The left-hand side shows that Portuguese regions received high funding compared to other regions within EU member states. The right-hand side shows that PRRP voting is also the lowest on average in Portugal.

1) Theory

I argue that funds for inclusion lower PRRP support because targeted transfers pressure regional governments to make social, economic, and civic institutions more accessible to migrants. They ensure that regional governments use finances for a particular cause, while enhancing the EU's ability to track progress (Van Wolleghem 2022, 641). In turn, interactions between native and migrant populations should reduce the natives' receptiveness to populist radical right appeals. While PRRPs boost negative stereotypes and claim that migrants economically burden the native population, enhanced contact should counter misconceptions about the outgroup and display their positive contributions to the labor market (Green et al. 2019, 632-635; Kende et al. 2022, 339).

Migrant inclusion creates a "virtuous cycle" because less discrimination and greater access to communal spaces facilitate long-term interactions with local society. Over time, this positive feedback loop reduces cultural, social, and economic threat perceptions (Kende et al. 2022, 349). There is a subset of populist radical right voters that are mainly driven by economic concerns, but economic contributions should spillover to reduce cultural threats. In turn, changes in vote share can be mediated by economic integration alone, and I expect to see reductions in PRRP voting alongside increases in migrant employment rates across Europe (Kriesi and Papas 2016, 323; Siddiqui 2021, 9). To evaluate my argument, I pose the following questions: Do EU subsidies for migrant inclusion reduce populist radical right vote shares? Is this effect mediated by economic integration?

Figure 5.



2) Research Design

In total, I analyzed vote shares for 84 political parties in national and EP elections at the provincial, NUTS 2 level from 2014 to 2020 (n = 1494). This included 192 NUTS 2 regions and 313 elections. All datasets were publicly available, and I analyzed them in RStudio. I combined EU-NED election data with Populist 3.0 data to identify PRRP vote shares (Schraff et al. 2022; Roodujin et al. 2023).[1] Afterwards, I joined EU Cohesion data on active inclusion funding (i.e., ESF+, ERDF) from 2014 to 2024. Then, I used Eurostat's migrant employment indicators to form my mediator variable (n = 3096) ("Population" 2025). Total unemployment rates (n = 2241), reporting-country birth rates (n = 2241), and the number of households in each region (n = 2232) from 2014 to 2023 were my control variables ("Unemployment Rates" 2025; "Number of Households" 2025). Finally, I used historical EU Cohesion payments (i.e., ESF+, ERDF, CF) as my instrument and inclusion funds as a percent of the EU's average GDP per capita for additional robustness (ARDECO 2024; European Commission 2025).

This study tested two hypotheses: funds to active inclusion projects lower PRRP voting in NUTS 2 regions (H_1) and economic inclusion mediates the relationship between funding and PRRP vote shares (H_2). In my main models, I conducted Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and two-step causal mediation analyses to determine the effects of active inclusion subsidies on PRRP voting. Step 1 regressed migrant employment rates on my treatment and controls. This was my mediator model in the causal mediation analysis. Step 2 regressed PRRP vote shares on my controls, mediator, and treatment (i.e., active inclusion funding) for my outcome model. My

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[1] The NUTS 2 level refers to provinces or states within EU nations (e.g., Bundesländer in Germany), while NUTS 3 comprises county or district-level data.

For a study using Populist 3.0 and EU-NED, see Vergioglou 2023 in my bibliography.

For EU-NED and Populist 3.0 datasets respectively, see in-text citations Schraff et al. 2022 and Roodujin et al. 2023. All datasets will be met with in-text citations.

final analysis displayed the direct (ADE), indirect (ACME), and total (sum) effect of targeted inclusion funding on PRRP vote shares. It also showed the proportion mediated (PM) through migrant employment (Tingley et al. 2014, 6-7). I enabled bootstrapping with 1000 simulations to enhance the robustness of my findings (5).

3) **Results and Discussion**

The direct (i.e., ADE), indirect (i.e., ACME), and total effects of active inclusion funds on PRRP vote shares were not statistically significant using a 1.96 critical value ($p > 0.05$). Contrary to my initial expectations, funding positively influenced PRRP vote shares. The indirect effect was negative, showing that funds increased migrant employment which brought down PRRP voting, but this was not meaningful either. As a result, I could not reject my null hypotheses for H_1 or H_2 (Tingley et al. 2014, 15). However, my OLS regressions showed that every ~43.7 million EUR in active inclusion funds only increased migrant employment rates ~0.029 percentage points ($p < 0.05$). Since my treatment variable was exogenous, this illustrated that funds for active inclusion had a marginal impact on economic integration among migrants. The population's ethnic homogeneity and total unemployment rates also had meaningful effects on PRRP voting throughout my primary and robust analyses.

These findings contribute significantly to the current literature. There are four main theories on support for PRRPs. The first relies on cultural grievances associated with immigration to ethnically homogenous regions (Mudde 1999). The second involves economic grievances, faced primarily by low-skilled workers after vast globalization in the 1990s (Kapstein 2000). The third focuses on the frequency and duration of close contact between native and migrant populations (Allport 1954), and the final emphasizes political inclusivity towards immigrants (Castles 1995). Few studies evaluate the effects of EU subsidies on PRRP voting, and inclusive policies still need to be explored alongside electoral behavior at the subnational level (Gold and Lehr 2024; Patana 2018). Thus, I show the effects of targeted funds for inclusion and the role inclusive policies play in determining vote shares with more granularity.

While my results build on the dominant theoretical assumptions in academia, this paper also provides institutions with information on how to address migrant integration moving forward. Since research on EU subsidies and PRRP voting is often limited to ERDF, this study shows the impact of other, more targeted funding avenues (e.g., the Cohesion Fund, ESF+). EU inclusion transfers seem to play a very small role in economic integration. This calls into question the efficacy of funds that are directed by the EU's technocratic officials during public concerns about a "democratic deficit" (Hix and Høyland 1997, 132). Thus, my findings promote further study and discourse on the direction of resources within the EU. By exploring new methods to enhance integration and cooperate with regional governments, the EU can be sure to avoid exacerbating nationalism and euroscepticism, which pose a risk to its own stability (Mudde 2019, 193; Moravcsik 2002, 605; Patana 2018; Gold and Lehr 2024).

I chose to analyze election data at the NUTS 2 level to avoid potential confounders at the country-level. Also, the EU typically sends cohesion subsidies to regional governments (Hix and Høyland 2011, 242). However, there are limitations since I cannot directly analyze whether funds for inclusion mediate PRRP voting through social, civic, or cultural integration measures (e.g., language acquisition, voter engagement). Currently, MIPEX, Eurobaromater, Eurostat, and European Social Surveys do not measure EU-wide social and political integration at the subnational level. In addition, EU-NED does not account for the significant PRRP gains since 2020 (e.g., Reconquête, Prišaha). It also lacks information on smaller electoral wins and does not include certain parties that disbanded within its time frame (e.g., Ny Demokrati, Partia X).

Eurostat's data on my control and mediator variables are also limited from 2014 to 2023 at this level. Thus, the scope of this study is only seven years with a one-year lag, but the observations are sufficient enough for a comprehensive analysis.

<u>Overview</u>

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature, and Chapter 3 introduces my theoretical argument. I contend that there is a causal relationship between targeted subsidies for migrant inclusion and PRRP vote shares mediated by economic integration. In short, there are four theories explaining electoral support for the populist radical right: cultural threat, economic threat, social contact, and migrant inclusivity. I argue that inclusive policies reduce economic and cultural threats, while promoting intergroup contact. This creates a "virtuous cycle" that lowers anti-immigrant sentiment and improves migrant integration over time. Targeted subsidies should push regional governments to incorporate migrants in civic, social, and economic spaces, ultimately kickstarting this process. Decreased threat perceptions and more interaction with migrants contradict PRRP appeals, lowering voter support across regions.

Chapter 4 explains my data, filtering process, choice of methodologies, and main methods. In total, I analyzed the effect of EU cohesion funds for active inclusion, migrant employment rates from Eurostat, and my controls (i.e., population homogeneity, population density, and total unemployment) on subnational vote shares for 84 populist radical right parties from 2014 to 2020. I used Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions for my main causal mediation analysis because my Durbin-Wu-Hausman test showed that the treatment was exogenous. Then, I bootstrapped with 1000 simulations for additional robustness. Since the F-statistic was high in stage 1 of my two-stage least squares (2SLS) analysis, and these results were similar, I presented them in my findings section as well. For 2SLS, I used regressions with estimated inclusion funds for my mediator and outcome models.

In Chapter 5, I present my OLS, 2SLS, and causal mediation results. I discuss model fit, significance, and the implications of my regressions. Then, I show the direct, indirect, and total effects of active inclusion funding on PRRP vote shares and address the proportion mediated by objective economic integration indicators. Ultimately, my results demonstrate no significant relationship between funds for inclusion and PRRP vote shares, which countered my initial expectations. Although increases in funding had positive repercussions for migrant employment, these effects were small considering the amount operationalized for active inclusion (~0.029 percentage points for every ~43.7 million EUR). I employed robustness checks following the same methods with additional controls, and for several checks, I replaced the mediator with migrant labor force participation rates. My results demonstrated the necessity of using objective integration measures to explore migrant inclusion and electoral behavior.

I discuss the limitations of this study before moving to my final chapter. The scope is relatively small since data on my controls were unavailable before 2014, and electoral results in EU-NED do not account for recent PRRP wins or minor ones within the reporting period. Further, there is a lack of data on other objective integration measures (e.g., civic participation, language acquisition) at the NUTS 2 level that would be useful to determine the comprehensive impact of funds for inclusion. In Chapter 6, I summarize the information discussed throughout this paper, its ramifications, and future directions for political science research. Ultimately, my results indicate that large increases in inclusion funding slightly boost migrant employment rates and do not have any meaningful effect on PRRP vote shares. This adds to the dominant theories on PRRP voting and promotes exploring new strategies to advance economic integration moving forward.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

In this section, I review the literature on voter backlash against immigration through populist radical right support. PRRPs prioritize nativism, which resonates in over half of EU countries. Their vote shares ranged from 5.6% to 29.5% since the 1990s, with an average of 14.7% in national parliamentary elections (Mudde 2016, 297). While attitudes towards migrants can often predict electoral support for PRRPs, changes in vote share quantify the institutional impact they have over time. PRRP representatives in national and EU parliaments (EP) often impose restrictions on social spending, immigrant inclusion programs, and external action policies regarding EU integration (Schumacher and Kersbergen 2014; Seabrooke and Tsingou 2018, 469). Thus, it is necessary to analyze the efficacy of migrant inclusion measures and electoral consequences across Europe.

Cultural/Group Threat Theory

To begin, one group argues that ethno-cultural factors facilitate voter backlash against immigration. Individuals view immigrants as a threat to the majority's culture, traditions, values, and sovereignty (Norris and Inglehart 2019). Demographic shifts risk population homogeneity, which many believe undermines their established lifestyles and cultures. Natives may have to conform to the out-group's norms or face socio-political marginalization, given elections favor the "outsiders" over time (Mudde 2007; Mudde 1999; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Kitschelt and Mcgann 1997). These factors largely explain far-right populist support in cross-national and subnational models (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2020; Spies 2013). One study found that PRRPs resonate most in Finland's ethnically homogeneous regions since they are most afraid of cultural changes (Patana 2018, 726-727). Such cases are complemented by significant relationships between nativist ideals and anti-immigrant sentiment in European Social Surveys (Lucassen and Lubbers 2011; Card et al. 2011; Inglehart and Norris 2017, 446).

Economic Threat Theory

Others argue that economic factors are better predictors of PRRP voting. They contend that populist radical right support was triggered by job losses during expanded globalization in the 1990s. Low-skilled labor in high-wage countries, particularly those in manufacturing sectors, experienced instability after expanding trade with low-wage countries. This was primarily driven by low-cost imports from China to Western Europe and the United States, as well as free trade agreements with neighbors to the East and South, respectively (Autor et al. 2016; Cooke et al. 2016; Dorn and Levell 2024). Many positions were outsourced, and immigration was used to fill other low-skilled positions. Thus, the concentration of immigrants within certain industries created competition for jobs and resources under mainstream political parties (Borjas et al. 1997; Hjerm 2007; Kapstein 2000; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Mayda 2006; Facchini and Mayda 2009). As a result, individuals were more likely to vote for PRRPs that aimed to restrict both free trade and immigration, particularly during periods of economic decline (Kriesi and Papas 2016; Siddiqui 2021; Rodrik 2021). Currently, regions that spend more on migrants tend to vote populist radical right due to perceived “fiscal burdens” to the native population (Cordero et al. 2023). Also, unemployment is strongly correlated with increases in PRRP support (Guriev and Papaioannou 2022, 781-782).

Intergroup/Social Contact Theory

A third group uses social contact theory to explain changes in PRRP voting. They note that regular, close interactions between migrants and native populations foster empathy, while contradicting negative stereotypes that portray out-groups as overly distinct. Populist parties often exploit isolation to emphasize differences, and in turn, many believe that certain groups threaten native values and security more than others (Green et al. 2019; De Coninck et al. 2020). For example, populist portrayals of religious differences between migrants from the Global South and EU natives in the media often emphasize physical risks (Schleuter et al. 2019). These perspectives flourish when people are isolated because there are no visible contradictions to their biases, whereas close and frequent interactions foster the feeling that migrants are like-minded (Allport 1954; Nelson 2016). Thus, increased contact lowers PRRP support, and outcomes are more pronounced in subnational analyses, given closer proximity between individuals of various backgrounds (Nijs et al. 2019; Graf and Sczesny 2019; Patana 2018; Della Posta 2013).

Migrant Inclusion Theory

The last group argues that more inclusive migrant integration policies lower support for PRRPs. Inclusivity is the extent to which migrants can engage in the host society's civic, economic, and social institutions. More inclusive integration measures reduce inequalities (e.g., through social protections, subsidized housing, labor market access, naturalization) and increase intergroup contact, which empirically lowers social and cultural threat. They also undermine the intensity of perceived economic, demographic, and social changes (Patana 2018). When migrants are visibly integrated, they are seen as like-minded, positive contributors to society's overall well-being. (Neureiter 2021; Green et al. 2019; Callens and Meuleman 2016; Wagner et al. 2008). This creates a "virtuous cycle", where immigrants receive less discrimination and are therefore more likely to continue engaging in such activities (e.g., jobs, schooling) (Kende et al. 2022). Many studies show the positive effects of inclusion on local attitudes, and one demonstrates that they lower PRRP vote shares across Europe at the country-level (Zagórski et al. 2024).[2]

Notably, less inclusive integration measures maintain restricted access to civic, social, and economic institutions (e.g., limited relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, strict language standards imposed in schools). These promote anti-immigrant sentiment since blame for the failure to participate is often placed on the migrants themselves. As a result, they tend to feel alienated by members of the host-society and often face discrimination in intergroup settings (Duemmler 2015; Lê-Scherban et al. 2023). However, critics of migrant inclusion claim that these policies can actually promote migrant influxes. Inclusive measures make the topic more salient in political discussions and perceived competition for resources more pronounced (Hjerm 2007; Fetzer 2000; Dennison 2019). This could increase PRRP support over time, particularly when substantial funds are allocated to these groups (Reeskens and Oorschot 2015; Burgoon and Schakel 2021). A recent study showed that pro-immigration policies did not increase PRRP voting, but it did not assess inclusive integration measures (Kustov 2022).

<u>EU Transfers</u>

Two studies evaluate EU transfers alongside PRRP voting.[3] Both analyzed development subsidies (i.e., ERDF) to economically disadvantaged regions. One found declines in PRRP vote shares over several funding periods and noted that economic stability and institutional trust mediated this effect with a regression discontinuity design (Gold and Lehr 2024).[4] The other

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[2] Positive behaviors and attitudes towards immigrants are sometimes represented through openness to less restrictive policies and integration measures, but effect on vote share is only measured in one study (Zagórski et al. 2024).

[3] With regards to EU funding, most studies evaluate its effects on anti-system voting through eurosceptic rather than populist party vote share. They find that EU transfers significantly reduce support for eurosceptic parties, typically by promoting institutional trust, economic stability, and social cohesion (Vergioglou 2023; Senninger 2021; Schraff 2017; Borin et al. 2021; Hlatky 2020).

[4] ERDF has a threshold for significant increases in funding, unlike other EU funding mechanisms, which best suits a regression discontinuity design (Vergioglou 2023; Van Wolleghem 2019).

showed that the relationship between migrant influxes and PRRP voting became insignificant when controlling for EU development transfers in an OLS regression (Patana 2018). Broad, EU Cohesion funds are known to alleviate budgetary constraints, which are common during migrant influxes (Rakowska and Ozimek 2021; Gál 2019). Yet, some argue that funds for migrants often serve to "tick boxes" and do not represent genuine inclusion efforts. They also posit that directing funds to minorities could make natives feel like they are competing, which aligns with economic threat theory and criticisms of migrant inclusion. Thus, targeted transfers may increase negative attitudes alongside PRRP vote shares (Boeri 2010; Samaluk 2020).

Chapter 3 - Theoretical Argument

Since the absorption rate of EU Cohesion funds is over 80%, broad funding should mitigate resource depletion and help maintain economic stability. However, targeted subsidies are necessary to avoid mainstreaming (i.e., embedding migrant integration efforts into broader social and economic welfare policies) (Van Wolleghem 2022). Since migrants often face challenges that are distinct from the general population, targeted subsidies ensure that resources are allocated specifically for these issues (Van Breugel and Scholten 2018). Currently, the EU has two funding mechanisms dedicated to migrant integration: the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (i.e., AMIF) and certain EU Cohesion Funds. Within cohesion funding, there are categories that specify the direction of transfers. Category 109 is labelled "active inclusion", and focuses on economically and socially integrating migrants. These funds are supposed to "improve employability" and increase immigrant activity in the labor market (see Appendix A.1). The EU sends them to regional governments to invest in projects that develop essential skills, provide job training, and give career guidance (Frazer and Marlier 2013, 45).

Migrants face various integration challenges when they lack institutional support. They may not be able to meet certain labor market criteria or have familiarity with application processes upon arrival (Samaluk 2020, 108). Oftentimes, they also have language barriers and face discrimination, which can hinder employment opportunities significantly (Alegría et al. 2017, 150-151). I argue that transfers for inclusion counter this by pressuring regional governments to increase training, language acquisition, and application assistance for migrants. While there are concerns about the misuse of funds, and the EU does not specify their direction within these projects (see Appendix A.1), they present funding objectives, collaborating entities, and project durations that should hold regional governments accountable. Direct subsidies also increase the EU's abilities to track and publish progress (Van Wolleghem 2022, 641). In turn, inclusion funds will likely increase migrants' access to economic institutions by helping them engage through newfound skills (e.g., language).

With enhanced access to the labor market, shifts in economic stability will appear much less drastic. Since most EU countries have a dual labor market, employment-based competition between natives and migrants should be much less apparent than it was in the 1990s (Andrijasevic and Sacchetto 2016). Competition has shifted towards social spending, but increases in migrant employment through funds for active inclusion illustrate that current allocations benefit the broader community (Hix and Høyland 2011). When migrants show active contributions in low-skilled sectors, the population is more likely to see them as necessary to fill crucial gaps in the labor market. This promotes the notion that they are beneficial for economic stability over time, rather than a burden on the institution's resources (Dražanová & Gonnot 2023; Markaki & Longhi, 2013). Then, frequent interactions between natives working with migrants and those engaging with them in social settings should spillover to reduce cultural and social threat perceptions as well (Cordero et al. 2023).

