



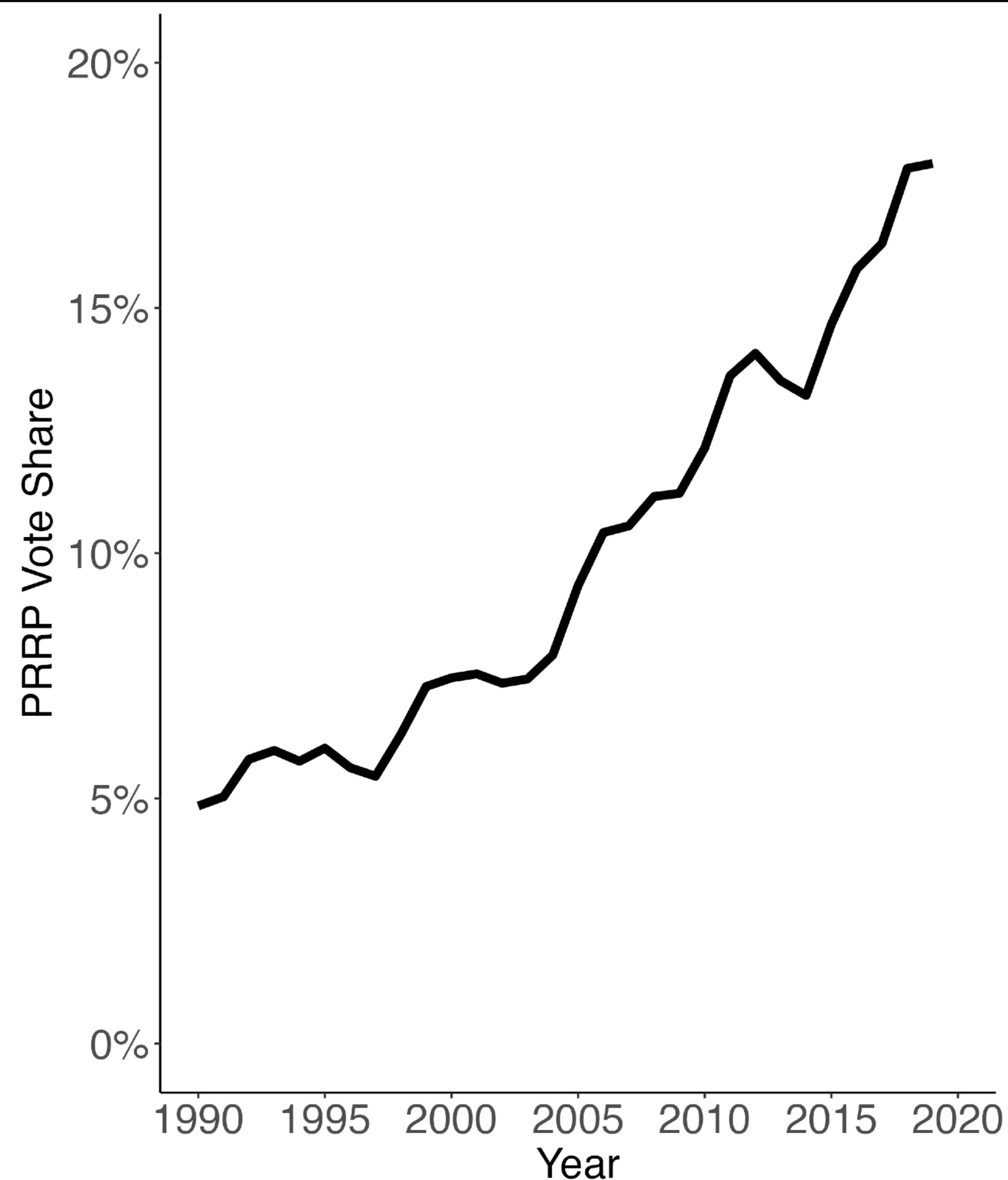
Decomposing the Rise of the Populist Radical Right

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Rise of Populist Radical Right

Average Vote Share for PRRP



- Surge of **Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRP)** in Europe
- Widespread implications
 - Joining/leading govt.
 - Affect policies
 - Erode democratic norms
- **No consensus on main drivers**

Goal: Decomposing the Rise of PRRP

Three Drivers:

- **Supply: Party Positions**

- Ex. PRRP gained support by moderating positions (Lancaster 2020)

- **Demand 1: Voters' demographics/opinions (“Voter Attributes”)**

- Ex. Growing hostility towards immigrants (Hangartner 2019)

- **Demand 2: Priorities at the ballot (“Voter Priorities”)**

- Ex. Voters prioritize cultural issues more (Bartels 2017, Sides et al 2019)

What We Do

- **Merge** wide datasets on
 - parties (CMP)
 - voters (WVS/IVS)
- **Estimate** voter priorities with a probabilistic voting model
- **Quantify** relative importance of each component
 - Decomposition method—common in Labor Economics (Inequality)

Results: Decomposing the Rise of PRRP

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- **Demand 2: Priorities at the ballot (“Voter Priorities”)**

- Ex. Voters prioritize cultural issues more (Bartels 2017, Sides et al 2019)

- **Residuals**

- **Party Entry**

Results: Decomposing the Rise of PRRP

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Demand 1: Voters' demographics/opinions ("Voter Attributes")

- Ex. Growing hostility towards immigrants (Hangartner 2019)

Demand 2: Priorities at the ballot ("Voter Priorities")

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- Residuals

Party Entry

Contribution

- **Demonstrate that decomposition is an useful **descriptive** method**
 - Common in Labor, especially for inequality: (Juhn et al., 1993; DiNardo et al., 1996)
- **Know the What/How PRRP rise (which is important for knowing the Why PRRP rise)**
 - **Reject theories that are inconsistent with facts**
 - Supply: (Akkerman, 2015; Berman, 2021; Berman and Kundnani, 2021; Zeira, 2022)
 - Demand I: Voter attributes (Hangartner et al., 2019)
 - Demand II: Voter priorities (Bartels, 2017; Sides et al., 2019; Magistro and Wittstock, 2021)
 - **Provide mechanisms for reduced-form analysis:** Tech., Financial Crises, Trade, Media,...
- **Empirics on theory lit. on growing importance of cultural issues:** (Enke, 2020)

Today's Plan

1. Data & Framework

2. Results

(a) Party Positions

(b) Voter Characteristics

(c) Voter Priorities

Data: Parties

- CMP (Comparative Manifesto Project)
 - Share of sentences in manifesto (party platform) discussing topics in each lower-house election
 - For many issues positive and negative mention counted separately
 - This paper
 - Use all the 56 party positions [Sum Stat](#)
 - Show results using two established indices
 - “Economic” and “Cultural” positions [Econ Indices](#) [Cultural Indices](#)

Data: Voters

- Integrated Values Survey
 - Combination of the World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Survey (EVS)
 - Three waves: 2005-2009, 2011-2013, 2017-2020
 - Use over 100 variables that exist for vast majority of country-waves
 - Demographics
 - Opinions
 - Supported Parties

[Sum Stat](#)

Model: Probabilistic Voting Model

- Utility of voter i from party j

$$U_{ij} = z_j' w_i(x_i) + \zeta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

- Party positions: $z_j = \{z_j^1, \dots, z_j^L\}$
- Voter's weights: $w_i(x_i) = \{w_i^1, \dots, w_i^L\}$
- Party's valence: ζ_j
- Similar to a bliss point model

[Details](#)

Voting Weights

- Demand: voting weights

$$w_i(x_i) = x_i\phi + \beta$$

- Linear function of voter characteristics x_i with parameters ϕ, β
- x_i : opinions and demographics, directly observed in IVS
- ϕ, β : how characteristics map to weights
 - Estimated [Estimation Details](#)

Predict PRRP vote share

- PRRP vote share at time t

$$S_t = \int P(\Pi | x_i ; \theta_t, Z_t, \zeta_t) f_t(x_i) dx_i$$

- $P(\Pi | x_i)$ —prob. of voting for PRRP
 - $Z_t = \{z_{j,t}\}_{j \in J(c,t)}$: matrix of party positions z_j at time t
 - $f_t(x_i)$: density of voter characteristics at time t
 - $\theta_t = (\phi_t, \beta_t)$: set of priority parameters
 - $\zeta_t = \{\zeta_{j,t}\}_{j \in J(c,t)}$: vector of residuals (including party entry)

Decomposing Changes in PRRP Support

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta_t^{t+1}S &= \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_{t+1}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \zeta_t) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \text{Total} \\ &= \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, \underline{Z_{t+1}}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_t(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, \underline{Z_t}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \text{Party Positions} \\ &\quad + \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, Z_{t+1}, \underline{\zeta_{t+1}}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, Z_{t+1}, \underline{\zeta_t}) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \text{Voter Characteristics} \\ &\quad + \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \underline{\theta_{t+1}}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \underline{\theta_t}, Z_{t+1}, \zeta_{t+1}) f_{t+1}(x_i) dx_i && \text{Voter Priorities} \\ &\quad + \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \underline{\zeta_{t+1}}) f_t(x_i) dx_i - \int P(\Pi \mid x_i; \theta_t, Z_t, \underline{\zeta_t}) f_t(x_i) dx_i && \text{Residual}\end{aligned}$$

