



Emergence of the unified right- and left-wing populism—When radical societal changes become more important than ideology



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ABSTRACT

If among humans a single concern starts to dominate over all others, a society may start approaching a tipping point, where radical political, economic and societal changes are likely to occur. It is easy to imagine that a societal tipping point when two concerns such as economic and immigrant substantially dominate over all others can be even faster to reach than if just one concern prevails separately. Here, for a group of EEA countries comprising of old democracies and ex-socialist countries we analyse the total populist votes as the sum of right-wing (RW) and left-wing (LW) populist votes within the European Economic Area (EEA) since both populism share the negative stance towards globalization, NATO, and the EU. We find a substantial heterogeneity between old democracies and ex-socialist countries. For the old democracies we find that the percentage of the total populist votes in a given country depends on the percentage of immigrants in this country's population and the total immigration inflow into the entire EEA. We report a negative dependence between the long-term economic growth and the total populism. For both ex-socialist countries and old democracies we demonstrate that the weaker the immigrants are integrated in a society, the stronger the total populism. However, compared to populism in old democracies, populism in ex-socialist countries is more sensitive to both (i) the rate of immigrant's integration and (ii) the immigrants' fraction in total population.

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1. Introduction

Karl Popper famously stated that unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance [1]. According to Karl Popper, if a society is unconditionally tolerant, thus tolerant without limit, their ability to preserve tolerance on the long run will eventually be seized or destroyed by the intolerant. He concluded that in order to maintain a tolerant society, the society must be intolerant of intolerance. This philosophical view seems to have been proven and tested at least a couple of times in modern history. Nowadays, the unprecedented inflow of immigrants into the European Economic Area (EEA) seems to be a trigger for the high support for right-wing (RW) populism which is generally known to object not only to globalization, but also to NATO and the EU, as well as some important political values the EU and NATO are based on. However, opposing

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globalization, NATO, and the EU are traditionally political views of the left-wing (LW) parties which additionally openly show the anti-American and pro-Russian stance. In a period before the Fall of Socialism far-left and far right parties antagonized each other, the far-left being mainly pro-Russian and far-right being mainly pro-American. However, nowadays many LW and RW parties share the same political views, openly oppose some vital and salient issues for the Western world, and recently even cooperate. This implies that due to the importance of Europe for the world economy, having BREXIT in minds, the potential political synergy between the RW and LW parties may cause, in case they manage to come to power, immersive and radical political, financial, social, and even military alliance changes.

Typically, the rise of either RW- or LW-populism is equivalent to the rise of intolerance, where in different periods of human life either of two intolerant populism prevails. We expect that if economic issues prevail, a society partially becomes more prone to intolerant LW populism. In contrast, if ethnic issues start to dominate, a society starts to lean more on intolerant RW populism. Theoretically, a large body of literature focused on tolerance, mainly in association with how cooperation emerges as a result of human interaction. For example, Riolo, Cohen, and Axelrod [2] proposed a model where due to a combination of mutation and kin selection, tolerance towards those who are different is not kept constant, but in line with Popper's view on tolerance, cyclically evolves over time. As a consequence, the times of low tolerance and the times of high tolerance repeatedly interchange Nowak and Sigmund [3] proposed a model based on reputation where in the long run, cooperation can be harmed by unconditional cooperators, because they enable defectors to invade, in line with Karl Popper's idea on unlimited tolerance. However, in the absence of unconditional cooperators – or in case of reduction of tolerance – cooperative populations and cooperation as a prevailing mechanism persist much longer.

The aforementioned tides of tolerance [4] suggest that the model lacks mechanisms that may stop the non-cooperatives (or less tolerant) to prevail at some periods of time. The dynamics embedded in the previous game theory models match the dynamics of real societies. Here we make a parallel between biology and social science. In contrast to biology, where mutations can affect the course of selection, but evolutionary processes commonly take a long period of time, in social science tolerance reduction, mentioned in the context of the previous game theory model, can be viewed as the human-imposed, short-term mechanisms that may act as well. Here we note that tolerance reduction may emerge because of two reasons, either because the less tolerant prevail and may impose their new rules to everyone, or because the more tolerant change the rules and decide, at least for a while, to reduce their own tolerance in order to prevent the opponent to prevail. For the latter, the question is what makes the tolerant change their attitudes towards others at some point in time?

To this end, if one group is dominant, as long as it prevails in number over some other group, it may expect that it will live under its own rules. However, if the group becomes dominated by another drastically different group, the latter may impose completely new rules that may hold for everyone, including the former, as occurred under the ISIL in Iraq and Syria. When a human society is under constant non-equilibrium inflow of population with considerably different attitudes towards human rights and tolerance, understanding the relationship between public opinion about the inflow and the speed of inflow is crucial. If the inflow is extremely low, it is very likely that the majority will not feel jeopardized. In extremely high inflow, the majority may start to fear of the future and perceive such a situation as a form of aggression. It is of huge interest to understand how a society responds between these two inflow limits. To this end, if one group is dominant, as long as it prevails in number over some other group, it may expect that it will live under its own rules. However, if the group becomes dominated by another drastically different group, the latter may impose completely new rules that may hold for everyone, including the former, as occurred under the ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

Our work is inspired by Karl Popper hypothesis that unlimited tolerance may lead to disappearance of tolerance and Dani Rodrik hypothesis that globalization, democracy, and national sovereignty can simultaneously coexist only if one of them is restricted. Here we test these hypotheses by analysing the joint RW–LW populism, and defining the total sum of RW- and LW-populist votes, since both populism openly oppose to some vital Western values. Due to interaction between LW and RW populism, a tipping point (Card, Mas, and Rothstein 2008) [5] characterized by a societal transition from tolerance to intolerance can be even faster to reach than if just one populism exists separately. We demonstrate which economic and immigration factors significantly impact the total populist votes. We find a substantial heterogeneity between old democracies and ex-socialist countries. For old democracies we report that the weak long-term economic growth significantly contributes to the total populism. Additionally, the weaker the immigrants are integrated in a society, the stronger the total populism. However, we demonstrate that the sensitivity (tolerance) towards the immigrants in ex-socialist countries is much lower than the sensitivity in old democracies.

2. Literature

The idea of tolerance was first applied in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when struggles for power between different religions threatened to escalate. Tolerance was considered mutual acceptance of the existence of conflicting worldviews without violent interference. Today tolerance has been discussed extensively in research on immigrants. It is the willingness to 'put up with' others that one objects to (see e.g. [6–12]). A person can be tolerant only if he or she first rejects a group and then grants them certain political rights, despite the fact that he or she finds this group objectionable [13]. Research on tolerance mainly focuses on influence factors on the individual or group level, depending on the theoretical framework—individual and collective theories. Individual determinants of tolerance are variables such as the level of education, personal income, employment status, cultural conflicts where there is a lack of understanding from natives towards immigrants, level of political involvement, interpersonal trust, and feeling safe. On the other hand,

group level variables that are related with tolerance are the number of immigrants in a country (contact theory), level of unemployment, unemployment growth rate (collective economic theories) and amount of foreign investment from a country (foreign investment theory) (see [14,15]). In this paper the authors focus on determining country level determinants of tolerance.

In a series of studies on different social issues, Back and Lindholm [16] reveal that challengers of the status quo show more intergroup biases in attitude attributions, and ascribe more favourable origins of preferences to those who agree with them as opposed to those who disagree with them in comparison to defenders of the status quo. They label this effect as challenger bias and further show that challengers perceive defenders more negatively than the other way around. They comment the results in respect to people's tolerance, respect, and understanding of conflicting perspectives suggesting that those who want change are less tolerant of their opponents' point of view. If we consider conservative parties' voters as defenders and both left and right populist parties' voters as challengers, we may say that the more populist voters implies a less tolerant society.

Roughly one may say that citizens who are intolerant towards immigration become prone to RW populism while those who are sensitive and less tolerant to economic inequality embrace LW populism. More precisely, RW populism is a highly intolerant political ideology based on opposition to immigration, anti-elitism and in most cases Euroscepticism. Based on intolerance, which is a widespread social phenomenon, RW populism is responsible for segregation and creation of hubs (see [17–22]). Intolerance combined with radicalization commonly elicit violence and terrorism worldwide (see [23–29]). However, RW populism commonly shares negative stances towards globalization and the EU, supporting protectionism and Euroscepticism with the LW populism, which traditionally also focuses on anti-elitist sentiments, anti-capitalism, but also social justice, pacifism, and traditionally anti-Americanism and Russophilia.