With interaction between natives and immigrants, the "virtuous cycle" forms because negative stereotypes, which PRRPs rely on, are gradually dispelled. Less hostility helps migrants participate in intergroup settings (e.g., the workplace, schools, community events, etc.), and the positive feedback loop persists (Green et al. 2019, 632-635; Kende et al. 2022, 339). Many populist radical right voters are motivated by cultural, social, and economic factors alike, and there is a group of individuals that vote populist radical right primarily for economic reasons (Cordero et al. 2023). Since I anticipate a large socio-cultural "spillover effect" under the virtuous cycle, active inclusion funds should significantly lower PRRP vote shares through increases in migrant employment rates alone. Within my theory, changes in PRRP voting must be mediated by objective integration measures (e.g., employment rates, school enrollment, percent of the population that is voting, etc.) since the in-group has to physically see migrants' contributions and likeness to the host-society, in order to change how they vote.

Chapter 4 - Research Design

I analyze support for PRRPs in Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics II (i.e., NUTS 2) regions throughout the EU from 2014 to 2020. The analysis is country-subnational and region-year specific. NUTS 2 regions correspond with provinces and regional governments in EU countries, while NUTS 3 regions reflect municipalities or local administrative jurisdictions ("NUTS" 2024). For example, Lombardy (ITC4) is a NUTS 2 region in Italy, but NUTS 3 regions within it include cities such as Milan (ITC41), Bergamo (ITC42), Brescia (ITC43), and Como (ITC44) ("Statistical Regions" 2022). Financial assistance from the EU Commission is typically given to NUTS 2 regional governments under ESF+ and ERDF to reduce social and economic disparities. Regional authorities apply for and implement these funds based on their specific needs. Because of this and the additional granularity, I tailored my analysis to regional contexts ("Cohesion Policy Indicators" 2024).

Linear Estimation:
PRRP Vote Shares (Outcome) ~
Lagged Active Inclusion Funds (Treatment) +
Migrant Employment Rates (Mediator) +
Population Unemployment Rates (Control 1) +
Population Homogeneity (Control 2) +
Population Density (Control 3)

Dependent Variable

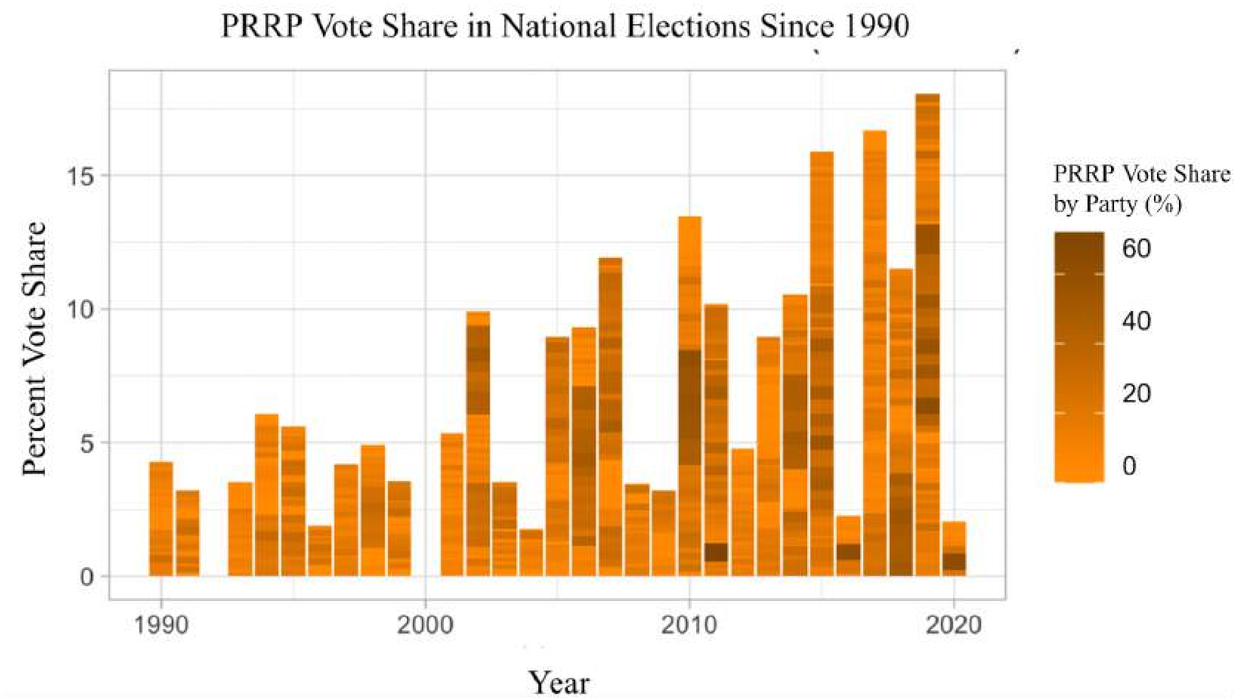
My dependent variable is populist radical right party vote shares in national and EP elections across Europe. I used the Populist 3.0 dataset, which includes information on active parties from 1989 to 2022, in order to determine which were PRRPs. The dataset uses binary indicators to assign four labels to political parties in each EU country. These labels include "far-left, far-right, populist, and eurosceptic". Like the Manifesto Project and PartyFacts datasets, Populist assigns codes to quasi-sentences to categorize party "manifestos", ensuring consistency and a lack of bias across these labels (Roodujin et al. 2024, 973; Werner et al. 2021, 2-5; Roodujin et al. 2023). I assigned the column "BOTH" to parties that had populist and far-right indicators equal to one, which made them "TRUE". Those with either one or both values equal to zero were assigned "FALSE", and they were excluded from analysis (see Appendix A.2).

Next, I used EU-NED data from the Harvard Dataverse to obtain PRRP vote shares. This included national and EP election results from 1990 to 2020 in all 27 EU member states and Great Britain (Schraff et al. 2022). This is the only dataset that comprises NUTS 2 electoral results across EU countries, and subnational data is necessary to analyze the effects of inclusion funding with appropriate granularity. These data are sourced from national government publications, agencies, and commissions, and they are cross-referenced to ensure consistency and accuracy across elections (Vergioglou et al. 2022, 2-3). Prior to merging, I cleaned both datasets to account for the differences in party abbreviations. First, the umlauts in Populist 3.0 data were removed to match the EU-NED dataset, then I filtered EU-NED in "Numbers" by country and English party name to find their short forms. I found that party abbreviations often varied based on the year of election. For example, the same party was coded "RESP" and "RESPUBLICA" or "SNK-ED" and "SNK ED" for different years.

I made adjustments for each party using the above filtering protocol and string replacements in RStudio. I coded party abbreviations to the PRRP in cases where a coalition was present. In several instances, I formed new rows within each dataset and assigned binary codes manually because parties had abbreviations within others. For example, "Vänsterpartiet" is "VP", which is within another party's short form (e.g., "LVP"). After this, I merged the two datasets by country name and party abbreviation. Then, I divided the party vote over the number of valid votes for each election to operationalize my dependent variable (i.e., vote share for

PRRPs). Including "country name" in the merge was necessary to ensure that parties with the same abbreviation from different countries (e.g., "SF" being Sinn Fein from Ireland and Socialistisk Folkeparti from Denmark) did not overlap with each other. Using the new dataset (n = 3,550), I graphed variations in PRRP vote shares since 1990 across national elections in Figure 6 and EP elections in Figure 7 below.

Figure 6.

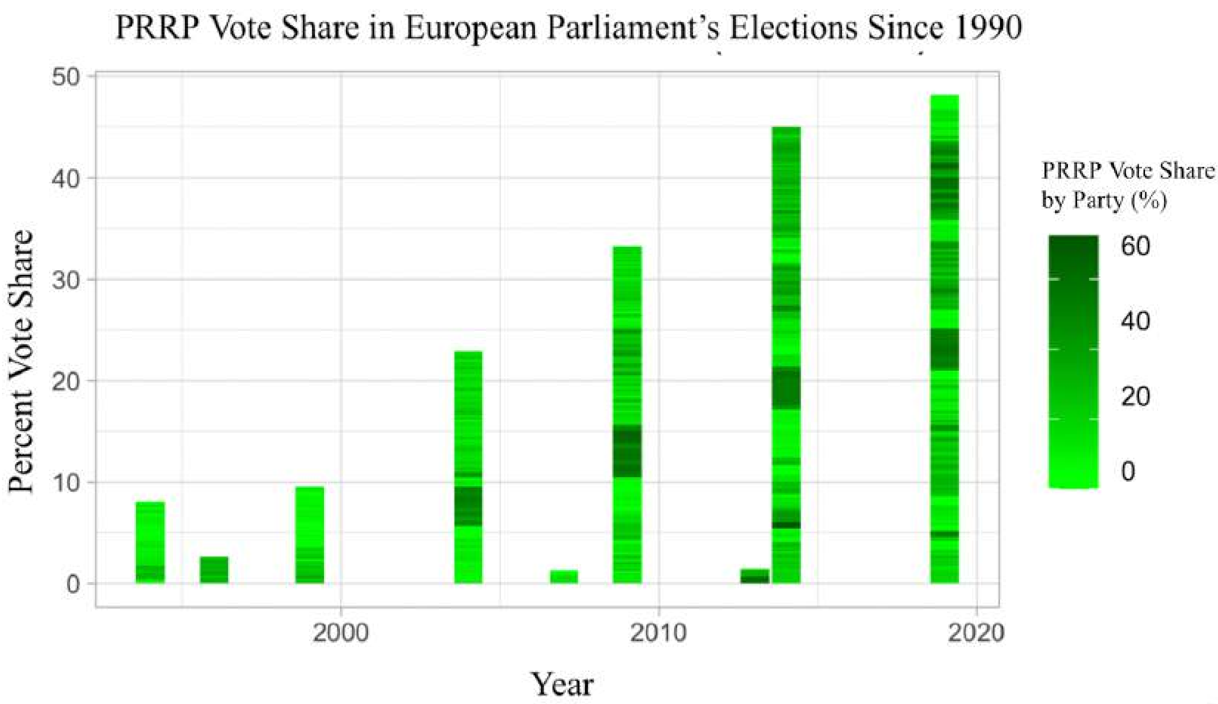


Source: Graph by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5) and Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/).

Note: The overall increase in PRRP vote shares across national elections in the EU is on the y-axis. The colored lines within each bar display the variance in vote shares by party. When a bar contains more dark orange, the size of the bar (i.e., overall PRRP vote share in that year's national elections) becomes larger.

National election data from EU-NED reflect when citizens vote for parties that will represent their country on domestic and foreign policy issues.

Figure 7.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5) and Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/).

Note: The overall increase in PRRP vote shares across EU Parliament elections is on the y-axis. The colored lines within each bar display the variance in vote shares by party. When a bar contains more dark green, the size of the bar (i.e., overall PRRP vote share in that year's EP election) becomes larger.

EP election data from EU-NED represents when citizens of member-states vote for parties that will represent them on EU-wide policy issues.

Independent Variables

My main independent variable was EU Cohesion funding for migrant inclusion from the European Commission's Kohesio platform. Funds labeled "active inclusion" are for projects that aim to improve employability, participation in the labor market, and social integration (see Appendix A.1). This is geared towards disadvantaged communities, such as migrants, ethnic minorities, and homeless populations ("Active Inclusion" 2023). I needed to operationalize NUTS 2 funding and project data on "active inclusion" because there were no migrant-specific funding labels. At the same time, I could not use subsidies from the Asylum, Migration, and

Integration Fund (AMIF) since they are typically given to national governments, and their regional allocations are unavailable for most EU states ("Asylum" 2025a; "Asylum" 2025b). EU Cohesion data includes projects, funding mechanisms, and the amount contributed from 2014 to 2024 ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023).[5] While funding data from 1988 to 2024 is available, the thematic nature of these investments is unspecified (European Commission 2025).

Public data on EU Cohesion funds were available by country and had to be aggregated using the "data.table" package in RStudio. I filtered the combined dataset using "dplyr" to isolate funds with the "Category of Intervention" 109 - Active Inclusion. Since project data were often tied to NUTS 1 and NUTS 3 regions, I downloaded EU NUTS data from the Cohesion Platform and left-joined by NUTS 3 codes to match funds to their NUTS 2 jurisdictions ("Kohesio: NUTS" 2023).[6] Although I can see more granularity at the local level, this is necessary since regional governments handle implementation, and my controls are only available at the NUTS 2 level across the EU. The data were sourced from regional managers of cohesion programs under the EU commission, and projects were labeled by start date and end date. As a result, I extracted the start years and end years to create a new column, "active years" ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023). After this, I divided the EU project budget category by the number of active years to create a new column "annual funds".

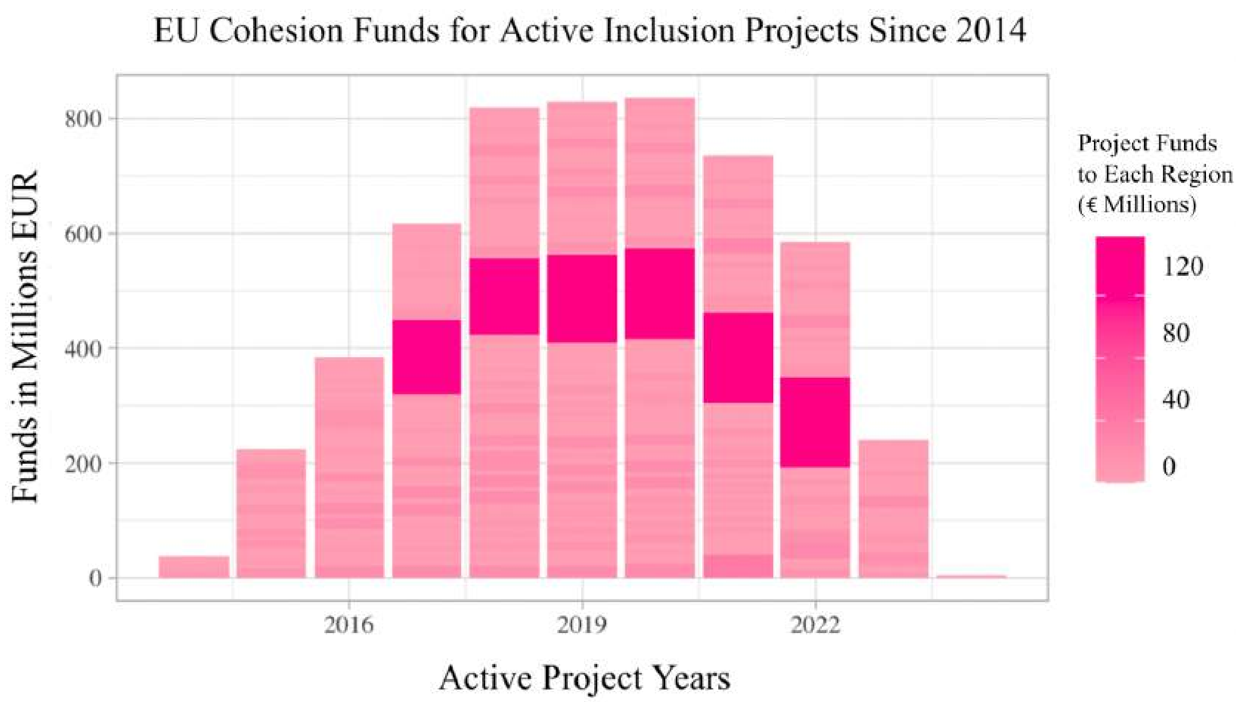
I used the project budget column to operationalize funding, which reflected the amount (EUR) that the EU allocated to each project, as opposed to the "total eligible expenditure" amount in the next column. This is because the total eligible amount was only available for request at the time the projects were active (EU Parliament 2023, 2-3). Each category follows

[5] Datasets range until 2023, but they include projects which are "active" through 2024.

[6] Here, it is necessary to download EU NUTS data from the Kohesio database. Although a NUTS conversion tool exists, its capacity to convert data of this size is unknown and attempts were much less efficient.

EU guidelines for consistency and accuracy, and this is the only dataset that includes funding alongside thematic projects across the EU ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023). I kept the category of intervention, category label, active years, annual funds, NUTS 2 codes, NUTS 3 codes, and country columns. Finally, I dropped NA values before joining with the dependent variable dataset (n = 5186). Figure 8 shows the distribution of active inclusion funds over time, where several regions consistently receive up to 120 times more funding than others.

Figure 8.



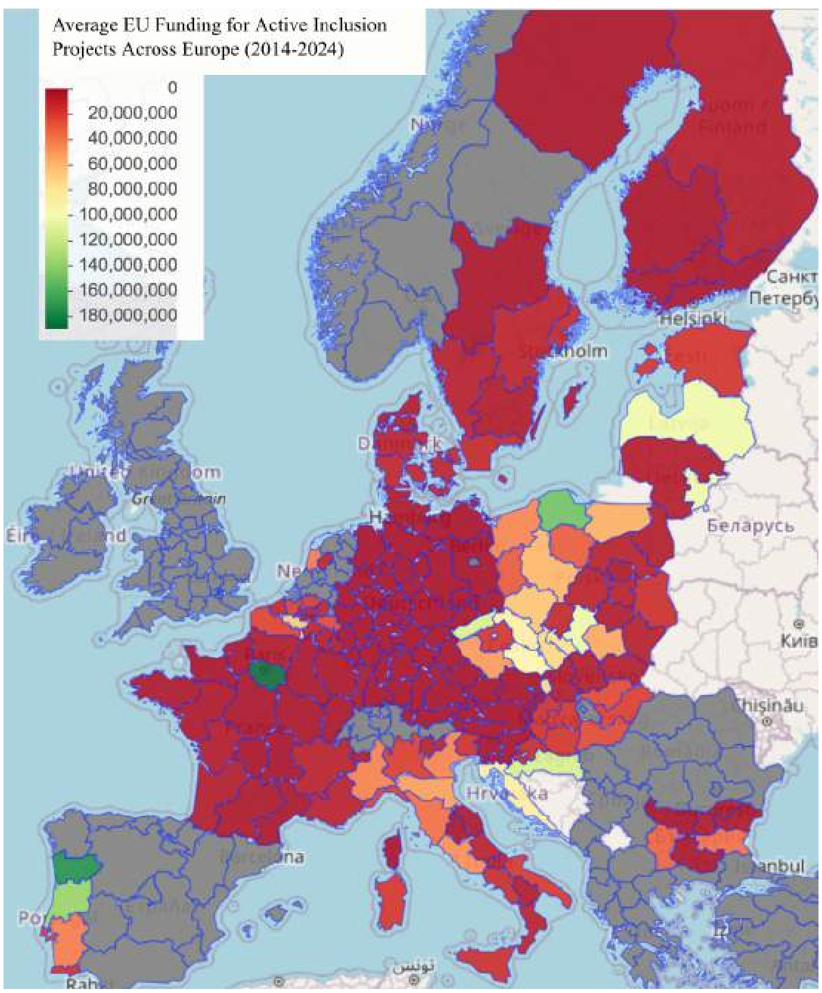
Source: Graph by author, based on EU Kohesio Project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects) and EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: Total active inclusion funds per year are on the y-axis. Colors vary based on the amount given to each NUTS 2 region for projects with category of intervention equal to 109. Since dark pink represents more funding per region, bars with more dark pink than light pink have higher overall funding totals.

The graph displays a gradual increase in funding following the refugee crisis, but this decreased after 2020.

I map active inclusion funding to each NUTS 2 region from 2014 to 2024 in Figure 9 below. I had to split the funds evenly among active project years since information on yearly allocations were not available ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023). Most active inclusion funding is constrained between zero and 5 million EUR, but my maps show significant variation between neighboring regions. There is selection bias since EU Cohesion Funds are distributed based on the region's GDP per capita relative to the EU's three-year average. Those above 75% of the three-year average are eligible for "full funding", and those below are eligible for "limited funding" ("Cohesion Policy Indicators" 2024; Vergioglou 2023, 2133). Thus, the regions receiving relatively high funds should be those with GDP per capitas below the cutoff.

