



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Principles or Pragmatism? Mapping and Explaining the Attitudes of the European Radical Right towards Positive Integration

Sheehan Fleming, Stephen

Citation

Sheehan Fleming, S. (2023). *Principles or Pragmatism? Mapping and Explaining the Attitudes of the European Radical Right towards Positive Integration*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3642692>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Principles or Pragmatism?
Mapping and Explaining the Attitudes of
the European Populist Radical Right
towards Positive Integration

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts

Stephen Sheehan Fleming

—

Programme: European Union Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Dennie Oude Nijhuis

Wordcount: 14990

Referencing system: ASA (American Sociological Association)

Submission date: 07/06/2023

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	6
1.1	Introduction	6
1.2	Literature Review	8
1.2.1	Terminology & Core Features of the Radical Right.....	8
1.2.2	Attitudes to European Integration: PRRPs as Eurosceptics.....	8
1.2.3	Socio-economic Attitudes: From Social Investment to Welfare Chauvinism....	10
1.2.4	An Attitudinal Nexus: Positive Integration.....	12
II.	Theoretical Chapter	15
2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	Theoretical Framework	16
2.3	Case Selection.....	18
2.3.1	Policies Studied.....	18
2.3.2	Parties Studied.....	21
2.4	Methods.....	22
2.4.1	Quantitative Element: Secondary Data Analysis.....	22
2.4.2	Qualitative Element: Discourse Analysis.....	22
III.	Quantitative Secondary Data Analysis	24
3.1	Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.....	24
3.2	Directive on Work-life Balance.....	25
3.3	Resolution on Establishing a European Education Area.....	27
3.4	Resolution on Affordable Housing for All.....	29
3.5	Resolution on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee.....	30
3.6	Summary of Quantitative Findings.....	31
IV.	Qualitative Discourse Analysis	34
4.1	Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.....	34
4.2	Directive on Work-life Balance.....	39
4.3	Resolution on Establishing a European Education Area.....	43
4.4	Resolution on Affordable Housing for All.....	46
4.5	Summary of Qualitative Findings.....	49
V.	Conclusion	51

List of Abbreviations

AfD:	Alternative for Germany
CO:	Conditional Opposition
Comp. S:	Compromising Support
CPP:	Conservative People's Party of Estonia
CS:	Conditional Support
DPP:	Danish People's Party
EC:	European Commission
EEA:	European Education Area
EP:	European Parliament
EPSR:	European Pillar of Social Rights
EU:	European Union
FDD:	Freedom and Direct Democracy
FdI:	Brothers of Italy
FvD:	Forum for Democracy
MEP:	Member of the European Parliament
PiS:	Law and Justice Party
PRRP:	Populist Radical Right Party
PVV:	Party for Freedom
RO:	Rejecting Opposition

List of Tables

Table 1: Parties Studied

Table 2: Example cross-tabulation in voting data analysis

Table 3: Example Frequency Table of main hypotheses in summary of voting data analysis

Table 4: Example cross-tabulation in discourse analysis

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Minimum Wage Directive

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Work-life Balance Directive

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the EEA Resolution

Table 8: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Affordable Housing Resolution

Table 9: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Youth Guarantee Resolution

Table 10: Summary of voting behaviour regarding the five policy cases

Table 11: Application of main hypotheses regarding the voting data analysis

Table 12: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the Minimum Wage Directive

Table 13: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the Work-life Balance Directive

Table 14: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the EEA Resolution

Table 15: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the Affordable Housing Resolution

Table 16: Application of sub-hypotheses to PRRPs resulting from the discourse analysis

Page intentionally left blank

I. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Populism is the political pejorative of our time. Some may see this phenomenon as a fundamental threat to liberal democracy, and indeed, democracy as we know it; others may see it as the awaited saviour of society from the ostensible misfortunes inflicted by this liberal ideal. However, apart from subjective aspects of analysis, there is a general consensus amongst academics and analysts about one thing: populism is here to stay- at least for the medium-term, in any measure (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018; Foreign Affairs 2016). European countries have been particularly subjected to a sizeable insurgence of right-wing populists. From Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy (FdI) reaching the apex of power in Italy, to the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) posing an ostensible threat to the centrist governmental consensus in the Netherlands, and to Viktor Orbán's Fidesz taking a firm grip on power in Hungary, European countries provide abundant examples for the study of this growing movement. With the prospect of this phenomenon playing a central role in European countries' political spheres for years to come, the policy preferences which populist radical right-wing parties (PRRPs) espouse will inevitably be at the forefront of analysis and debate.

Of course, the proliferation of these parties is not confined to just national spheres. Their presence and influence have also increased exponentially at the supranational level. Over the last two European Parliament (EP) election cycles, the radical right has gained considerable momentum, more than doubling their seat count from the 2014 to 2019 EP Elections (Treib 2021). Thus, the populist right has considerable capacity to influence parliamentary votes on EU legislation and resolutions, making an important case for studying their attitudes at this level. Interestingly, PRRPs appear to have come to a policy crossroads at the European level during this current parliamentary term. The introduction of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) has heralded an unprecedented acceleration of EU social policy. At one side of this crossroads, PRRPs are confronted with deepening European integration; at the other, they appear to be faced with socio-economic policies which benefit sizeable elements of their core support base.

Regarding their attitudes to integration, PRRPs are almost uniformly Eurosceptic (de Vries & Edwards 2009; Buhr 2012; Mudde 2019); but this scepticism can be qualified and contingent on policy preferences (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002), with PRRPs displaying three types of opposition to integration: Rejecting, Conditional, and Compromising (Vasilopoulou 2011). The first element of this typology holds that PRRPs are principally opposed to any form

of integration, whilst the third holds some may act pragmatically when policies suit their agenda.

Regarding their socio-economic attitudes, the literature shows that they are contingent on a confluence of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors (Gidron & Hall 2017) due to their core constituency consisting of the ostensible ‘losers’ of globalisation (Kriesi et al. 2008; Eatwell & Goodwin 2018; Mudde 2019; Hopkin 2020; Bergman 2022). Consequently, the debate around their welfare policy preferences is mixed, spanning from ‘blurred’ (Rovny 2013; Rovny and Polk 2020), centrist (de Lange 2007; Mudde 2007), or left leaning (Afonso and Rennwald 2018; Eger and Valdez 2015; Harteveld 2016; Michel and Lefkofridi 2017). However, this left-leaning stance has been shown to be qualified, with PRRPs advocating policies centred around social consumption over social investment (Afonso 2015; Roth et al. 2018; Chueri 2020; Kraus and Giebler 2020; Enggist & Pinggera 2022). This existing base of socio-economic research is largely nationally based, however, and does not account for these parties’ socio-economic attitudes at the European level, where, as established, their influence has grown, and they are faced with a policy dilemma vis-à-vis integration which adds another contingent factor to such attitudes.

To address this research deficit and investigate this dilemma, I ask: How can the attitudes of the populist radical right towards positive integration in the EU be explained? By doing so, I identify the nexus between PRRPs’ attitudes to European integration and socio-economic policy. Within this attitudinal nexus, I explore how principled or pragmatic these parties are by forming a hybrid theoretical framework informed by the existing, albeit separate, literature vis-à-vis their attitudes to both elements of the nexus. Firstly, I analyse PRRP voting behaviour towards a selected sample of EPSR initiatives in a secondary data analysis to broadly map attitudes. Subsequently, I assess the basis on which they either supported or opposed the initiatives through an in-depth discourse analysis of PRRP MEPs’ parliamentary speeches. I argue that where PRRPs oppose positive integration, they primarily do so on a principled rejection of European integration, but also on some conditional socio-economic bases. Conversely, I contend that on the limited occasions where PRRPs support positive integration, they do so on a compromising basis towards the potential economic prosperity which European integration offers. In tackling this topic, my research contributes to the literature regarding PRRPs’ attitudes to both European integration and socio-economic policy, shedding an important light on how pragmatically these parties can behave when confronted with initiatives which clearly benefit their core constituencies, but are at odds with their ostensible principles.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Terminology & Core Features of the Radical Right

Before discussing these parties' attitudes in specific relation to this thesis, it is important to briefly review terminology and denote the particular movements which it is concerned with. Populism is an inherently contested term. Cannon (2019) notes the issues pertaining to the term's conceptual utility and posits that it is associated with a 'catch-all vagueness.' He argues that it is important to denote a left/right dichotomy to explain the political phenomena relevant to this study (ibid:19). With Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) concurring, Mudde (2019: 7) defines the term populism as "a thin ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous groups, the pure people and the corrupt elite." Mudde (ibid) also supports the delineation of left/ right specificity and distinguishes the radical right from the extreme right, arguing that "the radical right accepts the essence of democracy, but opposes fundamental elements of liberal democracy, most notably minority rights, rule of law, and separation of powers." As such, the relevant movements to this study are termed populist radical right parties (PRRPs), consistent with this terminology and much of the literature cited hereafter.

Mudde (2007:22-23) also identifies core characteristics of such parties, two of which are relevant to this study. One such characteristic is 'nativism,' which relates to nationalist and xenophobic sentiments, with ethnic nationalism expressed through a perceived threat to culture. Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) concur, arguing that the perceived "destruction" of culture is a core tenet of such parties. The other is 'populism,' which pertains to protecting the "people" from the "elite." This perception of a group of elites, as mentioned previously, is somewhat vague; it can range from those in governmental institutions to the mainstream media (Mudde 2019; Eatwell & Goodwin 2018). However, more recently, this 'elite' is perceived by the radical right to be anyone who espouses liberal values, including a propensity to support a multi-ethnic and tolerant culture, or those who hold an above average educational attainment (Goodwin 2022). These core features of PRRPs are integral to explaining their attitudes to European integration and socio-economic policy.

1.2.2. Attitudes to European Integration: PRRPs as Eurosceptics

There is a consensus that Euroscepticism is a common denominator amongst PRRPs. Mudde (2019: 40) notes that PRRPs' increasing electoral fortunes have propelled them to "become more ambitious and bold with regard to the EU." This boldness may be a manifestation of the idea that those in the echelons of power in Brussels are an integral element

of the aforementioned 'elite,' taking on a distinctly 'populist' character, or that this perceived elite seeks to encroach on and distort national cultures (Mudde 2007; Eatwell & Goodwin 2018; Goodwin 2022). How this sceptical attitude is practiced, however, attracts greater debate.