In recent years, populism has attracted considerable interest from social scientists and political commentators (see [30–35]). According to Laclau (2005) [36], populism brings together different demands in opposition to a common enemy. Laclau views populism as a political form capable of articulating identities, interests, and needs that have been delegitimised by centre-right and centre-left parties. According to Arter (2010) [37] “there is general agreement in the comparative literature that populism is confrontational, chameleonic, culture-bound and context-dependent” which is why it is important to understand the relationship between culture and context on one side and populist politics on the other. In book *Twenty-First Century Populism* edited by Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008) [38], Frank Decker [39] analyses Germany's RW populist failures and LW's success stating that populist formations on the Right and Left thrive in periods of economic downturn, structural crises, anxiety about the future and general pessimism.

According to March and Rommerskirchen (2012) [40] there are several reasons why it is important to study radical left parties as well as radical right parties that have been in focus lately. One reason is because their electoral support in Europe is equivalent to radical right parties support. There is the rise of left-wing populist parties (see [41,42]), where the radical left parties' influence on European governments is increasing (e.g. [32,43]). Also, there is fertile environment for radical left parties, such as public spending cuts and welfare-state retrenchment, rising unemployment and social inequality. There is a far left sentiment presence measured by Eurobarometer on all EU member states where in 2010, 7.16 percent of respondents identified themselves as “far left”, whereas only 5.64 self-defined as “far right”. Until now most academic attention to radical left parties is through single-case studies (e.g. [44–47]). Very little attention has focused on analysing quantitatively determinants of “far left” support in European countries. One such study is by March and Rommerskirchen (2015) [40] focusing on 39 parties in 34 European countries from 1990 to 2008 which uses the “supply and demand” conceptual framework developed for radical right parties to identify a number of socio-economic, political-cultural and party-system variables in the external environment that might potentially affect radical left parties (RLP) support. Their results show that RLPs' success is strongly rooted in demand-side factors such as poor economic conditions, high societal Euroscepticism and, above all, a legacy of past radical left parties' success. They also report a linkage between anti-EU and anti-globalization sentiment and a radical left parties' support increase where globalization has perceived negative socio-economic impacts.

As far as the determinants of right-wing populism, Daniel Oesch's (2008) [48] research results suggest that economic parameters play a smaller role than often assumed in the rise of right-wing populism. Based on the European Social Survey results analyses, the author concludes that right-wing populist parties' electorates appear to be more afraid of immigrants' negative influence on the country's culture than on the country's economy. This result is consistent with earlier findings of no relationship between right-wing populist parties' scores and high levels of unemployment (see [49,50]).

Although many studies have focused on how migration affects the global economy, particularly low educated labour force [51–59] and either RW or LW populism [60–66], not much is known about the limitations of globalization [67–69]. For example, analysing national elections in 16 European countries from 1981 to 1998 Swank and Betz reported that the welfare state directly depresses RW populist populism [58]. Smith found that RW populism benefit from higher levels of crime by linking crime with higher levels of immigration [65]. Analysing the immigrants' integration rate in the US as the measure of integration in the US society – which is clearly in contrast with the findings of Oesch (2008), Alzheimer and Carter (2006) that economics parameters and so their economics integration play a small role in the rise of RW populism – Borjas reported that the integration of immigrants into the US was pretty slow during the past decades and that it took four generations for the earnings of immigrants to become equal to the earnings of natives [70]. Particularly interesting is the link between immigration and globalization. Rodrik [67,68] postulated that globalization, democracy, and national sovereignty are mutually irreconcilable and concluded that democracy can coexist together with national sovereignty only if globalization is restricted.



Fig. 1. Migrations towards Europe. A snapshot.

3. Data

In the paper we focus on both RW and LW populism within the European Economic Area (EEA) in which the Agreement on the EEA enables the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital to member states of either the European Union (EU) or European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Since Norway is the only EFTA representative, our sample of countries can be considered almost as an EU sample. For each country in the sample comprising of 12 old democracies and 10 ex-socialist countries, we list a corresponding RW and LW party(ies): Austria (Freedom Party of Austria; NAN), Belgium (New Flemish Alliance, Flemish Interest), Bulgaria (National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria, IMRO—Bulgarian National Movement, Attack), Croatia (Human Shield), Czech Republic (Workers' Party), Denmark (Danish People's Party,), Estonia (Conservative People's Party of Estonia, Estonian Independence Party), Hungary (Fidesz, Jobbik; NAN), France (National Front), Germany (Alternative for Germany), Greece (Golden Dawn, the Independent Greeks; Syriza), Italy (Lega Nord, Brothers of Italy), Latvia (National Alliance), Lithuania (Order and Justice), Netherlands (Party for Freedom), Norway (Progress Party), Poland (Law and Justice; NAN), Romania (United Romania Party, Greater Romania Party), Spain (;Podemos), Slovakia (Slovak National Party, Kotleba—People's Party Our Slovakia), Slovenia (Slovenian National Party, Levica), Sweden (Sweden Democrats), UK (United Kingdom Independence Party).

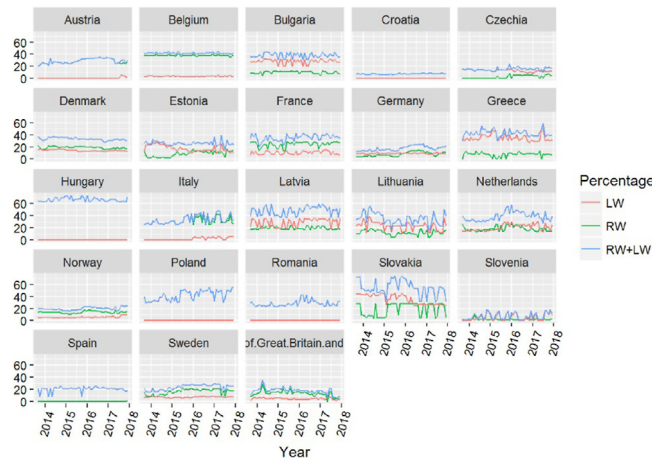
We further use for each country in the EEA sample, the percentage of immigrants from September 2013 to January 2018 by combining the official 2013 value for the number of immigrants with the number of visa applicants taken from UNHCR (see Fig. 1), considered as a proxy for a monthly country's change of immigrants' number—immigrant's monthly influx [71]. By adding immigrant's monthly influxes over EEA countries from the sample we obtain the monthly EEA immigrant's influx. Then we collect the available election poll data and election results for the same range of months [72]. The poll data ask respondents for whom they plan to vote if the elections were held today. We use the fraction of RW (LW) populist votes in a given country as a proxy for RW (LW) populism (see Fig. 2). Similarly, the total fraction of the merged RW–LW populist votes serves as a proxy for the total populism (see Fig. 2). In Fig. 3 we show the total EEA fractions of RW, LW, and the joined RW–LW populism. For some countries as Germany, there are more than one poll's results (different poll' firms) in which case we calculate the average poll's results.

Further we include violent incidents where immigrants have been involved, collecting for each incident the total number of injuries and killed recorded across the EEA [73]. We take into account economic factors that might also affect popular votes, such as GINI index which serves as a measure of economic inequality, and the unemployment rate. One would expect that economic inequality and unemployment correlate with LW populism. Additionally, we use MIPEX index [74], which serves as the migrant integration policy index. MIPEX stands as a proxy for the integration rate—the larger the MIPEX, the better the integration. One would expect that the larger the integration, the smaller the populism. We finally define at each year studied, a long-term GDP growth rate over the last 10y period, as a proxy not only for economic stagnation in case of its negative value, but also as a proxy estimating the level of peoples' desperation. It seems reasonable that the larger the stagnation, the larger the populism. Here in Table 1 we show summary statistics of the data used. GINI, MIPEX, unemployment, and 10y GDP growth rate are annually recorded in contrast to monthly recorded violent incidents, immigrants' influx, and percentage of immigrants.