Limitation, Clarifications, and Caveat

1. Descriptive Analysis

- Not causal, components could affect each other
- Guide future causal analysis

2. No strategic considerations

- Coordination effects, barriers to entry
- Attribute to the residual

3. No turnout

Today's Plan

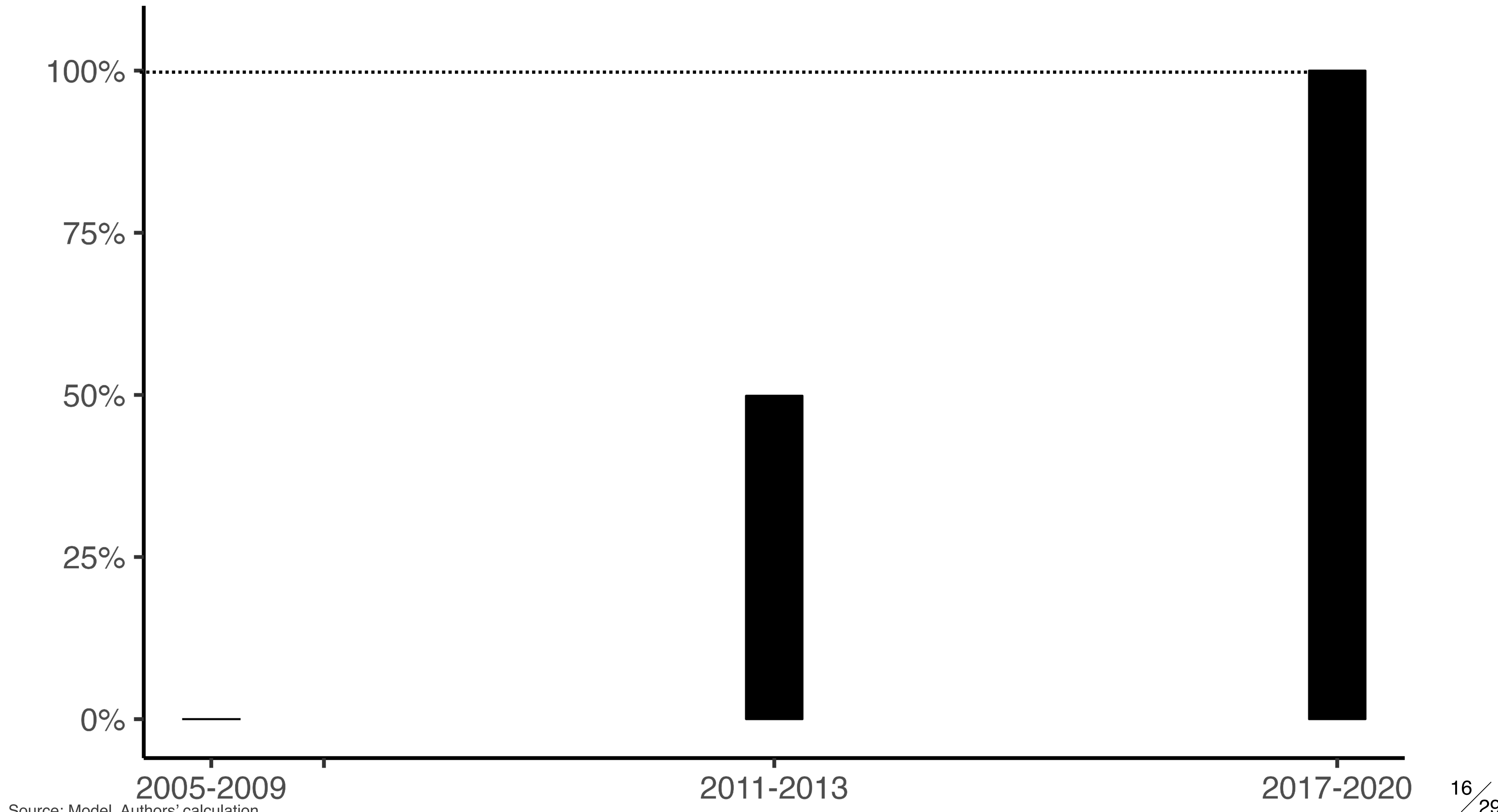
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2. Results

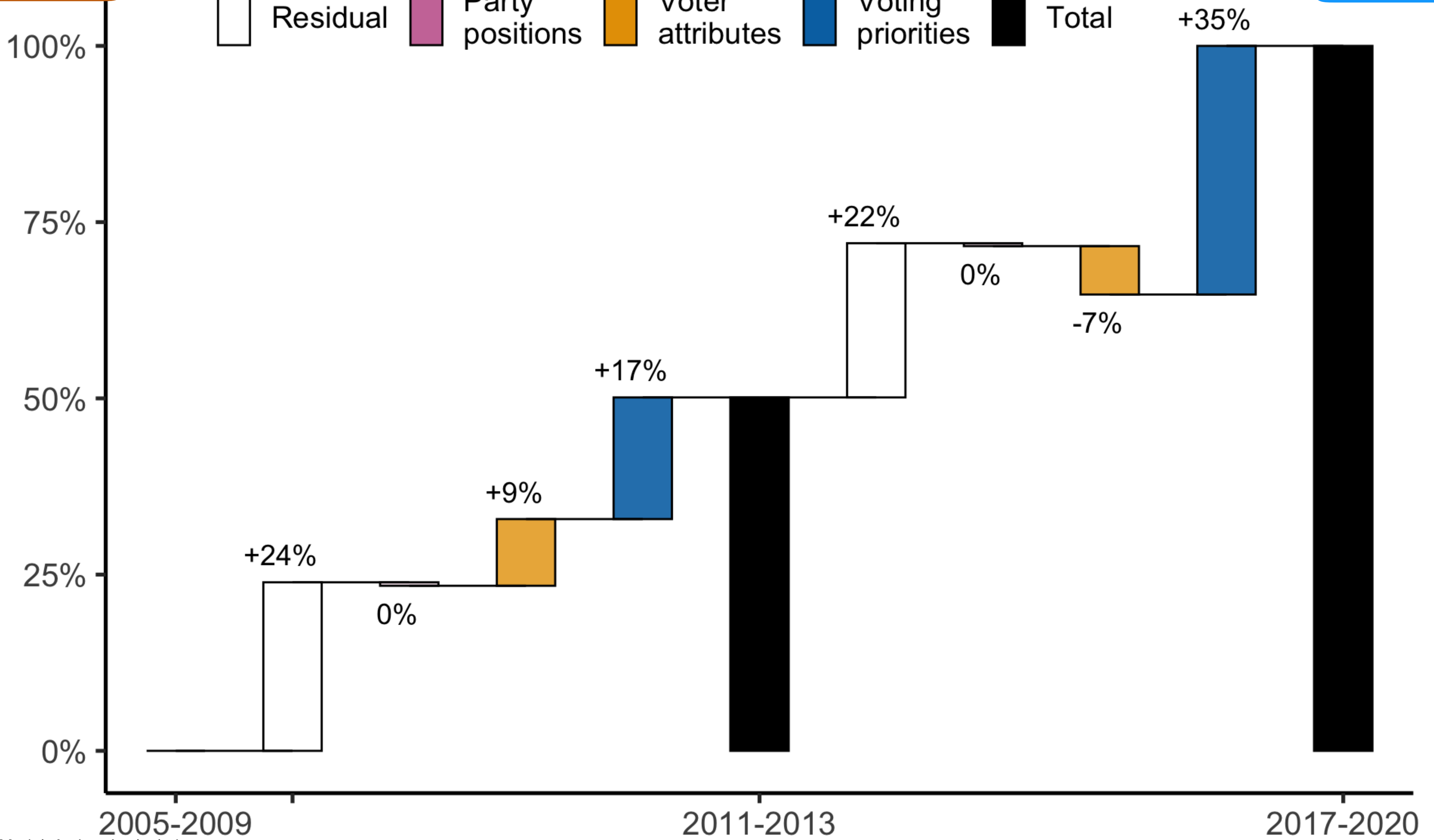
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Residual Party positions Voter attributes Voting priorities Total