Much of PRRPs' disdain towards the EU is directed on a steadfast, principled opposition to any form of integration, premised either on the supremacy of national sovereignty (de Vries & Edwards 2009); or on the exploitation of a political opportunity structure left vacant by mainstream parties (Buhr 2012). However, a more nuanced picture emerges when this opposition is not principled; but is qualified and contingent on other factors. In their seminal work on the topic, Taggart and Szczerbak (2002) identify the dualistic approach to integration attitudes, entailing both 'hard' and 'soft' variants. The former entails a principled opposition, whilst the latter, they argue, "is where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU trajectory" (ibid: 4). Heinisch et al. (2021: 189) note that PRRPs can espouse both the hard and soft variants simultaneously, terming some of them 'equivocal Eurosceptics.' The authors argue that this disposition affords PRRPs "the freedom to cooperate both with other radical right, hard Eurosceptic, parties at European level and more moderate parties at the national one" (ibid). Whilst such literature provides a useful basis on which to broadly analyse attitudes to integration, its conceptual utility is limited in that it does not allow for attitudinal nuance where it may occur vis-à-vis policy areas.

For a greater distinction, Vasilopoulou (2011: 232- 234) provides a tripartite conceptual framework for PRRP opposition to integration based on the aspects of "culture," the "principle of cooperation," "policy practice," and construction of an "EU polity." The first, *rejecting*, is synonymous with the 'hard' Eurosceptic variant, meaning PRRPs principally reject European integration in all aspects except for the acceptance of a common European culture. Secondly, *conditional*, is comparable to the 'soft' variant, with PRRPs accepting a common culture and limited cooperation. Vasilopoulou notes that this type pertains to the "approval of the principle of European cooperation but hostility to the current policy practice [...] The legitimacy of the EU project is denied to the extent that a majority of decisions have been taken by supranational institutions and not by the member states" (ibid). This typology holds that PRRPs may conditionally accept or reject certain policies and forms of integration on a highly qualified basis contingent on their agenda. The third, *compromising*, is synonymous with 'soft' Euroscepticism, pertaining to "support for the principle and the practice of integration but

opposition to the future building of a European polity.” According to Vasilopoulou, these Eurosceptics may act pragmatically and think that “transferring decision-making powers to European institutions is particularly unattractive. However, a degree of integration is necessary for the general prosperity of the state, particularly in the economic domain” (ibid).

Thus, some PRRPs can espouse particularistic attitudes to integration based on whether the pace of integration in a given policy area suits their particular agenda at given times. This tripartite conceptual framework is useful for categorising PRRPs’ stances on such and, thus, it informs the integration attitudinal element of the overall hybrid theoretical framework for this thesis, detailed in the theoretical chapter. This element of the framework lacks specific policy area analysis, however, and therefore needs to be combined with social policy preferences for the purposes of this thesis. This complementary element is detailed in the following section.

1.2.3. Socio-economic Attitudes: From Social Investment to Welfare Chauvinism

The socio-economic attitudes of PRRPs can be analysed through socio-economic and socio-cultural ‘poles of contestation.’ An integral explanation of the rise of the PRRPs relevant to both of argumentative poles is the claim that globalisation has produced ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ (Kriesi et al. 2008). A key aspect of this ostensible divide is how the ‘losers’ view their socio-economic status in comparison to the ostensible ‘winners.’ These ostensible ‘losers’ are the antithesis to the perceived ‘elite’ (Eatwell & Goodwin 2018; Mudde 2019; Goodwin 2022). This societal cohort is rife with those vulnerable to occupational risk or labour market outsiders (Bergman 2022), those who suffer from absolute deprivation (Mudde 2019), as well as those who are marginally well-off in the lower middle classes, but who are suffering from relative deprivation (Eatwell & Goodwin 2018). The economic grievances of these groups have been exacerbated through pervasive neoliberal economics and radical austerity policies in European societies over recent decades (Hopkin 2020). The ‘winners,’ then, are those perceived to be in the aforementioned ‘elite,’ such as labour market insiders or those with higher educational attainment, as well as urban and metropolitan dwellers and migrants. Gidron and Hall (2017: 57) substantiate these analyses, arguing that one’s perceived social status in society, or ‘status effects,’ shows that “economic and cultural developments may combine to increase support for the populist right.” This conceptual base assumes that policies which are situated at the intersection of these poles of contestation are highly relevant to PRRPs’ preferences.

There is some variation in the conclusions reached by scholars as to the socio-economic attitudes of PRRPs. Some argue their attitudes are ‘blurred’ (Rovny 2013; Rovny and Polk

2020) whilst others contend that they are centrist (de Lange 2007; Mudde 2007). However, most have advocated a left leaning view (Afonso and Rennwald 2018; Eger and Valdez 2015; Harteveld 2016; Michel and Lefkofridi 2017). For instance, Rovny and Polk (2020), although having noted that PRRPs have increased the salience of economic issues in their electoral strategies, as well conceding that they do clearly adopt particular left-leaning policies, ultimately argue that the radical right's socioeconomic stance "remains as blurry as ever" due to their fears of trading between elements of their support bases which hold differing economic views (ibid: 248). On the other hand, Afonso and Rennwald (2018: 30) posit that almost all European PRRPs have "adopted more pro-welfare positions," and that they have "been concomitant to an increasing proletarianization of the parties' electorate." However, for a more nuanced approach to PRRP socio-economic analysis, Enggist & Pinggera (2022) and Afonso (2015) cast a different perspective on the debate by noting a qualified trend in PRRP's left-leaning attitudes. They differentiate social consumption and social investment dimensions to socio-economic policy to argue that PRRPs are far more likely to advocate for the former, rather than the latter. Regarding the social consumption aspect, policies which pertain to issues such as pensions are particularly salient. This compares to investment policies, such as education and funding for minority groups, which are less popular amongst these parties.

This dualistic perspective is particularly relevant as it links to the aforementioned fusion of cultural and economic concerns in that favourable consumption policies may be reserved for the 'deserving' in society, whilst investment, for 'undeserving' minorities, is much less favourable. Ketola and Nordensvard (2020: 183) employ this chauvinistic paradigm to suggest a:

"resultant myopic approach to wicked social policy problems around the nature of and access to social citizenship are a core part of the explanation for the successes of the European populist radical right in recent years."

Synonymous with this dualistic perspective in welfare analysis, Chueri (2020) found that PRRPs employ a dualistic approach to the welfare state, focusing on the 'deserving' and 'undeserving.' The authors found that these parties, albeit pro-welfare, "compromise with mainstream right-wing parties on retrenchment initiatives" (ibid: 1101); however, they found that this was exclusive to 'undeserving' groups based on cultural factors (ibid). In a similar study but with somewhat different conclusions, Roth et al. (2018) found that PRRPs refrain from welfare retrenchment. The authors analysed distributive and (de)regulatory policies vis-

á-vis these parties' participation in government to show that whilst PRRPs do advocate for some degree of economic liberalisation/ deregulation, particularly if it is to the electoral detriment of social democratic party rivals, the opposite is true for welfare retrenchment. Meanwhile, Kraus and Giebler (2020: 343) contend that PRRPs do indeed employ policies which "try to attract the lower strata of society through the promotion of more expansive welfare." The authors stress the importance of analysing these policies through a multi-dimensional paradigm (i.e., socio-cultural and socio-economic factors). Although there is some variation in accounts here vis-á-vis the socio-economic and particular welfare policies of PRRPs, a commonality is that economic and cultural factors are not mutually exclusive when analysing the policies of such parties, particularly in their advocacy of dualistic and welfare chauvinist socio-economic approaches.

The differing elements of PRRPs' socio-economic attitudes outlined here are highly important to consider when investigating attitudes to positive integration. Although the existing literature does not detail these socio-economic attitudes extensively at the European level, it provides a useful basis on which to assess such attitudes. These parties' favourable views of social consumption and welfare chauvinism, unfavourable views of social investment, somewhat mixed views towards economic regulation, and sometimes blurred socio-economic stances, are combined with the aforementioned framework vis-á-vis integration attitudes. This forms a hybrid theoretical framework against which evidence of their attitudes to positive integration can be systematically analysed, as elaborated upon in Chapter 2. The next section details the connection between such integration and social attitudes.

1.2.4. An Attitudinal Nexus: Positive Integration

As mentioned, The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), launched in 2017, contains significant developments regarding EU social policy; it includes many initiatives pertaining to equal opportunities to the labour market, social protection & inclusion, and fair working conditions (Commission 2021). The EPSR is the most substantial development in the realm of positive integration to date.

Through successive treaties, and particularly the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the pace of economic integration has far exceeded that of social integration. This phenomenon, termed negative integration, is defined by Scharpf (1999: 45) as "the removal of [...] obstacles to free and undistorted competition." Conversely, its positive counterpart pertains to "the reconstruction of a system of economic regulation at the level of the larger economic unit"

(ibid). Majone (2005: 144) elaborates on this asymmetric development of supranational competence and identifies the main policy areas of salience vis-à-vis positive integration:

European competences have certainly expanded, but in a highly selective fashion. While regulatory policies have continued to grow, albeit at a decreasing rate, other policies explicitly mentioned in the treaties—such as [...] social policy—have remained largely underdeveloped. Key policies of the welfare state, health, social services, and income redistribution are still made at the national level.

Interestingly, with the introduction of the EPSR, these key policies now face an unprecedented Europeanisation. What makes these policy developments particularly interesting, however, is enquiring into how the European radical right has reacted to them when they appear to have come to a policy crossroads where, at one side, they are confronted with European integration; but on the other, are faced with policies which clearly benefit substantial elements of their core constituencies. To assess their attitudes towards such policies within this nexus, I form three main hypotheses and seven sub-hypotheses, informed by the existing literature, which I test against the empirical evidence:

- H1: PRRPs pragmatically support positive integration on a compromising basis towards European integration and/ or a conditional socio-economic basis
 - H1.1: PRRPs support positive integration on a compromising basis vis-à-vis integration
 - H1.2: PRRPs support positive integration on a conditional basis vis-à-vis social consumption
 - H1.3: PRRPs support positive integration on a conditional basis vis-à-vis economic regulation
- H2: PRRPs oppose positive integration on a principled rejection of European integration and/ or a conditional socio-economic basis
 - H2.1: PRRPs oppose positive integration on a principled rejection of European integration
 - H2.2: PRRPs oppose positive integration on a conditional socio-economic basis vis-à-vis social investment
 - H2.3: PRRPs oppose positive integration on a conditional socio-economic basis vis-à-vis welfare chauvinism

- H2.4: PRRPs oppose positive integration on a conditional socio-economic basis vis-à-vis economic regulation
- H3: PRRPs blur their positions towards positive integration

The main hypotheses are tested in the quantitative chapter, where I broadly map the variation in attitudes amongst and within the selected sample of PRRPs and EPSR cases by conducting a secondary data analysis of EP voting data. The sub-hypotheses are then tested in the qualitative chapter, where I conduct an in-depth discourse analysis to unwrap and explain some of this variation. The two elements are then amalgamated in a final discussion section. Further details regarding the methodological approach, application of the theoretical framework, case selection, and methods are elaborated upon in the following chapter.