Table 1

Data Statistics. OD denotes old democracies, ExS1 and ExS2 denote two groups of ex socialist countries. The symbols *im.perc* denote and *influx* denote the percentage of immigrants in the total population and the inflow of immigrants into the entire EEA relative to the total EEA population. By *unemploy* we denote the unemployment rate as the percentage of total labour force. *GDPpc10y* denotes the per capita growth rate over the last 10 years. *MIPEX* and *GINI* are immigration and economic factors. *Incidents* denote the total EEA number of casualties.

	mean	min	max
<i>im.perc.OD</i>	7.09	4.05	11.22
<i>im.perc.ExS1</i>	5.47	0.45	13.91
<i>im.perc.EEA</i>	5.68	5.20	5.96
<i>influxEEA</i>	0.014	0.003	0.035
<i>unemploy.OD</i>	9.59	3.20	29.0
<i>unemploy.ExS1</i>	8.33	2.30	14.30
<i>unemploy.ExS2</i>	8.54	3.80	19.50
<i>10yGDPgrowth.OD</i>	0.012	−0.27	0.14
<i>10yGDPgrowth.ExS1</i>	0.26	0.072	0.48
<i>10yGDPgrowth.ExS2</i>	0.18	0.018	0.398
<i>MIPEX.OD</i>	60.38	44.0	80.0
<i>MIPEX.ExS1</i>	41.31	34.0	49.0
<i>MIPEX.ExS2</i>	44.8	43.0	49.0
<i>GINI.OD</i>	31.16	26.4	36.2
<i>GINI.ExS1</i>	32.8	25.9	37.7
<i>GINI.ExS2</i>	29.7	25.7	32.5
<i>incidents.OD</i>	81.25	1.0	483.0

**Fig. 2.** Fractions of populist votes for different EEA countries.

4. Results

4.1. Motivation

In several European countries, such as Greece, Italy, Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Switzerland, RW parties have included in governments. Nevertheless even where RW populists have not gained power, groups such as Britain's UKIP, the French Front National, and Germany's Alternative für Deutschland are enjoying record popularity. During the last Austrian Presidential election Norbert Hofer, a candidate of the far-right Freedom Party of Austria received a stunning 49% of the vote, although his party at the time of election was supported by a bit more than 30% of voters. Although Hofer was ultimately defeated in the second round of election, his result vividly shows that a substantial fraction of conservatives (moderate right voters) are ready to vote for a RW candidate if left to choose between the RW candidate and a LW candidate.

Regarding the EU official stance towards the immigration policy, old democracies and ex-socialist countries typically stay on the opposite sides, which is best explained comparing Germany and Poland. While Germany received a high number of immigrants, Poland allowed to enter only a negligible number of immigrants. According to Gallup World Poll in 2016 [75] the Polish government's stance on immigration is supported by the Polish citizens where 50% of the citizens thought that their government should not accept any asylum seeker from the Middle East and North Africa. Poland together with Hungary belong to ex-socialist countries and are both among the toughest EU opponents of the official EU immigration policy. The same Gallup Poll [75] revealed the percentage of citizens who would reject a single asylum seeker for the following sample of

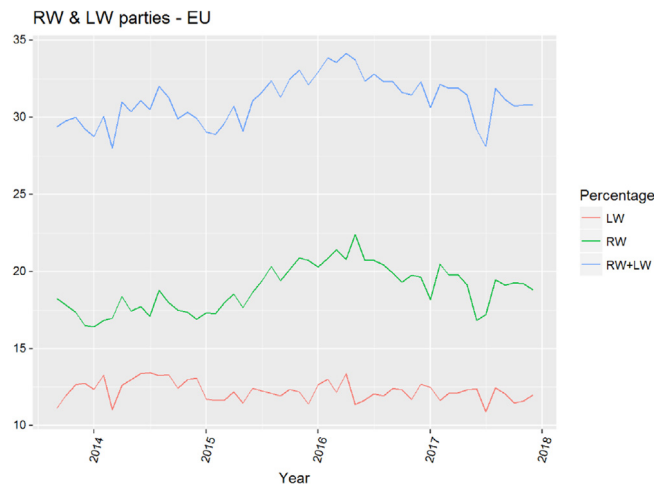


Fig. 3. Total EEA fractions of LW, RW, and the joined populism.

countries: Hungary (70%), Macedonia (66%), Montenegro (65%), Slovakia (61%), Latvia (57%), Bulgaria (56%), Czech Republic (56%), Romania (56%), Serbia (49%), Greece (47%), Albania (44%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (42%), and Croatia (40%). Here these numbers vaguely show why democracy (where 50% represents a tipping point) and national sovereignty (existence of different countries) can be a threaten for globalization if immigration is uncontrolled. Extremely radical populism in just one country can be a spark which can start a fire in the entire EU. Thus, many ex-socialist countries including Greece share similar if not even more radical stance towards immigration policy as Hungary and Poland and strongly oppose EU quotas conceived in Bruxelles in order to evenly spread the shock of the migrant crisis. Fico, a Slovak social democratic (SD) Prime Minister, had repeatedly vowed to protect Slovakia and Europe from an influx of Muslims even though a negligible percentage of Asian and African immigrants reside in Slovakia [76]. Fico repeatedly said Slovakia would accept 100 Syrian refugees only if they were Christians [76].

The previous examples suggest that ex-socialist EU countries have virtually already passed a tipping point and so crossed from a tolerant to intolerant mode regarding the immigrants' issue. However, regarding the same issue even some old democracies seem to have become much less tolerant as well. For example, after the unprecedented immigrants' 2015–2016 inflow the Nordic countries drastically reduced refugee inflows. However, it is interesting that in Sweden and Denmark it was not some RW parties that changed the policy towards immigration. In contrast, it was left government in Sweden and a coalition of moderate right and liberal government in Denmark that drastically changed their policy towards immigration and moved from a picture where these countries were presented as heavens for asylum seekers. Faced with the unprecedented inflow of immigrants, the left government in Sweden introduced extraordinary new border controls and reduced the benefits for immigrants sending a clear message to immigrants: Stay out. The next example we have seen in Hungary and perhaps we do not expect in liberal Nordic countries, however, Norway built a steel fence at its arctic border with Russia. In 2016 the Danish government cut social benefits to both refugees and immigrants by 45%. The new anti-immigrants law would delay family reunifications, confiscate migrants' valuables (cash, mobile phones) to pay for their stay. To be certain that the message will be clearly received among immigrants, the government advertised the benefit cut in newspapers in Lebanon [77]. The same government also proposed moving refugees from urban housing to campus outside cities showing vividly that integration of immigrants stopped being the government policy any longer. We found interesting that during the huge 2015–2016 immigrants' inflow, the RW party in Austria almost abruptly increased the percentage of votes and it took a while before the percentage of RW votes started to decrease towards a new balance level, where most likely the Austrians in general did not become equally liberal and tolerant as they used to be before the 2015–2016 immigrants' crisis, but rather the moderate voters became slightly more intolerant. To defend this assumption in Austria the coalition of moderate conservatives and RW populists settled a 180-page coalition agreement intended to implement a right-wing immigration policy [78]. In Italy the RW Lega party in a coalition government with Five-Star Movement (M5S) is looking to fulfil an anti-immigration pledge to deport as many as 500,000 illegal migrants. According to Salvini, Italy's deputy prime minister and interior minister, "It is not enough to reduce the numbers of people arriving. We need to increase deportations". These examples in old democracies clearly show that even many left and moderate right parties turned from a tolerant to less tolerant mode towards the immigrants. Thus, not only some fraction of moderate right voters switched to RW populists, but even the large bulk of EU society moved more to the right.

Additionally, it is also interesting to note that the most recent surge in right-wing votes in Sweden and Germany occurred almost three years after the largest 2015–2016 immigration inflow. It is worth nothing that despite the radical change in immigrants' policy in Sweden and Germany that radically ramped down the immigrants inflow, the most recent 2018 rapid surge of RW populist votes in these countries may suggest an intriguing possibility that the EU is approaching a tipping point

where even a small fluctuation, in this case in number of refugees, are capable causing a drastic response in a society, in this case in the RW support. Note that Brexit as anti-EU movement was the tipping point where the UK conservatives controlled the movement at the early stage. However, as more and more UK citizens started supporting Brexit the anti-EU movement became uncontrollable and unstoppable. However, from one grave crisis there is something even more dreadful, and that is two crises coming together, such as immigrants' synergy with economic recession. For example, Paul Krugman recently suggested that maybe the next recession will not be caused by one big shock, but instead by the combined impact of several smaller shocks [79]. In the EU perhaps one of these shocks may be less economic and more political shock, the immigrants' issue.