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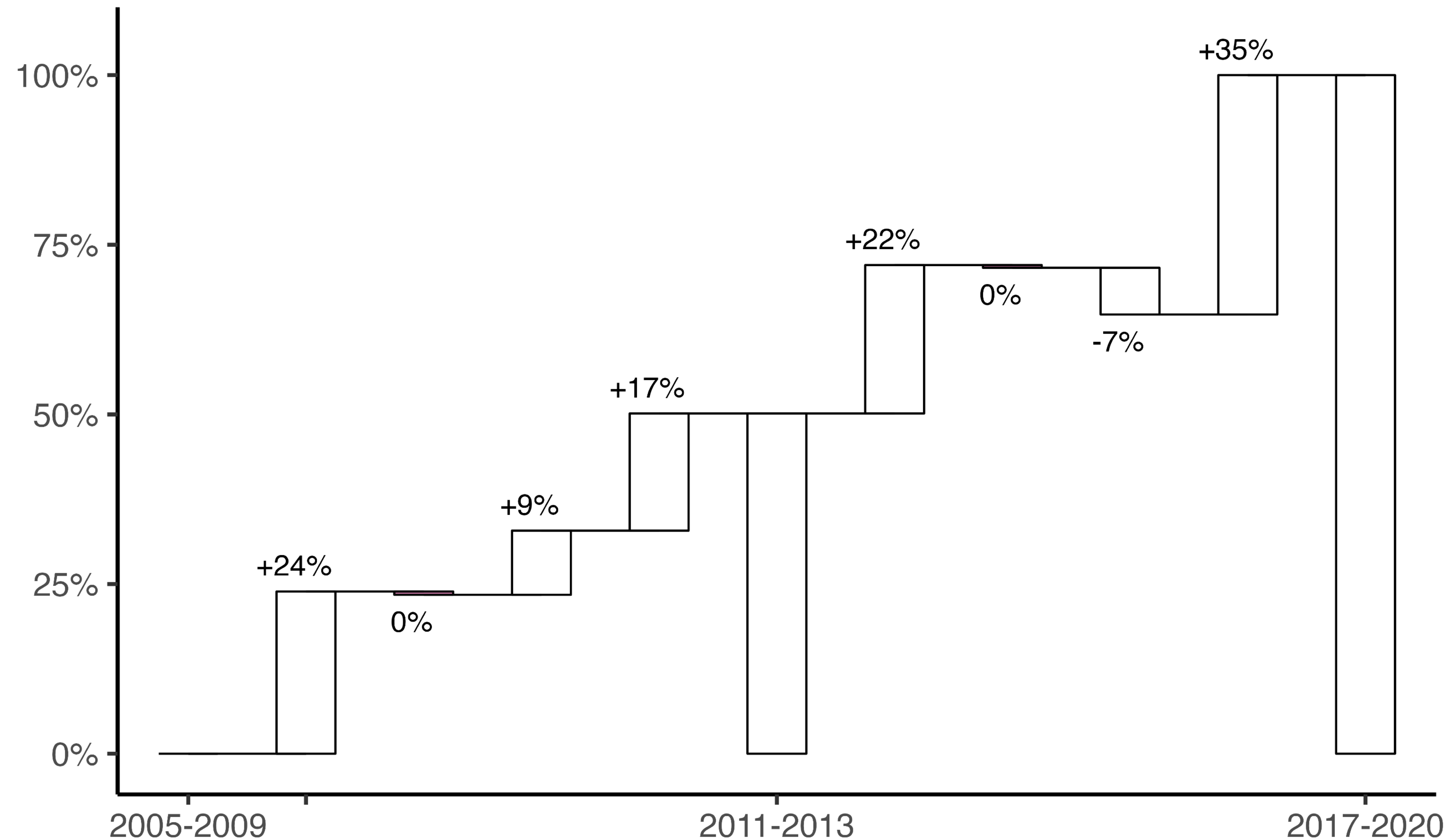
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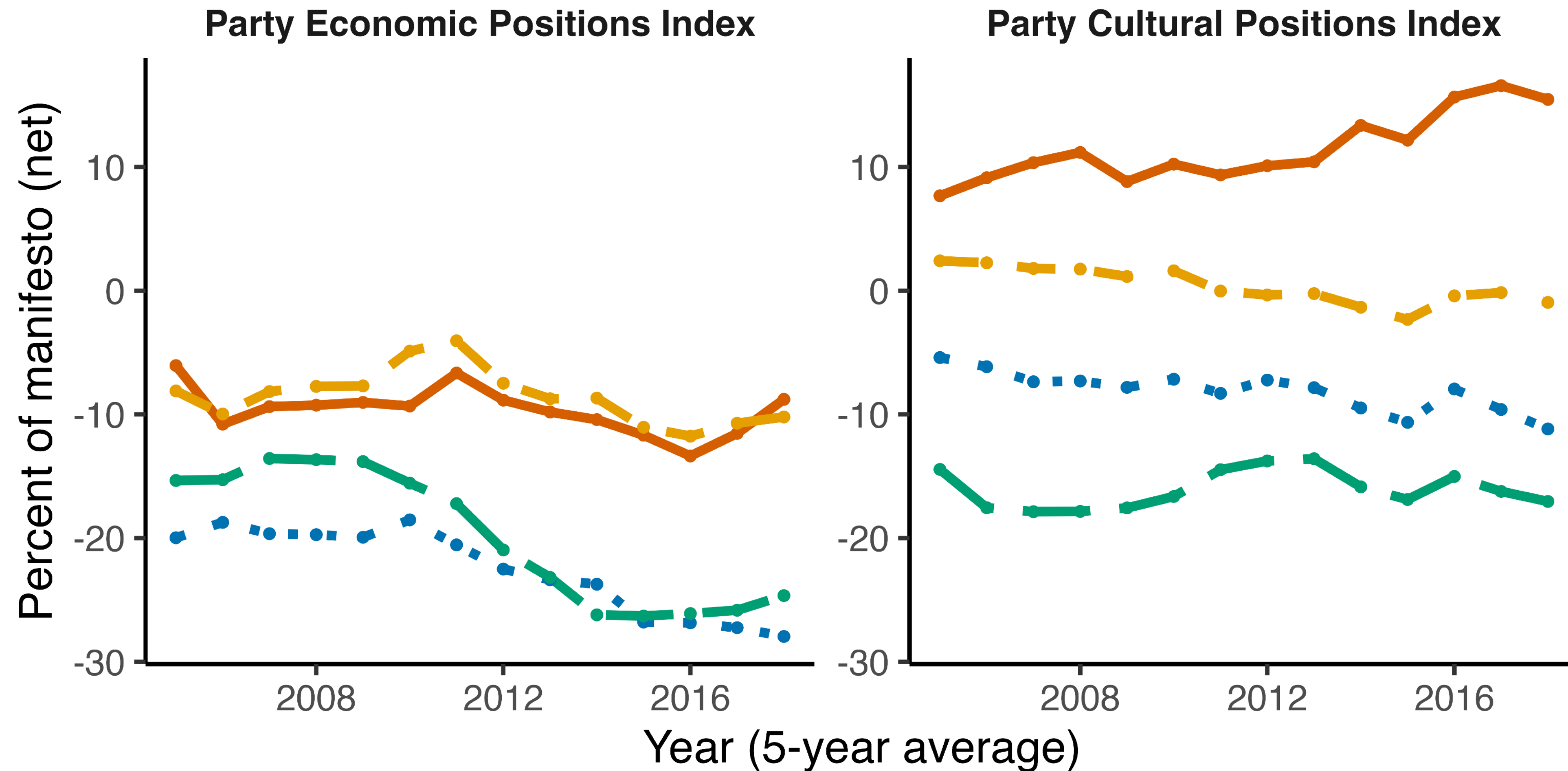
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Party Positions Do Not Drive PRRP Support



PRRP Do NOT Moderate Their Cultural Positions



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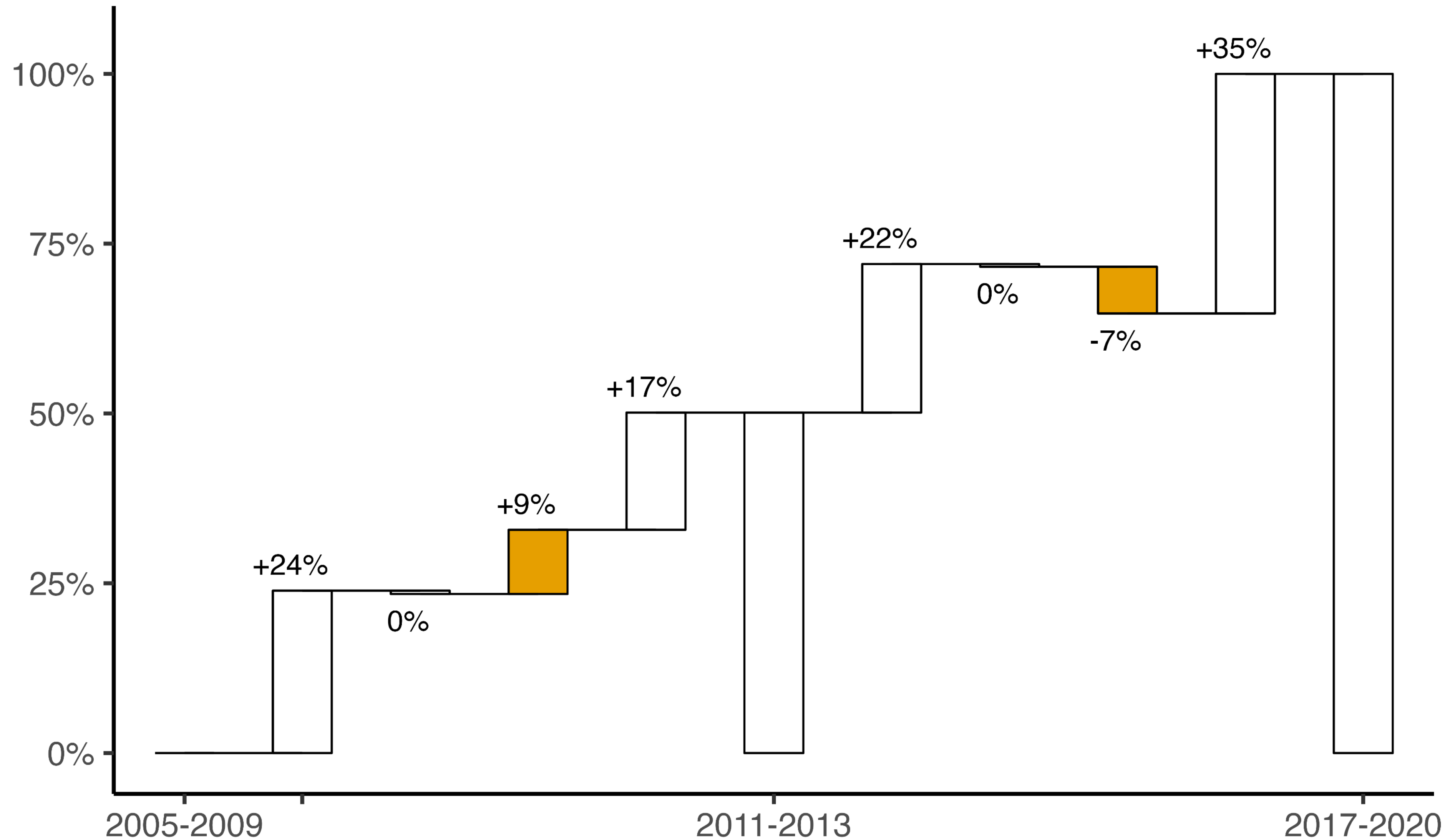
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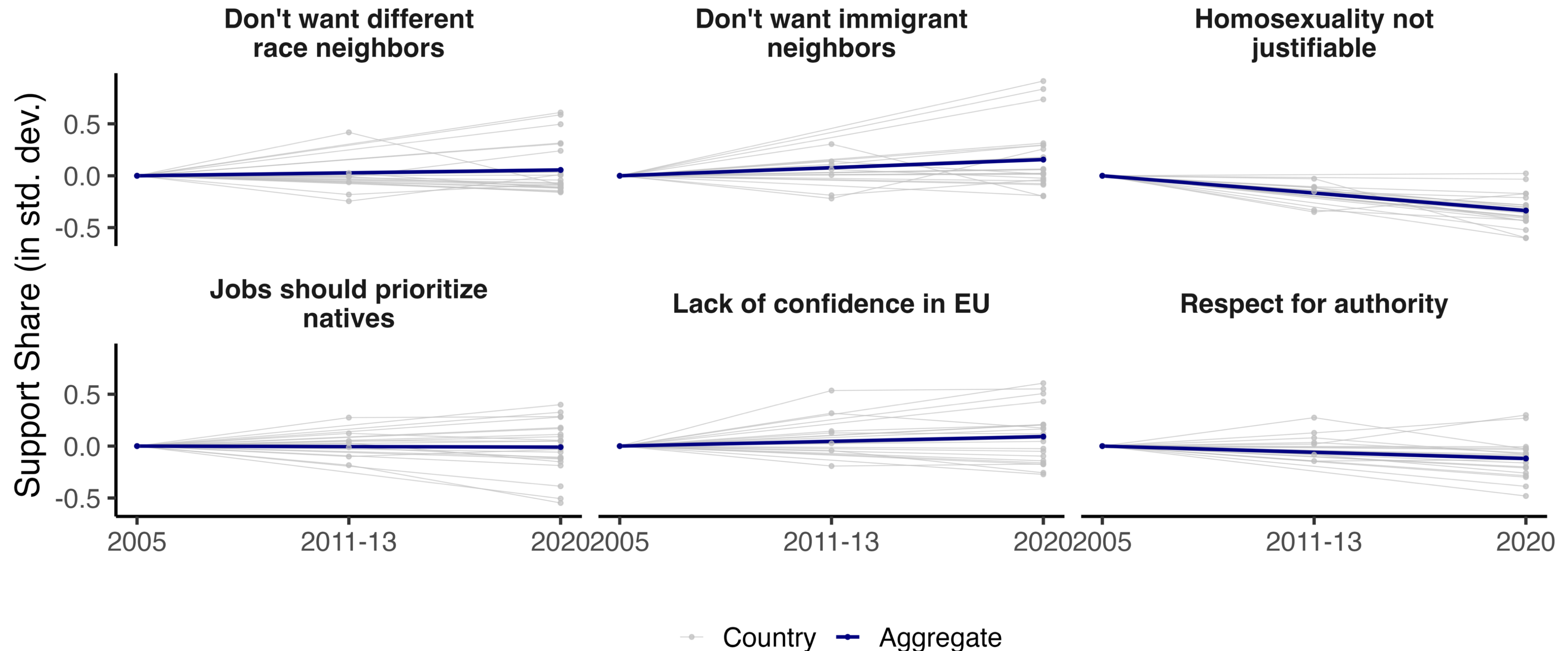
(b) Voter Characteristics