Figure 9.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU Kohesio Project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects) and EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

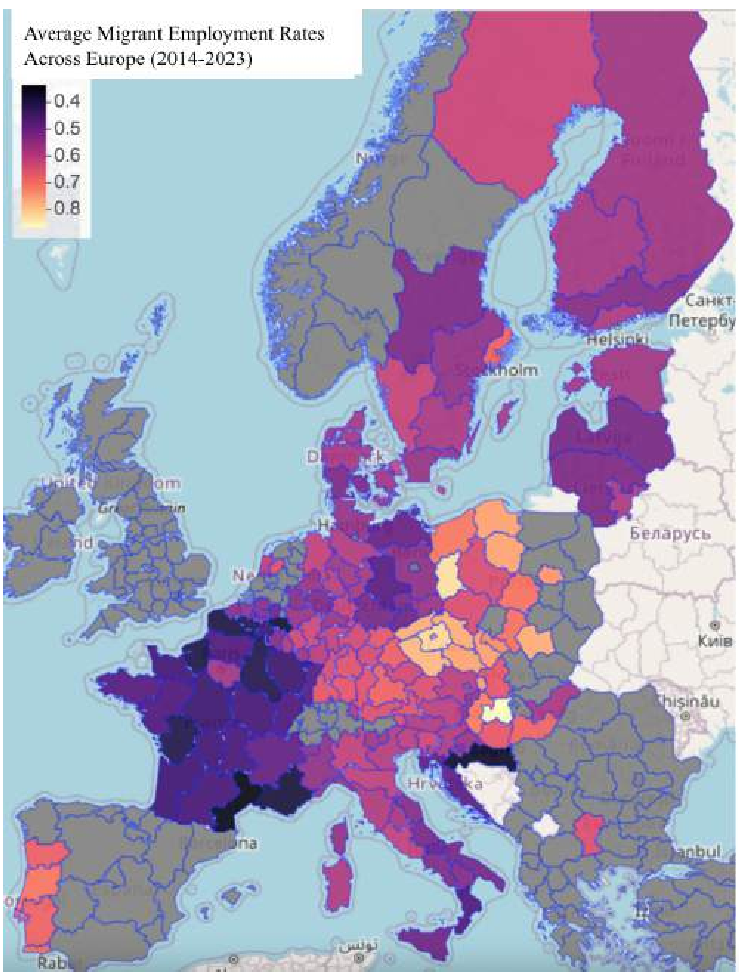
Note: The range of funding is on the upper left-hand corner of this map. While there are many instances of regions within the same country having similar funding (i.e., less than 5 Million EUR on average over 10 years), there are several cases where funds vary significantly (e.g., in Portugal, France, Italy, Poland, Croatia).

Given the cutoff for full EU Cohesion funding, we would expect these regions to have lower GDPs per capita relative to the Three-Year EU Average ("Cohesion Policy Indicators" 2024).

I left-joined both datasets (i.e., Kohesio project funding and PRRP vote shares) by years, NUTS 2 codes, and country names for analysis. Since active inclusion funds aim to promote labor market participation, economic integration is my mediator variable. There is some focus on social inclusion in these projects (See Appendix A.1), but data on language acquisition, civic engagement, poverty, and perceptions of discrimination are not available at the subnational level across Europe. MIPEX and Eurostat only include this information at the state-level throughout the EU (MIPEX 2020; MIPEX 2025; "Migrant Integration" 2024), while the European Social Survey (ESS), Migrant Values Survey (MVS), and Eurobarometer reflect state-level attitudes towards migrants (Haerpfer et al. 2022). Special Eurobarometer 469 and 519 are geared towards migrant integration, but they only cover responses from 2018 and 2021, respectively (Directorate-General for Communication 2018; "Special Eurobarometer" 2022). European Social Survey CRONOS1 Wave 3 and ESS8 also include questions on migrant integration, but they only cover Great Britain, Estonia, and Slovenia. While CRONOS1 is rotating, ESS8 reflects 2016-2017 data, leaving low levels of variation for an analysis in these countries (ESS ERIC 2023a; ESS ERIC 2023b).

As a result, I operationalized my mediator using NUTS 2 migrant employment data from Eurostat. The dataset was public, and I customized it to reflect employment among foreign-born citizens (i.e., those not from EU-27 countries) from 2014 to 2023 in EU states. The EU's statistical office aggregates this data for individuals of both sexes, ages 18-54, representing the foreign-born population in each NUTS 2 region (n = 3096) ("Population" 2025). Next, I loaded the EU's total population data, which included foreign-born citizens, EU-born citizens, and those born in the reporting country. In RStudio, I divided the foreign-born employment data by the total population's employment data in each region to obtain the mediator (i.e., migrant employment rates). These data were originally sourced from quarterly labor force surveys (LFS) that measured regional employment status, occupation, and activity. Data collection was standardized, which enabled cross-country comparisons by region (“Population” 2025). I left-joined migrant employment data with my analysis data by NUTS 2 codes and years. Finally, I mapped the distribution of average migrant employment rates from 2014 to 2023 across the EU in Figure 10 below.[7] Regions with high migrant employment rates seem to overlap with those that have relatively high active inclusion funding. Given these regions have a lower average GDP per capita, this should reflect funding as opposed to broader economic standing.

Figure 10.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU population and employment data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/).

Note: The range of migrant employment rates from 0 to 1, where 0 is 0% employed and 1 is 100% employed, are in the upper left-hand corner of this map. Migrant employment rates seem to overlap with active inclusion funding from the previous map.

Given the cutoff for full EU Cohesion funding, I would expect these regions to have lower GDPs per capita relative to the Three-Year EU Average, and therefore, relatively worse economic standing (Vergioglou 2023, 2133). In turn, I expect these funds to have a significant impact on employment across the EU.

[7] Regions that did not report on employment for all seven years received an N/A as opposed to a zero to avoid negatively skewing the results.

Linear Estimation:
PRRP Vote Shares (Outcome) ~
Lagged Active Inclusion Funds (Treatment) +
Migrant Employment Rates (Mediator) +
Population Unemployment Rates (Control 1) +
Population Homogeneity (Control 2) +
Population Density (Control 3)

Control Variables

This study employs one control for each theoretical perspective in my literature review. The first is each NUTS 2 region's economic standing, which I operationalized using the population's total unemployment from Eurostat. Like my mediator, I divided the unemployed population over the total population in each region to get the unemployment rate. Again, this represented both sexes, ages 18-54 within EU member-states from 2014 to 2023 (n = 2241) ("Unemployment Rates" 2025; "Population" 2025). The unemployment rate represents labor-market dynamics among the entire population, which has influenced voting for PRRPs through perceived economic competition with immigrants (Kapstein 2000; Guriev and Papaioannou 2022). Thus, holding it constant should reduce any confounding effect and demonstrate the isolated impact of immigrant inclusion on electoral behavior.

My second control variable is the ethnic homogeneity of each NUTS 2 region. This represents the cultural threat theory behind changes in PRRP voting, which denotes that native populations feel jeopardized by changing demographics. As a result, I operationalized this by determining the share of natives (i.e., those born within the reporting country since data on those born within each region was unavailable) using the same dataset as my mediator variable. In this case, I divided the native population by the total population in each region to get the share of natives from 2014 to 2023 (n = 2241) ("Population" 2025). This should reduce the confounding effect of perceived threats to native culture, traditions, and sovereignty, assuming that the more homogenous a region is, the more apparent demographic changes are (Patana 2018). Again, holding this constant should isolate the effect of migrant inclusion on PRRP support.

My final control variable is population density. This represents social/intergroup contact theory, and I operationalize it by scaling the number of households in each NUTS 2 region. The data are from Eurostat, and they include the number of households from 2014 to 2023, which I restricted to EU-27 countries (n = 2232). This measures interactions between in- and outgroups, under the auspices that regions with more households, relative to the mean, are more densely populated. The data are also sourced from labor force surveys, which document the degree of urbanization, quantity of households, and household size across NUTS 2 regions ("Number of Households" 2025). By holding density constant, the confounding effect of social contact should be reduced, further isolating the influence of migrant employment rates on PRRP voting. Notably, I included time trends to capture the temporal effects of funding on inclusion, but I could not include country or region fixed effects. These are collinear with active inclusion funds using a Variation Indication Factor (VIF) test (VIF > 5) (Kyriazos and Poga 2023). Since keeping both is incompatible with the estimation in RStudio, I rely solely on my controls and time trends.

I used the "pivot_longer" function in base R to shift these datasets from wide to long format. The controls initially had yearly results listed in their own columns, so I made years one category and put their values in another (e.g., years to the "year" column and unemployment rates to the "total unemployment" column) (see Appendix A.2.2). This made each control dataset compatible for merger with my analysis data by active years and NUTS 2 codes. I used additional controls in my robustness models, which I detailed in my "Findings" section below, and I applied the same modifications to each of them. I also applied these changes to the EU's historical GDP data for my regression discontinuity analyses and robustness tests, as well as the

EU's historical cohesion payments for my instrument. After this, I had my final dataset for analysis (n = 1494).

Hypothesis Testing

I use a bayesian model for hypothesis testing. My first hypothesis evaluates whether a direct relationship between funding for active inclusion and PRRP vote shares exists. Funding for active inclusion projects should decrease electoral support for PRRPs in NUTS 2 regions (H_1). In this case, the null hypothesis is that funding for inclusion does not decrease support for PRRPs in NUTS 2 regions (H_0). I present the standard equations below, where the coefficient τ represents the effect of X (i.e., active inclusion funds) on Y (i.e., PRRP vote shares) for each unit "i". "X" is the independent variable and "Y" is the dependent variable. Errors and y-intercepts are represented as εi and β0, respectively (Nuijten et al. 2015, 86; Imai et al. 2010, 313).

Direct Effect Hypotheses

H_1: Yi = β0 + τXi + εi (where τ does not = 0)

H_1: PRRP Vote Share(unit) = y-intercept + (Effect)*Active Inclusion Funds(unit) + error(unit) (where the effect does not equal 0)

H_0: Yi = β0 + τXi + εi (where τ = 0)

H_0: PRRP Vote Share(unit) = y-intercept + (Effect)*Active Inclusion Funds(unit) + error(unit) (where the effect does equal 0)

My second alternative hypothesis evaluates whether a direct relationship is mediated by economic integration, measured through migrant employment rates in each NUTS 2 region. Economic inclusion among migrants should mediate the effect of EU funding on PRRP vote shares (H_2). In this case, the null hypothesis is that economic inclusion does not mediate the effect of EU funding on support for PRRPs at this level (H_0). I present the equations for these hypotheses in my outcome and mediator models below, respectively. In these formulas, τ′ represents effects on the dependent variable (i.e., PRRP vote shares) when controlling for the mediator - "M" (i.e., migrant employment rates). Here, β is M's relationship to Y (i.e., PRRP vote shares), and "a" is the effect of X (i.e., active inclusion funds) on M (i.e., migrant employment rates) for each unit "i" (Nuijten et al. 2015, 86; Kosuke et al. 2010, 313).

Indirect Effect Hypotheses

H_2: Yi = β0 + τ′Xi + βMi + εi (where τ′ does not = 0)

H_2: PRRP Vote Share(unit) = y-intercept + (New Treatment Effect on Outcome)*Active Inclusion Funds(unit) + (Mediator Effect on Outcome)*Migrant Employment Rates(unit) + error(unit) (where the new treatment effect on my outcome does not equal 0)

H_0: Yi = β0 + τ′Xi + βMi + εi (where τ′ = 0)

H_0: PRRP Vote Share(unit) = y-intercept + (New Treatment Effect on Outcome)*Active Inclusion Funds(unit) + (Mediator Effect on Outcome)*Migrant Employment Rates(unit) + error(unit) (where the new treatment effect on my outcome does equal 0)

H_2: Mi = β0 + αXi + εi (where a does not = 0)

H_2: Migrant Employment Rates(unit) = y-intercept + (Treatment Effect on Mediator)*Active Inclusion Funds(unit) + error(unit) (where the treatment's effect on my mediator does not equal 0)

H_0: Mi = β0 + αXi + εi (where a = 0)

H_0: Migrant Employment Rates(unit) = y-intercept + (Treatment Effect on Mediator)*Active Inclusion Funds(unit) + error(unit) (where the treatment's effect on my mediator does equal 0)

Main Methods

I used two linear models to conduct a two-step causal mediation analysis in RStudio: (i) regressing the treatment and controls on the mediator, and (ii) regressing the treatment, mediator, and controls on the outcome. The treatment (i.e., active inclusion funds) is "X", and the mediator (i.e., migrant employment rates) is "M" in the equations below (Tingley et al. 2014, 2-5). Again, I included time trends to capture the temporal effect of funding on inclusion, but I could not include country or region fixed effects because of multicollinearity (VIF > 5). Before running these regressions, I lagged active inclusion funds by one year. I scaled these funds using the "scale()" function in base R, and I excluded NA values for compatibility. Both models use the "lm" function, and all OLS robustness checks follow same steps. However, they include additional controls and replace the mediator with migrant labor force participation rates.

Causal Mediation (Two-Step)
Step 1 (Mediator Model): M ~ X + controls
Migrant Employment Rates ~ Lagged and Scaled Active Inclusion Funds + Unemployment + Density + Homogeneity
Step 2 (Outcome Model): Y ~ X + M + controls
PRRP Vote Share ~ Migrant Employment Rates + Lagged and Scaled Active Inclusion Funds + Unemployment + Density + Homogeneity

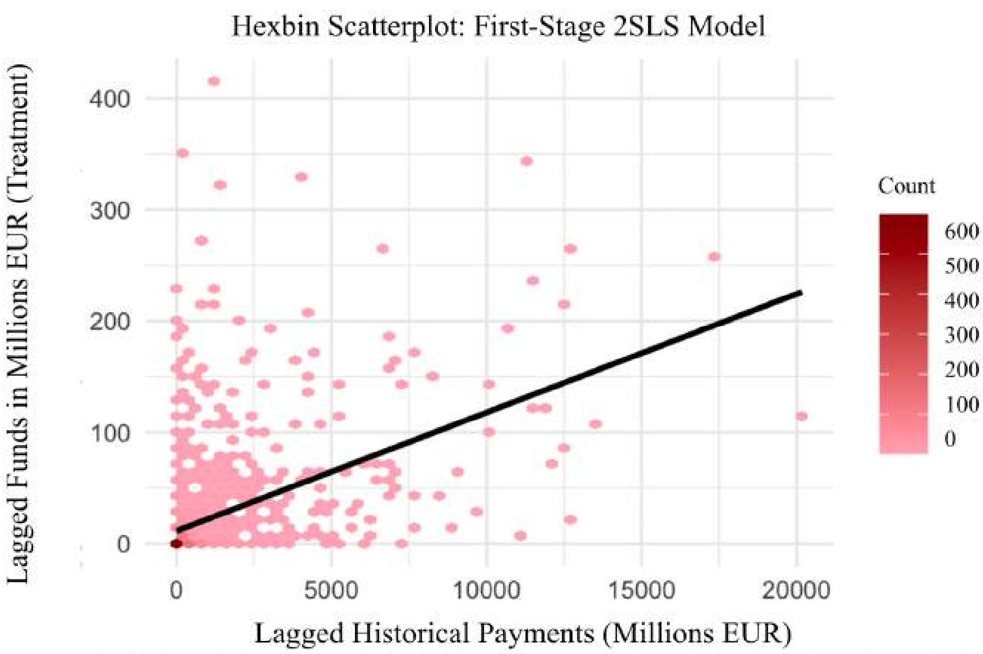
Using the mediation package, I input the above models (i.e., both OLS regressions) into the "mediate" function to estimate the direct, indirect, and total effects of active inclusion funds on PRRP voting, as well as the proportion mediated by migrant employment (Tingley et al. 2014, 6-7). I enable bootstrapping with 1000 simulations since it is the default measure to improve robustness. Within the mediate function, "boot" is equal to true, and "sims" is 1000 (5-6). I set the treatment to active inclusion funds and the mediator to migrant employment rates. The final function calls for a summary of this model. The average direct (i.e., ADE) and indirect effects (i.e., ACME) should be statistically significant and reflect the directions in my OLS regressions above (Imai et al. 2010, 311-312). The direct effect should be negative, given funds lower PRRP vote shares. The indirect effect should also be negative since increases in employment ultimately decrease vote shares. The total effect (312) and proportion mediated should be large, even though other integration pathways are not directly accounted for, to demonstrate that funds explain a large amount of PRRP voting through the economic inclusion pathway (321).

Endogeneity Checks

I conducted several checks to justify using OLS regressions in my causal mediation analysis. Since there was selection bias based on each region's GDP per capita, I assumed funding for active inclusion might be an endogenous variable. There is a GDP cutoff for all cohesion funds, so wealth should be correlated. I assessed the relevance of public historical data on EU Cohesion transfers as a potential instrument, given past funding would reflect modern wealth, and the same regions would likely apply for inclusion (Vergioglou 2023, 2132-2133). These data were from the EU Cohesion Database, and they included funds to each NUTS 2 region from 1988 to 2022 (n = 41,340). The EU Commission compiled payments from financial management systems, which recorded transfers and member-state reports. This dataset contains all funding mechanisms present in my independent variable (European Commission 2025).

The first stage of my 2SLS model shows the effect of lagged historical EU Cohesion payments and my controls on lagged funding for active inclusion projects. Assuming my treatment is relevant, the F-statistic should be high (>10) and significant ($p < 0.05$). Again, I used the "scale()" function in RStudio to transform historical payment data into z-scores (i.e., the number of standard deviations away from the mean, zero). Since my instrument and treatment differed in range, had many outliers, and did not appear exponential, I determined that standardizing monetary values was most appropriate (Wooldridge 2016). My F-Statistic was 45.4 and significant ($p < 0.001$), which exceeded commonly accepted standards for endogeneity risks. I can assume that my treatment is relevant, and incorporating the instrument (i.e., historical EU payments) could counter potential biases (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 159). Figure 11 visualizes the relationship between lagged historical payments and funding for inclusion, while Figure 12 presents the scaled relationship. Table 6 in my "Findings" chapter provides additional information on stage 1.

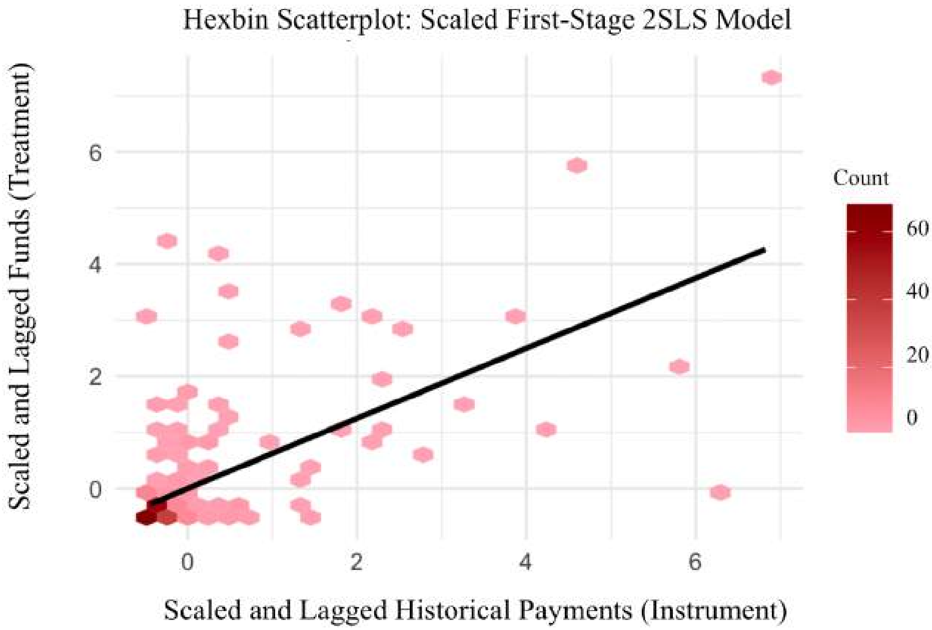
Figure 11.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU Cohesion Data on historical payments to each NUTS 2 region (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data for matching (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: This plot shows that most active inclusion and historical funds are concentrated within a certain range, and they follow a linear progression. In other words, regions with more historical funding are likely to have more active inclusion funding. This follows my assumption that the same regions would apply for these funds and be awarded based on wealth, relative to the EU's average GDP per capita.