II. Theoretical Chapter

2.1 Introduction

Research Question: *How can the Attitudes of the Populist Radical Right to Positive Integration in the EU be explained?*

To answer this research question, I employ a methodological framework which revolves around an integrative mixed-methods approach, entailing a broad quantitative element in relation to all five policy cases, and an in-depth qualitative dimension in relation to four, regarding 17 selected PRRPs from 14 EU member states. The integrative approach was chosen due to its conduciveness with the main research aims of both mapping the variations in PRRP support or opposition to particular policies, and offering an explanation as to why this is the case. Seawright (2016: 9) states that:

The central idea of integrative multi-method research is to use each method for what it is especially good at, and to minimize inferential weaknesses by using other methods to test, revise, or justify assumptions [...] In an integrative research sequence, one method provides an initial summary of current knowledge about a problem of causal inference. An alternative method then tests the assumptions behind that initial summary.

In line with this approach, the initial method employed is a secondary data analysis of the voting records of both PRRPs to policy initiatives, and the positions of individual MEPs within them. Because this data is readily available, the purpose of the analysis is to map the commonalities and variations in attitudes to positive integration amongst PRRPs and MEPs, summarise them broadly, and apply the initial main hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) to the cases contingent on the parties' stances. From this initial analysis, inferences and assumptions can be drawn as to why this variation occurs, actively engaging the sub-hypotheses (H1.1, H1.2, H1.3; H2.1, H2.2, H2.3, H2.4). Thus, a discourse analysis of the relevant MEPs' parliamentary speeches regarding the policies is used to explain what causes the variations in voting behaviour towards particular policies, offering a justification for the initial assumptions which arise from the secondary data analysis. Further details regarding these methods, including their incorporation into the overarching theoretical framework, are elaborated upon at later stages in this chapter. Before that however, a detailed elaboration of this framework and a justification for the case selection vis-à-vis policies and parties studied is offered.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A combination of two theoretical paradigms vis-à-vis PRRPs is taken to form a hybrid theoretical framework for this thesis. As established, this research lies within the nexus of party attitudes to both European integration and socio-economic policy. Thus, Vasilopoulous's (2011) tripartite typology of PRRP opposition is used to place the parties into categories pertaining to rejecting, conditional, and compromising. To assess into which of these categories the parties are placed, the discourse employed by their MEPs is coded vis-à-vis the differentiated nature of conditional or compromising support; and rejecting or conditional opposition. When considering this differentiation, the aspects pertaining to their often-principled objection to European integration (de Vries & Edwards 2009; Vasilopoulou 2011; Buhr 2012; Mudde 2019), and their conditional approach to PRRP socio-economic policy (Afonso 2015; Roth et al. 2018; Chueri 2020; Kraus and Giebler 2020; Enggist & Pinggera 2022), are drawn upon. The elaboration of the aforementioned hypotheses is detailed below.

Support

H1: When the PRRP supports the policy, they do so based on three possible dimensions:

- **H1.1: Compromising support** towards European integration, i.e. The party accepts deepening integration through social policies because it is conducive with their country's (and particularly their core constituency's) prosperity.
- **H1.2: Conditional support** based on qualified socio-economic grounds vis-à-vis social consumption, i.e. The policy is predominantly consumptive in nature, aimed at a core constituency
- **H1.3: Conditional Support** based on qualified socio-economic grounds vis-à-vis regulation¹, i.e. The policy is regulatory in nature.

Opposition

H2: When the PRRP opposes the policy, they do so based on three possible dimensions:

- **H2.1: Rejecting Opposition** based on a principled objection to European Integration.

¹ See mixed views towards regulation cited in chapter 1.3

- **H2.2: Conditional Opposition** based on qualified socio-economic grounds vis-à-vis social investment, i.e. The policy is predominantly concerned with investment in minority and disadvantaged communities etc.
- **H2.3: Conditional Opposition** based on socio-economic grounds vis-à-vis welfare chauvinism, i.e. The policy is aimed at non-Europeans such as migrants or refugees
- **H2.4: Conditional Opposition** based on qualified socio-economic grounds vis-à-vis regulation, i.e. The policy is regulatory² in nature.

For the purposes of this thesis and to differentiate between elements of the framework, the definition of social investment is taken as “policies that both invest in human capital development [...] and that help to make efficient use of human capital [...] while fostering greater social inclusion,” including, but not limited to education, women’s employment, and “facilitating access to the labour market for groups that have traditionally been excluded” (Morel et al. 2012). Likewise, social consumption can be seen those more traditional welfare policies, such as pensions and direct payments (Enggist & Pinggera 2022). Economic regulation is understood as policies which specifically aim to impose regulatory constraints on businesses in the interests of labourers. Additionally, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013: 160) define welfare chauvinism as when “a fairly generous welfare state is generally supported for the ‘own people’, but ‘aliens’ (such as immigrants, refugees or Roma) are to be excluded from most of the provisions.”

Additionally, PRRP MEPs may abstain from voting, thereby displaying ambivalence due to a reluctance to engage in trade-offs between elements of their support base. In this case, a third hypothesis may apply:

- **H3: PRRPs blur their positions towards positive integration**

This confluence provides a solid framework for testing the hypotheses against the empirical research and deciphering PRRPs’ attitudes to positive integration. Thus, it is also integral to the case selection and how the methods are executed, both of which are detailed below.

² ibid

2.3 Case Selection

2.3.1 Policies Studied

As mentioned, the EPSR is an unprecedented acceleration of positive integration, entailing numerous policies centred around the labour market, welfare entitlements, and wider social obligations. The case selection of policies to assess PRRPs' attitudes to these developments is guided by criteria based around both the policy's congruence with PRRP core constituencies (Kriesi et al. 2008; Eatwell & Goodwin 2018; Mudde 2019; Hopkin 2020; Bergman 2022) and the theoretical framework (Vasilopoulou 2011; Afonso 2015; Roth et al. 2018; Chueri 2020; Kraus and Giebler 2020; Enggist & Pinggera 2022). Five policies, consisting of two directives and three Parliamentary resolutions, from the EPSR were selected for empirical analysis in this thesis, the details of which are elaborated upon below.

1. Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in the European Union

This directive was proposed by the Commission in October 2020. Its aims are to “[ensure] that workers in the Union earn adequate wages [... and] to guarantee adequate working and living conditions, as well as to build fair and resilient economies and societies” (Commission 2020: 1). The policy is aimed at correcting “increased job polarisation resulting [... from] an increasing share of low-paid and low-skilled occupations,” as well as “in work poverty and wage inequality” (ibid). Thus, this policy is both highly salient vis-à-vis PRRPs' core constituency of the ‘losers of globalisation,’ and it is regulatory in nature. Both of these factors have the potential to influence their attitudes towards it.

2. Directive on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers

This directive was proposed by the Commission in April 2019. Although it is the only policy studied which fell to parliamentary approval in the 2014- 2019 term, it is integral to this research for numerous reasons. The policy contains aspects which pertain to both social consumption and investment. For instance, the EC states that it “improves existing rights and introduces new ones for both women and men, thereby addressing the equal treatment and opportunities in the today's labour market, promoting non-discrimination and fostering gender equality” (Commission 2017: 1). However, it is also aimed at tackling “lower social security contributions translating into reduced or non-existing pension entitlements” (ibid: 4). Moreover, it is highly regulatory in nature, imposing new rules on businesses vis-à-vis their

obligations to employees. Therefore, it is vital that PRRP attitudes to this policy be accounted for.

3. Resolution on Establishing a European Education Area by 2025

This resolution, first tabled in November 2021, but amended in May 2022 to include ‘micro-credentials,’ is also highly congruent with the case selection criteria. In the primary resolution, the Parliament states that “the ultimate goal is to establish a bottom-up European Education Area (EEA) with common European policy objectives that guarantee quality, inclusive and accessible education [...] education needs to be conceptualised broadly as ‘lifelong learning’, ranging from pre-primary to tertiary education, including vocational education and training (VET) as well as non-formal and informal education” (Parliament 2021a: 3). Interestingly, in identifying challenges to education within the EU, the resolution states that “various forms of extremism and populism, disinformation, the undermining of evidence-based education” are significant ones which should be addressed by such policy (ibid). The ‘micro-credentials’ amendment aims at providing a standardised recognition of citizens’ qualifications across EU member states, thereby increasing the resolution’s scope in deepening integration in this policy area further. Thus, the resolution is very much centred around social investment, is targeted at PRRP constituencies by the distinct emphasis on vocational initiatives; but essentially ‘calls out’ the tactics of such parties and deepens EU cooperation and European integration significantly, particularly the ‘micro-credentials’ amendment; these points make a strong case for its inclusion in this research.

4. Resolution on Affordable Housing for All

This resolution, adopted on January 21st 2020, states that “access to adequate housing is a fundamental right must be seen as a precondition for the exercise of, and access to, other fundamental rights and for a life in conditions of human dignity” (Parliament 2021b: 5). Although, as the title states, the initiative is targeted at all EU citizens, it makes particular reference to minority groups which may be acutely affected by housing crises, namely: “LGBTIQ persons, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, people with physical or psychiatric illnesses, and people from marginalised communities, including Roma.” Thus, the resolution is predominantly based on a social investment ethos, making it pertinent to this study.

5. Resolution on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee

This resolution, passed in October 2020, aims at building upon the original Youth Guarantee of 2013 to help the EU's youth "to find employment or to participate in a continuing education, apprenticeship or traineeship programme" (Parliament 2020a: 2). It is similar to the European Education Area initiative in many regards, except this explicitly aims to achieve "the Union's objective of sustainable growth and high-quality jobs, while also being in line with the EPSR" by tackling youth unemployment (ibid). Although it makes mention of migrants and refugees, it is notably targeted at addressing the woes of "those living in remote, rural or disadvantaged urban areas" (ibid: 5). This resolution is therefore highly salient with PRRPs' core support of the 'losers' of globalisation, particularly those young, rural dwellers. It is unfortunately the only policy included on which there was no parliamentary debate; however, inferences are drawn vis-à-vis the quantitative analysis in the discussion section subsequent to the qualitative analysis to attempt to substitute for the lack of data.