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Voters' Characteristics Cannot Explain the Rise



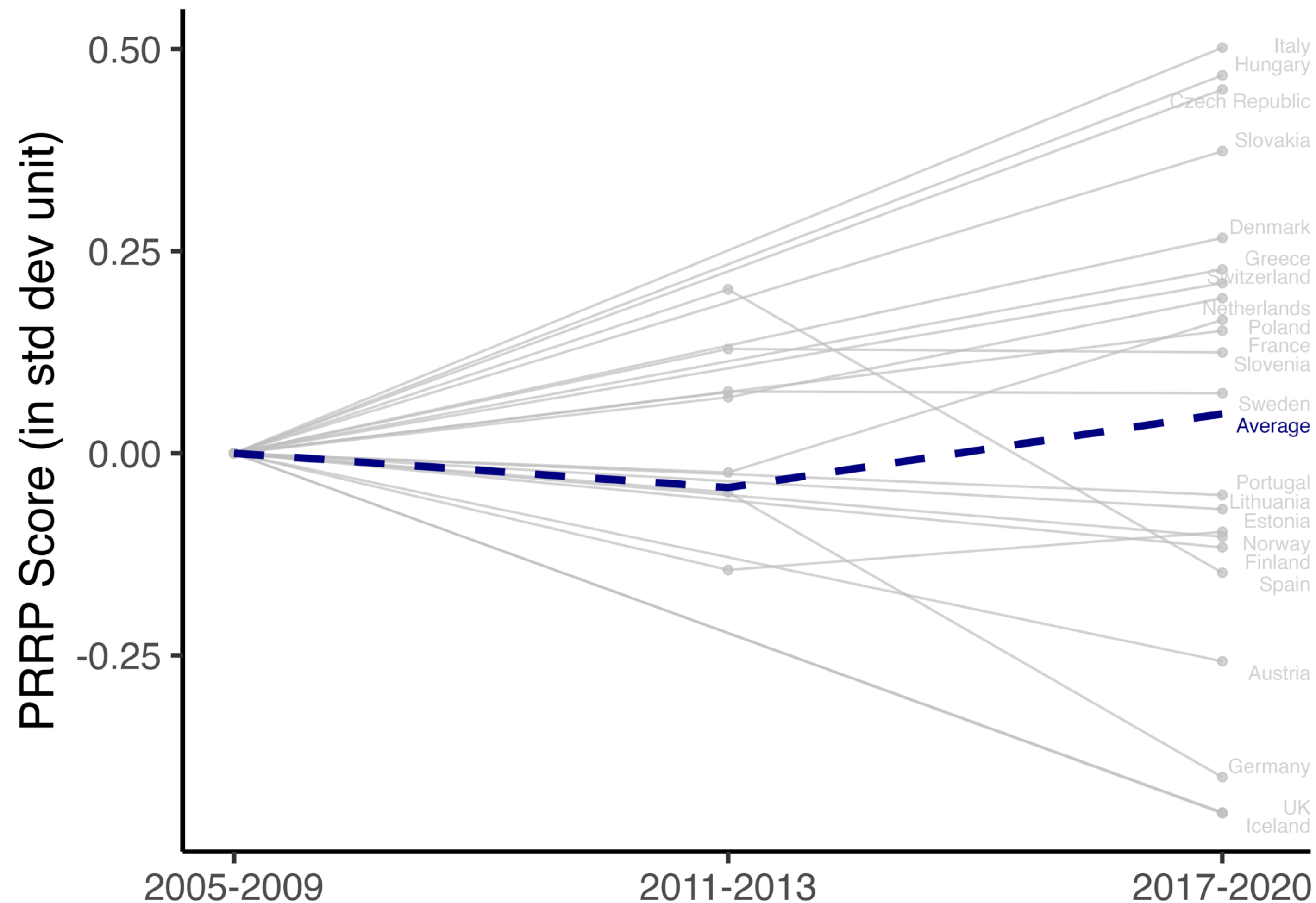
Voters' Cultural Opinions are Stable on Average



Going More Data-Driven...

- Run LASSO predicting PRRP support at voter level using IVS
 - Use most recent wave + country FE
 - Use all IVS variables (options and demographics)
- Construct PRRP score at voter level
 - Important variables:
 - “Jobs should prioritize natives”
 - Against “Trust other people”
 - Against “Don’t want heavy-drinking neighbors”

Voters's Characteristics are Not Toward PRRP on Average



- PRRP score did not increase on average
- Heterogeneity across country
- Hypothetically, PRRP score increase can explain cross-country variations
 - Insignificant for changes in voting share for PRRP ($R^2=0.06$)
 - Also, decomposition would have told us if it were the case

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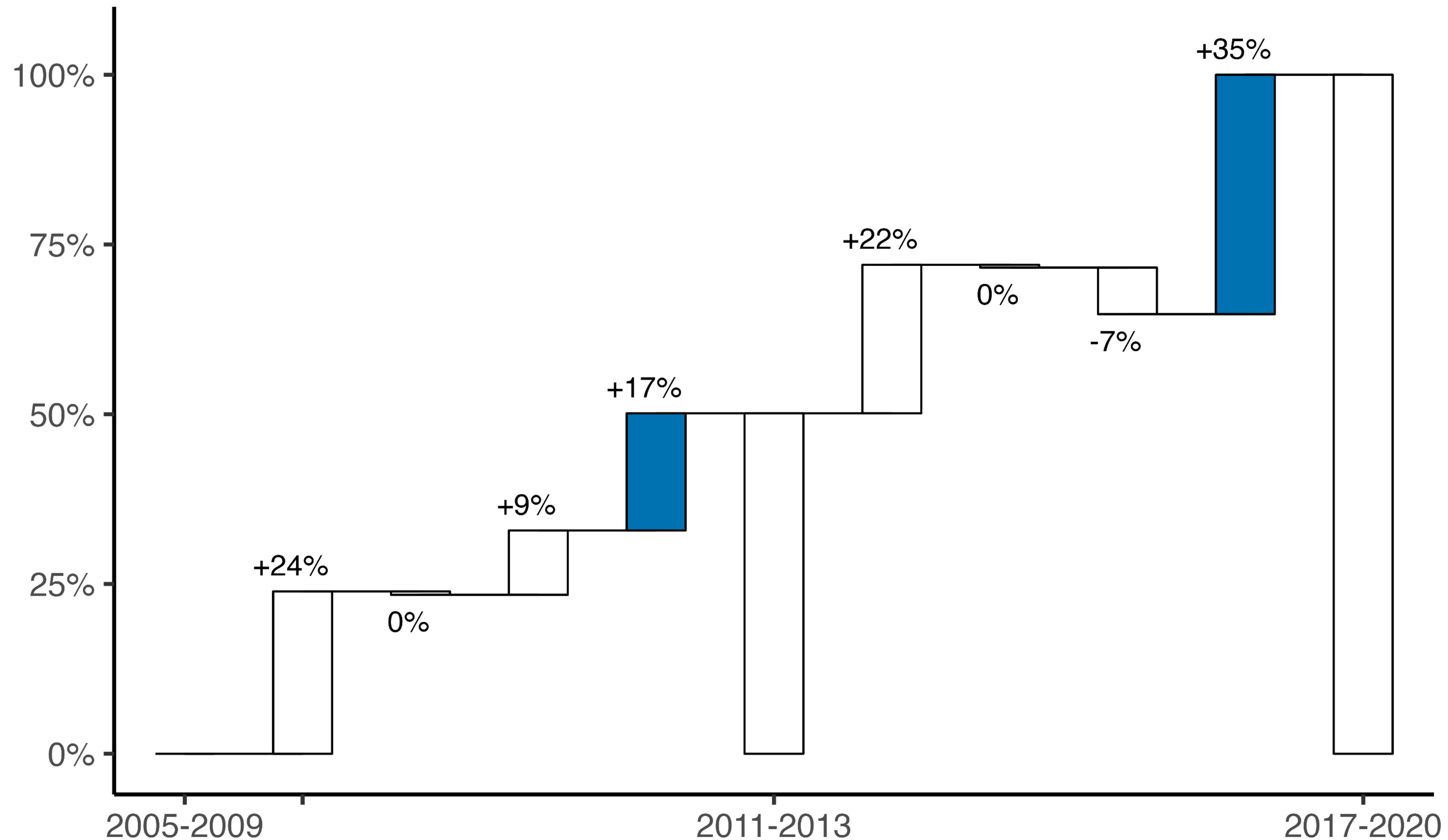
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Voters' Priority is Important for the Rise



re: Voters' Priority...