Figure 12.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU Cohesion Data on historical payments to each NUTS 2 region (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data for matching (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: This plot shows that scaled funding follows the same linear progression and is concentrated within a certain range like the unscaled model above. This suggests that using scaled historical payments and scaled active inclusion funds in my models should not be problematic for the analysis.

The unscaled graph shows that funding is concentrated below ~425 million EUR for active inclusion funds and ~20 billion EUR for historical cohesion payments. The outlier that is four standard deviations above the mean in both historical payments and funds for active inclusion is Norte, Portugal (PT11), which aligns with my assertions in Chapter 1. The data are skewed and linear as opposed to exponential on both ends, and they include zeros, which makes log transformations problematic (Wooldridge 2016). When I added 1 to avoid taking the log of zero, there were still issues because of outliers and the right skew. Figure 13 shows the distribution of lagged funds for active inclusion, while Figure 14 shows the distribution of lagged historical payments to each region below. The curves in both figures demonstrate that scaling is most appropriate, but I use unscaled funds and funds as a percentage of the EU's GDP per capita in my robustness checks.

Figure 13.

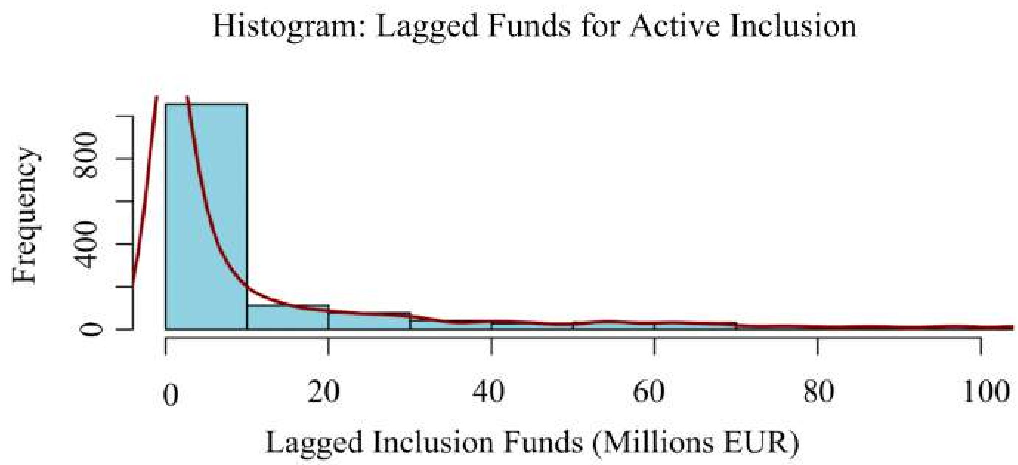
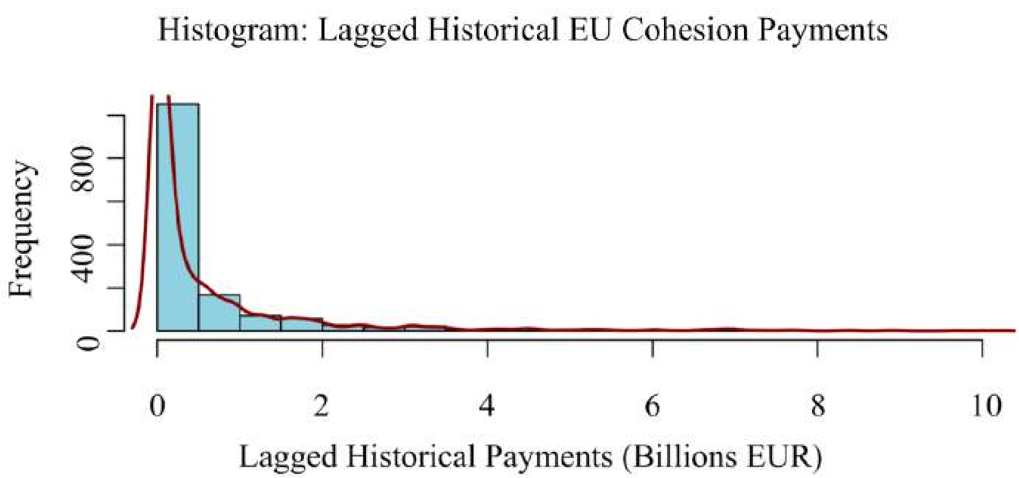


Figure 14.



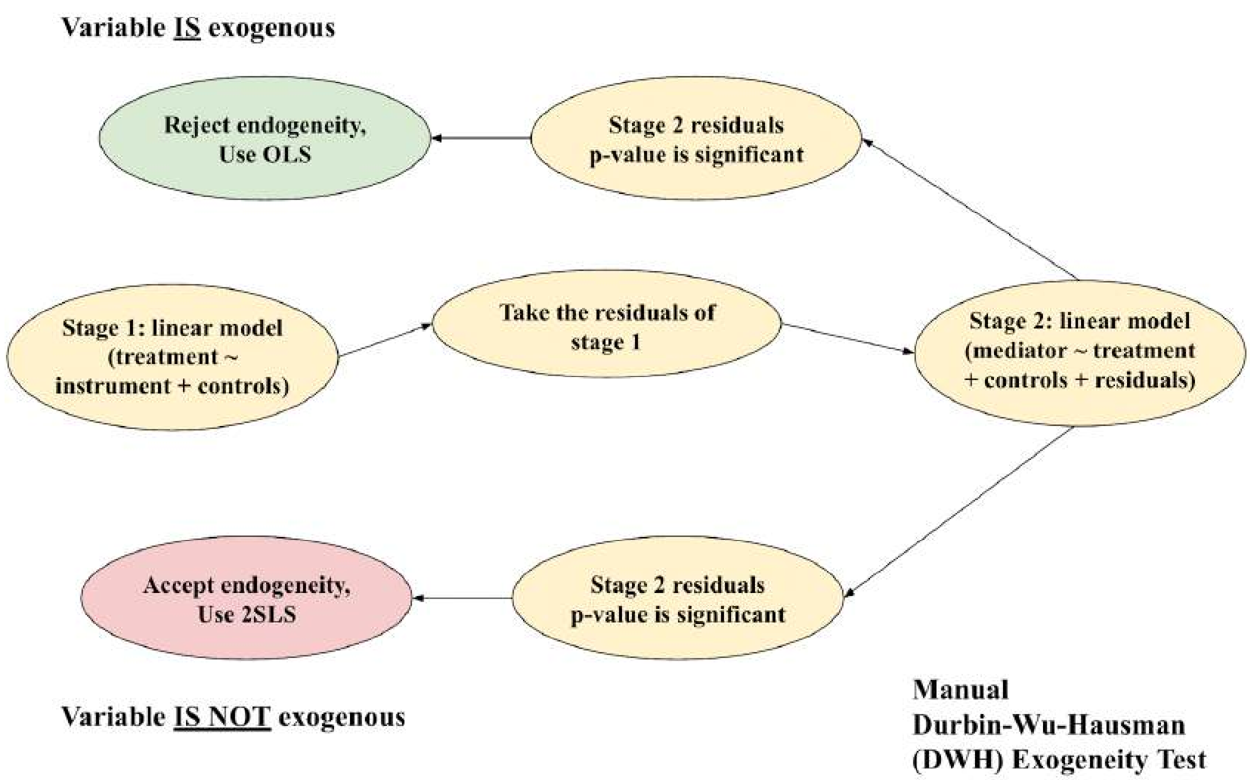
Source: Graphs 13 and 14 by author, based on EU Cohesion Data on historical payments to each NUTS 2 region (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), Kohesio projects data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data to match with each project (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: The right-skew is evident in both graphs, and there are several outliers receiving over 60 million Euros in active inclusion funds or 6 billion in historical cohesion payments. They follow the exact same structure, which illustrates that historical payments can be used to help predict active inclusion funds in stage 1 of a 2SLS analysis.

Exogeneity Checks

I ran a manual Durbin-Wu-Hausman (DWH) test to determine whether OLS or 2SLS regressions were more appropriate. The Durbin-Wu-Hausman test shows whether the OLS and instrumental variable regressions differ significantly. When they do, I can assume the treatment is endogenous (i.e., correlated with the error term) (Davidson and Mackinnon 1990). In RStudio, I regressed the treatment (i.e., active inclusion funds) on my instrument (i.e., historical EU cohesion payments to each region) and controls in Stage 1. Then, I took the residuals and added them to my second stage. I show a diagram of this in Figure 15 below. The p-value of my residuals was insignificant using a 1.96 critical value ($p > 0.05$), so I rejected that the treatment was endogenous (See Appendix A.3). This meant that I should use OLS instead of 2SLS as my main model moving forward (Davidson and Mackinnon 1990).

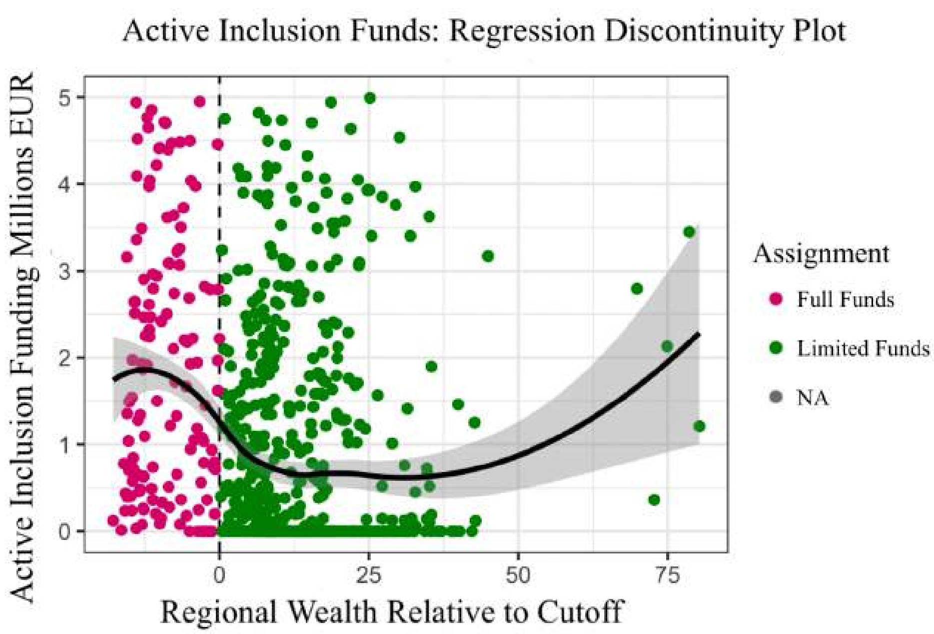
Figure 15.



Alternative Methodologies

This study uses Ordinary Least Squares regressions and a 2-step causal mediation analysis to estimate the direct and indirect effects of EU funding for inclusion on PRRP vote shares. Typically, studies that analyze the effects of EU cohesion transfers on anti-system voting use regression discontinuity designs (RDDs) at the NUTS 2 level. This is because of the 75% cutoff from the EU's three-year average GDP per capita for full cohesion funding eligibility (Van Wolleghem 2019). To examine whether an RDD was appropriate for my study, I visualized the distribution of active inclusion funds above and below the cutoff in Figure 16. There should be a visible discontinuity between the two sides for a sharp RD analysis to be insightful. If this were the case, I would also expect a visible jump in migrant employment and labor force participation rates (my robust mediator) above and below the cutoff for funds to influence PRRP outcomes (Vergioglou 2023, 2130). I display these relationships Figure 17 and Figure 18, respectively.

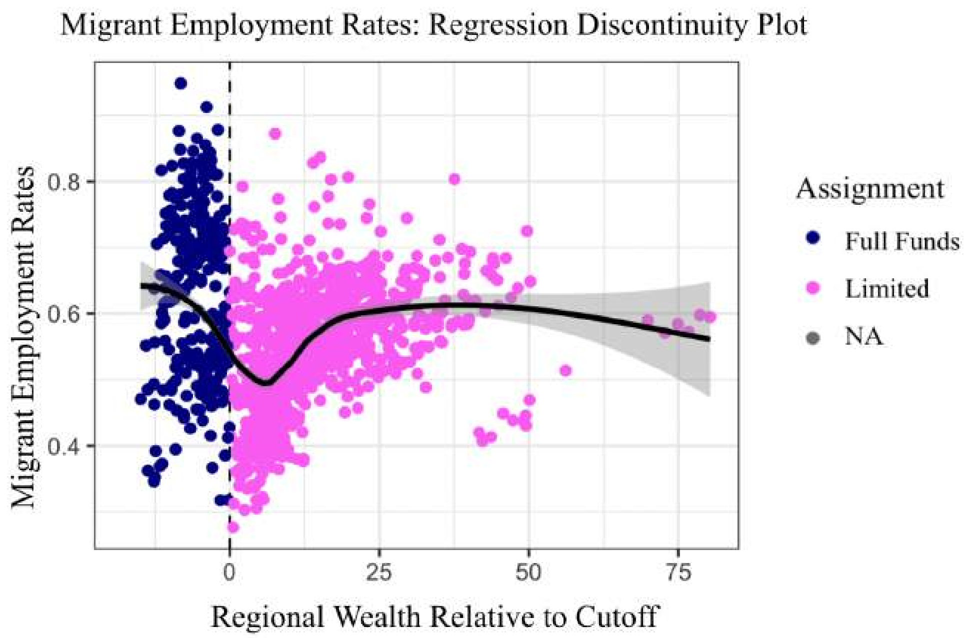
Figure 16.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU GDP per capita data (SUVGDP) from the period in which funding assignments were made (https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ardeco/explorer?lng=en), as well as Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data for matching (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts)

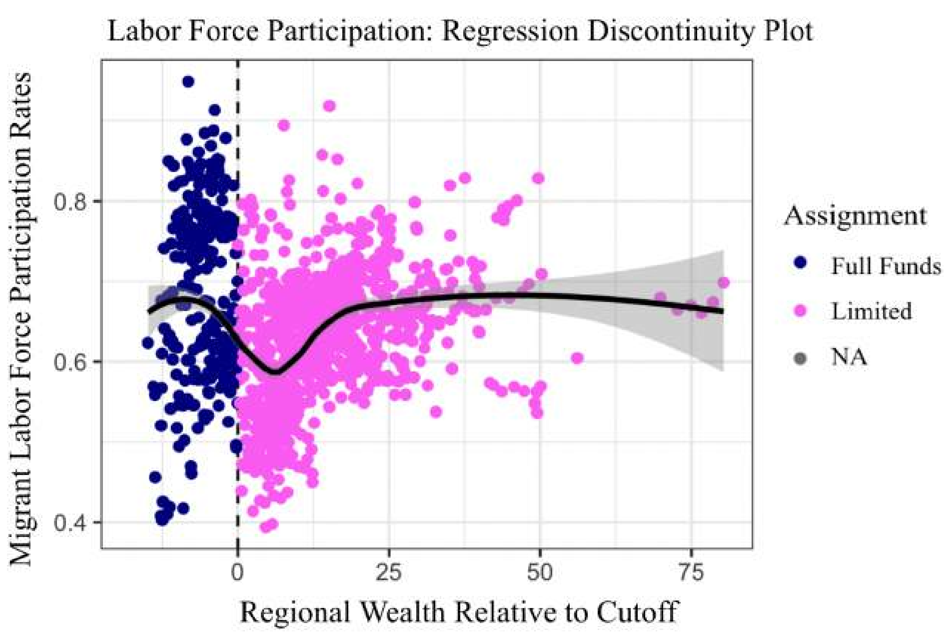
Note: There is a difference in funding above and below the cutoff, but the variable still appears continuous as opposed to discrete. See Vergioglou 2023 in my bibliography for appropriate breaks in regression discontinuity plots.

Figure 17.



Source (both): Graphs by author, based on EU GDP per capita data (SUVGDP) (https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ardeco/explorer?lng=en), as well as Kohesio projects data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts). Figure 16 uses migrant employment data and Figure 17 uses labor force participation data from (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/).

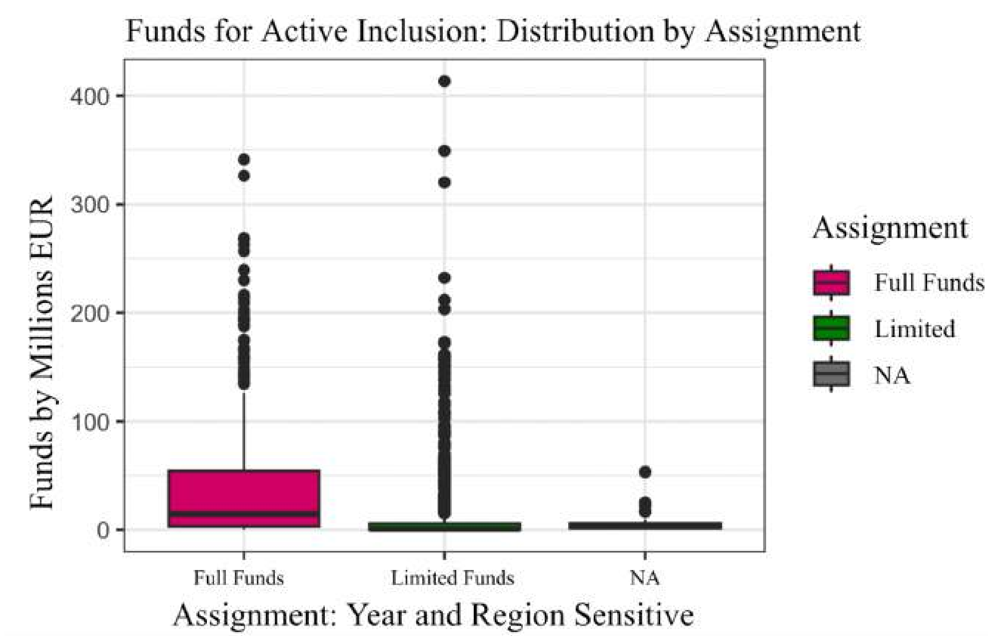
Figure 18.



Note: Both of these graphs portray the difference between those assigned full and limited funding. However, the “break” is not apparent enough to warrant an RD analysis as my main method for causal mediation. Migrant employment and labor force participation rates have a very similar structure, signaling that labor force participation is a suitable alternative for robustness checks.

The discontinuity above is not visible enough to warrant a regression discontinuity design in my main models. Oftentimes, an RD analysis requires no additional controls since it assumes that the cutoff mimics a discrete rather than continuous effect, but this is not the case for my data (Calónico et al. 2019). I present the distribution of assignments in Figure 14 and the scaled running variable (distance from the EU's three-year average GDP per capita) in Figure 15 below. Notably, there are less incidents of regions receiving "full funds" for active inclusion, though those assigned "limited funds" have lower total subsidies. The amount received by the "full funds" group was ~17.2 billion EUR with 428 observations, and the amount received by the "limited funds" group was ~11.5 billion EUR with 1026 observations from 2014 to 2020.