Therefore since ex-socialist countries mainly openly oppose accepting even the symbolic numbers of immigrants while many others are tacit supporters in opposing immigrants quotas, it makes reasonable to divide countries in the sample at least on two groups: old democracies – although even these countries are not homogeneous as we reported – and ex socialist countries. In our sample there are 12 old democracies: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, UK, Austria, Spain, Italy, and Greece. Additionally, we find that even the ex-socialist countries make sense to divide on two additional subgroups, one group comprises countries with LW supporters, and another with no or small support for LW-populism. Therefore, the first ex-socialist group denoted as ExS1 is comprised of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, while the second group denoted as ExS2 with no (or small support of) LW populism comprises Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, and Slovenia.

Besides dividing the EU on blocks of countries regarding the stance on EU immigration policy, in the paper we particularly put emphasis on merging effect between LW and RW populism due to over-lap in populist rhetoric and themes, which makes the LW- and RW-populism frequently fight for the same voters especially those who prefer anti-elitism and anti-immigration sentiments. To explain the similarity between the two populist parties, during the election campaign in Germany in 2005, the LW Party of Democratic Socialism leader at that time, Oskar Lafontaine, used a term commonly associated with the Nazi Party, *Fremdarbeiter* (“foreign workers”) [80]. In Greece, LW Syriza party is by far the largest party in Greece. However, to run Greece the LW Syriza leader and the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras offered a coalition government to the RW populists, the Independent Greeks [81]. In prior decades, coalitions between LW and RW parties in Europe used to be highly unlikely, but nowadays it is becoming more and more standard behaviour. It is intriguing that after the recent French 2017 presidential election a LW candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon was the only one who, just after the election results had been disclosed, refused to suggest his voters to vote against Le Pen in the second round, as he had done in 2002 [82]. Thus for some LW and RW supporters and leaders radical societal changes are becoming more important than ideology itself. However, there is not always a clear border between populist and conventional parties. In Slovakia a ruling SD party created a joined coalition government with nationalist RW political party, the Slovak National Party [83]. These examples vividly show how extreme left and right movements and parties can closely collaborate if sharing some common goals. Second, even some parties considered as moderate left and right are tacit supporters of populist ideas which makes a joined RW–LW populism even more dangerous.

It is generally believed that there is no significant relationship between right-wing populism and economic parameters [48–50]. Halla, Wagner, and Zweimuller [84] reported a correlation of 0.53 between the share of immigrants and the far-right vote share. Podobnik et al. [69] reported a significant relationship between the share of RW votes the total immigration inflow into the entire EEA. In this paper we focus not only on separate either RW or LW populism but on the joined left and right populism and hypothesize that both economic and immigrant factors contribute to the total populist votes in a given country. We hypothesize that economic stagnation significantly contributes to total populism. We further hypothesize that there is a substantial difference between old and new democracies regarding factors related to the rise of total populism, and in particular regarding populists' sensitivity towards immigration.

4.2. Analyses

In this paper citizens whose main concern is immigration issue are expected to become mainly prone to RW populism while those whose main concern is economic inequality and generally economic issues are supposed to rely on LW populism. However, strict borders between these two populism are nowadays arguable since both populism share to a large extent the negative stance towards globalization, NATO, and the EU. Here we analyse the emergence of the unified total populism as the sum of RW and LW populist votes within the EEA. To reveal which economic and immigration factors impact the total populism and to what extent the EU exhibits heterogeneity or homogeneity regarding the total populism, here we perform econometric analysis using a pooled time-series cross-section (TSCS) method that combines the cross-sectional data on multiple countries. In our sample 12 old democracies (OD), and 10 ex-socialist countries divided on two additional blocks (ExSoc1 and ExSoc2 hereafter) as explained before. Because for each country there are T observations along the temporal dimension, the entire dataset has $N \times T = 52$ observations. We have an extra index $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$ that refers to a cross-sectional unit. The partial overlap in political ideas between LW and RW populism, we quantify by the total percentage of RW–LW populist voters, P , equals

$$P_{it} = \beta_0 + \sum_j X_{jit}^{OD} + X_{jit}^{ExSoc1} + X_{jit}^{ExSoc2} + e_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where, X represents a set of economics and immigration variables (including violent incidents) each variable denoted with an extra index j . The variables are explained in DATA section and e_t is the random error.

Table 2

RW+LW populism. Fixed effects model (FEM) for both old democracies and ex-socialist countries, where the latter are divided in two groups. Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) Balanced Panel: $n = 23$, $T = 52$, $N = 1196$. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 38609 Residual Sum of Squares: 35003.4, R-Squared: 0.093, Adj. R-Squared: 0.067, F-statistic: 4.93193 on 24 and 1149 DF, p -value: $1.2529e-13$.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
<i>im.perc.OD</i>	1.177	0.405	2.903	0.004**
<i>im.percEEA.ExS1</i>	-0.059	1.303	-0.045	0.964
<i>im.percEEA.ExS2</i>	-0.195	1.506	-0.129	0.897
<i>influxEEA.OD</i>	-26.15	80.01	-0.327	0.744
<i>influxEEA.ExS1</i>	6.140	113.4	0.054	0.957
<i>influxEEA.ExS2</i>	62.59	124.1	0.504	0.614
<i>influxEEA.OD(lag 1)</i>	225.8	80.32	2.811	0.005**
<i>influxEEA.ExS1(lag 1)</i>	14.42	116.1	0.124	0.901
<i>influxEEA.ExS2(lag 1)</i>	46.94	126.5	0.371	0.711
<i>unemploy.OD</i>	-0.221	0.179	-1.233	0.218
<i>unemploy.ExS1</i>	0.704	0.282	2.500	0.013*
<i>unemploy.ExS2</i>	-0.313	0.275	-1.136	0.256
<i>10yGDPgrowth.OD</i>	-28.56	14.27	-2.001	0.046*
<i>10yGDPgrowth.ExS1</i>	1.175	6.702	0.175	0.861
<i>10yGDPgrowth.ExS2</i>	-43.40	20.97	-2.070	0.039*
<i>MIPEX.OD</i>	-0.621	0.615	-1.010	0.313
<i>MIPEX.ExS1</i>	1.433	1.520	0.943	0.346
<i>MIPEX.ExS2</i>	-1.833	2.077	-0.883	0.378
<i>GINI.OD</i>	-1.994	2.059	-0.969	0.333
<i>GINI.ExS1</i>	2.522	0.875	2.881	0.004**
<i>GINI.ExS2</i>	-7.738	3.575	-2.164	0.031*
<i>incidents.OD</i>	-1.17e-04	2.39e-03	-0.048	0.961
<i>incidents.ExS1</i>	3.82e-03	3.4e-03	1.122	0.262
<i>incidents.ExS2</i>	1.80e-03	3.74e-03	0.483	0.629