- Voters have a weight for each party position (issue)

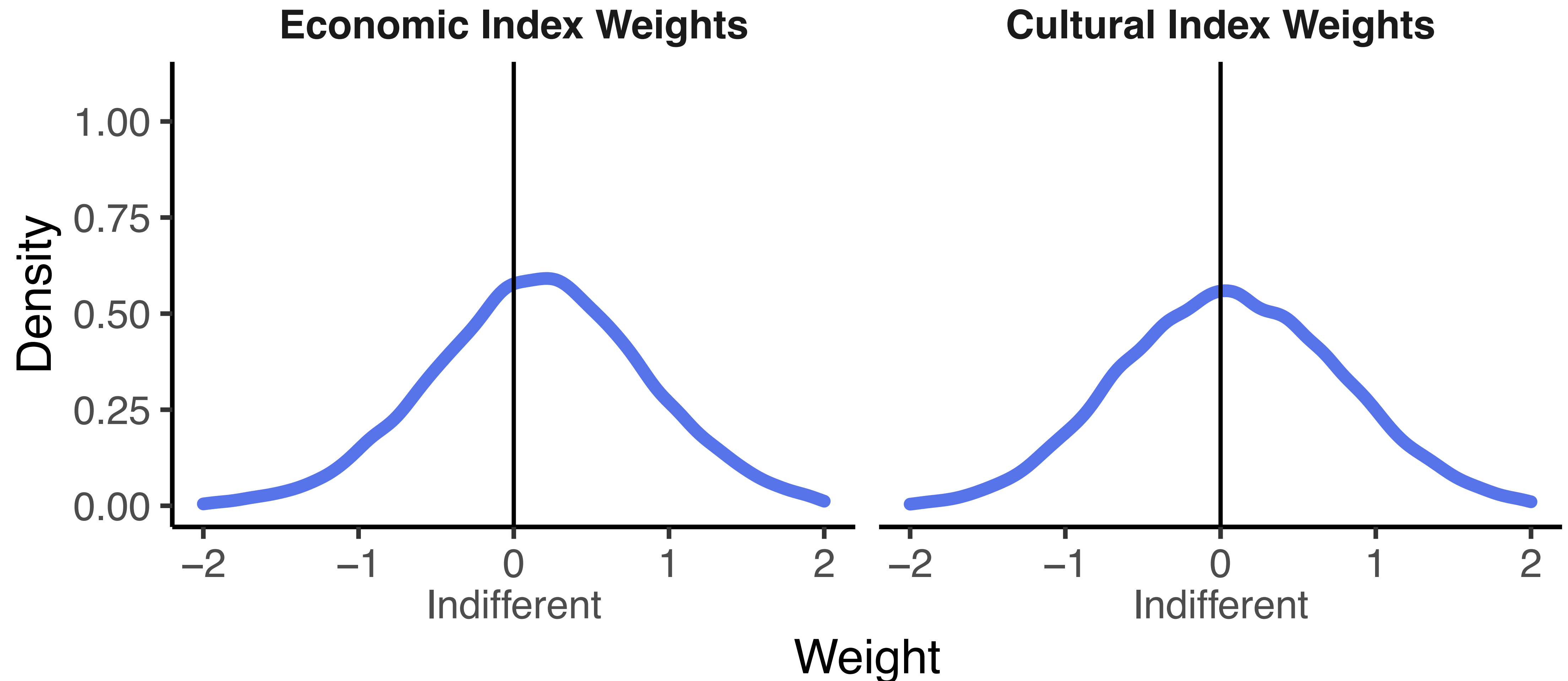
$$U_{ij} = z_j' w_i(x_i) + \zeta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

- Suppose we hold voters' characteristics constant at 2017-2020 level

$$\tilde{w}_i(x_i) = x_i^{2020} \phi_t + \beta_t$$

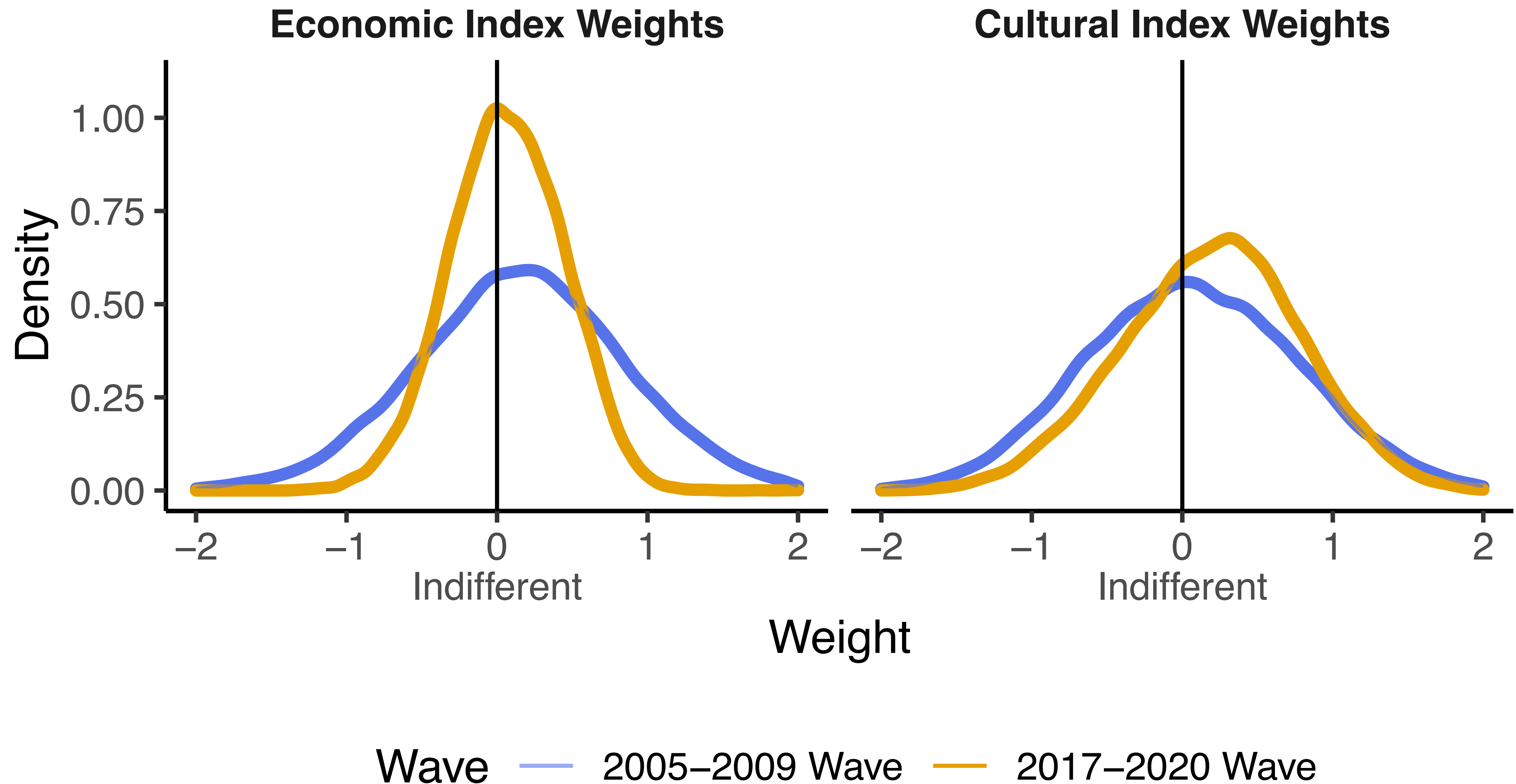
- See distribution of weights on two established indexes **(high = more right)**
 - Economic index: $\tilde{w}_i^E(x_i)$
 - Cultural index: $\tilde{w}_i^C(x_i)$