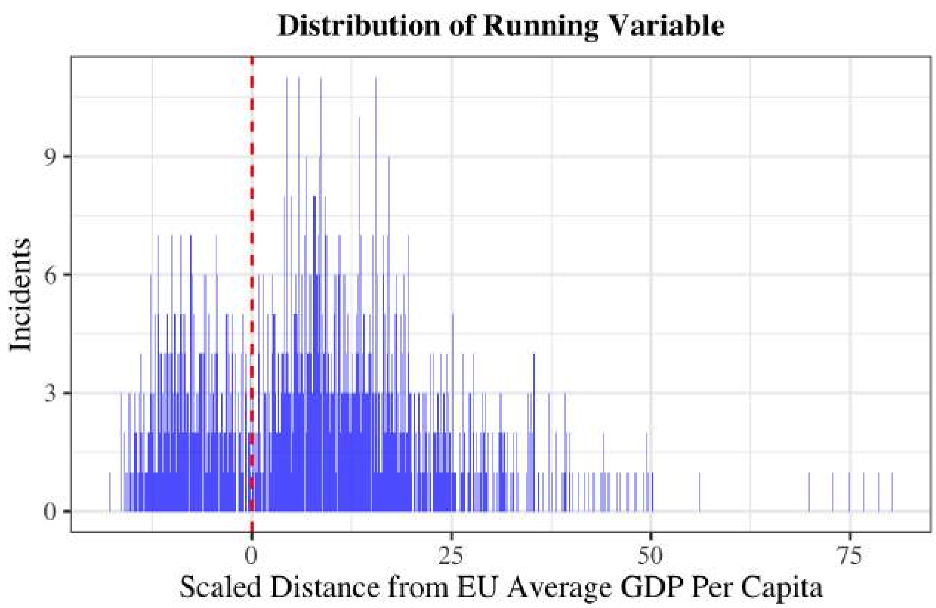
Figure 19.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU GDP per capita data (SUVGDP) from the period in which funding assignments were made (https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ardeco/explorer?lng=en), as well as Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data for matching (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts)

Note: The graph shows that the "Full Funds" bar is higher, meaning this group receives the most funding on average. Those in the "Limited Funds" group receive much less on average, but they have far more incidences. As a result, the total amount of funding received by each group is much closer than it should be for a confident regression discontinuity design.

Figure 20.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU GDP per capita data (SUVGDP) from the period in which funding assignments were made (https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ardeco/explorer?lng=en), as well as Kohesio projects data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data for matching (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts)

Note: The graph shows incidents immediately above ($x > 0$) and below ($x < 0$) the full funding cutoff to show the distribution right around the 75% threshold. The red, dashed line represents this cutoff.

I conducted a sharp regression discontinuity (RD) analysis using migrant employment rates and a robust RD analysis using migrant labor force participation rates. Labor force participation reflects those that are "active" in the labor market (i.e., employed and unemployed, but seeking work) ("Population" 2025). I was able to do a sharp RD because I used historical GDP data from when the EU was determining access to funds (ARDECO 2024; Vergioglou 2023, 2130). Based on the full and limited funding assignments, RD coefficients should be positive and significant to show that more funding for active inclusion has a favorable effect on migrant employment. Ideally, conventional, bias-corrected, and robust methods will elicit this output (2142). Tables 1 and 2 present my results, and they show relatively small and insignificant coefficients across methods. Zero falls within all 95% confidence intervals, and p-values are high with the exception of the bias-corrected score in Table 1. This suggests that active inclusion funding has no statistically meaningful effect on PRRP vote shares through economic inclusion using the RD method.

Table 1: Covariate-Adjusted Sharp RD Estimates Using Local Polynomial Regression - Migrant Employment Rates

Method	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P-Z	Confidence
Conventional	0.070	0.045	1.573	0.116	[-0.017 , 0.158]
Bias-Corrected	0.087	0.045	1.942	0.052	[-0.001 , 0.175]
Robust	0.087	0.052	1.679	0.093	[-0.015 , 0.188]

Number of Observations: 1148. BW Type: MSERD. Kernel: Triangular. VCE Method: NN. Number of Observations (Left): 247, (Right): 901. Eff. Number of Obs (Left): 81, (Right): 81.

Table 2: Robust Covariate-Adjusted Sharp RD Estimates Using Local Polynomial Regression - Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates

Method	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	P-Z	Confidence
Conventional	0.031	0.034	0.916	0.360	[-0.036 , 0.098]
Bias-Corrected	0.045	0.034	1.322	0.186	[-0.022 , 0.112]
Robust	0.045	0.039	1.146	0.252	[-0.032 , 0.122]

Number of Observations: 1155. BW Type: MSERD. Kernel: Triangular. VCE Method: NN. Number of Observations (Left): 251, (Right): 904. Eff. Number of Obs (Left): 78, (Right): 78.

Chapter 5 - Findings and Implications

In this section, I present the results of my OLS regressions and two-step causal mediation analysis. I discuss model fit, substantive interpretations, and the significance of my primary relationships, as well as those with my controls. I detail my robustness checks and use unscaled, active inclusion funds, as well as transfers proportional to the EU's three-year average GDP per capita to ensure the reliability of my results. I also include 2SLS models to demonstrate the effect of using an instrument (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 105). Moreover, I present visualizations throughout this section (e.g., graphs, maps, tables), discuss the theoretical and practical implications of my findings, and compare them to previous studies. Afterwards, I propose ideas for future research since my results raise questions for the political science community.

OLS Results

I present the results of my first OLS regression in Table 3 below. This functions as my mediator model in the main causal mediation analysis. I regressed the mediator (i.e., migrant employment rates) on lagged and scaled funds for active inclusion, total unemployment, population homogeneity, and scaled population density. The results should show that the scaled and lagged funds for active inclusion have a significant, positive effect on migrant employment rates (i.e., the mediator). I also expect total unemployment to have a negative effect on economic inclusion among migrants, assuming they are more likely to struggle finding positions when job markets are less stable (Van Breugel and Scholten 2018).

The model fit is adequate as the r-squared indicates that these factors explain ~44.5% of the variance in migrant employment rates and ~43.7% of the variance when penalized for complexities. Generally, variance at ~40% or greater indicates that the model is a fair representation of the outcome data's structure (Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 199). Total unemployment and lagged, scaled active inclusion funds are significant (p < 0.001). A 1-standard deviation increase in lagged funds for active inclusion (~43.7 million EUR) results in a ~0.029 percentage point increase in migrant employment rates. At the same time, a 1-percentage point increase in the total unemployment equals a ~2.84 percentage point decrease in migrant employment.

Table 3: OLS Regression Results - Effects on Migrant Employment Rates

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.688048	0.050626	13.591	$< 2e-16$ ***
Lagged Funds (scaled)	0.028833	0.005024	5.739	$2.58e-08$ ***
Total Unemployment	-2.843543	0.220254	-12.910	$< 2e-16$ ***
Share of Natives	-0.006365	0.057847	-0.110	0.912
Population Density (scaled)	-0.004026	0.005132	-0.784	0.433
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07874 (on 267 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4449			
Adjusted R^2	0.4366			
F-statistic	53.5 (on 4 and 267 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Since the population's total unemployment rate had the biggest impact on migrant employment, the state of each region's economy may play a larger role in determining PRRP vote shares than funds for inclusion do. Previous studies have not formally analyzed the effects of active inclusion funds on PRRP voting through migrant employment, but they show that economic stability serves as a mediator, when vote shares are affected by broad development funding (i.e., ERDF) (Gold and Lehr 2024; Patana 2018). So far, I have shown that active inclusion funds have a positive impact on migrant employment rates. However, the effect (i.e., less than 0.05 percentage points) is incredibly small considering the amount operationalized for inclusion (~43.7 million EUR).

Next, I show the effects of migrant employment rates (i.e., my mediator), scaled and lagged funds for active inclusion (i.e., my treatment), and my controls (i.e., total unemployment rates, population homogeneity, and scaled population density) on PRRP vote shares. This is the outcome model in my causal mediation analysis, but the fit is significantly lower than my mediator model. These variables only explain ~8.6% of the variance in PRRP vote shares and ~6.8% of the variance when penalized for complexity using the standard and adjusted r-squared values, respectively.

Table 4: OLS Regression Results - Effects on PRRP Vote Shares

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
(Intercept)	0.068710	0.066989	1.026	0.306
Migrant Employment	-0.084037	0.062259	-1.350	0.178
Lagged Funds (scaled)	0.005387	0.005417	0.995	0.321
Population Density (scaled)	-0.003060	0.005227	-0.585	0.559
Share of Natives	0.175150	0.058850	2.976	0.003 **
Total Unemployment	-1.030369	0.285568	-3.608	0.0004 ***
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.0801 (on 266 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.0856			
Adjusted R^2	0.0684			
F-statistic	4.979 (on 5 and 266 DF, p-value = 0.0002)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

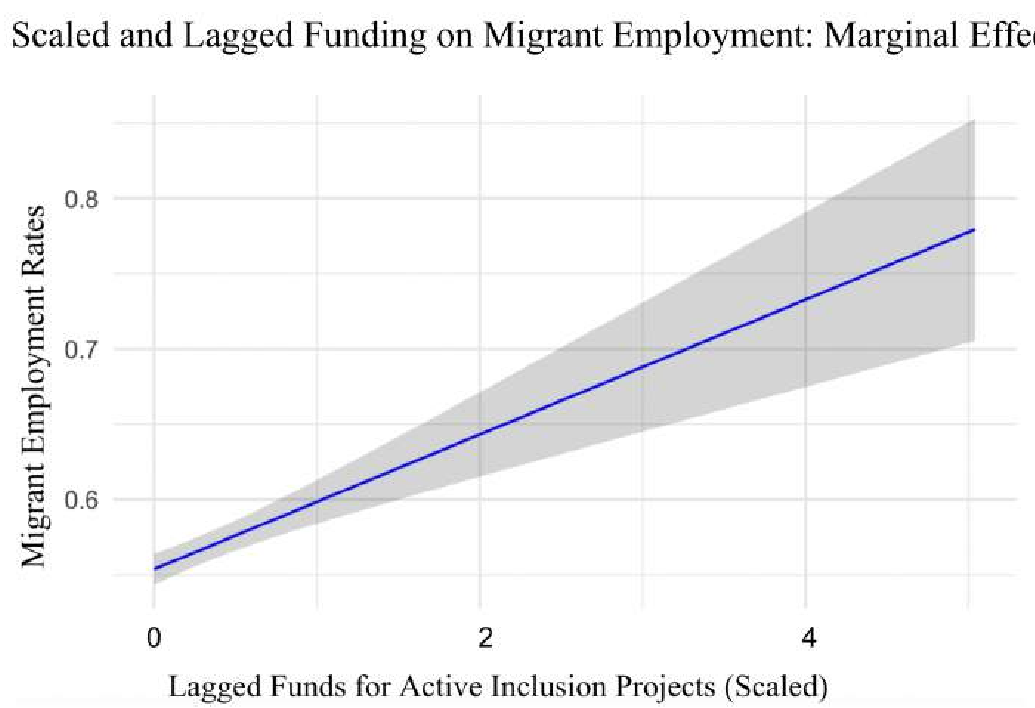
Table 4 shows that a 1-percentage point increase in migrant employment rates decreases PRRP vote shares ~0.08 percentage points since the outcome variable is bounded from 0 to 1. At the same time, a 1-standard deviation increase in lagged funds for active inclusion (~43.7 million EUR) increases PRRP vote shares ~0.005 percentage points. Both of these relationships are insignificant using a 1.96 critical value (p > 0.05). Still, a positive correlation between the treatment and outcome suggests that funding for migrant inclusion may actually promote populist radical right voting. Since the migrant employment estimate was larger, the indirect effect of funding on vote shares (i.e., ACME) could outweigh the direct effect (i.e., ADE) in my causal mediation analysis. However, this is unlikely since funds for inclusion marginally impacted migrant employment rates in step 1 (i.e., Table 3).

Moreover, this regression shows that a 1-standard deviation increase in the number of households per region (~765 households) equals a ~0.003 percentage point decrease in PRRP vote shares. This was insignificant ($p > 0.05$), but cultural and economic controls were statistically meaningful ($p < 0.05$). A 1-percentage point increase in population homogeneity and total unemployment rates resulted in a ~0.175 percentage point increase and a ~1.03 percentage point decrease in vote shares for PRRPs, respectively. Thus, cultural and economic factors are most explanatory of changes in PRRP vote shares. This aligns with previous findings in the literature, but the effect of total unemployment goes in the opposite direction than expected under economic threat theory (Kapstein 2000). Here, greater unemployment within the general population substantially reduces PRRP support. This contradicts the negative effects that economic stability had on vote shares in previous studies (Gold and Lehr 2024).

Alongside dual labor market theory, total unemployment rates do not automatically reflect competition for jobs between the in-group and migrants (Andrijasevic and Sacchetto 2016). Given concerns regarding social welfare distribution, it is possible that natives prefer funding towards themselves but also believe PRRPs cannot support them through job losses. These parties are known to engage in welfare chauvinism across Europe, but voters may expect mainstream parties to be more equipped to handle economic issues (Röth et al 2017; Hix and Hoyland 2011). The perceived "failure" of PRRPs as incumbents during economic distress could promote this and facilitate shifts back towards mainstream voting (Baidoo 2024). This needs to be explored in future research, alongside the fact that economic factors uncharacteristically played a much larger role in determining vote shares than socio-cultural factors in this model (Cordero et al. 2023).

Further, the model fit illustrates that there are other factors explaining most of the variation in PRRP vote shares, which are not accounted for by the theories above, limited by the scope of this study, or could not be operationalized at this level (e.g., civic participation) ("Migrant Integration" 2024; Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 199). To alleviate concerns regarding my operationalizations, I added alternative measures for these controls in my robustness checks. This will provide more insight into the literature's ability to explain modern drivers of change in PRRP vote shares and the theoretical implications of my results. I demonstrate the primary associations between my treatment and mediator, as well as my mediator and dependent variable in Figures 21 and 22 using marginal effects plots, respectively. In the next section, I present the results of my causal mediation analysis.

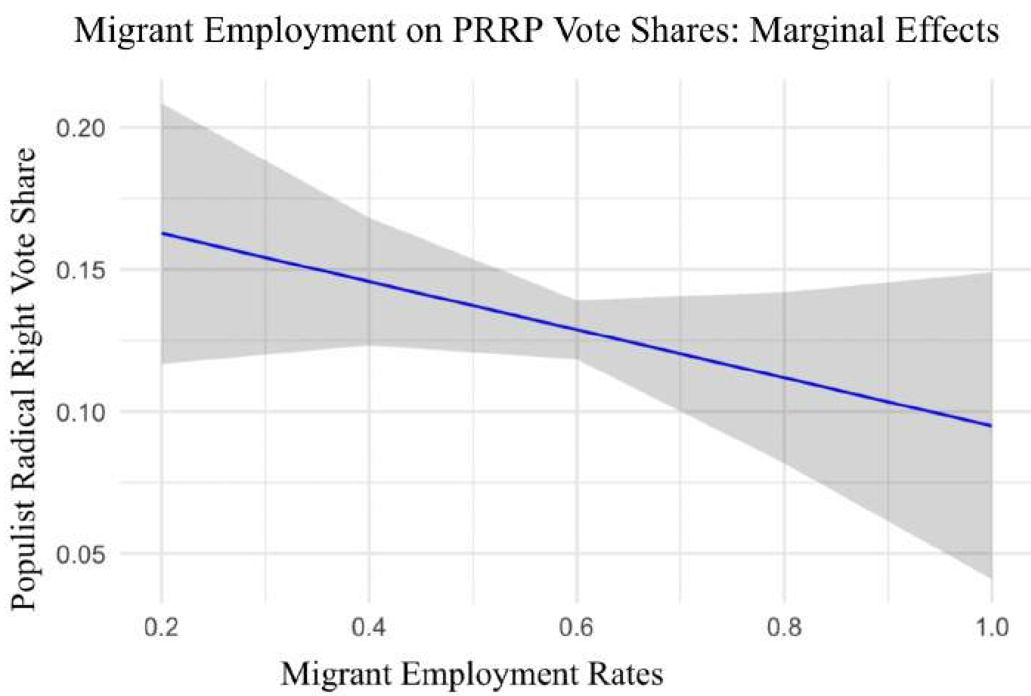
Figure 21.



Source: Graph by Author, based on migrant employment data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), as well as Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts). The full dataset is in the Appendix (A.2.2).

Note: This plot shows a visible difference predicted outcomes when the treatment (i.e., active inclusion funding) changes. This holds all other independent variables constant and demonstrates that funding likely has a meaningful effect on migrant employment rates using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS).

Figure 22.



Source: Graph by author, based on migrant employment data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5), and Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/).

Note: The outcome model is much less promising since the margin of error (MOE) is significantly larger (i.e., illustrated through a gray shadow) than the MOE above. Thus, I cannot be confident that migrant employment rates meaningfully impact PRRP vote shares, even though the slope is negative.

Causal Mediation Analysis

In this section, I present the results of my causal mediation analysis. Again, the OLS that regresses migrant employment rates is my mediator model, and OLS that regresses PRRP vote shares is my outcome model. My treatment was scaled and lagged funding for active inclusion, my mediator was migrant employment rates, and I bootstrapped the analysis with 1000 simulations (Tingley et al. 2014, 6). To reject my null hypothesis for H_1 (i.e., increased funding for inclusion does not decrease electoral support for PRRPs), the direct effect of funding on PRRP vote shares (i.e., ADE) has to be negative and significant (Imai et al. 2010, 312). To reject my null hypothesis for H_2 (i.e., migrants' economic inclusion does not mediate the relationship between EU funding and support for PRRPs), the indirect effect of funding on vote shares through migrant employment rates (i.e., ACME) has to be significant as well (311). Table 5 shows my results below.

Table 5: Standard Causal Mediation Analysis Results

Effect	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value	Sign.
ACME (Indirect Effect)	-0.00242	-0.00761	0.00000	0.22	
ADE (Direct Effect)	0.00539	-0.00649	0.02000	0.45	
Total Effect	0.00296	-0.00877	0.02000	0.71	
Proportion Mediated	-0.81739	-4.64142	5.53000	0.82	

Sample Size Used: 272. Simulations: 1000. Significance codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1.

The ACME ($p > 0.05$), ADE ($p > 0.05$), total effect ($p > 0.05$), and proportion mediated ($p > 0.05$) are all insignificant using a 1.96 critical value. The indirect effect (i.e., ACME) indicates that a 1-percentage point increase in migrant employment rates, facilitated by active inclusion funding, resulted in a ~0.002 percentage point decrease in vote share for the populist radical right. Since this is insignificant, I cannot reject my null hypothesis for H_2 (i.e., migrants' economic participation does not mediate the relationship between inclusion funding and PRRP vote shares). The direct effect (i.e., ADE) shows that a 1-standard deviation increase in funds for active inclusion (~43.7 million EUR) is associated with a ~0.005 percentage point increase in PRRP vote shares when holding migrant employment rates constant ($p > 0.05$). If meaningful, this would suggest that every ~43.7 million EUR in inclusive funding for migrants slightly increases PRRP vote shares, apart from the economic integration pathway. This estimate contradicts my initial assumptions, so I fail to reject my null hypothesis for H_1 (i.e., increased funding for inclusion does not decrease PRRP vote shares) (Imai et al. 2010, 311-312).

The direct estimate is larger, so the total effect (i.e., sum) of this analysis is net-positive (Imai et al. 2010, 312). This means that a 1-standard deviation increase in scaled and lagged funding for inclusion (~43.7 million EUR) is associated with a ~0.003 percentage point increase in PRRP vote shares when offset by gains in migrant employment. Therefore, funding would slightly increase voting for the populist radical right overall, if this effect was significant. My proportion mediated (PM) is negative because the ACME and ADE have opposite signs. A PM of ~-0.82 means that the mediator is reducing the positive consequences of funding by 82% (321). However, my causal mediation analysis and OLS models demonstrated that there was no statistically notable relationship between funds for active inclusion and changes in PRRP vote shares. In addition, there was no meaningful association between migrant employment and far-right populist electoral support, and every ~43.7 million EUR in active inclusion funds only increased migrant employment rates marginally (i.e., ~0.029 percentage points).