2.3.2 Parties Studied

The selection of parties studied is guided by the literature on regarding their core characteristics of populism, nativism, and authoritarianism (Mudde 2007; Eatwell & Goodwin 2018; Mudde 2019). This is in addition to the parties classified by the existing research cited regarding European PRRPs, both in the EP (Treib 2021), and their socio-economic positions (Afonso 2015; Roth et al. 2018; Chueri 2020; Kraus and Giebler 2020; Enggist & Pinggera 2022). Due to the Directive on Work-life Balance falling in the 2014-19 Parliamentary term, 11 parties³ are only available to study regarding this policy due to their election to in both terms. Thus, the 17 PRRPs contained in this study are listed in table 1 below.

Party	Country
Alternative for Germany (AfD)	DE
Brothers of Italy (FdI)	IT
Conservative People's Party of Estonia (CPP)	EE
Danish People's Party (DPP)	DK
Forum for Democracy (FvD)	NL
Freedom and Direct Democracy (FDD)	CZ
Freedom Party	AT
Fidesz	HU
Finn's Party	FI
Greek Solution	GR
Jobbik	HU
Law & Justice (PiS)	PL
Lega	IT
National Rally	FR
Party for Freedom (PVV)	NL
VOX	ES
Vlaams Belang	BE

Table 1: Parties Studied

³ With only 11 of the PRRPs elected to the previous parliamentary term in the case of the Work-life Balance Directive, the parties available for study in both terms are highlighted in green

2.4 Methods

2.4.1. Quantitative Element: Secondary Data Analysis of Voting Records

To analyse the sample of MEPs’ voting records vis-à-vis the five policies studied from the selected PRRPs, a secondary data analysis is employed. The data is easily accessible from the EP’s website where all roll-call votes are archived. The analysis for each policy is displayed using descriptive statistics, which Burnham et al. (2008: 138) define as “statistical tools for describing data.” The same authors note that the method is highly favourable for analysing and presenting political phenomena such as “voting data” (ibid). In line with the integrative methodological approach, this method is necessary to primarily map attitudes in a broad sense and apply the main hypotheses accordingly. The particular tool used for each case in the analysis is a cross-tabulation, as exemplified in table 2 below, as the data in question is multivariate (ibid: 156), I.e., PRRPs and MEPs within them are in favour/ against/ abstained in the vote. PRRPs’ attitudes according to these dimensions are taken as when a majority of MEPs votes in one direction. Where there is no conclusive direction, they are categorised as blurred. Additionally, a frequency table, exemplified by table 3, is then used in the summary of the quantitative analysis vis-à-vis the main hypotheses.

Party	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Lega	Frequency	Etc.	Etc.
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

Table 2: Example cross-tabulation in voting data analysis

Party/ Policy	Minimum Wage Directive	Work-life Balance Directive	EEA Resolution	Affordable Housing	Youth Guarantee
Lega	H1	H1	H2	H2	H3

Table 3: Example Frequency Table of main hypotheses in summary of voting data analysis

2.4.2. Qualitative Element: Discourse Analysis of PRRP MEPs’ Parliamentary Speeches

The purpose of the discourse analysis is to unwrap some of the attitudes outlined in the quantitative chapter. As with the integrative approach, this method is used to delve deeper into the attitudinal analysis, to explain party attitudes, and to test the hypotheses with more rigour by deconstructing them into the sub-hypotheses. Burnham et al. (2008: 248) describe this method as “showing how language and communications influence social actions and policies.”

The same authors note that it is favourable for conducting “in-depth and considered qualitative research” (ibid: 256). As such, this method is particularly congruent with the purpose of this research element.

The discourse of PRRP MEPs is analysed in relation to four of the initial cases, with the Resolution on the Youth Guarantee excluded due to the absence of a parliamentary debate as mentioned in Chapter 2.2.1. The nature of party support and/ or opposition is coded accordingly on a cross-tabulation with the theoretical framework vis-à-vis rejecting opposition, conditional opposition, conditional support, and compromising support. An example of this table is found below in table 4. To summarise this section, the sub-hypotheses vis-à-vis the PRRPs are then displayed on a similar table at the end of the chapter.

	RO:	CO: Soc.	CO:	CO:	CS: Soc.	CS:	Comp. S:
Policy	Integration	Investment	WC	Regulation	Consumption	Regulation	Integration
Party							

Table 4: Example cross-tabulation in discourse analysis

III. Quantitative Secondary Data Analysis

3.1 The Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages

Minimum Wage	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Lega	17	0	0
National Rally	0	20	0
Fidesz	8	0	0
AfD	0	11	0
FDI	4	0	1
Freedom Party	0	3	0
Vlaams Belang	0	3	0
VOX	0		4
FvD	0	4	0
Finn's Party	0	2	0
FDD	0	1	1
DPP	0	1	0
CPP	0	1	0
Greek Solution	1	0	0
Jobbik	0	0	0
PVV	0	1	0
PiS	4	2	16
<u>Total Party Votes</u>	34	49	22

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Minimum Wage Directive - (Parliament 2022a)

As seen from table 5, there was substantial variation across and within PRRPs regarding their attitudes towards the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages. Of the 105 MEPs who voted, 34 were in favour, 49 were against, and 22 abstained. The application of the main hypotheses is detailed below.

Pragmatic support on a conditional and/ or compromising basis

With regard to H1, just three PRRPs wholly supported the policy: the Italian Lega, Hungarian Fidesz, and Greek Solution. A more slightly more varied picture emerged with the Italian

Lega’s radical counterparts, Brothers of Italy, with four out of five votes casted in favour of the initiative and one abstention, rendering them supportive nonetheless.

Opposition on a principled and/ or qualified basis

H2 is applied to the majority of PRRPs in the study, with nine PRRPs wholly opposing the policy. The French, German, Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Finnish, Danish, and Czech PRRPs refrained from supporting it on either a principled objection to integration or qualified socio-economic basis.

Blurred Position

H3 is applied three PRRPs due to their ambivalent attitude towards the directive. As evident from table 5, the parties in which a majority of MEPs abstained from voting on the policy were VOX and PiS. The Czech party Freedom and Direct Democracy cast just two votes, one in favour and one against, making its attitude likewise.

3.2 The Directive on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers

Work-life Balance	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Lega	5	0	0
National Rally	1	3	7
Fidesz	11	0	0
AfD	0	1	0
Freedom Party	0	0	4
Vlaams Belang	1	0	0
Finn's Party	0	0	0
DPP	0	3	0
Jobbik	0	0	1
PVV	0	3	0
PiS	1	3	8
<u>Total Party Votes</u>	19	13	20

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Work-life Balance Directive - (Parliament 2019b)

As evident from table 6, there was also substantial variation amongst PRRPs’ attitudes towards the Work-life Balance Directive. Of the 52 votes that were cast by selected PRRP MEPs, 19

were in favour, 13 were against, and 20 abstained. The three main hypotheses are elaborated upon below.

Pragmatic Support on a conditional and/ or compromising basis

H1 is applicable to three PRRPs in the case of the Work-life Balance Directive. MEPs from Lega, Vlaams Belang, and Fidesz wholly supported the initiative, similar to their stance regarding the previous policy.

Opposition on a principled and/ or qualified basis

H2 is applicable to three PRRPs in this instance. MEPs from the AfD, the Danish People's Party, and the Party for Freedom all voted against the policy, suggesting that they objected to it on a principled opposition to integration or a qualified one vis-à-vis socio-economic concerns.

Blurred Position

H3 is the most common amongst PRRPs regarding the directive. As seen from table 6, National Rally, the Austrian Freedom Party, Jobbik and the Polish Party for Justice all held majorities of MEPs which abstained from voting in favour or against. Interestingly, there is substantial variation regarding the French and Polish radical right. Whilst seven National Rally MEPs abstained, three votes against, and one in favour. Similarly, eight PiS MEPs abstained in the vote, whilst three voted against, and one in favour. These results suggest a significant ambivalence towards positive integration within these parties.

3.3 Resolution on Establishing a European Education Area by 2025

EEA Resolution	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Lega	1	21	2
National Rally	0	16	0
Fidesz	10	0	0
AfD	0	8	1
FDI	5	0	0
Freedom Party	0	0	2
Vlaams Belang	0	0	3
VOX	0	0	3
FvD	1	2	0
Finn's Party	0	0	1
FDD	1	0	0
DPP	0	0	1
CPP	0	0	1
Greek Solution	1	0	0
Jobbik	0	0	0
PVV	0	1	0
PiS	27	0	0
Total Party Votes	46	48	14

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the EEA Resolution - (Parliament 2022b)

As evident in table 7, there is also significant variation amongst and within PRRPs towards the resolution on Establishing a European Education Area. Of the 108 votes cast by these MEPs, 46 were in favour, 48 were against, and 14 abstained. The application of the hypotheses is detailed below.

Pragmatic Support on a conditional and/ or compromising basis

H1 is relevant to five PRRPs vis-à-vis this case. MEPs from Fidesz, the Brothers of Italy, Freedom and Direct Democracy, Greek Solution, and PiS all voted in favour of the policy on a conditional or compromising basis.

Opposition on a Principled and/ or Conditional Basis

H2 is applicable to five PRRPs in the case of the EEA resolution. Those parties which wholly opposed the initiative were National Rally and the Dutch Party for Freedom. A slightly more varied picture was evident for the three others, however. Although a majority of 21 Lega MEPs voted against the policy, two abstained and one was in favour of it. Similarly, whilst two Forum for Democracy MEPs were against, one voted for it. Regarding the German AfD, eight were opposed to the resolution, whilst one abstained.

Blurred Position

H3 is assigned to six PRRPs regarding this resolution. MEPs from the Austrian, Belgian, Czech, Danish, Estonian, and Finnish PRRPs all abstained, blurring their attitude towards the education policy.

3.4 Resolution on Affordable Housing for All

EEA Resolution	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Lega	0	28	0
National Rally	0	21	0
Fidesz	0	13	0
AfD	0	11	0
FDI	0	6	0
Freedom Party	0	3	0
Vlaams Belang	0	3	0
VOX	0	4	0
FvD	0	4	0
Finn's Party	0	1	0
FDD	0	1	0
DPP	0	1	0
CPP	0	1	0
Greek Solution	0	0	1
Jobbik	0	0	0
PVV	0	1	0
PiS	0	26	1
<u>Total Party Votes</u>	0	124	2

Table 8: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Affordable Housing Resolution - (Parliament 2021c)

As seen from table 8, there is much less variation amongst and within PRRPs in the case of the Resolution on Affordable Housing for All than has been evident with the previous cases. Of the 126 votes cast by MEPs, an overwhelming majority of 124 opposed the resolution, with two abstaining. None supported the policy, making H1 non-applicable to any PRRP in this case. As for H3, it is applicable to just one party, Greek solution, as they blurred their position by abstaining from in the vote. H2 is thus applicable to all other PRRPs, except Jobbik, whose MEP was not present. This suggests that the vast majority of PRRPs opposed this resolution on a principled and/ or qualified basis.