Weights on Econ/Cultural Positions used to be Similar



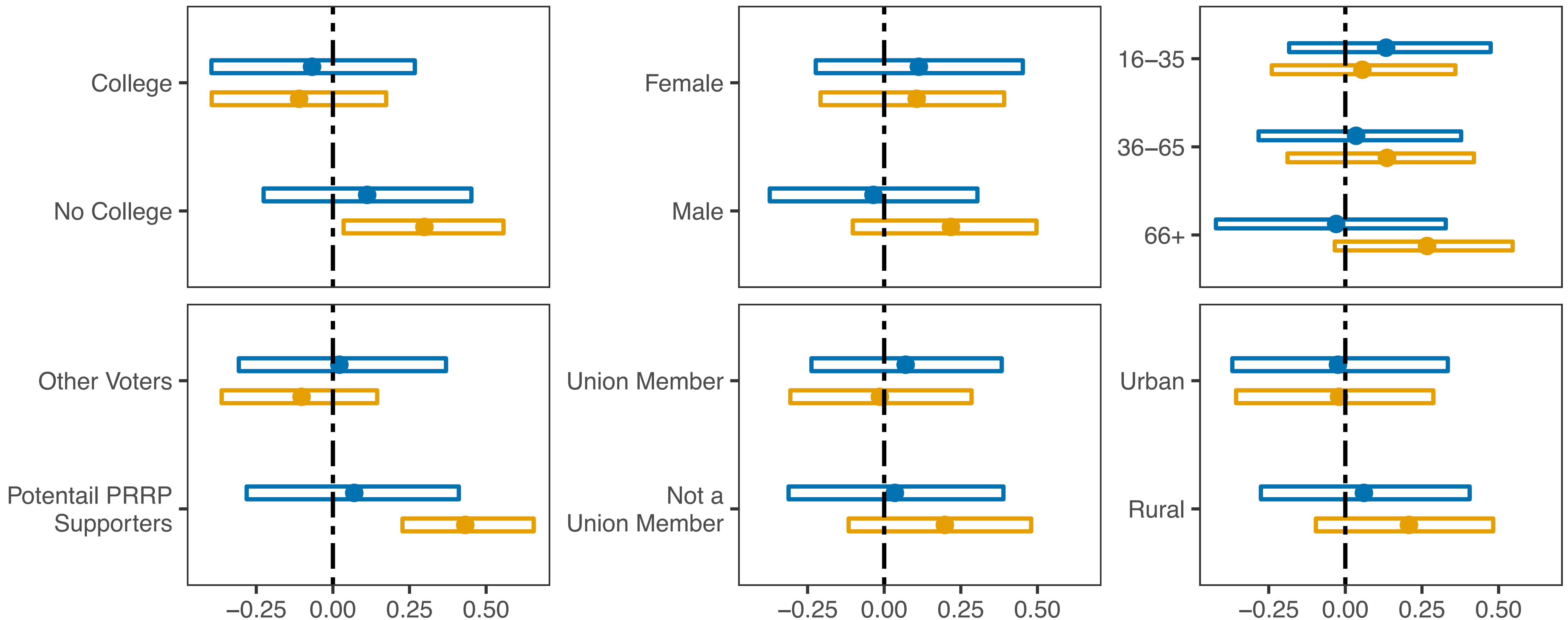
Wave — 2005–2009 Wave

Voters Now More Prioritized on Cultural Issues



Cultural Priorities are Polarized

Changes in Weights on Cultural Index by Subgroups



Conclusion

- **Changes in voter priorities drive recent populist support**
 - **Inconsistent** with theories emphasizing the following as drivers
 - Party positions changes
 - Waves in public opinion
- Future Research
 - Why do priorities change?
 - Apply the same methodology to decompose additional political trends
 - More micro applied work (geographical variations?)

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Manifesto Summary Stats

	2005-2009		2017-2020	
	PRRP	Other Parties	PRRP	Other Parties
Party Economic Positions Index	-6.4	-8.1	-6.4	-14.8
Party Cultural Positions Index	13.2	-6.7	19.7	-6.7
Top 5 Distinctive Variables				
European Community/Union: Negative	2.8	0.3	3.4	0.5
National Way of Life: Positive	6.1	1.9	10.8	2.6
Internationalism: Negative	1.2	0.2	1.2	0.2
Multiculturalism: Negative	3.2	0.5	2.6	0.9
Law and Order: Positive	7.0	4.4	6.9	4.0

Manifesto Economy Index

Variable	Description	Sign
Free Market Economy (per401)	Favourable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model	+
Incentives: Positive (per402)	Favourable mentions of supply side oriented economic policies	+
Market Regulation (per403)	Support for policies designed to create a fair and open economic market	-
Economic Planning (per404)	Favourable mentions of long-standing economic planning by the government	-
Corporatism/Mixed Economy (per405)	Favourable mentions of cooperation of government, employers, and trade unions simultaneously	-
Protectionism: Positive (per406)	Favourable mentions of extending or maintaining the protection of internal markets	-
Protectionism: Negative (per407)	Support for the concept of free trade and open markets	+
Keynesian Demand Management (per409)	Favourable mentions of demand side oriented economic policies	-
Controlled Economy (per412)	Support for direct government control of economy	-
Nationalisation (per413)	Favourable mentions of government ownership of industries, either partial or complete; calls for keeping nationalised industries in state hand or nationalising currently private industries	-
Marxist Analysis (per415)	Positive references to Marxist-Leninist ideology and specific use of Marxist-Leninist terminology by the manifesto party	-
Anti-Growth Economy: Positive (per416)	Favourable mentions of anti-growth politics	-
Welfare State Expansion (per504)	Favourable mentions of need to introduce, maintain or expand any public social service or social security scheme	-
Welfare State Limitation (per505)	Limiting state expenditures on social services or social security	+

Manifesto Cultural Index

Variable	Description	Sign
Military: Positive (per104)	The importance of external security and defence	+
Military: Negative (per105)	Negative references to the military or use of military power to solve conflicts	-
Peace (per106)	Any declaration of belief in peace and peaceful means of solving crises absent reference to the military	-
Internationalism: Positive (per107)	Need for international co-operation, including co-operation with specific countries other than those coded in Foreign Special Relationships	-
Internationalism: Negative (per109)	Negative references to international co-operation	+
Environmental Protection (per501)	General policies in favour of protecting the environment, fighting climate change, and other green policies	-
Equality: Positive (per503)	Concept of social justice and the need for fair treatment of all people	-
National Way of Life: Positive (per601)	Favourable mentions of the manifesto countrys nation, history, and general appeals	+
National Way of Life: Negative (per602)	Unfavourable mentions of the manifesto countrys nation and history	-
Traditional Morality: Positive (per603)	Favourable mentions of traditional and/or religious moral values	+
Traditional Morality: Negative (per604)	Opposition to traditional and/or religious moral values	-
Law and Order: Positive (per605)	Favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime	+
Multiculturalism: Positive (per607)	Favourable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies	-
Multiculturalism: Negative (per608)	The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration	+
Underprivileged Minority Groups (per705)	Very general favourable references to underprivileged minorities who are defined neither in economic nor in demographic terms	-

IVS Summary Stat

	2005-2009		2017-2020	
	PRRP	Other Parties	PRRP	Other Parties
Demographics				
College education	0.16	0.28	0.22	0.40
Age	45.83	50.04	51.01	52.48
Male	0.53	0.47	0.53	0.45
Right Wing	0.66	0.41	0.74	0.42
Urban	0.21	0.27	0.18	0.24
Most Distinctive Opinions				
Confidence in EU	-0.13	0.07	-0.53	0.04
Jobs should prioritize natives	0.46	-0.03	0.55	-0.13
Don't want immigrant neighbors	0.14	-0.08	0.55	-0.04
Confidence in press	-0.11	0.05	-0.36	0.03
Confidence in UN	-0.14	0.06	-0.42	0.04

IVS Data

Table: IVS Data Analyzed

Wave	Countries	Parties	Radical Right Parties	Observations
2005–2009	22	151	19	26,153
2011–2013	7	53	6	6,377
2017–2020	22	173	28	27,105

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Our Model is Similar to Bliss Point Model

- Assume that voters have a bliss point, which is linear in their observables

$$U_{ij} = \|z_j - Ax_i\|^2 + \zeta_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \text{ with norm } \|a\|^2 = \sum_k \beta_k^2 a_k^2$$

- Then, we can rewrite as

$$U_{ij} = x_i \phi z_j' + \delta_j \text{ with } \phi = A * \text{diag}(\beta) \text{ and } \delta_j = z_j^2 \beta^2 + \zeta_j$$

- Our model misspecified δ_j
 - This would be attributed to ζ_j

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Estimation: Two-Steps

- Define δ_j as the utility gain from party j that is common across voters

$$U_{ij} = x_i' \phi z_j + \underbrace{\beta' z_j + \zeta_j}_{\delta_j} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

- Assume ε_{ij} has a Gumbel (logit) distribution, the prob. of voting for party j

$$P(z_j | x_i) = \frac{\exp(x_i \phi z_j + \delta_j)}{\sum_k \exp(x_i \phi z_k + \delta_k)}$$

- Step 1: estimate $\hat{\phi}_t$ and all $\hat{\delta}_{j,t}$ separately for each wave t using penalized-MLE
 - Reduce dimension using nuclear norm and solve using proximal gradient descent
- Step 2: estimate $\hat{\beta}_t$ using estimates $\hat{\delta}_{j,t}$ for all waves

Step 1: Penalized MLE

- Challenge: ϕ has a large dimension ($\approx 5,000$)
- Solution: penalize $\|\phi\|$ with nuclear norm

$$\max_{\Phi, \delta} L(\Phi, \delta) - \lambda \|\Phi\| = \max_{\Phi, \delta} \sum_i \log \frac{\exp \left[x_i \Phi_{z_{j(i)}} + \delta_{j(i)} \right]}{\sum_k \exp \left[x_i \Phi_{z_k} + \delta_k \right]} - \lambda \|\Phi\|$$

- Nuclear norm
 - Generate low-rank solutions, individuals expected to vote based on a few dimensions
 - Computationally easier to solve
- Solve using proximal gradient descent
- Choose penalty λ using cross validation

Step 2: Beta and Zeta

- Want to decompose changes in mean utility $\delta_j = \beta' z_j + \zeta_j$
 - Could be due to party positions, weights, or residual
- Estimate the following linear model for all waves jointly

$$\hat{\delta}_{j,t} = \beta_t z_{jt} + \eta_j + \nu_{jt}$$

- Control party FE η_j
- Add additional waves for more power
- $\hat{\zeta}_{jt} = \hat{\eta}_j + \hat{\nu}_{jt}$: party valence