Table 3

RW+LW populism. Random effects model (REM) for both old democracies and ex-socialist countries, where the latter are divided in two groups. Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) Balanced Panel: $n = 23$, $T = 52$, $N = 1196$. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 40729 Residual Sum of Squares: 36907 R-Squared: 0.099 Adj. R-Squared: 0.085 F-statistic: 5.05 on 24 and 1171 DF, p -value: $4.1e-14$ Hausman Test: $\text{chisq} = 9.197$, $df = 24$, p -value = 0.997.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
(Intercept)	68.21	24.82	2.748	0.006**
<i>im.perc.OD</i>	1.089	0.403	2.691	0.007**
<i>im.percEEA.ExS1</i>	0.226	1.298	0.174	0.862
<i>im.percEEA.ExS2</i>	1.914	1.409	1.358	0.175
<i>influxEEA.OD</i>	-27.07	81.25	-0.333	0.739
<i>influxEEA.ex</i>	10.15	115.3	0.088	0.930
<i>influxEEA.ex</i>	62.13	126.1	0.493	0.622
<i>influxEEA.OD(lag 1)</i>	224.4	81.65	2.748	0.006**
<i>influxEEA.ExS1(lag 1)</i>	11.12	118.0	0.094	0.925
<i>influxEEA.ExS2(lag 1)</i>	28.32	128.4	0.221	0.825
<i>unemploy.OD</i>	-0.122	0.169	-0.726	0.468
<i>unemploy.ExS1</i>	0.699	0.283	2.471	0.014*
<i>unemploy.ExS2</i>	-0.899	0.235	-3.830	0.000***
<i>10yGDPgrowth.OD</i>	-35.51	12.66	-2.803	0.005**
<i>10yGDPgrowth.ExS1</i>	-0.137	6.780	-0.020	0.984
<i>10yGDPgrowth.ExS2</i>	-13.31	16.17	-0.823	0.411
<i>MIPEX.OD</i>	-0.397	0.232	-1.715	0.087 .
<i>MIPEX.ExS1</i>	-1.528	0.529	-2.890	0.004**
<i>MIPEX.ExS2</i>	-1.877	0.763	-2.462	0.014*
<i>GINI.OD</i>	-0.759	0.616	-1.232	0.218
<i>GINI.ExS1</i>	0.728	0.504	1.445	0.149
<i>GINI.ExS2</i>	1.492	1.024	1.457	0.145
<i>incidents.OD</i>	-3.9e-05	2.4e-03	-0.016	0.987
<i>incidents.ExS1</i>	3.7e-03	3.4e-03	1.075	0.282
<i>incidents.ExS2</i>	1.4e-03	3.8e-03	0.369	0.712

Applying both Fixed Effects Model (FEM) and Random Effects Model (REM) model (Tables 2 and 3, respectively) on three groups of countries in panel data analysis, the Hausman test helps choose between FEM or a REM. The null hypothesis is that the preferred model is random effects, and therefore if the p -value is small (less than 0.05), reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, comparing the results in Tables 2 and 3 the Hausman test shows that the null hypothesis should be accepted

Table 4

RW+LW-populism. Random effects model (REM) for old democracies. Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: $n = 12$, $T = 52$, $N = 624$. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 15039, Residual Sum of Squares: 13091, R-Squared: 0.12958, Adj. R-Squared: 0.10957, F-statistic: 6.47568 on 14 and 609 DF, p -value: 2.8634e-12. Housman Test: $\text{chisq} = 5.8468$, $df = 14$, p -value = 0.9702.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
<i>Intercept</i>	103.7	31.87	3.250	0.001**
<i>im_perc</i>	1.091	0.338	3.230	0.001**
<i>im_percEEA</i>	0.339	0.749	0.450	0.651
<i>influx(lag0)</i>	-4.650	13.16	-0.350	0.724
<i>influx(lag1)</i>	8.753	13.13	0.670	0.505
<i>influxEEA(lag0)</i>	3.212	74.87	0.040	0.966
<i>influxEEA(lag1)</i>	179.3	79.04	2.270	0.024*
<i>EEAvictims(lag0)</i>	1.0e-03	2.4e-03	0.420	0.677
<i>EEAvictims(lag1)</i>	-1.4e-03	3.1e-03	-0.440	0.660
<i>nonEEAvictims(lag0)</i>	-8.2e-04	4.0e-03	-0.210	0.837
<i>nonEEAvictims(lag1)</i>	-0.105	0.147	-0.710	0.476
<i>unemploy</i>	-0.105	0.147	-0.710	0.476
<i>10yGDPgrowth</i>	-39.00	10.75	-3.63	0.000***
<i>MIPEX</i>	-0.622	0.237	-2.620	0.009**
<i>GINI</i>	-1.521	0.707	-2.150	0.032*

and therefore the REM is appropriate model. According to REM results in Table 3, first, for old democracies we show, that (i) the long-term stagnation and economics recession (negative growth) over the last 10 years significantly and positively affect to radical merged RW-LW populist movements, where 10y interval is chosen arbitrarily. The negative regression coefficient between the 10y per capita GDP growth and the total RW-LW populism implies that the smaller the long-term GDP growth, the larger the total populism; (ii) the fraction of immigrants in a country together with (iii) the last month total influx of immigrants into the entire EEA, but not at county level, significantly contributes to radical political movements in the current month poll. The result that it is the total EEA influx of immigrants that stirs the populism in a country is most likely a consequence of the fact that the EU functions as a supranational state and due to a lack of inner borders “someone else’s problem” can easily become “my problem” as noted by Podobnik et al. analysing the most recent rise of RW populism [69]. This way of thinking is at least present in old democracies which generally share very similar political attitudes. We obtain that a country’s populist movement depends insignificantly on country’s influx of immigrants even this may look as a surprising result. However, this result is maybe due to the fact that the large number of immigrants had their final destination in a small number of EEA old democracies, precisely, Germany, Austria, and Sweden. Countries such as Denmark even introduced rigorous entrance control at the southern border with Germany. Robustness of these prior results is additionally confirmed since both REM and FEM yield the same results. Here we show that for old democracies, the MIPEX index is responsible for radical RW-LW movement through negative dependence however at only 10 percent level, that is exactly as one would expect, since, the worse the immigrants are integrated, the more voters support the joined RW-LW populist radicals. Surprisingly, violent incidents where immigrants have been involved, and incidents are aggregated at the EEA level, are not responsible for radical movements. Similar results are obtained even for economics factors such as unemployment rate and economic inequality (GINI index) which show to be irrelevant for the merged RW-LW populism among old democracies that in line with Alzheimer and Carter (2006) and Bjorklund (2007) [49,50] who reported that economics parameters play a small role in the rise of RW populism.

For ex-socialist countries, regardless of group, Table 3 suggests that the MIPEX index contributes to the support for radical RW-LW parties, the same as we found for old democracies. However, the regression coefficient of the MIPEX index for ex-socialist countries is approximately four times larger than the coefficient value we obtain for old democracies, implying that ex-socialist countries compared to old democracies are more sensitive on the rate of immigrant’s integration. Although only a small number of immigrants reside in these countries, since the level of tolerance towards others is much lower than in old democracies, it seems that even a small fraction of immigrants if not properly integrated or assimilated can trigger a strong rise of populism. However, in contrast to old democracies, for the first group of ex-socialist countries, the larger the unemployment, the stronger the joined RW-LW populism support, just as one would expect. Surprisingly the opposite dependence we find for the second group characterized by no LW supporters. What we find surprisingly in comparison to old democracies, is that the percentage of immigrants at the level of the entire EU, and the inflow of immigrants both do not affect the joined RW-LW populism in ex-socialist countries. Partially this can be explained in a way that some countries already reached the highest level of radical support, as Hungary and Poland, and therefore there is no further space for the increase in the support for radical populism. Alternatively, we hypothesize that some ex-socialist countries already underwent the transition from tolerant to intolerant mode towards the immigrants and they plan to insist that new immigrants will not be allowed to enter their countries regardless of the level of threaten from the Bruxelles.

However, bringing many potentially varying countries and political options together may create a problem that we are not capable to monitor which effect dominates over the others. Tables 4 and 10 in Supp. Mat. show the results accomplished

Table 5

RW-populism for the sample of old democracies. Random effects model (REM). Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: $n = 12$, $T = 52$, $N = 624$. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 9104.3, Residual Sum of Squares: 7827.4, R-Squared: 0.140, Adj. R-Squared: 0.115, F-statistic: 5.483 on 18 and 605 df, p -value: 4.888e–12. Hausman Test: $\text{chisq} = 1.485$, $\text{df} = 18$, p -value = 1.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
<i>Intercept</i>	93.26	38.16	2.443	0.015*
<i>im.perc</i>	0.878	0.269	3.271	0.001**
<i>influxEEA</i>	0.364	0.607	0.600	0.549
<i>influx</i>	–5.492	10.32	–0.532	0.595
<i>influx(lag 1)</i>	15.286	10.30	1.484	0.138
<i>influxEEA</i>	3.317	59.26	0.056	0.955
<i>influxEEA(lag 1)</i>	137.6	63.25	2.176	0.030*
<i>killedEEA</i>	–0.013	0.023	–0.577	0.564
<i>killedEEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.011	0.019	–0.566	0.571
<i>injuredEEA</i>	0.002	0.006	0.371	0.711
<i>injuredEEA(lag 1)</i>	0.004	0.006	0.701	0.483
<i>killednonEEA</i>	–0.008	0.019	–0.421	0.673
<i>killednonEEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.010	0.018	–0.549	0.582
<i>injurednonEEA</i>	0.003	0.007	0.496	0.620
<i>injurednonEEA(lag 1)</i>	0.006	0.008	0.801	0.423
<i>unemploy</i>	–0.011	0.125	–0.086	0.932
<i>10yGDPgrowth</i>	–30.66	9.30	–3.29	0.001**
<i>MIPEX</i>	–0.340	0.290	–1.175	0.240
<i>GINI</i>	–2.066	0.868	–2.38	0.018*