2SLS Results

Here, I briefly present the results of my 2SLS regressions to highlight similarities to OLS when using an instrument “Z” (i.e., historical EU Cohesion payments to each region). The first stage shows the effects of my instrument and controls on the treatment (i.e., lagged and scaled funds for active inclusion) (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 105). Table 6 shows my results, which demonstrate appropriate model fit using r-squared and adjusted r-squared values. Stage 1 explains ~40.5% of the variance in scaled and lagged funds for active inclusion projects and

~39.6% of the variance when penalized for complexities. Only historical EU payments to NUTS 2 regions (i.e., the instrument) and population density have meaningful impacts on active inclusion funding.

Treatment Model Equation

X ~ Z + Controls

Scaled and Lagged Active Inclusion Funds ~ Scaled and Lagged Historical EU Cohesion Payments + Total Unemployment + Population Homogeneity + Population Density

Table 6: First Stage 2SLS Regression Results - Effects on Lagged Funding for Active Inclusion

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.23446	0.51228	0.458	0.6476
Lagged Payments (scaled)	0.59966	0.05074	11.818	$< 2e-16$ ***
Total Unemployment	-0.94528	2.17845	-0.434	0.6647
Share of Natives	-0.22465	0.58713	-0.383	0.7023
Population Density (scaled)	0.11662	0.05084	2.294	0.0226 *
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.7772 (on 267 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4048			
Adjusted R^2	0.3959			
F-statistic	45.4 (on 4 and 267 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

For every 1-standard deviation increase in lagged historical payments, funding for active inclusion increases 0.6 standard deviations from the mean (p < 0.001). One standard deviation is ~40 million EUR in estimated active inclusion funds and ~1.8 billion EUR in historical cohesion payments. This means that a ~1.8 billion EUR increase in historical payments equals a ~25.8 million EUR increase in active inclusion funds over time. In addition, a 1-standard deviation increase in population density (i.e., ~765 households) equals a ~0.12 standard deviation increase in lagged funds for active inclusion (i.e., 5.16 million EUR) (p < 0.05). This implies that more dense or urbanized areas are more likely to receive funding.

The second stage 2SLS shows that estimated funds from my first stage, using predict() in base R, and total unemployment rates have significant effects on migrant employment in the same directions as my OLS (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 104). Table 7 shows that all other control variables are insignificant using a 1.96 critical value (p > 0.05). The r-squared and adjusted r-squared values indicate that this model explains ~41.7% of the variance in migrant employment rates and ~40.8% of the variance when penalized for complexity. For every 1-standard deviation increase in estimated, lagged funding for active inclusion, migrant employment rates increase ~0.038 percentage points, compared to ~0.029 in my main regression (p < 0.001). Also, every 1-percentage point increase in the total unemployment rate decreases migrant employment rates ~2.81 percentage points, compared to ~2.84 points in my primary model (p < 0.001).

Table 7: Second Stage 2SLS Regression Results - Effects on Migrant Employment Rates

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.699774	0.052705	13.277	$< 2e-16$ ***
Estimated Lagged Funds	0.037848	0.008786	4.308	$2.32e-05$ ***
Population Density (scaled)	-0.006723	0.005675	-1.185	0.237
Share of Natives	-0.021347	0.060455	-0.353	0.724
Total Unemployment	-2.810865	0.227203	-12.372	$< 2e-16$ ***
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.0807 (on 267 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4169			
Adjusted R^2	0.4082			
F-statistic	47.73 (on 4 and 267 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

In Table 8, I show the effects of migrant employment rates (the mediator), estimated scaled and lagged funds for active inclusion, and my controls on PRRP vote shares using a 2SLS regression. These variables explain ~16.6% of the variance in PRRP vote shares and ~15.1% of the variance when penalized for complexity, which is much higher than my OLS outcome model. My mediator, treatment, and controls had significant relationships with PRRP vote shares, compared to unemployment and homogeneity alone in my OLS. Table 8 shows that a 1-percentage point increase in migrant employment rates equals a ~0.14 percentage point decrease in PRRP vote shares. At the same time, a 1-standard deviation increase in estimated, lagged funds for active inclusion programs (~40 million EUR) equals a ~0.045 percentage point increase in PRRP vote shares.

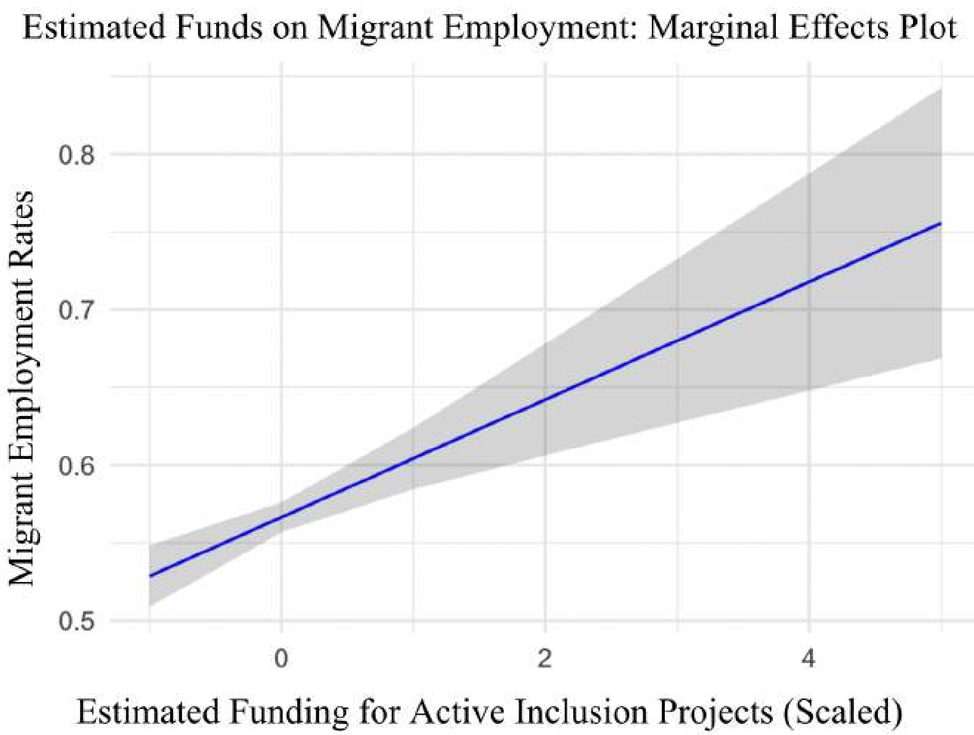
Table 8: Second Stage 2SLS Regression Results - Effects on PRRP Vote Shares

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.156177	0.064369	2.426	0.0159 *
Migrant Employment Rate	-0.140089	0.058007	-2.415	0.0164 *
Estimated Lagged Funds	0.044596	0.008612	5.178	$4.43e-07$ ***
Population Density (scaled)	-0.014534	0.005393	-2.695	0.0075 **
Share of Natives	0.112316	0.057315	1.960	0.0511 .
Total Unemployment	-1.053483	0.270117	-3.900	0.0001 ***
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07649 (on 266 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.1662			
Adjusted R^2	0.1506			
F-statistic	10.61 (on 5 and 266 DF, p-value 2.645×10^{-9})			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

All estimates work in the same direction as my main models, but more relationships are significant in the 2SLS. Since the first stage was strong, I can assume that this is because of the sample size. It may make the 2SLS more volatile and biased with large standard errors, which could explain why the estimates for homogeneity and unemployment are slightly lower, while others (i.e., those that were not significant in the OLS) are higher. Since the model fit improved, aspects of the instrument may be related to PRRP voting (e.g., wealth), but the treatment itself is not endogenous because 2SLS disposes endogeneity within the data (Hahn et al. 2004, 272; Angrist and Pischke 2009, 238). I demonstrate the main 2SLS associations using marginal effects plots in Figures 23 and 24 below.

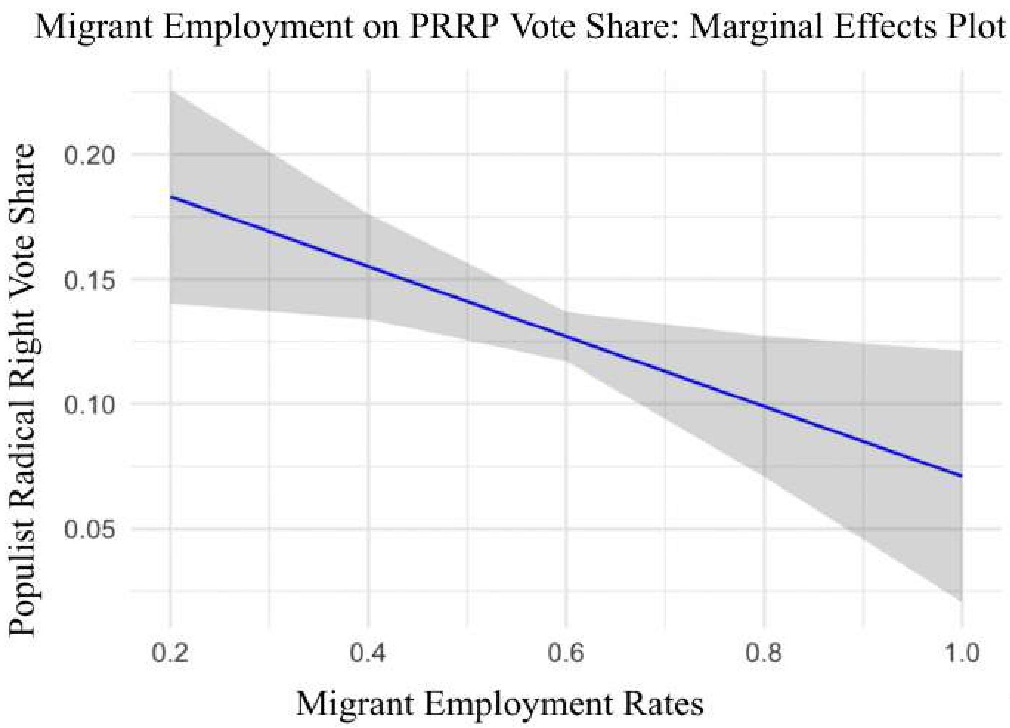
Figure 23.



Source: Graph by Author, based on migrant employment data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), as well as Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts), and historical EU Cohesion payment data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data). Full data is in the Appendix (A.2.2).

Note: This marginal effects plot uses estimated funds with historical EU cohesion payments as an instrument. The graph is relatively similar to my OLS model in terms of margin of error and direction of the slope, but the incline is slightly greater.

Figure 24.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5), Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/), and Eurostat's migrant employment data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/). The full dataset is in the Appendix (A.2.2).

Note: The margin of error is smaller, and the slope is greater than the slope from my OLS outcome model, making it more likely that I receive meaningful results in this 2SLS causal mediation analysis with larger direct (i.e., ADE) and indirect (i.e., ACME) estimates.

Causal Mediation Analysis with 2SLS

In this section, I present the results of my causal mediation analysis. The second-stage IV regression from Table 7 is my mediator model, while the regression from Table 8 is my outcome model. Estimated, scaled and lagged inclusion funding from stage 1 is my new treatment variable (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 104). Table 9 shows the results below, which are are all significant using a 1.96 critical value ($p < 0.05$). The indirect effect (i.e., ACME) indicates that a 1-percentage point increase in migrant employment rates, facilitated by active inclusion funding, resulted in a ~0.005 percentage point decrease in PRRP vote shares. The direct effect, however, shows that a 1-standard deviation increase in estimated funds for active inclusion (~40 million EUR) is associated with a ~0.044 percentage point increase in PRRP vote shares, when holding migrant employment rates constant. Again, this goes in the same direction as my causal mediation using OLS, but it is less reliable because of exogeneity and finite sample bias (Hahn et al. 2004).

Table 9: 2SLS Causal Mediation Analysis Results

Effect	**Estimate**	**95% CI Lower**	**95% CI Upper**	**p-value**	**Sign.**
ACME (Indirect Effect)	-0.00530	-0.01109	0.00	0.038	*
ADE (Direct Effect)	0.04460	0.01156	0.09	0.002	**
Total Effect	0.03929	0.00656	0.09	0.010	**
Proportion Mediated	-0.13493	-0.74157	-0.01	0.048	*

Sample Size Used: 272. Simulations: 1000. Significance codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1.

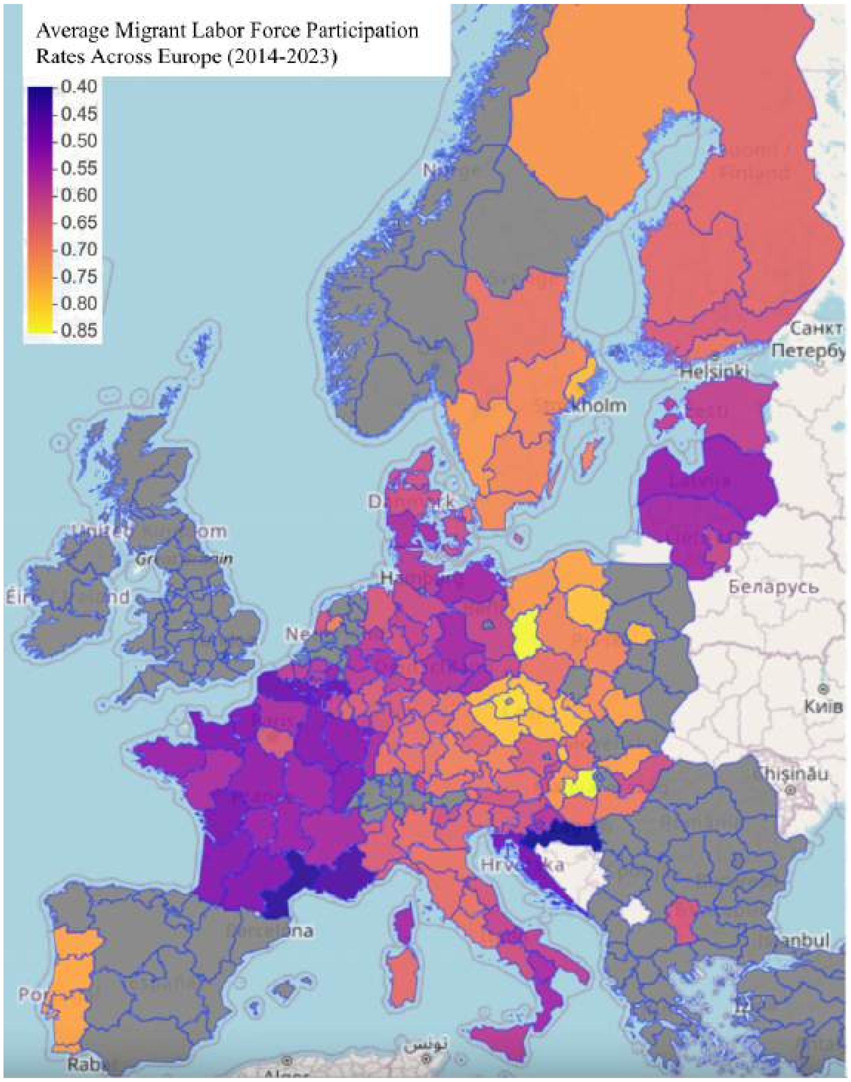
The direct estimate is larger, so the total effect of this analysis is net-positive. A 1-standard deviation increase in estimated and lagged active inclusion funding (~40 million EUR) is associated with a ~0.04 percentage point increase in PRRP vote shares, offset by gains in migrant employment. Funding slightly increased PRRP support in my main models as well. Though it was insignificant, this could warrant further investigation to ensure funds are not inadvertently promoting anti-system sentiment (Hjerm 2007; Fetzer 2000). My proportion mediated (PM) is negative because the ACME and ADE have opposite signs, but it is much smaller here (i.e., ~13.5% compared to 82%). If standard errors are greater, this could be reducing the mediation ratio in this analysis (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 238).

OLS Robustness Checks

For my main robustness checks, I kept the controls from my previous analyses but included new measures for population density, homogeneity, and economic standing. These were the EU commission's urbanization rates, share of the population EU-born, and household income from Eurostat, respectively. For urbanization, I used the percent of households in each NUTS 2 region that were labeled degree 1 (i.e., cities) ("Number of Households" 2025). This may be a better measure for density, given the size of each NUTS 2 region can vary drastically. The percent EU-born was from the same dataset as my "share of natives" control, but the data were customized to reflect individuals from EU-27 countries instead of the reporting country ("Population" 2025). Finally, I scaled the population's household income since Eurostat provided a sum, rather than the median income for each region ("Income" 2025).

I adjusted all of these datasets using the same methods as my original controls. However, I switched the mediator with migrants' labor force participation rates. These differ from employment rates because they include the total population that is employed or unemployed but actively seeking work. This comes from the same dataset as migrant employment rates, but the population was switched to "active" as opposed to "employed". Although Eurostat does not specify the exact populations excluded from this metric, these are likely students, retirees, disabled individuals, or others not looking for work from ages 18-54 ("Population 2025"). Figure 25 shows a mapped distribution of the average migrant labor force participation rates across NUTS 2 regions from 2014 to 2023.

Figure 25.



Source: Map by author, based on migrant labor force participation data from Eurostat (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/).

Note: The color scale in the upper left-hand corner shows the range of migrant labor force participation rates bounded from 0 to 1 throughout the EU. Notably, this map shows less drastic variation between neighboring regions in the same country, as opposed to the map of migrant employment rates in Figure 10 above.

This suggests that the rate of individuals actively seeking work is similar between regions in the same country, but migrants' abilities to obtain employment differ substantially.

Next, I present the results regressing my new mediator (i.e., migrant labor force participation rates) on these controls and my treatment variable (i.e., active inclusion funding) in Table 10. The results are fairly similar to my main OLS mediator model since funds for active inclusion and total unemployment were significant again. Here, a 1-standard deviation increase in lagged inclusion funds increases migrant labor force participation rates ~0.022 percentage points, compared to ~0.029 percentage points for employment. At the same time, a 1-percentage point increase in total unemployment equals a ~1.43 percentage point decrease in migrant labor force participation rates, compared to ~2.84 in my main model. However, the fit is much lower here (i.e., ~0.2 compared to ~0.44).

Table 10: Robust OLS Regression Results - Effects on Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.573528	0.119197	4.812	$2.65e-06$ ***
Lagged Funds (scaled)	0.023236	0.005159	4.504	$1.04e-05$ ***
Total Unemployment	-1.427755	0.239079	-5.972	$8.39e-09$ ***
Share of Natives	0.114913	0.121891	0.943	0.347
Population Density (scaled)	-0.006490	0.006770	-0.959	0.339
Household Income (scaled)	0.003926	0.006434	0.610	0.542
Urbanization Rate	0.030892	0.029101	1.062	0.290
Share EU-born	0.310884	0.222182	1.399	0.163
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07602 (on 240 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.2232			
Adjusted R^2	0.2005			
F-statistic	9.851 (on 7 and 240 DF, p-value 8.562×10^{-11})			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Next, I present the results for my robust OLS outcome model in Table 11. This estimates the effects of my original controls, additional controls, scaled and lagged funding for active inclusion, and migrant labor force participation rates on PRRP vote shares. The population's total unemployment rates are significant again, but unlike my main model, the share of natives became insignificant. This suggests that homogeneity's effect on vote share may not be direct, rather it could be transmitted through labor force participation rates (Cordero et al. 2023). If part of homogeneity's effect was transmitted through employment in my initial model, this might explain why the estimate was lower than those in previous studies. With additional measures for my controls, the model fit was still slightly lower than it was in my main analysis.