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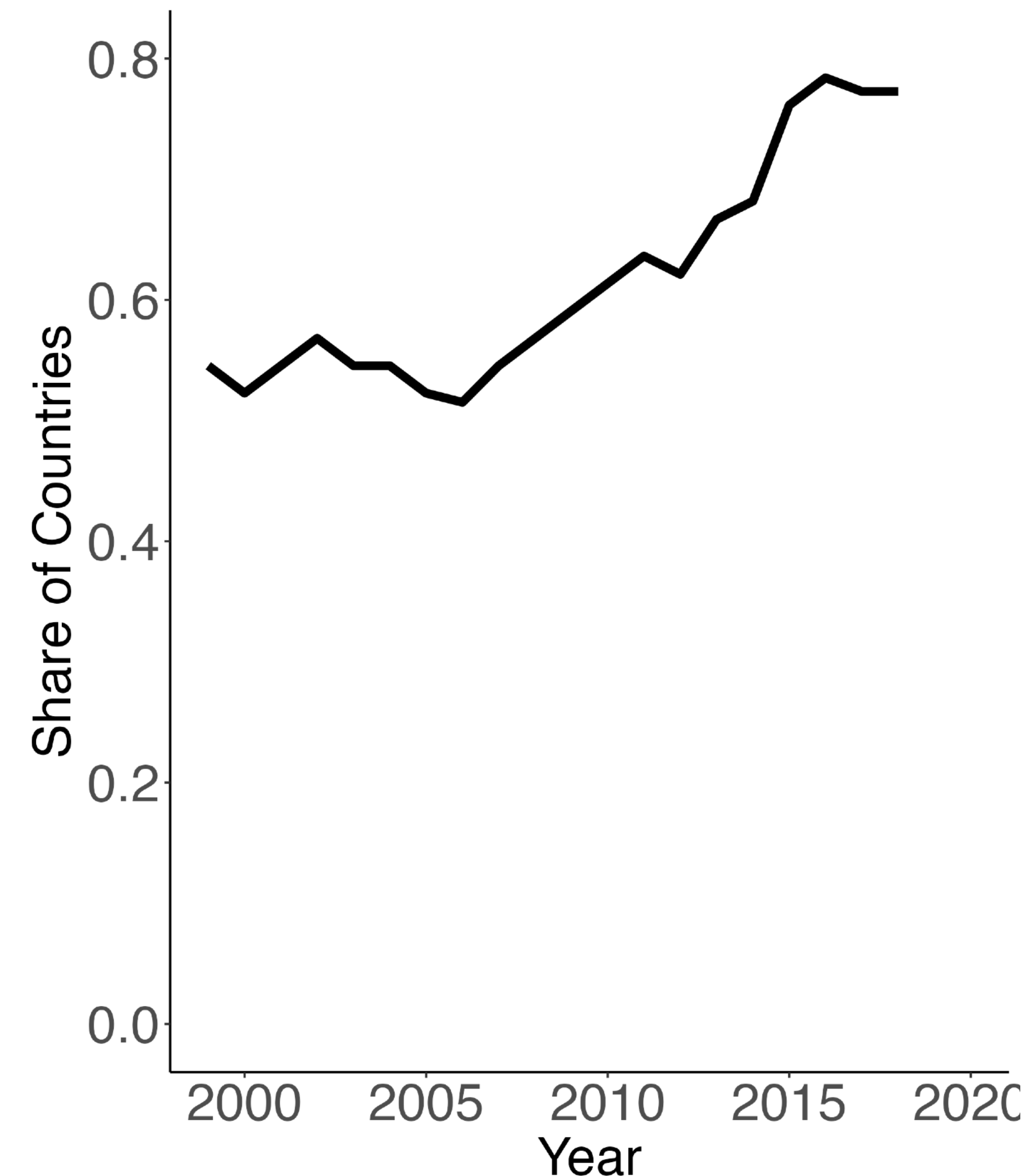
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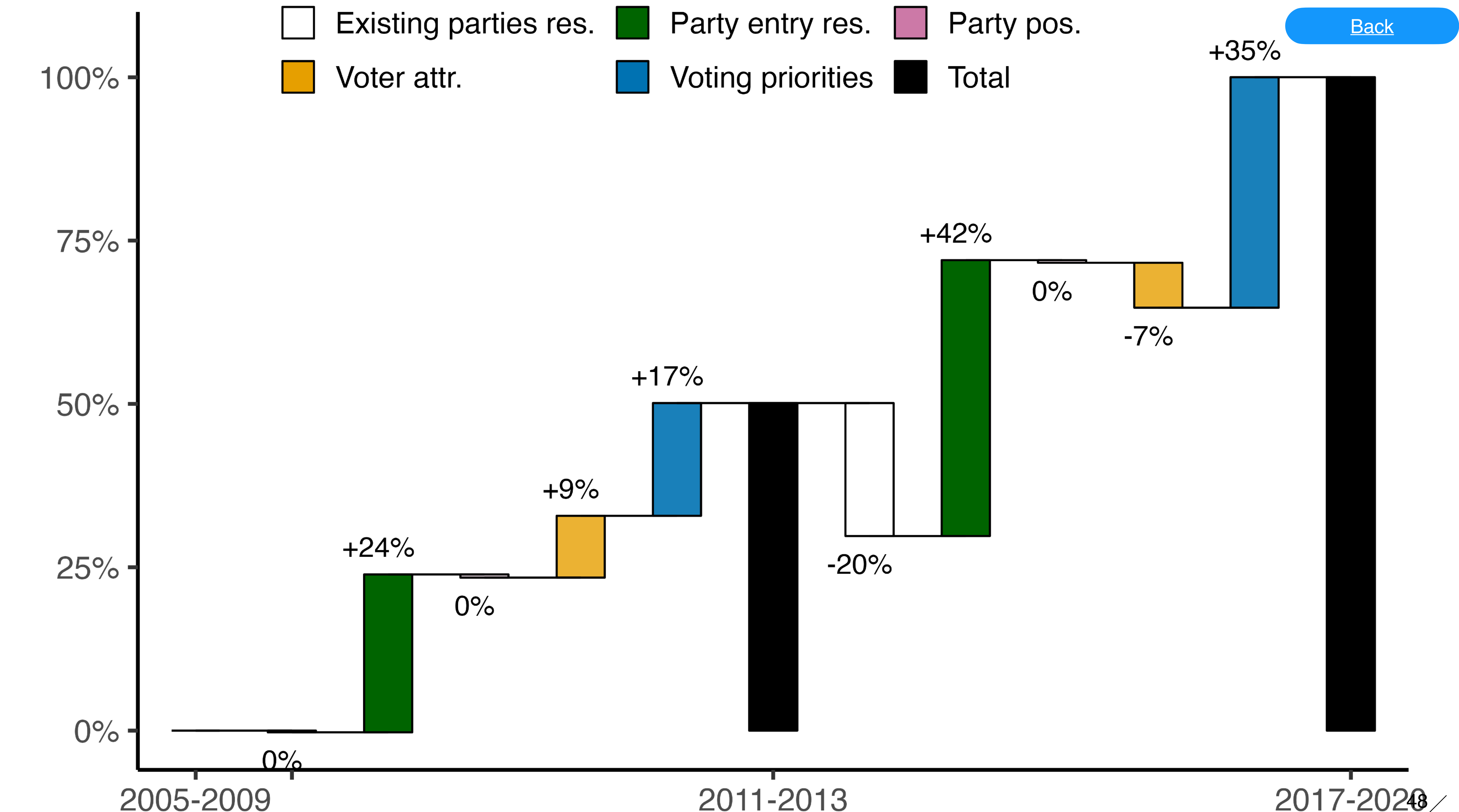
(c) Voter Priorities