Table 6

LW-populism for the sample of old democracies. Random effects model (REM). Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: $n = 12$, $T = 52$, $N = 624$. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 5332.7 Residual Sum of Squares: 5177.5 R-Squared: 0.029112 Adj. R-Squared: 0.00022654 F-statistic: 1.00784 on 18 and 605 DF, p -value: 0.44845 Hausman Test: $\text{chisq} = 13.001$, $\text{df} = 18$, p -value = 0.7915.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
(<i>Intercept</i>)	16.051	34.021	0.4718	0.6372
<i>im.perc</i>	0.7176	0.5370	1.3363	0.1820
<i>im.percEEA</i>	–0.9915	2.1705	–0.4568	0.6480
<i>influx</i>	0.6570	8.4204	0.0780	0.9378
<i>influx(lag 1)</i>	–5.0199	8.3898	–0.5983	0.5498
<i>influx.EEA</i>	–3.3368	48.3519	–0.0690	0.9450
<i>influx.EEA(lag 1)</i>	57.157	52.7784	1.0830	0.2793
<i>killed.EEA</i>	–0.0011	0.0184	–0.0624	0.9503
<i>killed.EEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.0158	0.0156	–1.0184	0.3089
<i>injured.EEA</i>	0.0020	0.0050	0.4149	0.6783
<i>injured.EEA(lag 1)</i>	0.0054	0.0049	1.1078	0.2684
<i>killed.nonEEA</i>	–0.0140	0.0161	–0.8693	0.3850
<i>killed.nonEEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.0008	0.0158	–0.0530	0.9578
<i>injured.nonEEA</i>	0.0022	0.0055	0.4146	0.6786
<i>injured.nonEEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.0014	0.0066	–0.2257	0.8215
<i>unemploy</i>	–0.1057	0.0970	–1.0906	0.2759
<i>10yGDPgrowth</i>	5.12224	8.1349	0.6297	0.5292
<i>MIPEX</i>	–0.3357	0.2452	–1.3692	0.1714
<i>GINI</i>	0.5067	0.7479	0.6775	0.4983

by applying again REM and FEM models but this time only for old democracies. Again we obtain virtually the same results as when ex socialist countries are included (see [Tables 2](#) and [3](#)). However this time the REM approach in [Table 4](#) reports that the GINI index significantly contributes to the joined RW-LW populism but in surprising way, namely, the larger economic inequality, the larger the populism. A possible answer to this unusual dependence is that since the world economics is in globalization mode, we can expect worse economics in countries which do not properly award those with best skills and education. Living in a globalized world, if a country promotes equality in salaries the most educated and skilled immigrate to countries where their skills will be better rewarded. Again, the majority of EEA citizens seem immune on violent incidents, where here we sum up the total victims at the EEA level.

For old democracies, analysing the RW populism separately the Hausman test again prefers REM over FEM model ([Tables 5](#) and [11](#) in Supp. Mat.). Compared to the results obtained in the previous regressions for the joined RW-LW populism, in [Table 5](#) when analysing the RW populism alone, we obtain virtually the same results applying in this regression the number of killed and injured at the EEA level and non-EEA level. We obtain that violent incidents do not contribute to the rise of RW populism.

Table 7

RW-populism for the sample of ex-socialist countries. Random effects model (REM). Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: $n = 12$, $T = 52$, $N = 624$. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 14944 Residual Sum of Squares: 13385 R-Squared: 0.10429 Adj. R-Squared: 0.075137 F-statistic: 3.57716 on 18 and 553 DF, p -value: 1.0524e–06 Hausman Test: $\text{chisel} = 0.17122$, $\text{df} = 18$, p -value = 1.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
(Intercept)	–32.995	46.309	–0.7125	0.4764
<i>im_perc</i>	2.364	3.872	0.6106	0.541
<i>im_percEU</i>	9.957	3.733	2.6674	0.007**
<i>influx</i>	–1.558	11.866	–0.1313	0.895
<i>influx(lag 1)</i>	12.024	11.933	1.0080	0.313
<i>influx.EEA</i>	35.956	82.924	0.4336	0.664
<i>influx.EEA(lag 1)</i>	16.434	90.206	0.1822	0.855
<i>killed.EEA</i>	–0.0212	0.032	–0.6555	0.512
<i>killed.EEA(lag 1)</i>	0.017	0.027	0.6248	0.532
<i>injured.EEA</i>	0.010	0.009	1.1188	0.263
<i>injured.EEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.006	0.009	–0.7030	0.482
<i>killed.nonEEA</i>	–0.007	0.028	–0.2545	0.799
<i>killed.nonEEA(lag 1)</i>	0.022	0.028	0.7756	0.438
<i>injured.nonEEA</i>	0.002	0.010	0.2465	0.805
<i>injurednonEEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.006	0.012	–0.5104	0.609
<i>unemploy</i>	–0.413	0.157	–2.6315	0.008**
<i>GDPpercap10y</i>	–6.924	5.092	–1.3599	0.174
<i>MIPEX</i>	0.427	0.833	0.5131	0.608
<i>GINI</i>	0.298	0.655	0.4542	0.649

Table 8

LW-populism for the sample of ex-socialist countries. Random effects model (REM). Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: $n = 12$, $T = 52$, $N = 624$. Total Sum of Squares: 12460 Residual Sum of Squares: 10999 R-Squared: 0.11727 Adj. R-Squared: 0.088537 F-statistic: 4.08139 on 18 and 553 DF, p -value: 4.5849e–08 Hausman Test: $\text{chisq} = 0.22385$, $\text{df} = 18$, p -value = 1.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
(Intercept)	32.0726	43.8635	0.7312	0.464
<i>im_perc</i>	1.9679	3.5205	0.5590	0.576
<i>im_perc.EEA</i>	–4.2709	3.3854	–1.2616	0.207
<i>influx</i>	1.8326	10.7569	0.1704	0.864
<i>influx(lag 1)</i>	0.4362	10.8146	0.0403	0.967
<i>influx.EEA</i>	–71.632	75.1715	–0.9529	0.341
<i>influx.EEA(lag 1)</i>	67.397	81.7745	0.8242	0.410
<i>killed.EEA</i>	–0.0726	0.0294	–2.4692	0.014*
<i>killed.EEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.0583	0.0246	–2.3625	0.018*
<i>injured.EEA</i>	0.0175	0.0079	2.1952	0.028*
<i>injured.EEA(lag 1)</i>	0.0156	0.0079	1.9821	0.047*
<i>killed.nonEEA</i>	0.0375	0.0254	1.4749	0.141
<i>killed.nonEEA(lag 1)</i>	–0.0132	0.0252	–0.5266	0.599
<i>injured.nonEEA</i>	–0.0071	0.0087	–0.8106	0.418
<i>injured.nonEEA(lag 1)</i>	0.0159	0.0105	1.5086	0.132
<i>unemploy</i>	0.3205	0.1425	2.2483	0.025*
<i>GDPpercap10y</i>	20.995	4.6245	4.5404	6.8e–06***
<i>MIPEX</i>	–1.1104	0.7957	–1.3955	0.163
<i>GINI</i>	1.0612	0.6126	1.7323	0.083

Even more surprising results we find by analysing LW populism for old democracies. In Tables 6 and 12 in Supp. Mat. unemployment rate, long term stagnation and economics inequality which are supposed to be traditional left paradigms for many years seem to be not important nowadays for the majority of LW supporters. However, what we find astonishing is that the percentage of immigrants in the general population and the level of immigrants integration show the smallest p -value, however insignificantly, and these are the attributes more related to RW supporters. This result somehow explain the level of overlap between the RW and LW populism.