3.5 Resolution on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee

Youth Guarantee	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Lega	0	0	28
National Rally	0	28	0
Fidesz	12	0	0
AfD	0	11	0
FDI	6	0	0
Freedom Party	0	3	0
Vlaams Belang	0	2	1
VOX	0	3	0
FvD	0	4	0
Finn's Party	0	2	0
FDD	1	1	0
DPP	0	1	0
CPP	0	1	0
Greek Solution	1	0	0
Jobbik	0	0	0
PVV	0	1	0
PiS	26	0	0
Total Party Votes	46	57	29

Table 9: Cross-tabulation of voting behaviour regarding the Youth Guarantee Resolution – (Parliament 2020b)

As seen from table 9, there was a higher level of variation in PRRP attitudes towards the Resolution on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee than with the previous resolution. Of the 132 votes cast by MEPs, 46 were against, 57 in favour, and 29 abstained. The details regarding the hypotheses are described below.

Pragmatic Support on a conditional and/ or compromising basis

H1 is applicable to four PRRPs vis-à-vis this policy. Fidesz, the Brothers of Italy, Greek Solution, and PiS all displayed a propensity to pragmatically support the Youth Guarantee on conditional and/ or compromising bases.

Opposition on a Principled and/ or Conditional Basis

H2 is relevant to most PRRPs in this case, with 11 expressing rejection of the resolution on principled and/ or conditional bases. As seen from table 9, nine of those wholly rejected the initiative. However, a slight variation was evident regarding Vlaams Belang, with one MEP abstaining.

Blurred Position

H3 is applicable to just one PRRP, the Italian Lega, in the case of the resolution on the Youth Guarantee. All 28 MEPs who voted on the policy did so on abstention, thereby blurring their attitude towards it.

3.6 Summary of quantitative findings

Positive Integration Policy	In Favour	Against	Abstained
Minimum Wage Directive	34	49	22
Work-life Balance Directive	19	30	20
EEA Resolution	46	48	14
Affordable Housing	0	124	22
Youth Guarantee Resolution	46	57	29

Table 10: Summary of voting behaviour regarding the five policy cases

Party/ Policy	Minimum Wage Directive	Work-life Balance Directive	EEA Resolution	Affordable Housing	Youth Guarantee
Lega	H1	H1	H2	H2	H3
National Rally	H2	H3	H2	H2	H2
Fidesz	H1	H1	H1	H2	H1
AfD	H2	H2	H2	H2	H2
FDI	H1		H1	H2	H1
Freedom Party	H2	H3	H3	H2	H2
Vlaams Belang	H2	H1	H3	H2	H2
VOX	H3		H3	H2	H2
FvD	H2		H2	H2	H2
Finn's Party	H2		H3	H2	H2
FDD	H3		H1	H2	H3
DPP	H2	H2	H3	H2	H2
CPP	H2		H3	H2	H2
Greek Solution	H1		H1	H3	H1
Jobbik		H3			
PVV	H2	H2	H2	H2	H2
PiS	H3	H3	H1	H2	H1

Table 11: Application of main hypotheses regarding the voting data analysis

H1: PRRPs pragmatically support positive integration on a compromising basis towards European integration and/ or a conditional socio-economic basis

H2: PRRPs oppose positive integration on a principled rejection of European integration and/ or a conditional socio-economic basis

H3: PRRPs blur their positions towards positive integration

The data analyses of PRRP voting behaviour towards the five cases demonstrates the high level of variation in attitudes both among the parties and amongst MEPs within them. Although opposition to the policies was the most likely outcome of all five votes as table 10 shows, there was also relatively strong support amongst MEPs for the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages, the Resolution on Establishing a European Education Area, and the Resolution on Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee.

With regard to the hypotheses vis-à-vis PRRPs studied, table 11 shows that H2, meaning opposition to positive integration, was the most common regarding the Minimum Wage Directive, the Affordable Housing Resolution, and the Youth Guarantee. A rather ‘blurrier’ picture was evident in the cases of the Work-life Balance Directive and the EEA Resolution, with many MEPs abstaining, causing high levels of attitudinal variation. Although H1 did not predominantly prevail amongst the whole sample in any of the cases, there was still some scope for its individual application displayed through the sometimes varying attitudes within the PRRPs. Having broadly mapped this variety and applied the main hypotheses to the PRRPs, the next chapter aims at unwrapping this variation and explaining the attitudes in relation to the sub-hypotheses before amalgamating the quantitative and qualitative elements in the subsequent chapter.

IV. Qualitative Discourse Analysis

4.1 Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages

Minimum Wage Directive	RO: Integration	CO: Soc. Investment	CO: WC Regulation	CO: Regulation	CS: Soc. Consumption	CS: Regulation	Comp. S: Integration
Lega						Yes	Yes
National Rally							
Fidesz	Yes						
AfD	Yes		Yes				
FDI							
Freedom Party							
Vlaams Belang							
VOX	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
FvD							
Finn's Party							
FDD							
DPP	Yes						
CPP							
Greek Solution							
Jobbik							
PVV							
PiS							Yes

Table 12: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the Minimum Wage Directive

As seen from table 12, the discourse of opposition among the six PRRPs whose speeches in the debate was available for analysis was mostly expressed through a principled opposition to European integration. The VOX and AfD parties displayed multifaceted objections, with the former objecting on every criterion. The relatively sparse support was found to come from the discourse of Lega and PiS, with MEPs from both parties holding favourable views of the

directive on a compromising basis vis-à-vis integration. There was no contribution from 11 PRRPs in this debate and, thus, their specific attitudes cannot be analysed. Some pertinent examples of PRRPs' rejecting, conditional, and compromising stances are detailed below.

Rejecting Opposition

MEPs from table 12, four PRRPs objected to the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages on a principled opposition to European integration. Their discourse shows that this rejection mainly concerned perceived encroachments on national sovereignty. For example, the VOX MEP Jorge Buxade Villalba, stated:

Mr. President, Article 153, paragraph 5, of the Treaty denies the Union powers to regulate remuneration, and you know it, but you don't care. They give us this directive on wages, which does not protect the stable employment of Europeans (Parliament 2022c).

Here, Buxade Villalba makes clear his frustration with the EU's involvement in this policy area, detesting its ostensible encroachment on national competence. Similarly, Peter Kofod of the Danish People's Party said:

Sir. Chairman! The EU must not interfere with our wages. This is clear from the Treaty of Lisbon. And what does the Commission do? What does a large majority in the European Parliament do? Of course you start meddling in wages. Now you want the European minimum wage implemented, which has the potential to crush the successful Danish model on the labour market. It is foolish. (ibid)

Much like the previous contribution, Kofod cites an alleged breach of EU law in his contestation of the directive, claiming that the EU has overstepped its competence regarding social policy. The German MEP, Guido Reil, is also seen to premise his argument on the supremacy of national sovereignty:

Why are you having this discussion in the EU Parliament? The issue of minimum wages clearly belongs in national parliaments. And secondly, and more importantly, I think, your minimum wage policy is just another attempt to patch up the problems you've created yourself. With your horrendous energy costs, your Green Deal, your emissions

trading system and now your sanctions against Russia, you are creating the situation that is leading to people becoming impoverished. And poverty always hits the low paid first (ibid)

Interestingly, Reil is keen to evoke a ‘populist’ sentiment in his opposition to the directive, suggesting that the EU is encroaching on national sovereignty, and framing it as the force which has created impoverishment.

Conditional Opposition

As seen from table 12, MEPs from two PRRPs expressed conditional opposition on a socio-economic basis. Jorge Buxade Vallalba, in addition to his principled opposition, also opposed the directive on the grounds of social investment, welfare chauvinism, and economic regulation. He stated that:

You cannot talk about fair wages and not combat the main dangers for employment: the massive arrival of illegal immigrants willing to assume the worst working conditions and be cheap labour, and the destruction of European companies with climate regulations, the taxes and unfair competition from abroad [...] And the final joke: recital 16 states that unions are harassed. I don't know in which country; In Spain, workers are harassed by unions when they see them applaud immigration and gender policies that curtail equal opportunities (ibid).

By casting blame on illegal immigrants for low wages, his chauvinistic stance is demonstrated. He also rails against regulation on industry as a driver of employment problems. This is in addition to criticising the gendered element of the element, showing his negative view towards social investment. AfD MEP Guido Reil also displayed a qualified opposition to the directive based on welfare chauvinism and social investment by criticising the directive’s ostensible gendered and ethnic focus, saying:

I'm saying it in biblical terms because the situation is now such that it seems appropriate to me: Repent! Get back to smart, rational policies that put people first, not gender or ethnicity (ibid).

Conditional Support

As seen from table 12, Lega was the only party to offer conditional support for the policy, with Elena Lizzi offering qualified approval on the basis of economic regulation and the:

[elimination] of pirate contracts of wage dumping [...] it will be able to contribute to the introduction in the Member States, where a legal minimum wage already exists, of objective criteria which allow wages to rise and which act as a deterrent to relocations (ibid).

Additionally, her party colleague, Stefania Zambelli, offered similar qualified support vis-à-vis economic regulation, basing it on the directive's aim of tackling:

the phenomenon of wage dumping from Eastern European countries towards our industries [...] this proposal will not lead to any imposition from Europe on Italy, which will instead have to focus on fighting unfair wage practices and cutting the tax wedge and guaranteeing fair wages and a dignified life, also in light of the heavy inflationary wave in progress (ibid).

It is notable that the Lega MEP offers this support for economic regulation on the condition that it is not aimed predominantly at imposing constraints on Italian industry. This qualified support from Lega intertwines inextricably with their compromising support for integration, as detailed in the next subsection.