More and More Countries Have PRRP

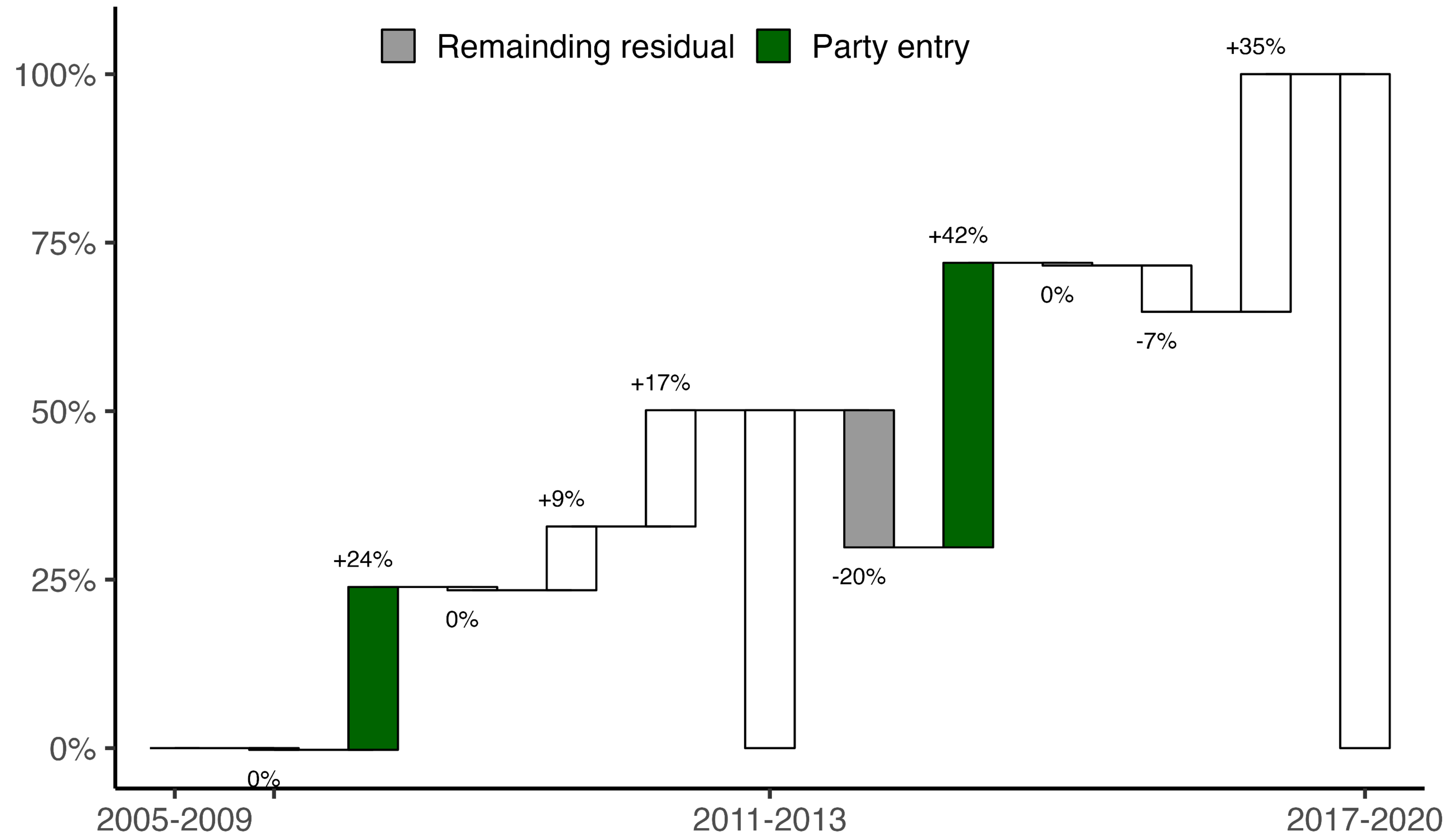
Share of Countries with PRRP



- About 80% of the 22 countries have at least one PRRP in 2020
- Increasing trends
 - Swedish Democrats first got seats in 2010
 - AfD in Germany founded 2013



Party Entry is Also Important



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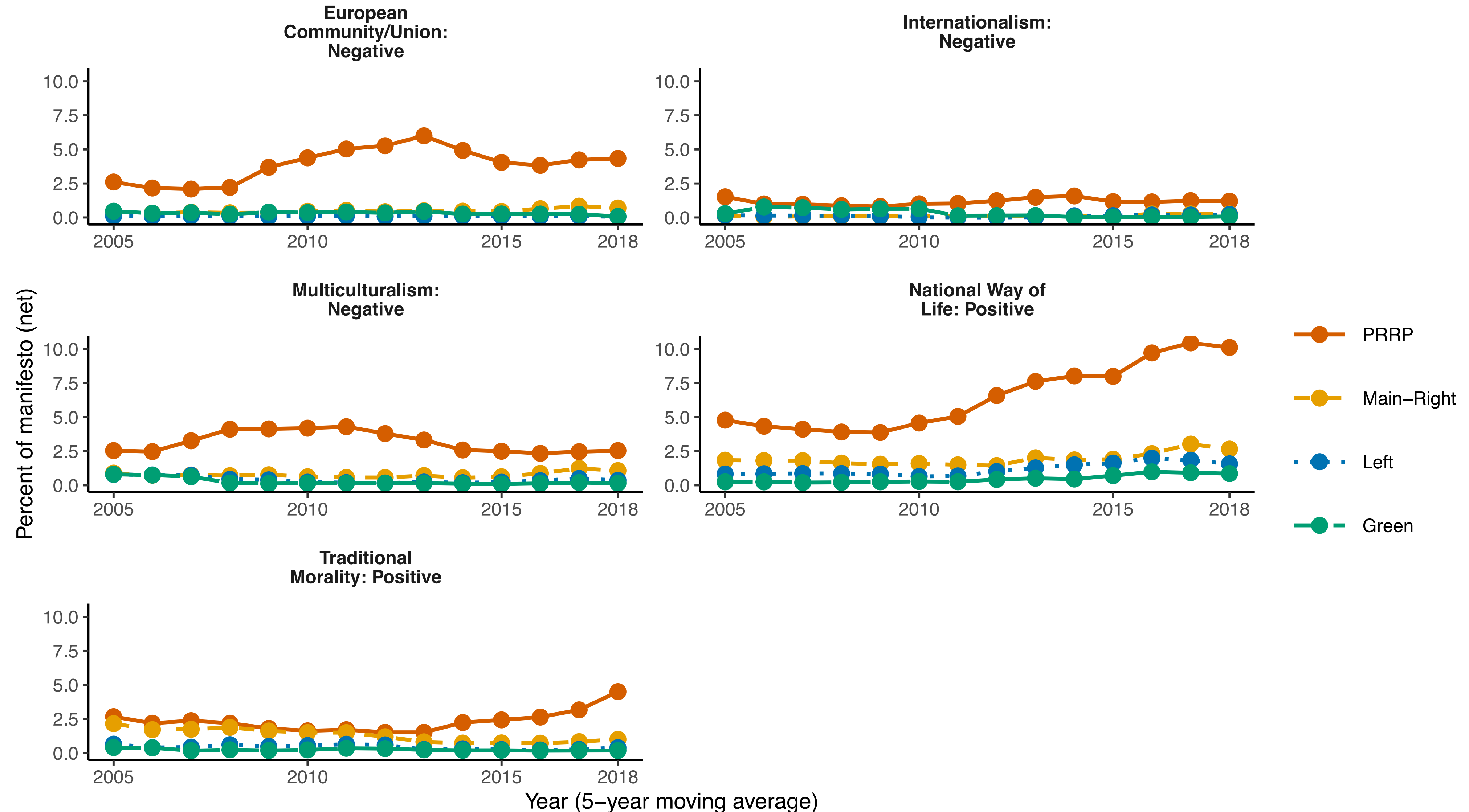
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PRRP are Becoming More and More Culturally Right



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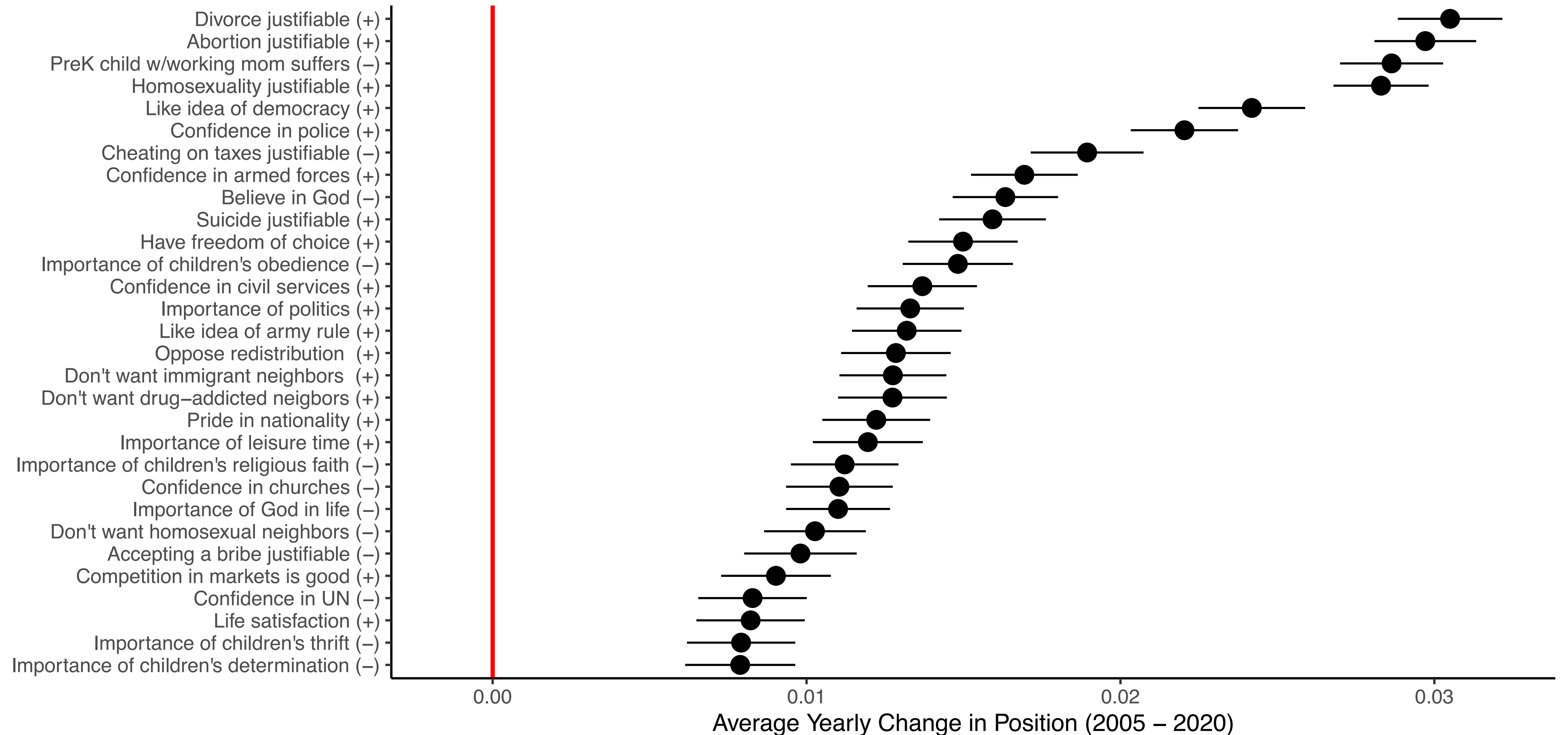
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People are Not Quite Going to Right

Opinions which have changed the most between 2005-2020; global average



Source: IVS data for 22 European countries

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