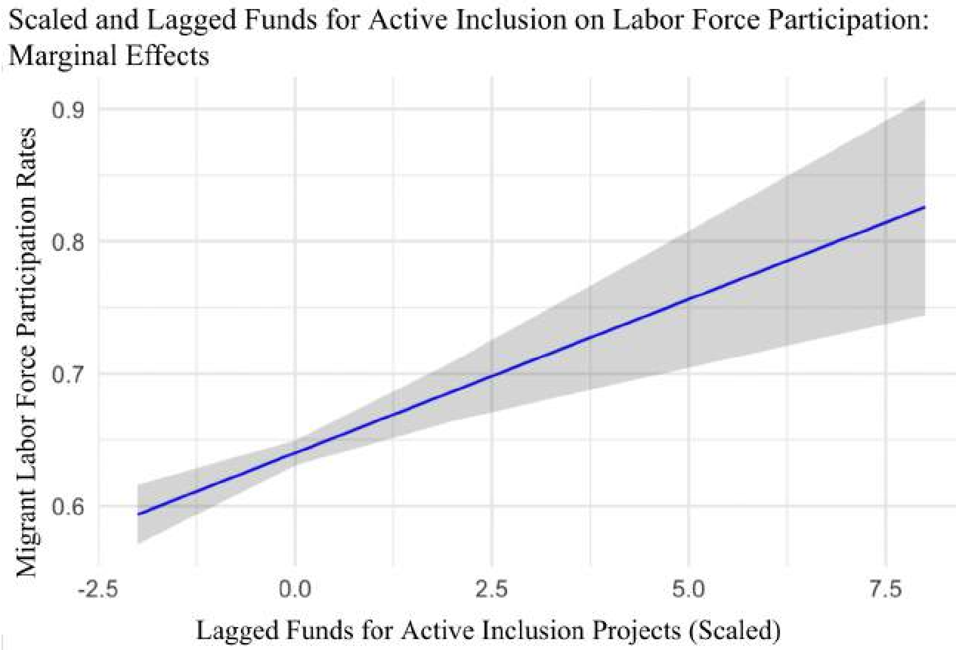
Table 11: Robust OLS Regression Results - Effects on PRRP Vote Shares

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
(Intercept)	0.105523	0.117327	0.899	0.369
Migrant Labor Force Participation	-0.042025	0.060678	-0.693	0.489
Lagged Funds (scaled)	-0.002938	0.005050	-0.582	0.561
Total Unemployment	-0.488235	0.240859	-2.027	0.044 *
Share of Natives	0.088001	0.114792	0.767	0.444
Population Density (scaled)	-0.009577	0.006376	-1.502	0.134
Household Income (scaled)	0.010535	0.006053	1.740	0.083 .
Urbanization Rate	-0.018654	0.027420	-0.680	0.497
Share EU-born	-0.063425	0.209705	-0.302	0.763
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07146 (on 239 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.0664			
Adjusted R^2	0.0352			
F-statistic	2.125 (on 8 and 239 DF, p-value = 0.0342)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Here, a 1-standard deviation increase in lagged funding for active inclusion (~43.7 million EUR) equals a ~0.003 percentage point increase in PRRP vote shares, compared to ~0.005 percentage points in my primary regression. A 1-percentage point increase in the population's total unemployment rate equals a ~0.49 percentage point decrease in PRRP vote shares, compared to ~1.03. Again, the results are in the same direction, but these estimates are smaller than those in my main outcome model. With the significantly reduced model fit in step 1, I assume this is because labor force participation includes migrants seeking work, as opposed to just those employed. This demonstrates the need to operationalize objective integration measures when evaluating inclusion and PRRP vote shares (Green et al. 2019; Kende et al. 2022). I visualize my robust mediator and outcome models in Figures 26 and 27 below, using marginal effects plots.

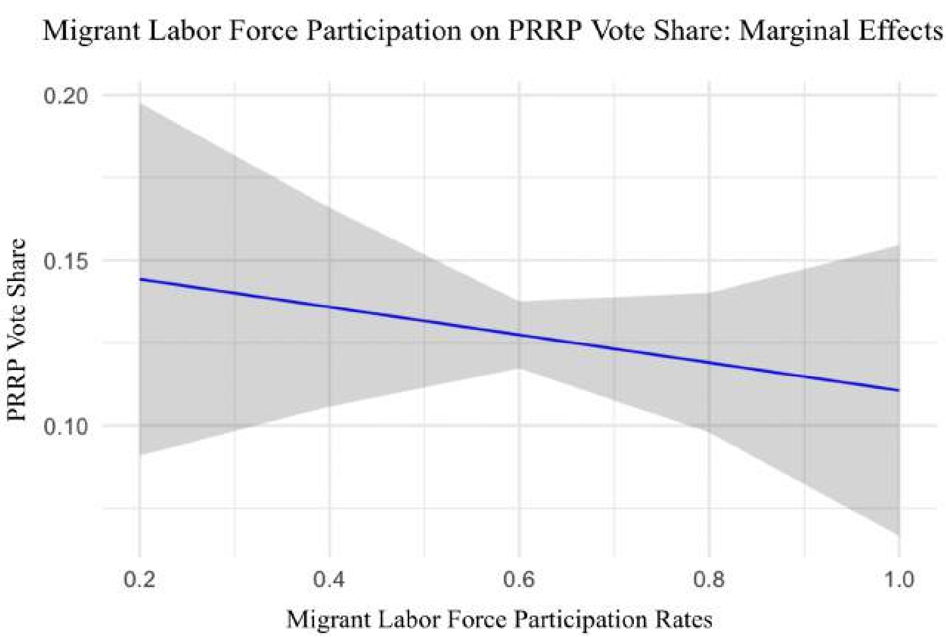
Figure 26.



Source: Graph by Author, based on migrant labor force participation data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), as well as Kohesio data on active inclusion transfers to projects in each region (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts). Full data is in the Appendix (A.2.2).

Note: The plot for step 1 of my robust models looks relatively similar to the main models that regress migrant employment rates on my controls and treatment (lagged and scaled active inclusion funds).

Figure 27.



Source: Graph by author, based on EU-NED election data (doi:10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5), Populist 3.0 party data (https://osf.io/2ewkq/), and migrant labor force participation data from Eurostat (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/).

Note: This outcome graph looks much less promising than the outcome using migrant employment rates. The margins of error are much greater and the slope has a lower absolute value. This suggests that migrant labor force participation rates are much less likely to have a substantial impact on PRRP voting.

Causal Mediation Robustness Checks

In Table 12 below, I show the results of my robust causal mediation analysis. This uses the robust mediator and outcome models above, and it identifies migrant labor force participation rates as the mediator variable. Like my main analysis, none of these results were significant using a 1.96 critical value ($p > 0.05$). However, all estimates were lower, and the direct (i.e., ADE) and total effects switched directions. Here, a 1-standard deviation increase in active inclusion funding (~43.7 million EUR) equaled a -0.003 percentage point decrease in PRRP vote shares (i.e., ADE) compared to a ~0.005 percentage point increase in my main model. Also, a 1-percentage point increase in migrant labor force participation rates, facilitated by active inclusion funding, resulted in a ~0.001 percentage point decrease in PRRP vote shares (i.e., ACME) compared to ~0.002 percentage point decrease in my main analysis. The proportion mediated (i.e., ~25%) was much lower than it was when I used migrant employment rates (i.e., ~82%), suggesting again that labor force participation was much less relevant. The new controls were not significant in the mediator or outcome models above, making it unlikely that my mediation under employment was skewed because these were omitted (Peel 2014). In my appendix (A.4), I employ the same checks as Tables 10-12 using 2SLS instead of OLS.

Table 12: Robust Standard Causal Mediation Analysis Results

Effect	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value	Sign.
ACME (Indirect Effect)	-0.00098	-0.00435	0.00000	0.43	
ADE (Direct Effect)	-0.00294	-0.01322	0.02000	0.71	
Total Effect	-0.00392	-0.01404	0.01000	0.58	
Proportion Mediated	0.24944	-2.72277	2.85000	0.75	

Sample size: 248 Simulations: 1000 (Nonparametric bootstrap, percentile method)

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Alternative Funding Measures

Before moving forward, I used unscaled active inclusion funds and funding as a percentage of the EU's three-year average GDP per capita to ensure my results' reliability. The EU used this historical GDP per capita data to determine each region's funding assignments (ARDECO 2024; Vergioglou 2023, 2134). In Table 13, I show the effects of my original controls and lagged funds for active inclusion as a percentage of the EU's three-year average GDP per capita on migrant employment rates. In Table 14, I show the effects of the same controls and unscaled, lagged funds for active inclusion on migrant employment rates. The results are nearly identical to each other and my main mediator model's results in Table 3. Both exhibit estimates with approximately the same significance, directions, coefficients, and model fit as my primary analysis. So far, scaling simply made my results easier to interpret.

Table 13: OLS Regression Results - Effects on Employment using Lagged Funds as a Percentage of EU Average GDP per Capita

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	6.752e-01	5.040e-02	13.397	$< 2e{-16}$ ***
Lagged Funds as Percent	1.790e-07	3.126e-08	5.725	2.78e-08 ***
Total Unemployment	-2.844e+00	2.203e-01	-12.907	$< 2e{-16}$ ***
Share of Natives	-6.129e-03	5.786e-02	-0.106	0.916
Population Density (scaled)	-3.908e-03	5.129e-03	-0.762	0.447
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07876 (on 267 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4446			
Adjusted R^2	0.4363			
F-statistic	53.43 (on 4 and 267 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table 14: OLS Regression Results - Effects on Employment using Lagged Active Inclusion Funds (Unscaled)

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	6.753e-01	5.039e-02	13.402	$< 2e{-16}$ ***
Lagged Funds	6.562e-10	1.143e-10	5.739	2.58e-08 ***
Total Unemployment	-2.844e+00	2.203e-01	-12.910	$< 2e{-16}$ ***
Share of Natives	-6.365e-03	5.785e-02	-0.110	0.912
Population Density (scaled)	-4.026e-03	5.132e-03	-0.784	0.433
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07874 (on 267 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4449			
Adjusted R^2	0.4366			
F-statistic	53.5 (on 4 and 267 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Next, I show the effects of active inclusion funding as a percentage of the EU's average GDP per capita, my original controls, and migrant employment rates on PRRP vote shares in Table 15. Table 16 operationalizes unscaled, lagged inclusion funds as the treatment instead. Again, the results are nearly identical, and they effectively match those from Table 4 (i.e., my primary outcome model). In each of these, only economic and cultural factors are significant again, with unemployment negatively and homogeneity positively affecting PRRP vote shares.

Table 15: OLS Robust Regression Results - Effects on PRRP Vote Shares using Active Inclusion Funds as a Percentage of EU Average GDP per Capita

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	6.696e-02	6.628e-02	1.010	0.313269
Migrant Employment	-8.475e-02	6.223e-02	-1.362	0.174389
Lagged Funds as Percent	3.477e-08	3.369e-08	1.032	0.303006
Population Density (scaled)	-3.098e-03	5.221e-03	-0.593	0.553427
Share of Natives	1.749e-01	5.884e-02	2.972	0.003229 **
Total Unemployment	-1.032e+00	2.855e-01	-3.614	0.000361 ***
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.08009 (on 266 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.08585			
Adjusted R^2	0.06866			
F-statistic	4.996 (on 5 and 266 DF, p-value 0.0002163)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table 16: OLS Robust Regression Results - Effects on PRRP Vote Shares using Lagged Active Inclusion Funds (Unscaled)

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	6.633e-02	6.630e-02	1.000	0.317983
Migrant Employment	-8.404e-02	6.226e-02	-1.350	0.178226
Lagged Funds (Unscaled)	1.226e-10	1.233e-10	0.995	0.320860
Population Density (scaled)	-3.060e-03	5.227e-03	-0.585	0.558709
Share of Natives	1.752e-01	5.885e-02	2.976	0.003187 **
Total Unemployment	-1.030e+00	2.856e-01	-3.608	0.000368 ***
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.0801 (on 266 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.08559			
Adjusted R^2	0.0684			
F-statistic	4.979 (on 5 and 266 DF, p-value 0.0002237)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Finally, I present the results of my causal mediation analyses using the previous OLS regressions and new funding operationalizations. Table 17 presents the results using active inclusion funds as a percent of the EU's three-year average GDP per capita, and Table 18 presents the results using unscaled, lagged inclusion funds. Again, the results are very similar to each other and my main values from Table 5. This solidifies that, regardless of the operationalization, active inclusion funds have no meaningful impact on PRRP vote shares in this study.

Table 17: Robust Causal Mediation Analysis using Funds as a Percentage of EU Average GDP per Capita

Effect	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value	Sign.
ACME (Indirect Effect)	-1.52e-08	-4.71e-08	0.00	0.21	
ADE (Direct Effect)	3.48e-08	-3.94e-08	0.00	0.44	
Total Effect	1.96e-08	-5.38e-08	0.00	0.70	
Proportion Mediated	-7.74e-01	-4.61e+00	6.54	0.82	

Sample size: 272 Simulations: 1000 (Nonparametric bootstrap, percentile method)

Table 18: Robust Causal Mediation Analysis Results using Lagged Active Inclusion Funds (Unscaled)

Effect	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value	Sign.
ACME (Indirect Effect)	-5.51e-11	-1.68e-10	0.00	0.19	
ADE (Direct Effect)	1.23e-10	-1.36e-10	0.00	0.37	
Total Effect	6.75e-11	-2.02e-10	0.00	0.66	
Proportion Mediated	-8.17e-01	-6.38e+00	6.96	0.77	

Sample size: 272 Simulations: 1000 (Nonparametric bootstrap, percentile method)

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

<u>Implications for Future Research</u>

Since active inclusion funding had a very small impact on migrant employment rates, my results align with the assertions made by Samaluk and Boeri. There may be some misuse across regions, which need to be further investigated (Boeri 2010; Samaluk 2020). Exploring why increases in employment were marginal could help the European Union better support migrants and potentially adopt more effective alternatives. In addition, the positive direct estimates between active inclusion funding and PRRP vote shares raise questions about whether these funds can increase anti-immigrant sentiment among natives (Hjerm 2007; Fetzer 2000). Though positive, direct effects were insignificant, they were fairly consistent across models. Thus, perceived competition for social welfare or attitudes regarding the funds' efficacy need to be explored to ensure resource allocations do not inadvertently promote anti-system voting (Hix and Høyland 2011).

Further, total unemployment had the largest absolute effect on PRRP vote shares in my models. While I would expect this to be positive under economic threat theory, it was negative across my main OLS regressions and robustness checks (Cooke et al. 2016). Higher unemployment may reduce PRRP voting because individuals do not trust populist radical right parties to provide them with economic stability (Gold and Lehr 2024). Given most EU natives are not directly competing with immigrants for jobs anymore, there may be the impression that these parties are not adept in supporting economic growth (Cooke et al. 2016; Kriesi and Papas 2016; Andrijasevic and Sacchetto 2016). Thus, it may be useful to evaluate whether PRRP incumbency during financial distress leads to shifts back towards mainstream voting.

In the past, cultural threat theory has been much more explanatory of changes in PRRP voting than economic theories. Yet, my models show that the share of natives (i.e., population homogeneity) had slightly lower absolute effects on populist radical right vote shares than unemployment (Cordero et al. 2023). This effect may be absorbed by economic inclusion or related to the fact that cultural threat is often operationalized through homogeneity (Patana 2018, 726-727; Mudde 1999). Increases in media that scapegoats migrants for individuals' economic shortcomings could similarly resonate with individuals of different ethnic backgrounds and should be investigated (Hix and Høyland 2011, 128-129; Schleuter et al. 2019).

Finally, my study showed that broader economic and cultural factors played a much larger role in PRRP voting than migrants' economic inclusion and social contact. Social contact may be better operationalized at the NUTS 3 (i.e., municipality) level, which could be evaluated using this data in future studies (see Appendix A.2.2) (Patana 2018). Migrant employment rates had no statistically significant effects on PRRP voting throughout this study, but this paper does not undermine the migrant inclusion school of thought since there are other aspects of inclusion could not be measured at this level (MIPEX 2020; MIPEX 2025; "Migrant Integration" 2024). In turn, I ask the EU to gather subnational data on social and civic integration for a more comprehensive analysis. Overall, my study buttresses the dominant indicators of changes in PRRP voting from the literature (i.e., economic and cultural), but it raises questions about economic threat theory in the modern EU context (Cordero et al. 2023).

Limitations

There are several limitations with respect to data availability. EU-NED election results were missing for several populist radical right parties that disbanded within the time frame of data collection (e.g., Ny Demokrati, Partia X) or had relatively small electoral wins. Also, this dataset does not account for significant PRRP gains and new party formations since 2020 (e.g., Reconquête, Prišaha) (Rooduijn et al. 2023; Schraff et al. 2022). On the other hand, EU cohesion data on active inclusion funding showed that one EU member (i.e., Spain) did not have projects that received subsidies within this time period. Thus, the analysis takes place across the EU, but it is not reflective of all 27 EU members. Further, EU Kohesio data did not specify the exact use of active inclusion funds within each project, nor were these funds isolated to migrants alone

("Kohesio: Projects" 2023). This left many questions unanswered with respect to their use, and the EU's ability to hold regions accountable under my theory (See Appendix A.1).

Economic integration was the only objective inclusion measure I could analyze at the NUTS 2 level aside from educational attainment, so this study did not assess the funds' relationships with other, relevant avenues (e.g., civic participation, language acquisition) (Migrant Integration" 2024). Eurostat's data for my controls limited the scope of this study to seven years, and the one-year lag across models makes the evaluation act as six. Moreover, there are several articles indicating that funding use lags multiple years behind EU budget reports (Spychała 2023; Tosun 2013; Încalțărău et al., 2020). This begs the question of whether the timeframe of this study is too short to see the full effects of these funds. However, I had to assume the funds in my model were used within the project's stated timelines ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023).

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This was the first study to assess inclusion and PRRP voting at the subnational level across Europe. It aligned targeted funds to regional governments with their economic impacts, making changes in PRRP voting more granular ("Cohesion Policy Indicators" 2024). In the end, I was unable to reject my null hypotheses for H_1 (i.e., funding for active inclusion projects lowers PRRP vote shares at the NUTS 2 level) and H_2 (i.e., economic inclusion mediates the effect of funds on PRRP voting). I found that inclusion funds had no significant impact on PRRP vote shares, which promotes further research to buttress the migrant inclusion school of thought. In turn, I implore the European Union to collect subnational data on other objective inclusion measures, so scholars can more comprehensively assess the impact of these funds (MIPEX 2020; MIPEX 2025; "Migrant Integration" 2024). At the same time, relationships between inclusion subsidies and PRRP vote shares were positive across models, so I urge political scientists to investigate how transfers for migrants impact sentiment (Hjerm 2007; Fetzer 2000).

In accordance with dominant theories in the literature, economic and cultural factors played the largest role in determining PRRP vote shares. The population's total unemployment rate and ethnic homogeneity meaningfully impacted PRRP voting, but unemployment brought PRRP vote shares down. This countered expectations under economic threat theory and posed questions for future research on the motivations to vote mainstream in times of economic distress (Cooke et al. 2016). In addition, cultural factors played a much larger role than economic factors in determining vote shares historically, but they did not in this study (Cordero et al. 2023). Some of culture's effect may have been absorbed by migrant employment, or it could be related to the use of homogeneity as a threat indicator. In the modern context, media that scapegoats migrants for individuals' economic shortcomings could resonate with people of different backgrounds and should be explored (Schleuter et al. 2019; Hix and Høyland 2011, 128-129).