Compromising Support

As well as Lega MEPs, PiS also showed a compromising support for positive integration. These two parties held favourable views of the directive on the basis of its potential to bring economic prosperity to Italy and Poland respectively. For example, in her contribution to the debate, Lizzi also stated that:

Mr President, Commissioner Schmit, ladies and gentlemen, the proposal for a directive on adequate minimum wages is an important goal for improving the conditions of workers and for the fight against in-work poverty and the League will support it [...] It does not impose a statutory minimum wage on all Member States; secondly, it does not oblige Member States with a collective bargaining system that already meets the criteria set by the directive itself, such as Italy (ibid)

In this part of her contribution, although she is wary of the undesirability of supranational policy imposition on member states, Lizzi seems to postulate that this form of European integration holds the potential to bring prosperity for European citizens. This aspect of her contribution, in conjunction with her qualified support for economic regulation, makes a strong

case to classify Lega's support as compromising. Additionally, the PiS MEP, Elizbieta Rafalska, displays a compromising acceptance, stating:

After intense negotiations, we have reasonable yet moderate solutions that take into account national circumstances and respect the competences of the Member States. It is crucial that the draft directive clearly indicates that it is the Member States that take into account the national socio-economic situation, decide on the importance of mandatory criteria, respect valorisation, and strengthen the role of social partners (ibid).

Similar to Lizzi's discourse, Rafalska is also wary of transferring decision-making powers; but compromises on the basis that it respects national sovereignty. It is notable that, as seen in the previous chapter, Rafalska was one of just two PiS MEPs that supported the directive, with most abstaining; this suggests significant divisions in the Polish PRRP regarding such a policy direction.

4.2 Directive on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers

Work-life Balance	RO: Integration	CO: Soc. Investment	CO: WC	CO: Regulation	CS: Soc. Consumption	CS: Regulation	Comp. S: Integration
Lega							Yes
National Rally	Yes	Yes		Yes			
Fidesz							
AfD							
Freedom Party							
Vlaams Belang							
Finn's Party							
DPP	Yes						
Jobbik							
PVV							
PiS	Yes						Yes

Table 13: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the Work-life Balance Directive

From the four parties' discourse available for analysis regarding the Directive on Work-life balance for parents and carers, the results are mixed. As seen from table 13, National Rally and the Danish People's Party principally opposed the directive on a steadfast objection to European integration, with the former also displaying a qualified opposition regarding social investment and economic regulation. Meanwhile, MEPs from PiS and Lega offered support for the policy on a compromising basis, with MEPs from the former party holding conflicting views with one MEP rejecting and the other compromising in their support. No MEP or PRRP was found to support the directive on a conditional basis. There was no contribution from seven PRRPs in this debate and, thus, their specific attitudes cannot be analysed

Rejecting Opposition

As mentioned, the principled rejection of the directive came from the French and Danish radical right. For instance, the DPP's Anders Vistisen stated:

Sir. Chairman! The legislation that is being adopted today marks a new low point in the EU's interference in family life as well as in the Member States' right to define social conditions themselves. It is almost the height of hypocrisy that a parliament that does not even allow maternity leave for either men or women would dictate how European families should orientate themselves when it comes to ensuring the best possible start in life for the child. In the Danish People's Party, we believe exclusively that social rights and social competences are an area that must be defined by the member states (Parliament 2019b).

In his contribution to the debate, Vistisen is adamant that the EU should not involve itself in social competences whatsoever, claiming that this is a policy area exclusively reserved for national governments. Similarly, Joelle Melin of the French National Rally, stated that:

all legislative or administrative texts in this area are the sole responsibility of the Member States. Brussels has no right to set rates, durations and amounts, because this violates the principle of subsidiarity and comes in addition to constraining countries, such as France, which already have all the desirable arsenal, not to mention the potential imbalance in national social accounts (ibid).

Perceived encroachments upon national sovereignty and social competences are strong drivers of the rejecting opposition expressed by the Danish and French radical right. However, in the case of PiS, a rather more blurred picture of their attitude emerges. The MEP Czeslaw Hoc appears to be supportive of the directive in some regards, but ultimately draws upon the same national sovereignty argument in his opposition:

only a person who is fulfilled and happy in his private life is maximally efficient and engaged in the professional sphere. It would be great if there was a balance between these two spheres. Well, the EU directive on this balance has good and desirable goals. However, it should be noted that these issues are a very sensitive matter, that Member States may consider it too excessive interference of the Union in the organization of family life, in the sphere of care for offspring and their upbringing, even a violation of the principle of subsidiarity. Some internal regulations are compatible with EU proposals, for example, in Poland, on the occasion of the birth of a child, 14-day paid paternity leave is granted, the EU proposes at least ten days or more flexible work organization. On the other hand, it is necessary to argue about the non-transferability of the two-month parental leave to the other parent (ibid).

As seen from the above quote, Hoc appears to empathise with aspects of the directive; but he ultimately places national sovereignty above all other concerns.

Conditional Opposition

As seen from table 13, Melin was the only PRRP MEP to express conditional opposition, doing so on a qualified basis vis-à-vis social investment and economic regulation. In her contribution, she also stated that:

these purely societal provisions are absolutely not the responsibility of employers, whose role is to provide professional activities in an acceptable environment and not to impose an obligatory paternalism that they would not want. Last but not least, this text imposes a predominance of personal life over professional life, which will eventually become a major brake on the economic dynamism of Europe, initially affecting VSEs and SMEs, which will thus be unbalanced (ibid).

Although the opposition is predominantly centred around regulation of small and medium enterprises, she does allude to the apparent “obligatory paternalism” which the policy propagates, signalling her objection to the gendered nature of the directive and, thus, social investment.

Compromising Support

As evident from table 13, one member of PiS was the only MEP to express their support on a compromising basis for European integration. Jadwiga Wisniewska stated that:

Mr. President! Work-life balance is extremely important, extremely important for all parties, both for the child's parents and for the child himself. And looking for solutions that will bring us closer to achieving this state is indeed very important. Let's look through the prism of the European Parliament and what this work-life balance looks like, for example, the employees of the European Parliament who come to the Parliament before 9.00 and very often leave almost in the evening. Their children are brought up in nurseries and kindergartens, they have very little contact with their parents. When my assistant was pregnant, I tried to look at what flexible working hours

look like, what the possibility of working from home for assistants looks like. It turns out that our regulations become fiction in practice (ibid).

Interestingly, although she accepts the directive on a compromising basis because it “is needed” “very important,” she also accuses the EU of hypocrisy, citing the EP’s own alleged handling of issues which the policy seeks to address.

4.3 Resolution on Establishing a European Education Area 2025

EEA Resolution	RO: Integration	CO: Soc. Investment	CO: WC	CO: Regulation	CS: Soc. Consumption	CS: Regulation	Comp. S: Integration
Lega	Yes						
National Rally	Yes						
Fidesz							Yes
AfD	Yes	Yes					
FDI							
Freedom Party							
Vlaams Belang							
VOX	Yes	Yes					
FvD							
Finn's Party							
FDD							
DPP							
CPP							
Greek Solution							
Jobbik							
PVV							
PiS							

Table 14: Cross-tabulation of discourse analysis regarding the EEA Resolution

As seen from table 14, of the five PRRPs which contributed to the debate regarding the EEA, MEPs mostly expressed their opposition to it on a principled rejection of European integration. As could be expected with such a policy, there was also objection on the qualified basis of social investment; this came from AfD and VOX MEPs. Fidesz, the only PRRP to support the resolution in the debate, doing so on a compromising basis vis-à-vis integration. There was no conditional support offered to this resolution by PRRPs. Additionally, there was no contribution from 12 PRRPs in this debate and, thus, their specific attitudes cannot be analysed.

Rejecting Opposition

As a running theme in the rejecting opposition evident regarding positive integration in the previous cases, the perceived encroachment upon national competences was also highly evident in this case. For example, AfD MEP Christine Anderson stated:

The fact that this initiative is not at all subject to the regulatory competence of the EU is made clear by the fact that the Commission is called upon to implement an emphatically motivating instrument which forces the member states to tolerate this unconventional assumption of competence. The rapporteur evidently notices this himself when, as a precaution, he incorporates the flashbang of the voluntary implementation (Parliament 2022d).

Anderson is staunch in her defence of national sovereignty vis-à-vis education. Similarly, VOX MEP Margarita de la Pisa Carrion described it as:

another vague idea is also being put forward: the concept of the European Education Area with objectives between now and 2025. It is worrying that this idea could imply an interference that reduces the sovereignty of the Member States in terms of educational competences (ibid).

Lega took a slightly more qualified approach to their objection; however, it is ultimately based on a principled opposition with its MEP Gianantonio da Re stating that:

Collaboration between the Member States to achieve a common vision of education is welcome, but this must take place in full compliance with Article 165, according to which the Union can intervene in education only in full respect of the responsibility of States and with respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity. As established by the treaties themselves, in the field of education the European Union can only assist, coordinate and supplement the action of the member countries; we will therefore not accept any interference in our educational system. Willingness to collaborate not become a pretext for the European Union to give the States unsolicited directives (ibid).

As has been common with Lega's stance in the previous cases, there is a willingness to compromise; however, in this case, the MEP in question holds national sovereignty in supremacy.

Conditional Opposition

The conditional opposition expressed towards this resolution was done so by two PRRPs and on the basis of social investment. For example, the AfD's Christine Anderson, in addition to her principled objection, also stated:

Micro-credentials - a kind of passport intended to ensure access to the labour market for those who have gained green and digital literacy. It is expressly emphasized that this initiative is not based on the needs of the labour market (ibid).

Here, Anderson's disdain for investing in providing micro-credentials recognition to degree holders is evident. Meanwhile, VOX's MEP, de la Pisa Carrion, said the resolution was:

at the service of promoting ideologies such as gender and climate in an effort to homogenize the interests of the people in Europe that limits the subjects, as has been mentioned here today, to the consecration of ecological sustainability: it seems that there is only a need for training in this line. It is also disturbing that attempts are made to promote education for European and global citizenship and the activist appeal of young defenders of a more inclusive and sustainable society; that is, indoctrination. Be clear (ibid).

The Spanish MEP's discourse is rather more polemic. She rails against the apparent gendered element of the policy and calls it "indoctrination," making the contribution distinctly 'populist' in nature as she casts the EU as a villain to European citizens.

Compromising Support

The Hungarian PRRP, Fidesz, was the only party to support the resolution, doing so on a compromising basis vis-à-vis integration. Andrea Bocskor stated:

I welcome the efforts made to create the European Education Area, as it is important that as many European citizens as possible can benefit from quality and accessible education. I also support lifelong learning and the recommendation for micro-certificates that help with employability, since it is necessary to help those who need it to participate in education, training, and further training for their entire life. As the skills and competences acquired in basic education quickly become obsolete due to the rapid changes in the labour market, it is often necessary to retrain or gain experience abroad. This is why micro-certificates are very important and it is essential that their

introduction remains voluntary for the member countries, respecting the competences of the member countries (ibid).