Comparing old democracies and ex-socialist countries on the issue of radical populism, we should raise a question: Is there any substantial difference between the RW populists in old democracies and ex-socialist countries? For the latter we find a substantial difference compared to the former. First, in contrast to old democracies, the RW populism in ex-socialist countries depends not on the country's percentage of immigrants, but on the percentage of immigrants in the EU. This result seems reasonable because not much immigrants live in these countries and so the RW populists are not so sensitive on

Table 9

RW-LW-populism for a smaller sample of old democracies: Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, France, the UK. Random effects model (REM). Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: $n = 6$, $T = 52$, $N = 312$. Total Sum of Squares: 8942.2 Residual Sum of Squares: 6441.2 R-Squared: 0.2797 Adj. R-Squared: 0.26131 F-statistic: 16.862 on 7 and 3014 DF, p -value: $2.22e-16$ Hausman Test: $\text{chisq} = 0.22385$, $\text{df} = 18$, p -value = 1.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
(Intercept)	1.246e+02	4.244e+1	2.936	0.004**
imigperc	2.024	1.050	1.927	0.0548.
influxEU(lag 1)	303.4	37.02	8.195	7.082e-15***
killedEU(lag 1)	-7.580	3.364	-0.225	0.822
injuredEU(lag 1)	-1.003	1.0769e-02	-0.009	0.993
10yGDPgrowth	-66.82	26.33	-2.537	0.0117*
MIPEX	-6.608	3.005	-2.199	0.0286*
GINI	2.366	1.025	-2.3079	0.0217*

Table 10

RW+LW-populism. Fixed effects model (FEM) for old democracies. Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 14534, Residual Sum of Squares: 12728, R-Squared: 0.12425, Adj. R-Squared: 0.087638, F-statistic: 6.06023 on 14 and 598 DF, p -value: $2.6827e-11$.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	t -value	$P > t $
im.perc	1.209	0.345	3.510	0.000***
im.percEU	0.519	0.764	0.679	0.497
influx(lag 0)	-5.013	13.10	-0.382	0.702
influx(lag 1)	8.682	13.08	0.664	0.507
influxEU(lag 0)	2.271	74.55	0.030	0.976
ifluxEU(lag 1)	178.9	78.78	2.271	0.023*
totalvictimsEU(lag 0)	1.5e-03	3.0e-03	0.487	0.626
totalvictimsEU(lag 1)	9.5e-04	2.4e-03	0.397	0.692
totalvictimsEU(lag 2)	-1.4e-03	3.1e-03	-0.455	0.649
totalvictimsEU(lag 1)	-9.3e-04	3.9e-03	-0.236	0.813
unemploy	-0.247	0.161	-1.538	0.125
10yGDPgrowth	-29.86	12.33	-2.421	0.015*
MIPEX	-0.714	0.528	-1.353	0.177
GINI	-2.067	1.726	-1.198	0.231

domestic immigrants. However, being part of a supranational state, as the EU definitely is, makes the RW populists in ex-socialist countries concerned about the percentage of immigrants living in the entire EU. Comparison with old democracies also reveal that the RW populism in ex-socialist countries is not affected by the immigrants influx into the EEA, in contrast to the RW populism in old democracies, most likely because ex socialist countries do not pay bills for the new coming immigrants. However, comparing [Tables 5](#) and [7](#) we find an interesting result that the regression coefficient of the percentage of immigrants in the entire EEA for ex-socialist countries is approximately eleven times larger than the regression coefficient of the percentage of country's immigrants for old democracies, that is in line with a broad opinion that the sensitivity (if not even tolerance) towards the immigrants in ex-socialist countries is much lower than the sensitivity in old democracies. However, this is a rough estimate because we compare two different regression coefficients, the one related to the fraction of immigrants in a country ([Table 5](#)) with the another related to the fraction of immigrants in the entire EEA ([Table 7](#)).

Regarding the LW populism in ex socialist countries, as one would expect unemployment and economic inequality are potential triggers for the rise of this type of populism. We also find that all incidents where immigrants are perpetrators also affect the LW populism but only the incidents occurring within the EEA. The LW supporters are not sensitive on incidents taking place without the EU. However, we find that the LW populism in this block of countries shows pretty surprising attributes since the dependences between casualties and LW populism are not always positive as one would expect. See [Table 8](#).

Next we show that not only ex-socialist countries differ among each other, but also old democracies. In [Table 9](#) for a sample of six old democracies comprising Germany, Austria, France, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK, REM reveals that the citizens in these countries show a higher level of sensitivity on immigration than the citizens in the larger sample of twelve old democracies which we analysed in the past analyses. While for the larger sample of 12 countries, the estimated values for the regression's coefficients of the fraction of immigrants in a country and the last month total influx of immigrants into the entire EEA equal 1.09 and 179 ([Table 4](#)), respectively, for the smaller sample of countries we obtain 2.02 and 303 (see [Table 9](#)). Thus, if the fraction of RW-LW populists roughly represents the country's sensitivity on immigration, in the smaller sample the country citizens are more than twice more sensitive on both the current percentage of immigrants and the influx of new immigrants entering the EU. The reason for this result is perhaps because the majority of immigrants find these countries as their final destination.

Table 11

RW-populism. Fixed effects model (FEM) for old democracies. Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 8946.1, Residual Sum of Squares: 7689.7, R-Squared: 0.1404, Adj. R-Squared: 0.0985, F-statistic: 5.391 on 18 and 594 DF, *p*-value: 9.22e–12.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	<i>t</i> -value	<i>P</i> > <i>t</i>
<i>im.perc</i>	0.880	0.271	3.253	0.001**
<i>im.percEEA</i>	0.316	0.616	0.513	0.608
<i>influx(lag0)</i>	–5.403	10.33	–0.523	0.601
<i>influx(lag1)</i>	15.33	10.31	1.487	0.137
<i>influx.EEA(lag0)</i>	3.252	59.31	0.054	0.956
<i>influx.EEA(lag1)</i>	138.5	63.35	2.185	0.029*
<i>killed.EEA(lag0)</i>	–0.013	0.023	–0.593	0.553
<i>killed.EEA(lag1)</i>	–0.011	0.019	–0.571	0.568
<i>injured.EEA(lag0)</i>	0.002	0.006	0.379	0.704
<i>injured.EEA(lag1)</i>	0.004	0.006	0.710	0.478
<i>killed.nonEEA(lag0)</i>	–0.009	0.019	–0.443	0.657
<i>killed.nonEEA(lag1)</i>	–0.011	0.019	–0.575	0.565
<i>injured.nonEEA(lag0)</i>	0.003	0.007	0.520	0.603
<i>injured.nonEEA(lag1)</i>	0.007	0.008	0.830	0.406
<i>unemploy</i>	0.018	0.129	0.138	0.890
<i>10yGDPgrowth</i>	–31.50	9.866	–3.192	0.001**
<i>MIPEX</i>	–0.283	0.413	–0.685	0.493
<i>GINI</i>	–1.968	1.347	–1.461	0.144

Table 12

LW-populism for the sample of old democracies. Fixed effects model (FEM). Pooled time series cross-section analysis (TSCS) with random-effects GLS regression as defined in Eq. (1). Swamy-Arora's transformation. Balanced Panel: *n* = 12, *T* = 52, *N* = 624. Test statistics: Total Sum of Squares: 5224.2 Residual Sum of Squares: 5061.5 R-Squared: 0.031154 Adj. R-Squared: –0.016146 F-statistic: 1.06115 on 18 and 594 DF, *p*-value: 0.38864.