Finally, for every ~43.7 million EUR in active inclusion funds, migrant employment rates only increased ~0.029 percentage points. This suggested that targeted subsidies may not be the best method to promote economic integration at the regional level. With concerns regarding the use of funding, I urge scholars to delve into their applications and the European Commission to release additional data, so large-scale assessments can be made ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023). My study showed that inclusion analyses need to use objective integration measures (e.g., employment), as opposed to individual efforts to integrate as well ("Population" 2025). Labor force participation comprised migrants actively seeking employment and was much less relevant in my models. This aligns with my theory that integration has to be observed by the local population to influence sentiments and voting. Thus, I ask academics to consider using this analytical approach in future studies.

Appendix

A.1 Description of Active Inclusion Projects for EU Funding

A.1.1 Active Inclusion Labels from the Data

Thematic Objective ID	Thematic Objective Label	Category of Intervention
TO09	Social Inclusion	109

A.1.2 Cross-National Description of Funding Use from the Data

Kohesio Description Across Funding Datasets (EU-Wide)	"Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability" ("Kohesio: Projects" 2023).[8]

A.1.3 Description of Active Inclusion Funds from EU Commission

Active Inclusion Definition	Objectives	Challenges
"Enabling every citizen, notably the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society, including having a job" ("Active Inclusion" 2023).[9]	- Income Support - Inclusive Labor Market - Access to Quality Social Services	- Labor Market Segmentation and Exclusion - Social Exclusion and Poverty

[8] Country-specific NUTS datasets within the EU Cohesion Platform include this description. No additional information on the use of funds was given.

[9] Equal, if not more emphasis is placed on economic inclusion compared to social inclusion, justifying the choice of mediator in this study.

A.2 Analysis Data

A.2.1 List of Populist Radical Right Parties for Analysis

Native Name	English Name	Abbreviation	Populist	Far-Right	PRRP?
Freiheitliche Partei	Freedom Party of A	FPO	1	1	TRUE
Front National	National Front	FN	1	1	TRUE
Parti populaire	People's Party	PP	1	1	TRUE
Vlaams Belang	Flemish Interest	CSSD	1	1	TRUE
Nieuw-Vlaamse All	New Flemish Allian	N-VA	1	1	TRUE
Ataka	Attack	ATAKA	1	1	TRUE
Prezaredi Bulgariya	Bulgaria Uncensore	BBT	1	1	TRUE
Natsionalen Front z	National Front for tl	NFSB	1	1	TRUE
Red, Zakonnost i S	Order, Law and Just	RZS	1	1	TRUE
Balgarsko Natsiona	Bulgarian National	IMRO-BNP	1	1	TRUE
Volya	Will	VOLYA	1	1	TRUE
Vazrazhdane	Revival	ABC	1	1	TRUE
Hrvatski demokrats	Croatian Democrati	HDSSB	1	1	TRUE
Hrvatski rast	Croatian Growth	HRAST	1	1	TRUE
Most	Bridge	MOST	1	1	TRUE
Domovinski Pokret	Homeland Moveme	DP	1	1	TRUE
Hrvatski Suverenist	Croatian Sovereignt	HS	1	1	TRUE
Blok za Hrvatsku	Bloc for Croatia	BZH	1	1	TRUE
Hrvatska Konzerva	Croatian Conservati	HKS	1	1	TRUE
Hrvatska Demokrat	Croatian Democrati	HDZ	1	1	TRUE
Ethniko Laiko Mete	National Popular Fr	ELAM	1	1	TRUE
EVROKO	European Party	EURO.KO	1	1	TRUE
Movement of Hunte	Movement of Hunte	KEK	1	1	TRUE
New Horizons	New Horizons	NO	1	1	TRUE
Allilegii	Solidarity	SOLIDARITY	1	1	TRUE
USVIT	DAWN	UPD	1	1	TRUE
Svoboda a prímá de	Freedom and Direct	SPD	1	1	TRUE
Úsvit	Dawn	USVIT	1	1	TRUE
Volný Blok	Free Bloc	CSSD	1	1	TRUE
Dansk Folkeparti	Danish People's Par	DF	1	1	TRUE
Nye Borgerlige	The New Right	NB	1	1	TRUE
Eesti Kodanik	Estonian Citizens	EKO	1	1	TRUE
Eesti Konservatiivn	Conservative People	EKRE	1	1	TRUE
Suomen Maaseudu	Finns Party	PS	1	1	TRUE
Debout la républiqu	Republic Arise | Fra	DLF	1	1	TRUE
Front National / Ra	National Front / Ral	FN	1	1	TRUE
Reconquete	Reconquest	RECONQUETE	1	1	TRUE
Alternative für Deu	Alternative for Gern	AFD	1	1	TRUE
Republikaner	Republicans	REP	1	1	TRUE
Politiki Anixi	Political Spring	POLAN	1	1	TRUE
Anexartitoi Ellines	Independent Greeks	ANEL	1	1	TRUE
Elliniki Lisi	Greek Solution	ELLINIKI LYSI	1	1	TRUE

Laïkós Orthódoxos	Popular Orthodox R	LAOS	1	1	TRUE
Laikos Syndesmos ·	Golden Dawn	GD	1	1	TRUE
Fidesz	Fidesz	FIDESZ	1	1	TRUE
Jobbik Magyarorsz	Movement for a Bet	JOBBIK	1	1	TRUE
Magyar Igazság és]	Hungarian Justice ai	MIEP	1	1	TRUE
Független Kisgazda	Independent Smallh	FKGP	1	1	TRUE
Fratelli d'Italia	Brothers of Italy	FDI	1	1	TRUE
Lega (Nord)	(Northern) League	LEGA	1	1	TRUE
Tevzemei un Brivit	For Fatherland and]	TB / LNNK	1	1	TRUE
Tautas Kustība "La	People's Movement	TKL	1	1	TRUE
Alternativ Demokra	Alternative Democr	ADR	1	1	TRUE
Centrum Democrat	Centre Democrats	CD	1	1	TRUE
Forum voor Democ	Forum for Democra	FVD	1	1	TRUE
Partij voor de Vrijh	Party for Freedom	PVV	1	1	TRUE
Juiste Antwoord 21	Right Answer 21	JA21	1	1	TRUE
BoerBurgerBewegi	Farmer–Citizen Mo	BBB	1	1	TRUE
Fremskrittspartiet	Progress Party	FRP	1	1	TRUE
Liga Polskich Rodz	League of Polish Fa	LPR	1	1	TRUE
Partia X	Party X	X	1	1	TRUE
Prawo i Sprawiedli	Law and Justice	PIS	1	1	TRUE
Ruch Odbudowy P	Movement for the R	ROP	1	1	TRUE
Zjednoczenie Chrz	Christian National U	ZCHN	1	1	TRUE
Solidarna Polska	United Poland	SP	1	1	TRUE
Chega	Enough	CH	1	1	TRUE
Partidul România M	Greater Romania Pa	PRM	1	1	TRUE
Partidul Unitatii Na	Romanian National	PUNR	1	1	TRUE
Alianța pentru Unir	Alliance for the Uni	AUR	1	1	TRUE
Pravá Slovenská N	Real Slovak Nation	PSNS	1	1	TRUE
Slovenská Národná	Slovak National Par	SNS	1	1	TRUE
Sme Rodina	We are family	SR	1	1	TRUE
Vlasť	Homeland	VLAST	1	1	TRUE
Slovenska Demokr	Slovenian Democrat	SDS	1	1	TRUE
Slovenska Nacional	Slovenian National	SNS	1	1	TRUE
Nova Slovenija – K	New Slovenia – Chr	N.SI	1	1	TRUE
Vox	Voice	VOX	1	1	TRUE
Sverigedemokrater	Sweden Democrats	SD	1	1	TRUE
Lega dei Ticinesi	Ticino League	LDT	1	1	TRUE
Mouvement Citoye	Geneva Citizens' M	MCG	1	1	TRUE
Schweizer Demokr	Swiss Democrats	SD	1	1	TRUE
Schweizerische Vo	Swiss People's Party	SVP	1	1	TRUE
United Kingdom In	United Kingdom In	UKIP	1	1	TRUE
Brexit Party / Refor	Brexit Party / Refor	BREXIT	1	1	TRUE

A.2.2 Full Analysis Data CSV

File Download

A.3 Manual Durbin-Wu-Hausman Test

Table 19: Manual Durbin-Wu-Hausman Exogeneity Test

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.69977	0.05136	13.625	$< 2e\text{-}16$ ***
Lagged Funds (scaled)	0.03785	0.00856	4.421	$1.44e\text{-}05$ ***
Population Density (scaled)	-0.00672	0.00553	-1.216	0.225
Share of Natives	-0.02135	0.05891	-0.362	0.717
Total Unemployment	-2.81087	0.22140	-12.696	$< 2e\text{-}16$ ***
Residuals from First Stage	-0.01373	0.01057	-1.299	0.195
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07864 (on 266 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4484			
Adjusted R^2	0.438			
F-statistic	43.24 (on 5 and 266 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: This table justifies using OLS as my main method in this study. When the residuals are insignificant in stage 1, I can assume that my treatment variable is exogenous (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 105). I used resid() in RStudio to obtain these results.

A.4 Additional 2SLS Robustness Checks

A.4.1 First Stage 2SLS Table (Robust)

Table 20: Robust First Stage 2SLS Regression Results - Effects on Lagged Funding for Active Inclusion

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	-0.70523	1.21491	-0.580	0.5621
Lagged Payments (scaled)	0.58759	0.05249	11.195	$< 2e - 16$ ***
Total Unemployment	-2.34442	2.42132	-0.968	0.3339
Share of Natives	0.48583	1.24564	0.390	0.6969
Population Density (scaled)	0.03012	0.06900	0.437	0.6628
Household Income (scaled)	0.07627	0.06523	1.169	0.2435
Urbanization Rate	1.04200	0.29111	3.579	0.0004 ***
Share EU-born	0.26687	2.25839	0.118	0.9060
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.771 (on 240 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.4224			
Adjusted R^2	0.4056			
F-statistic	25.08 (on 7 and 240 DF, p-value $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$)			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: This table shows the effects of my additional controls, original controls, and instrument on active inclusion funding. Like my other first stage analysis, density and lagged payments have significant relationships with inclusion funding. While it was the scaled number of households in my original 2SLS, it is the urbanization rate in this model, meaning there may be an issue with the way density was operationalized.

A.4.2 Mediator Model 2SLS with Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates (Robust)

Table 21: Robust Second Stage 2SLS Regression Results - Effects on Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
(Intercept)	0.571975	0.124325	4.601	$6.82e-06$ ***
Estimated Lagged Funds	0.022694	0.009055	2.506	0.0129 *
Population Density (scaled)	-0.006411	0.007040	-0.911	0.3634
Share of Natives	0.116487	0.127104	0.916	0.3603
Total Unemployment	-1.429076	0.246432	-5.799	$2.09e-08$ ***
Household Income (scaled)	0.004023	0.006745	0.597	0.5514
Urbanization Rate	0.031404	0.030708	1.023	0.3075
Share EU-born	0.312250	0.229157	1.363	0.1743
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07815 (on 240 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.179			
Adjusted R^2	0.1551			
F-statistic	7.476 (on 7 and 240 DF, p-value 3.854×10^{-8})			

Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity and migrant labor force participation data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), and EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts).

Note: This table shows the effects of my additional controls, original controls, and estimated active inclusion funding on migrant labor force participation rates. Like my original second stage mediator model (2SLS), unemployment and estimated, lagged active inclusion funds have significant effects on the economic inclusion indicator. The estimates are relatively similar and affect labor force participation rates in the same direction.

A.4.3 Outcome Model 2SLS with Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates (Robust)

Table 22: Robust Second Stage 2SLS Regression Results - Effects on PRRP on Vote Shares

Variable	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**
(Intercept)	0.190327	0.117135	1.625	0.1055
Migrant Labor Force Participation	-0.075269	0.058300	-1.291	0.1979
Estimated Lagged Funds	0.020809	0.008284	2.512	0.0127 *
Population Density (scaled)	-0.013109	0.006370	-2.058	0.0407 *
Share of Natives	0.025184	0.114999	0.219	0.8268
Total Unemployment	-0.479780	0.237655	-2.019	0.0446 *
Household Income (scaled)	0.006538	0.006096	1.072	0.2846
Urbanization Rate	-0.039301	0.027795	-1.414	0.1587
Share EU-born	-0.110882	0.207769	-0.534	0.5941
Model Fit Statistics:				
Residual standard error	0.07059 (on 239 degrees of freedom)			
Multiple R^2	0.08914			
Adjusted R^2	0.05866			
F-statistic	2.924 (on 8 and 239 DF, p-value 0.003929)			

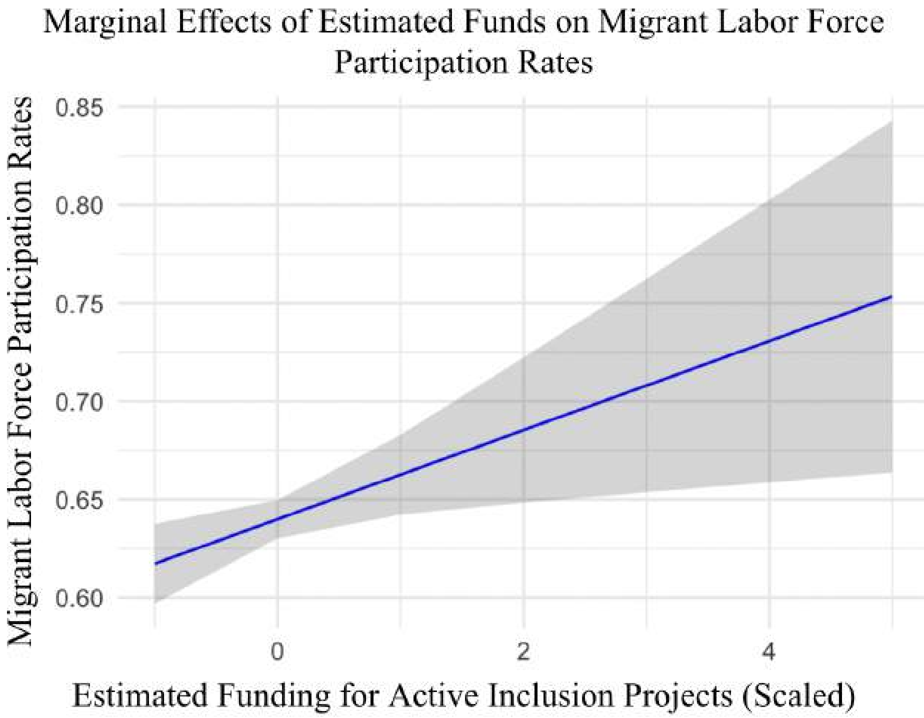
Significance codes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity and migrant labor force participation data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts), EU-NED election data (https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5) and Populist 3.0 party data (https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/2EWKQ).

Note: This table shows the effects of my additional controls, original controls, estimated active inclusion funding, and migrant labor force participation rates, on PRRP vote shares across NUTS 2 regions. Like my original second stage mediator model (2SLS), inclusion funds, scaled population density, and scaled household income are significant. However, my original 2SLS model showed that migrant employment had a significant impact on PRRP vote shares. In this model, labor force participation does not have a significant impact on PRRP vote shares, showing again that it is necessary to use objective integration measures when analyzing inclusion and populist radical right voting.

A.4.4 2SLS with Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates: Marginal Effects

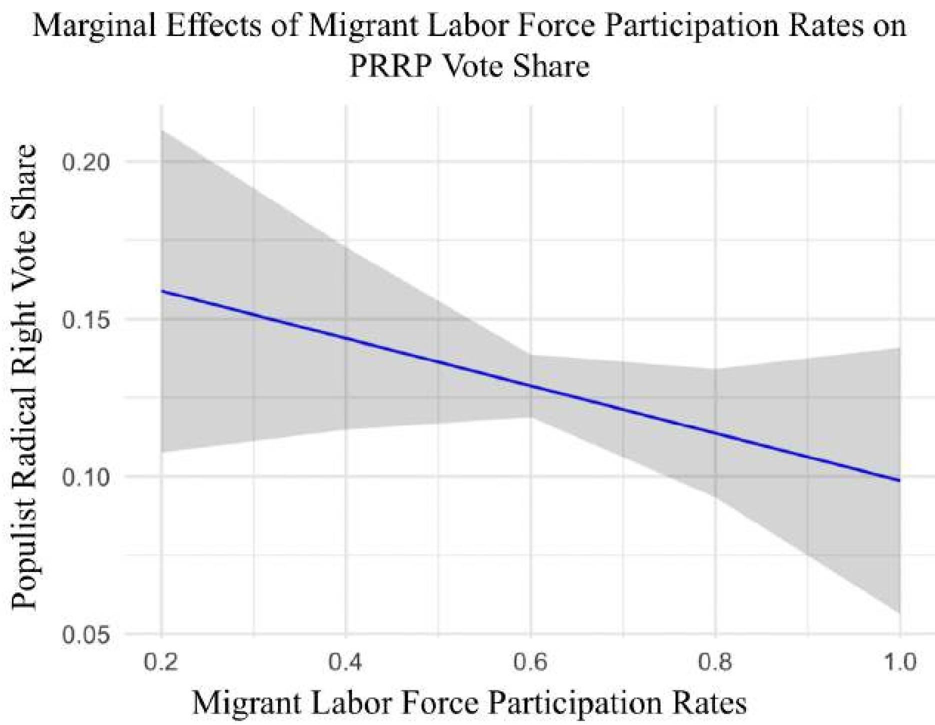
Figure 28.



Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity and migrant labor force participation data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts)

Note: This marginal effects plot has a much higher margin of error and lower slope than the OLS version using scaled and lagged, as opposed to estimated funding. It looks relatively similar to the 2SLS plot using migrant employment instead of labor force participation, but the slope is far less pronounced.

Figure 29.



Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity and migrant labor force participation data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts), EU-NED election data (https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5) and Populist 3.0 party data (https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/2EWKQ).

Note: This slope looks much smaller with larger margins of error than my 2SLS and OLS plots using migrant employment. My labor force participation plot using OLS above, however, had a similar margin of error and slope as this model. Overall, when using labor force participation, I can assume that the impact on PRRP vote shares is unlikely to be statistically significant or large, regardless of methods used (i.e., ordinary or two-stage least squares).

A.4.5 2SLS with Migrant Labor Force Participation Rates: Marginal Effects

Table 23: Robust 2SLS Causal Mediation Analysis

Effect	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value	Sign.
ACME (Indirect Effect)	-0.00171	-0.00539	0.00	0.228	
ADE (Direct Effect)	0.02081	-0.00185	0.06	0.078	.
Total Effect	0.01910	-0.00413	0.06	0.126	
Proportion Mediated	-0.08943	-1.06510	0.96	0.346	

Sample Size Used: 248. Simulations: 1000. Significance codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1.

Source: Table by Author, based on unemployment (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfur2gac/), population homogeneity and migrant labor force participation data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_r_lfsd2pwc__custom_13614525/), household income data (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10r_2hhinc/default/table?lang=en), historical payments data (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/Historic-EU-payments-annual-timeseries-regionalise/tc55-7ysv/about_data), EU Kohesio project data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/projects), EU Kohesio NUTS data (https://kohesio.ec.europa.eu/en/data/nuts), EU-NED election data (https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/IQRYP5) and Populist 3.0 party data (https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/2EWKQ).

Note: While all of these effects were significant in my causal mediation with 2SLS, which used migrant employment rates, they become insignificant here. Again, this suggests that labor force participation is a much less relevant variable than employment, regardless of the methods used.

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