Bocskor is conspicuously pragmatic in her assessment of the policy, recognising that educational integration is necessary to provide EU university graduates with economic prosperity. Expectedly, she makes clear her support is based on the respect of national sovereignty, a common theme observed in the previous cases of PRRPs offering compromising support to positive integration.

4.4 Resolution on Affordable Housing for All

Affordable Housing	RO: Integration	CO: Soc. Investment	CO: WC	CO: Regulation	CS: Soc. Consumption	CS: Regulation	Comp. S: Integration
Lega	Yes		Yes				
National Rally			Yes				
Fidesz							
AfD		Yes					
FDI							
Freedom Party							
Vlaams Belang							
VOX							
FvD							
Finn's Party							
FDD							
DPP							
CPP							
Greek Solution							
Jobbik							
PVV							
PiS	Yes		Yes	Yes			

Table 15: Cross-tabulation of the discourse analysis regarding the Affordable Housing Resolution

As evident in table 15, there were four PRRPs whose discourse was available for analysis: Lega, National Rally, and PiS. MEPs from these parties only expressed opposition to the resolution, doing so on both principled and conditional bases. This is the only policy which attracted no support from PRRPs, whether conditionally or compromising. There was no contribution from 13 PRRPs in this debate and, thus, their specific attitudes cannot be analysed.

Rejecting Opposition

The MEPs representing Lega and PiS voiced their opposition to the resolution on a steadfast rejection of European integration. For example, Lega MEP Stefania Zambelli stated that:

Europe must not intrude on the competences of individual states (Parliament 2020c).

Here, she plainly evokes the common PRRP argument against positive integration that Europe is encroaching on national competences. Similarly, PiS MEP Beata Szydlo said:

I fully agree with the report. I also agree that housing construction is the flywheel of the economy. But I do not agree with this report in the part where it tries to [...] encroach on the competences of member states (ibid).

Seemingly supportive of aspects of the resolution, Szydlo stops short of supporting it, pining national sovereignty as superior in her view.

Conditional Opposition

As seen from table 15, the conditional opposition to this directive was mostly targeted on the basis of welfare chauvinism. For example, in addition to her rejecting opposition, Zambelli also stated:

I believe that Europe has other things to think about in this period of crisis than dealing with social housing, setting limits and conditions for the assignment of housing, favouring, among other things, Roma and non-EU citizens [...] We need national plans that are able to accommodate the real needs of the individual territories and a much more rigid immigration policy to stem the arrival of thousands of illegal immigrants, because only in this way, and I repeat, because only in this way would the number of homeless people be drastically reduced our cities and would decrease the number of illegal occupations intended for those who have been on the list for years (ibid).

This element of her contribution is particularly chauvinistic in nature, blaming Roma People and foreigners for housing crises and claiming that such people should not be the subject of EU welfare initiatives. She seems to suggest that if the policy were more chauvinistic and targeted at just EU citizens, she would be capable of lending her support. Similarly, National Rally's Dominique Bilde stated that:

Mr President, around twenty undocumented migrants living in 37 m² in Val d'Oise, 200 migrants in a squat in Marseilles, a growing shortage of social housing in Île-de-France, migrant and Roma camps in outskirts of our cities, these are some examples that demonstrate the sad state of our country France today. We keep repeating what you refuse to see: the incessant migratory flow aggravates housing problems, no offense to the lesson givers who voluntarily live far from those they claim to defend. To put an end to the fatalism and hypocrisy of self-righteous people, let's stop immigration, which produces catastrophic effects for the working classes who suffer the full brunt of it (ibid).

Much like the previous contribution, the French MEP is also highly critical of a policy which is aimed at aiding those who do not fit the radical right's conception of the 'European' or 'French' citizen.

With regard to economic regulation and social investment, AfD and PiS were the propagators of such contestation. For instance, in addition to her rejecting opposition to the policy, the PiS MEP Beata Szydło also railed against the prospect of "more standards, more regulations," and urged the EU to "not impose further regulations." On the other hand, the German PRRP MEP Guido Reil stated that

Today we are talking about access to decent and affordable housing for all. This is a very important issue because rents have exploded in recent years and unfortunately there are now 700 000 people living on the streets in the EU, they are homeless [...] Green politics is a politics of social indifference, of freezing cold, and we must not allow that. We need real social politics for real people! (ibid).

Here, Reil seems quite supportive of the resolution generally, acknowledging the need for regulation; however, this support is highly contingent on what he views as "green politics," making an allusion to his disdain for policies which centre around investment in sustainable housing. As seen in Chapter 3.4, he ultimately voted against.

4.5 Summary of Qualitative Findings

PRRPs/ Policies	Minimum Wage Directive	Work-life Balance Directive	EEA Resolution	Affordable Housing
Lega	H1.1, H1.3	H1.1	H2.1	H2.1, H2.3
National Rally		H2.1, H2.2, H2.4	H2.1	H2.3
Fidesz	H2.1	H1.1		
AfD	H2.1, H2.3		H2.2	H2.2
FDI				
Freedom Party				
Vlaams Belang				
VOX	H2.1, H2.2, H2.3, H2.4		H2.2	
FvD				
Finn's Party				
FDD				
DPP	H2.1	H2.1		
CPP				
Greek Solution				
Jobbik				
PVV				
PiS	H1.1	H1.1, H2.1		H2.1, H2.2, H2.4

Table 16: Application of sub-hypotheses to PRRPs resulting from the discourse analysis

H1.1: PRRP supported positive integration on a compromising basis vis-a-vis integration

H1.2: PRRP supported positive integration on a conditional basis vis-a-vis social consumption

H1.3: PRRP supported positive integration on a conditional basis vis-a-vis economic regulation

H2.1: PRRP opposed positive integration on a principled rejection of European integration

H2.2: PRRP opposed positive integration on a conditional socio-economic basis vis-a-vis social investment

H2.3: PRRP opposed positive integration on a conditional socio-economic basis vis-a-vis welfare chauvinism

H2.4: PRRP opposed positive integration on a conditional socio-economic basis vis-a-vis economic regulation

The in-depth discourse analysis of PRRP MEPs' speeches vis-à-vis the four cases shows some variation in attitudes. However, these attitudes are predominantly expressed through opposition to the socio-economic policies. Although data was unavailable for 10 PRRPs, there was sufficient data for seven to draw inferences and conclusions. Additionally, H1.2 can be discounted from the findings as it was non-applicable to any case.

As table 16 shows, variation was prevalent in the attitudes towards the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages. Lega did show a propensity to support the Directive on a compromising basis towards European integration, believing a degree of such is necessary for

the overall economic prosperity of their country. This was in addition to the party's qualified support for the policy due to its economic regulatory nature. The Polish PRRP PiS also supported the directive on a compromising acceptance for integration. The prevailing attitude towards this policy among PRRPs, however, came in form of a principled objection to integration. Through their parliamentary discourse, Fidesz, AfD, VOX, and DPP all opposed the policy vis-à-vis a perceived protection of national sovereignty and competences. The AfD also propagated a welfare chauvinistic attitude in their rejection of the Directive, whilst VOX's opposition was multi-faceted, doing so on all qualified bases relating to social investment, welfare chauvinism, and economic regulation.

Regarding the Work-life Balance Directive, a somewhat similar situation is evident as displayed in table 16. Lega also supported this policy on a compromising basis, as did the Hungarian PRRP Fidesz. Significant attitudinal variation was encountered in the case of PiS, however, with one MEP demonstrating compromising support, whilst another expressed their steadfast rejection for it on the basis of national sovereignty. National Rally and the DPP also rejected it on this basis; however, the former party also rejected it on a multi-dimensional, qualified socio-economic basis vis-à-vis social investment and economic regulation.

PRRP attitudinal discourse towards the Resolution on a European Education Area was quite one-sided, with all MEPs' dialogue directed in opposition towards the policy. Lega's and National Rally's objection was that of outright rejection of European integration. AfD's and VOX's opposition was done so on a qualified basis towards social investment.

Similarly, the Resolution on Affordable Housing for All also attracted broad opposition in PRRP MEPs parliamentary discourse. As seen from table 16, Lega and PiS MEPs demonstrated a principled rejection of European integration towards the policy, adamant that the EU should not encroach on national competence. The former party also opposed it on the basis of social welfare chauvinism, whilst the latter did so on the bases of social investment and economic regulation. Similarly, the AfD also took issue with the social investment aspect of the policy, whilst National Rally expressed chauvinistic opposition to it.

V. Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

Although this research presents mixed conclusions, it mirrors the variety in PRRPs' general attitudes towards social initiatives detailed throughout this thesis. The radical right's support and opposition towards positive integration is quite nuanced, with a range of rejecting, conditional, and compromising positions displayed by many parties and MEPs within them.

MEPs from three PRRPs: Lega, Fidesz, and PiS, were found to hold compromising attitudes towards positive integration in the cases of the Minimum Wage and Work-life Balance Directives, citing the potential economic benefits which would arise from lending their support to such policies. They show a pragmatic propensity to support European integration, even if it may be against their ostensible principles. Indeed, Fidesz gave pragmatic support to four of the five cases in parliamentary votes. Although there was no debate discourse available for analysis from either the Brothers of Italy or Greek Solution, they also showed broad support towards three of the policies through their voting behaviour shown in Chapter 3. It should be noted, however, that although PRRPs did not explicitly mention it in all instances, these parties' support for such initiatives may well be based on the fact that they were predominantly aimed at EU citizens and elements of their core constituencies, demonstrating the pathological dualism which has been seen to characterise their socio-economic attitudes at the national level. Moreover, this ostensible pragmatism displayed towards such EU policies may well be contingent on a fear of backlash from large elements of PRRPs' support bases should the parties be against initiatives which are clearly of benefit to them.

Indeed, a potential threat of electoral backlash from their core constituencies may also explain the blurred or ambivalent attitudes encountered in some PRRPs regarding their abstentions in parliamentary votes. The Austrian Freedom Party, VOX, Czech Freedom and Direct Democracy, and PiS all held a majority of MEPs who abstained in the votes regarding two of the cases. Although MEPs from VOX did so in the case of the Minimum Wage Directive, the discourse employed by their representation in the EP railed against the initiative on all four oppositional bases, showing the fragmentation of opinion within the party. A similar situation was evident regarding PiS in the case of the Work-life Balance Directive. Whilst a majority of its MEPs abstained in the vote, there was polarised opinions expressed by two MEPs through their discourse, with one rejecting the policy on a principled basis, and the other showing compromising support. These examples demonstrate the divisive nature which EU

social policy has within some PRRPs. In some of these parties, MEPs may be highly reluctant to trade between the marginally more well-off, 'relatively deprived' element of their support base and the 'absolutely deprived' element which would directly benefit from the policy. Moreover, the range of socio-economic and cultural concerns, coupled the ominous threat of electoral backlash, likely causes their positions to be blurred and ambiguous.