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	<i>t</i> -value	<i>P</i> > <i>t</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	93.26	38.16	2.443	0.015*
<i>im.perc</i>	0.930	0.571	1.631	0.103
<i>im.perc.EEA</i>	–1.127	2.175	–0.518	0.605
<i>influx</i>	0.533	8.404	0.063	0.950
<i>influx(lag1)</i>	–5.020	8.372	–0.600	0.549
<i>influxEEA</i>	–2.084	48.26	–0.043	0.966
<i>influxEEA(lag1)</i>	58.48	52.68	1.110	0.267
<i>killed.EEA</i>	–0.001	0.018	–0.061	0.952
<i>killed.EEA(lag1)</i>	–0.0154	0.015	–0.991	0.322
<i>injured.EEA</i>	0.002	0.005	0.388	0.698
<i>injured.EEA(lag1)</i>	0.005	0.005	1.061	0.289
<i>killed.nonEEA</i>	–0.014	0.016	–0.887	0.375
<i>killed.nonEEA(lag1)</i>	–0.001	0.016	–0.055	0.956
<i>injured.nonEEA</i>	0.002	0.005	0.405	0.686
<i>injured.nonEEA(lag1)</i>	–0.001	0.007	–0.221	0.8251
<i>unemploy</i>	–0.153	0.099	–1.552	0.121
<i>10yGDPgrowth</i>	10.66	8.809	1.210	0.227
<i>MIPEX</i>	–0.291	0.335	–0.870	0.385
<i>GINI</i>	–0.144	1.093	–0.132	0.895

5. Discussion and conclusion

Previous decades in Europe were characterized by populism tides where either LW or RW populism dominated and their supporters mainly disliked each other. However, at least in Europe the prior antagonism between the LW and RW supporters seems to be over and even though the tides of LW and RW populism still exist nowadays, their antagonism has been replaced by emerging cooperation. Therefore, our motivation that RW and LW populism should be treated as a joint emerging radical movement is based on assumption that in general both populism oppose the EU establishment and Western policy more than they object each other. The merging process of radical left and radical right in order to work together does exist and is confirmed by several EU governments – both in old democracies and ex-socialist countries – confirming that the RW-LW populists' intention to trigger radical changes in Europe is much more important than ideology itself.

However, European populism is not homogeneous. Europe is nowadays affected by both immigration and economic crises, but these crises do not affect all countries with equal intensity. Interestingly, while eight years ago in Eurobarometer surveys more Europeans politically declared themselves as far left than as far right, today mainly because of unprecedented immigrants' inflow in 2015 the situation seems much different. The fact that our analysis more easily identifies factors responsible for RW populism than factors responsible for LW populism suggests that those who are closer to left ideas but

feel strongly unsatisfied with the current political and economic situation do not mind to swing from left to right extremism if they feel that the latter populism has more chance to radically change Europe. Nowadays it seems very likely that Europeans who strongly want changes care much more about how to elicit changes in Europe than how to please their own political views.

We find significant differences between the radical movements in old democracies and ex-socialist countries. For old democracies, we find a negative dependence between the long-term economic growth and the radical merged RW-LW populist movements. We also report that the percentage of immigrants in a country together with the last month total influx of immigrants into the entire EU significantly affects radical political movements. The most surprising result we found for both old democracies and ex-socialist countries is that violent incidents do not trigger populism. It is possible that Europeans have become immune on the current frequency of terrorist and violent incidents and consider them as something that come and go. In contrast, immigrants who are already in Europe are considered as a permanent threat. Additionally, the MIPEX index for ex-socialist countries contributes to populism roughly four times more than in case of old democracies, meaning that ex-socialist countries are more sensitive to how immigrants integrate to the society than the old democracies. However, while large immigrant influxes such as those in 2015 strongly stirred radical right populism in old democracies, in our results we do not identify the same dependence among the ex-socialist countries. This finding can be due to the fact that the ex-socialist countries, particularly countries such as Hungary, Slovak Republic, and Poland, perhaps already made a political and societal transition from tolerant to intolerant mode regarding the immigrants' issue and in these countries the RW support already reached the highest possible level that immigrants' shock can hardly change it.

But what is the signal that a society is becoming more and more radicalized? What makes socialists become far-left supporters or conservatives become RW supporters? For the latter case, if e.g. traditional conservatives perceive immigrants as a threat, they may impose a mechanism in order to actively defend themselves, e.g. either giving larger support to RW parties at non-government level, or redirecting immigrants' boats to Papua New Guinea, as is the official Australian policy. The EU and Australian official policies towards immigrants clearly reveal how democratic countries can exhibit considerably different policy about the immigrants. Generally, in prosperous years we expect citizens' interests and concerns generally span a multidimensional space, since people are different and exhibit different interests and fears. However, during non-prosperous and gloomy societal periods, the same multi-dimensional space of human concerns and interests starts to shrink, and a single issue starts dominating over all others. As the societal condition is getting worse a society gradually approaches a tipping point, characterized by radical societal changes and a sudden shift from one phase to another, considerably different, where radical political and societal changes are likely to happen.

Obviously even more radical societal changes are possible if two or more issues simultaneously come together. Then one may expect a nonlinear synergy effect that is hard to control if the society comes too close to the tipping point. This was demonstrated in the UK with BREXIT that was conceived by the UK elite to enable better position for the UK within the EU. However, over time the BREXIT process became un-controllable since the society became too polarized and too close to the tipping point where there is no way back. How close a society is from the tipping point is of huge importance. BREXIT already affected the UK economy, but if the merged populism becomes a predominant political platform in the EU, we may expect even more radical political, financial, social changes and even changes in military Alliances. Precisely, the radical political changes may affect the EU, but also NATO, and EU links with the US. In months to come it will be interesting to monitor what will be the attitude towards the EU immigrants' policy in some other ex-socialist countries, precisely, whether these countries will transfer from tacit anti-immigrants' supporters to open supporters of Poland and Hungary or they will embrace the official EU immigrants' policy.

One of the main reasons for bad perception on immigration is the low integration rate that is a consequence of gathering immigrants in large hubs, where many point this issue as one of the main triggers for populism. However, some countries such as Singapore, where democracy has no Western standards, has implemented an ethnic quota policy on public housing. A question of huge interest in public management, in agreement with Rodrik hypothesis that globalization, democracy, and national sovereignty are mutually irreconcilable, is the following: is it better to restrict democracy and impose restrictions like this and avoid future potentially immense conflicts or we should continue with the policy of allowing the free choice in selling and renting of public housing which may elicit populism and anti-immigration sentiments?

Our findings open several directions for future research. Future research should focus on clarifying further some of our findings, such as understanding the reasons behind different direction of relationship between unemployment and populism for two subgroups of ex-socialist countries. Further, more should be understood about the relationship between economic inequality and populism and the possible explanation we offer for this relationship should be empirically tested. Also, to complement the current findings, the idea of certain people being prone to swing from LW populism to RW populism and vice-versa could be explored from a psychological point of view with the aim of understanding individual factors that drive people to become populists. Further, since the data that we analyse span for 5 years in which the immigrant crisis has played an important role, in future research it would be important to test whether these results replicate when analysing a longer span of data. When discussing the limitations of our study, one limitation is related to the fact that some of the data that we analyse is reported on a monthly basis, while some of the data is reported on a yearly basis. Further, regarding the regression models, the size of the percentage of explained variance of populism is rather small, particularly for LW populism for old democracies and RW-LW populism for a smaller sample of old democracies. This suggests that there could be additional important economic and immigration factors, as well as other type of variables important for the prediction of populism. Therefore, future research should focus on detecting these additional important variables related to RW-LW populism.

Understanding the underlying tolerance dynamics towards the immigrants may help policy-makers propose policy changes in order to prevent potential future conflicts, since both populism share the same negative stance towards globalization, NATO, and the EU. So policy makers, no matter which political option they belong to, should carefully monitor whether there is a balance between immigrants' in-flow and the rate of their integration. Strong emphasis for policy makers should be on immigrants' integration, particularly in ex-socialist countries. In case of the imbalance, radical movements may become the only political option for the majority of voters. In a kind of Popperian twist, the population that is benevolent in the long term ends up trying to protect benevolence by temporarily renouncing it.

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Appendix. Supplementary Material

A fixed effects model (FEM) is a model in which the model parameters are fixed or non-random quantities, in contrast to random effects models (REM) in which all or some of the model parameters are considered as random variables. A FEM refers to a regression model in which the group means are fixed (non-random) as opposed to a random effects model in which the group means are a random sample from a population [85].

There are two common assumptions: the random effects assumption and the fixed effects assumption. The random effects assumption used for REM is that the individual-specific effects are uncorrelated with the independent variables. In contrast, for the fixed effect assumption the individual-specific effects are correlated with the independent variables. If the random effects assumption holds, the random effects model is more efficient than the fixed effects model, and vice versa. Commonly, statistical tests such as the Durbin–Wu–Hausman test is used to discriminate between REM and FEM [85,86]. See [Tables 10 and 12](#).

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