As for the instances where PRRPs offered a more qualified explanation for their support towards initiatives, the evidence is quite limited. With just one example of where a PRRP supported a policy based on economic regulation (the case of Lega regarding the Minimum Wage Directive), and no examples evident of support based on social consumption, this proposed explanation is inconclusive vis-à-vis this research. Perhaps PRRPs reserve favourable attitudes towards such consumptive policies exclusively at the national level.

As for qualified socio-economic objections towards EU social policy, there was more substantial findings. Social investment is a significant determinant of negative PRRP attitudes towards EU social policy. MEPs from VOX, the AfD, National Rally, and PiS were all seen to oppose policies due to their disdain for such policy orientation. This was particularly evident in the cases of the Affordable Housing and EEA Resolutions. Thus, although debate discourse was not available for the Youth Guarantee Resolution, the wide-spread opposition evidenced in the vote was likely based on objections to social investment. The prevalence of welfare chauvinism was also high among PRRPs' objections, with measures aimed at helping migrants or refugees seen as highly unfavourable and attracting acute criticism. In particular, this offers an explanation to the near-blanket rejection in the vote on the Affordable Housing Resolution, as non-EU nationals were primarily blamed as a cause of the housing crisis in the sample of discourse analysed.

PRRPs' objections to cases of positive integration were vastly based on a principled rejection of European integration, however. As can be expected with such parties, their disdain for perceived encroachments upon national sovereignty was a typical trope used in parliamentary discourse. All PRRPs whose discourse was analysed demonstrated this objection, making it a strong determinant of negative attitudes towards positive integration. In many instances, the radical right will hold this ostensible principle in supremacy, shunning a pragmatic stance towards policies which largely benefit their core constituencies.

5.2 Conclusion

As the populist radical right continues to make in-roads across the EU, their policy attitudes must be taken into close consideration. With Italy, Hungary, and Poland all currently under the leadership of such parties, as well as the prospect of other countries following similar trajectories as electoral processes unfold across the Union, their ideology has the potential to influence EU-level policy and legislative votes in the EP. By engaging in this research, I have aimed at contributing to two analytical perspectives vis-à-vis the radical right, pertaining to their attitudes towards both European integration and socio-economic policy. As positive integration accelerates in the near future, further and more extensive research may monitor PRRP attitudes to similar initiatives as they transpire, in addition to comparing their activities towards such at the national and European levels, as well as investigating how likely certain parties are to support or oppose such policies.

VI. Bibliography

6.1 References

- Afonso, Alexandre. 2015. "Choosing Whom to Betray: Populist Right-Wing Parties, Welfare State Reforms and the Trade-Off between Office and Votes." *European Political Science Review* 7(2): 271–92.
- Afonso, Alexandre, and Line Rennwald. 2018. "Social Class and the Changing Welfare State Agenda of Radical Right Parties." Pp. 171–94 in *Political Competition in Times of Changing Welfare States*, edited by Philip Manow and Bruno Palier Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bergman, Matthew. 2022. "Labour market policies and support for populist radical right parties: the role of nostalgic producerism, occupational risk, and feedback effects." *European Political Science Review* (14): 520–543
- Buhr, R.L. 2012. "Seizing the opportunity: Euroscepticism and extremist party success in the post-Maastricht era." *Government and Opposition* 47(4):544-73
- Burnham, Peter, Karin Gilland Lutz, Wyn Grant, and Zig Layton-Henry. 2008. 2nd Ed. *Research Methods in Politics*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cannon, Barry. 2019. "Must We Talk About Populism? Interrogating Populism's Conceptual Utility in a Context of Crisis." *New Political Science* 40(3): 1-20
- Chueri, Juliana. 2021. "Social Policy Outcomes of Government Participation by Radical Right Parties." *Party Politics* 27(6): 1092–1104
- Commission. 2017. "DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU." *European Commission*, April 26. < https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:84205176-2b39-11e7-9412-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF>
- Commission. 2020. "DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on adequate minimum wages in the European Union." *European Commission*, October 28. < <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12477-2020-INIT/en/pdf>>

- Commission. 2021. “The European Pillar of Social Rights.” *European Commission*, available at: < <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/#annex1>>
- De Lange, Sarah L. 2007. “A New Winning Formula? The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right.” *Party Politics* 13(4): 411–35.
- De Vries, Catherine and E. E. Edwards. 2009. “Taking Europe to its extremes: Extremist parties and public Euroscepticism.” *Party Politics* 15(1): 5-28
- Eatwell, Roger and Matthew Goodwin. 2018. *National Populism*. London: Pelican.
- Eger, Maureen A., and Sarah Valdez. 2015. “Neo-Nationalism in Western Europe.” *European Sociological Review* 31(1): 115–30
- Enggist, Matthias and Michael Pinggera. 2022. “Radical Right Parties and Their Welfare State Stances – Not so Blurry after All?” *West European Politics* 45(1): 102-128.
- Foreign Affairs. 2016. “Is Populism here to Stay?” *Foreign Affairs*, October 19. Accessed November 8, 2022. < <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ask-the-experts/2016-10-19/populism-here-stay>>
- Gidron, Noam, and Peter A. Hall. 2017. “The Politics of Social Status: Economic and Cultural Roots of the Populist Right.” *British Journal of Sociology* 68(1): 57–84.
- Goodwin, Matthew. 2022. *Values, Voice, and Virtue*. London: Penguin
- Harteveld, Eelco. 2016. “Winning the ‘Losers’ but Losing the ‘Winners’? The Electoral Consequences of the Radical Right Moving to the Economic Left.” *Electoral Studies* 44: 225–34.
- Heinisch, Reinhard, Duncan McDonnell and Annika Werner. 2021. “Equivocal Euroscepticism: How Populist Radical Right Parties Can Have Their EU Cake and Eat It.” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 59(2): 189–205
- Hopkin, Jonathan. 2020. *Anti-System Politics: The Crisis of Market Liberalism in Rich Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ketola, Markus and Johan Nordensvard. 2018. “Reviewing the relationship between social policy and the contemporary populist radical right: welfare chauvinism, welfare

- nation state and social citizenship.” *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy* 34(3): 172–187.
- Krause, Werner and Heiko Giebler. 2020. “Shifting Welfare Policy Positions: The Impact of Radical Right Populist Party Success Beyond Migration Politics.” *Representation*, 56(3): 331-348.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Grande Edgar, Lachat Romain, Dolezal Martin, Bornschier Simon, and Timotheos Frey. 2008. *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press#
- Majone, Giandomenico. 2005. *Dilemmas of European Integration: The Ambiguities and Pitfalls of Integration by Stealth*. Oxford: OUP
- Michel, Elie and Zoe Lefkofridi. 2017. “The Electoral Politics of Solidarity,” Pp. 233–67 in *The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies*, edited by Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka. Oxford: OUP
- Morel, Nathalie, Bruno Palier and Joakim Palme. 2012. “Beyond the Welfare State as We Knew It?” Pp. 1- 30 in *Towards a social investment welfare state?* Edited by Nathalie Morel, Bruno Palier and Joakim Palme. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2013. “Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America.” *Government and Opposition* 48(2): 147–74.
- Parliament. 2019a. “Minutes of Proceedings.” *European Parliament*, April 4. < https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-8-2019-04-04-RCV_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2019b. “Debate on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers.” *European Parliament*, April 4. < https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-8-2019-04-04-ITM-003_EN.html>
- Parliament. 2020a. “Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee.” *European Parliament*, October 8. < https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0267_EN.pdf>

- Parliament. 2020b. “Minutes of Proceedings.” *European Parliament*, October 8. <
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2020-10-08-RCV_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2020c. “Decent and Affordable Housing for all (debate).” *European Parliament*, January 20. <
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/vod.html?mode=chapter&vodLanguage=EN&playerStartTime=20210120-16:43:19&playerEndTime=20210120-17:31:19>>
- Parliament. 2021a. “Establishing a European Education Area: A Shared Holistic Approach.” *European Parliament*, November 11. <
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0452_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2021b. “Decent and Affordable Housing for All.” *European Parliament*, January 21. <
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0020_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2021c. “Minutes of Proceedings.” *European Parliament*, November 11. <
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2021-11-11-RCV_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2022a. “Minutes of Proceedings.” *European Parliament*, September 14. <
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2022-09-14-RCV_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2022b. “Minutes of proceedings.” *European Parliament*, May 19. <
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2022-05-19-RCV_EN.pdf>
- Parliament. 2022c. “Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages (debate).” *European Parliament*, September 13. <
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/vod.html?mode=chapter&vodLanguage=EN&playerStartTime=20220913-12:41:55&playerEndTime=20220913-13:50:39#>>
- Parliament. 2022d. “Establishing the European Education Area by 2025 - micro credentials, individual learning accounts and learning for a sustainable environment (debate).” *European Parliament*, May 19. <
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/vod.html?mode=chapter&vodLanguage=EN&playerStartTime=20220519-08:30:26&playerEndTime=20220519-09:11:51>>
- Rovny, Jan, and Jonathan Polk. 2020. “Still Blurry? Economic Salience, Position and Voting for Radical Right Parties in Western Europe.” *European Journal of Political Research* 59(2): 248–68.

- Röth, Leonce, Alexandre Afonso, and Dennis C. Spies. 2018. “The Impact of Radical Right Parties on Socio Economic Policies.” *European Political Science Review* 10(3): 325–35.
- Scharpf, Fritz. 1999. *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* Oxford: OUP
- Seawright, Jason. 2016. *Multi-method Social Science*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2002. “The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU member and candidate states.” *European Consortium for Political Research*
- Treib, Oliver. 2021. “Euroscepticism is here to stay: what cleavage theory can teach us about the 2019 European Parliament elections.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 28(2): 174-189
- Vasilopoulou, Sofia. 2011. “European Integration and the Radical Right: Three Patterns of Opposition.” *Government and Opposition*, 46(2): 223–244

6.2 Appendices

Output file – Secondary Data Analysis: https://leidenuniv1-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/personal/s3670732_vuw_leidenuniv_nl/_layouts/15/doc2.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B086585B7-9C98-4CA9-8DAF-FA9964B8DFA1%7D&file=Map.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen=1&ct=1686141256

Output file – Discourse Analysis: https://leidenuniv1-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/s3670732_vuw_leidenuniv_nl/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BBBD65B985-8BAC-47A1-B80F-AAE5AF0450C5%7D&file=Document61.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen

