

Anti Immigration in Western Europe: Power of Symbols

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The paper demonstrates that the issue of immigration in Western Europe has been captured by policy entrepreneurs on the political right. By translating the conditions into problems and employing colorful symbols, the policy entrepreneurs on the far-right have managed to influence the citizens' attitudes- national mood- towards the immigrants. Because of the right-wing success in framing the issue in policy debates, it is likely that mainstream politicians and parties will find it necessary, in the years ahead, to embrace some of their issues.

Although the Western European countries have seemingly entered a peaceful, prosperous, and optimism-filled millennium, a striking feature of post-World War II and post-cold war Europe is a rise or resurgence of extreme right-wing or neo-populist politics and parties. The electoral successes of the extreme right parties are by no means isolated cases: from the Progress Parties in Denmark and Norway to the Lega Nord in Italy, from the National Front in France to the Vlaams Blok in Belgium. These numerous cases illustrate that there is an undeniable upsurge of the far-right and in a rising number of countries far-right parties already participate in government where their growing electoral support has often translated into significant influence over the shape and nature of government coalitions as well as sensitive policy decisions.

By far the most important targets of contemporary right wing radical populist resentment have been immigrants as demographic shifts with successive waves of immigration create new pools of people moving to Europe. The issue of immigration undeniably transformed into a salient political theme all over the continent and immigration proves to be an “ideal” issue for radical right wing mobilization because it offers a wide range of points of attack.

Although many people would agree that immigration is in the forefront of political debates, it is not entirely clear how it became to be a politically volatile issue and why. Arguments range from the ones stating that an increased immigration causes severe problems in Europe to the ones maintaining that immigration is actually necessary for the Western European countries. The primary purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the issue of immigration in Western Europe has been captured by policy entrepreneurs on the political right, and, because of the right-wing success in framing the issue in policy debates, it is likely that mainstream politicians and parties will find it necessary, in the years ahead, to embrace some of the far-right issues. Additionally, this essay will analyze how and why immigration came to be a controversial issue, how the narrative of the immigration issue was framed in public debates and it will examine the role of institutions and leadership in the process of building and maintaining public support for extreme right parties.

Immigration: *Conditions*

Murray Edelman (1988) contends that meaning is socially constructed and political developments mean whatever observers construe them to mean. As a result, meaning is ambiguous since it is entirely a social construct. John Kingdon (1995, 92) also argues that conditions do not automatically translate into problems. Problems are brought to attention by systematic events, focusing events like crises, or by feedback from the operation of current programs. Policy makers or entrepreneurs define conditions as problems by comparing current conditions with their values concerning more ideal states of affair, by comparing their own performance with that of other countries or by putting the subject into one category rather than another (ibid, 111). Consequently, the far-right policy entrepreneurs need to have a fact or condition which they could manipulate to define it in their own terms. Does immigration to Western Europe offer such conditions?

Immigration Data

Scholars have rather convincingly shown that in countries where the unemployment level is higher and the number of immigrants is larger, support for far-right wing parties is frequently greater (Lubbers, Gijsberts and Scheepers, 2002). According to Eurostat, the European Union's statistical database, net migration is a major component of population change in Western Europe compared to such factors as population birth and death rates (Eurostat). Migration is affected by a variety of factors- economic, social and political and such factors can exist in either the country of destination or the migrant's country of origin. The economic prosperity and political stability of many European countries exert a considerable pull effect thus attracting many people from all over the world. In the years 1960 to 2002, as a consequence of positive net migration, the population of the former 15 member European Union (EU) increased by an estimated increase of 17.8 million persons (ibid). For these countries, net migration was relatively low until the end of 1980s (see Table F-1 in Appendix). Indeed, it was negative in the second half of the 1960s and almost negligible in the first half of 1980s. However, since 1999, as a consequence of migration the population of the "old" EU has increased by close to one million persons each year.

Part of the explanation for the increased interest to international migration is the large number of people who have sought asylum in the EU in recent years. During the period 1990- 2002, the total number of asylum applications in the EU-25 was well over five million (Figure F- 2 in Appendix). The vast majority of these applications were in the former EU-15 countries; fewer than 200 thousand applications were made in the new member states (Eurostat). In 1992, the number of asylum requests reached its highest level (around 675 thousand). Germany received the great majority of these requests (438 thousand), followed at a considerable distance by Sweden (84 thousand). After a strong decrease until 1996 (228 thousand), the number of asylum applications in the former EU-15 rose again but in the years 2000-2002 the number stabilized around 400 thousand.

Compared with the first half of the 1990s, the distribution of applications within the EU has changed significantly (Figure F-3 in Appendix). Germany's share fell from 55% (1990/94) to less than 20% (2000/02). In contrast, the United Kingdom especially became more important for asylum seekers. The other notable change over time illustrated in Figure F-3 is the increased weight of the category "other EU-25 countries". This clearly indicates that, in recent years, asylum seekers have become less concentrated in particular EU countries than formerly. Finally, Tables F-4 and F-5 (see Appendix) illustrate the public opinion about immigration of the European citizens and particularly interesting and informative is Table F-5 showing the breakdown of the responses by socio-demographic and other categories. This information illustrates that the increased immigration to Western Europe in the last few decades is the condition exploited and manipulated by policy entrepreneurs to advance their own interests.

Immigration: Policy Entrepreneurs and Policy Windows

Two components that are significant in making it possible for an issue to become politicized are policy entrepreneurs and opportunity windows. Policy entrepreneurs are the advocates for certain proposals or ideas and they could be in or out of government, in elected or

appointed, in interest groups or organizations (Kingdon, 1995, 122). Nikolaos Zahariadis (2003, 158) complements Kingdon's approach by arguing that policy entrepreneurs have clear goals, but most policy makers do not know what they want. It seems a plausible assumption given that policy makers are typically concerned with numerous issues and they cannot concentrate their full attention on a sole issue. In the case of the radical right, one can easily identify the policy entrepreneurs such as Jörg Haider in Austria or Le Pen in France- flamboyant and outspoken leaders interested in gaining political power and who provide an excellent case study in the deployment of colorful rhetoric. For example, Jean Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's Front National, described the Holocaust as "a detail of history" and the ability of Le Pen's party to give a political character and widespread attention to a certain issue [immigration] is usually considered as the keystone of its success (BBCb, 2002). The Dutch right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn, who was shot dead leaving a radio studio thus causing political concerns all over Europe, provoked public indignation by calling for the Netherlands' borders to be closed to immigrants and by describing Islam as a "backward" religion (BBCa, 2002).

Policy windows offer the opportunity to attract attention to an issue. Kingdon (1995, 186) defines policy windows as the processes where policy issues move onto the government agenda and toward decision and action. He also argues that there are many variables that contribute to the opening of policy windows including elections, legislative deadlines, budget cycles, national moods and focusing events. He maintains that "a change of administration is probably the most obvious window in the policy system" (Kingdon, 1995, 185). Zahariadis (2003, 159) asserts that some windows opening may be manipulated to create more favorable environments unlike Kingdon's argument that policy opportunities occur independently of all other elements. One could reasonably contend that a change in administration offers a great opportunity for policy entrepreneurs to make their case widely known in Western Europe where states have parliamentary as well as local elections every few years. Hence, policy windows that are exploited by these far-right leaders are upcoming elections. This is particularly true in Europe where, unlike the USA, gaining access into

the government is the sole way of enabling one to change a policy issue. The increase in the anti-immigrant activity occurs before local or parliamentary elections. Thus, the anti-immigrant rhetoric became pronounced in Germany in September 2004 before local elections in Saxony, in France before presidential elections in April 2002 and in Sweden before parliamentary elections in March 2003. One could reasonably argue that these elections provide the single most effective policy window for policy entrepreneurs in Europe.

Table A Far-right Policy Entrepreneurs: Who are They in Western Europe?

Austria	Austrian Freedom Party (FPO); Key figure- Jörg Haider
Belgium	Flemish Block (Vlaams Block), Front National; Key figure- Frank Vanhecke
Denmark	Progress Party (FPR), Danish People's Party (DPP); Key figure- Pia Kjaersgaard
France	National Front (FN); Key figure- Jean-Marie Le Pen
Germany	Republican Party, National Democratic Party (NPD), Union of German People
Italy	National Alliance, Northern League; Key figures- Umberto Bossi, Gianfranco Fini
Norway	Progress Party (FRPn); Key figure- Carl Hagen
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party; Key figure- Christopher Blocher
UK	British National Party; Key figure- Nick Griffin
Netherlands	Livable Netherlands, Pim Fortuyn List; Key figure- Mat Herben
Portugal	Popular Party, Key figure- Paulo Portas

Problem Construction

Deborah Stone (2002, 11) argues that policy-making is a “constant struggle over the criteria for classification, the boundaries of categories, and the definition of ideals that guide the way people behave.” Thus, policymaking is a constant discursive struggle over the definitions of problems, the boundaries used to describe them, the criteria of their classification, as well as the meaning of the ideals that motivate people to make certain decisions. The far-right policy entrepreneurs offer their own definitions of problems and solutions and they do so rather convincingly. No mainstream party can dare blatantly call immigrants as the cause of the society's problems or consider eliminating immigration as a solution to these problems. Yet, precisely

because the mainstream parties will not put society's blame on immigrants, the radical-right parties manage to convey the meanings of their ideas to large audiences who are expecting somebody to offer a solution.

New ideas can invade a subsystem- the mix of actors, institutions and resources that operate in a particular policy area- leading to dramatic policy change as the existing subsystem is destroyed and replaced with a new subsystem and these new ideas offer a novel way of looking at a problem, raise a new problem, or redefine the dimension of conflict associated with a problem (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 238). The problem definition is the "driving force in both stability and instability, because issue definition has the potential for mobilizing the previously disinterested" (ibid, 16). When the far-right leaders succeed in circulating their ideas to a large number of people, they will attempt to use the symbols such as the words "history," "motherland," "alien," "us," "they," which are created through language and communicative interaction, to signify the meaning of a particular event and provided standards for judging what is good and bad.

Moreover, although language is only one aspect of political situation, it is an important one. Through language political phenomena are given social meaning (Fischer, 2003, 58). The leader of the Austrian far-right Freedom Party, Jörg Haider provides an excellent case study in the deployment of colorful rhetoric due to his unprecedented success in gaining popular support and affecting people's perceptions. In the 1999 European elections he argued that the EU's eastwards expansion policies would open Austria's borders to a flood of new immigrants, which he characterized as, in effect, declaring war on his country (Eatwell, 2000, 421). Such charismatic leaders rather easily capture the attention of the masses by using glib language and confrontational statements not many people would dare to utter. People like Le Pen hope people will acquire a social meaning of immigration that suits their personal interests and which would help bring the policy changes.

As we mentioned earlier, opportunities for a major policy change- policy windows- help bring this change about (Kingdon, 1995, 167). Because these policy or opportunity windows

[elections] do not happen frequently, policy entrepreneurs need to take advantage of these windows to promote their policies which emphasizes the role of policy entrepreneurs in facilitating the opening of a policy window and their commitment to a particular “solution.” It can be easily predicted that the far-right policy entrepreneurs will begin their populist speeches a few months before local, parliamentary or presidential elections.

Edelman (1988, 122) cogently demonstrates how socially constructed stories crafted to attract the interests of the audience rather than to provide a realistic portrayal of events, contribute building a political spectacle. This spectacle consists of a set of symbols that continually construct and reconstruct one’s self conception, the meanings of the past and present, expectations of the future and the role of the politicians [or policy entrepreneurs]. This political spectacle ascribes the meanings to social problems and events, leaders, enemies and ideologies. The radical right policy entrepreneurs define the conditions in their own terms and typically focus attention on existing or “imminent” crisis. According to right-wing extremists, immigrants are responsible for all that ails society from unemployment to crime to the general depression of the country and this task is made easier with the pervasiveness of mass media. As Betz and Immerfall (1998, 6) have described, immigration has proven to be an “ideal” issue for radical right wing mobilization because it offers a wide range of points of attack. Thus, in Western Europe the newcomers have variously been charged by the far-right activists with taking away jobs from native workers, driving down wages, and exploiting the welfare system.

Edelman (1988, 82) contends that an important process of leadership is to find or create the enemies who are needed to justify policies and advance careers and, for a myriad of reasons such as a loss of job or insecurity for one’s future, people accept the constructions of the elites. The far-right policy entrepreneurs illustrate this point. Both France’s Front National and Germany’s Republikaner Party employ the slogan “eliminate unemployment, eliminate immigration”, and, consequently, most of the attacks by right-wing extremists in various European countries have targeted members of large immigrant communities: Arabs in France, Turks in Germany, Asians in

Britain (BBCa). This hostility directed towards outsiders has made immigration the most prominent issue on the platforms of the extreme right. It is obvious that, in the extreme right's view, violating the "natural" ethnic and cultural order through racial intermingling leads to decadence and decay in society, and, therefore, the extreme right portrays itself as the defender of the nation, protecting society's integrity and purity from the invasion of foreigners and unwanted change.

For policy entrepreneurs the trick is to ensure that their solution is viewed as the best once a "problem" has emerged on national agenda. As Kingdon (1995, 482) puts it, argumentation and creation of a new understanding of an issue are at the heart of the political process. Policy entrepreneurs responsible for administering programs argue that their program represents the best solution to the new problem. The far-right leaders offer simplistic solutions to complex problems. For example, Jean Marie Le Pen directly blames France's high unemployment on the influx of immigrants from North Africa and he has said he would have illegal immigrants put in transit camps" before expelling them if he won France's presidential election (BBCb, 2002).

Immigration: Success of the Far-Right?

Have the far-right policy entrepreneurs been successful in Western Europe? Unfortunately, there is somber evidence that they have indeed been rather successful in achieving some of their goals. Even if they have not gained parliamentary seats, they have influenced and altered people's opinions about immigration. As we saw earlier, tables F-4 and F-5 (see Appendix) illustrate the public opinion about immigration of the European citizens. These tables illustrate that two of the countries at the southern frontiers of the European Union, Greece and Italy are where 89% of respondents agree that entry controls into the European Union for persons coming from non-Member States should be strengthened. In fact, Italy along with Luxembourg rank highest on the "absolutely agree" scale- both 64%. It is worth noting that Luxembourg, a country ranking highest for the proportion of its citizens recognizing the economic need for immigration, ranks third highest on the agreement scale for stepping up controls of entry into the EU for persons coming from non-

member states. In each member state close to or over two in three respondents believe that controls of entry into the European Union for persons coming from non-member states should be strengthened. The lowest “agree” results are in Sweden where 65% of respondents are of this opinion. Interestingly, political positioning bears an influence with 62% of respondents who claim to be of a right orientation calling for a strengthening of frontier controls for persons coming from non-member states compared to 41% of those of a left orientation.

Curiously, television viewers in the Netherlands have voted the right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn, killed in 2002, the greatest Dutchman of all time (BBCc). Fortuyn, who inflamed Dutch society with fierce anti-immigration rhetoric, was shot by an animal rights activist two years ago and he was voted as greater than such famous Dutchmen as Vincent Van Gogh.

Table A -1 Greatest Dutch of All Time

1 - Pim Fortuyn - politician
2 - William of Orange - royalty
3 - William Drees - politician
4 - Antony van Leeuwenhoek - scientist
5 - Erasmus - humanist
6 - Johan Cruyff - footballer
7 - Michael de Ruyter - admiral
8 - Anne Frank - diarist
9 - Rembrandt van Rijn - artist
10 - Vincent van Gogh - artist

Source: BBC

News

It should be noted, however, that Europeans have been shaken by the brutal death of the Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh in November 2004, who had made a controversial film about Islamic culture, and was shot and stabbed in Amsterdam (ibid). This death is what Kingdon (1995, 94-95) describes as a focusing event- “a disaster that comes along to call attention to the problem, a powerful symbol that catches, or the personal experience of a policy maker”. In other words, focusing events are mechanisms that bring problems to their attention. Thus, opinion polls after

Theo van Gogh's killing suggest that a majority of Dutch people feel threatened by the prospect of high immigration and the further integration of ethnic minorities into society (BBCc). However, Kingdon (1995, 113) has also aptly noted that focusing events “are important but need accompaniment in the form of preexisting perceptions which they reinforce.” The film-maker was assassinated by an immigrant and, even before it had been officially confirmed that the killer was of Moroccan descent, one of the typical reactions that appeared on Dutch websites right after the murder was: “Today is the day I became a racist” (BBCd). Other reactions were more extreme, calling for Hitler to be brought back from the grave or for all “foreigners” to be deported from the Netherlands at once (ibid). Fortuyn’s assassination in 2002 triggered a fierce anti-government backlash and the left-wing Labor Party saw its vote almost halved in the elections that followed. This time, with a right-wing government in power, the sense of disillusionment is even stronger, as many people feel they are running out of non-violent alternatives. Opinion polls have consistently shown that race related issues are among those which most concern extreme right voters. A yearly survey conducted by Statistics Sweden bureau asks the citizens their opinions on immigration issues, and Table A-2 shows that in Sweden a majority of the voters have been receptive to the idea of reducing the number of refugees allowed into Sweden. This opinion reached a high of 65% in 1992, and has declined slightly during the last years of the decade.

Table A-2

Proportion who agree (in %), year	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
It is a good idea to reduce the number of refugees	61	56	65	59	56	56	54	54	50	47
There are too many refugees in Sweden	-	-	-	52	-	-	-	48	-	40
Would not like to see a relative get married with an immigrant	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	18	-	17

Source: Rydgren 2002, 48

Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 6) have stressed the importance of policy monopolies: “every policy entrepreneur has a primary interest in establishing a monopoly- a monopoly on

political understanding concerning the policy of interests and an institutional arrangement that reinforces that understanding.” Apparently, the far-right leaders in many places in Western Europe have managed to create policy monopolies. Such slogans as “Germany for the Germans” or “France for the French” are used to demonstrate hostility toward immigration and globalization. Thus, the immigration issue has been transformed into a dominant discourse- one of the most important and salient issues in the media broadly accepted by a large majority of people (Fischer, 2003, 89). It is depicted as a crisis while in reality what contributes to the controversy of immigration issue is the fact that it is difficult to prove that immigration causes problems.

Immigration has already been portrayed as an “important” policy issue and it therefore has a good chance of being exploited for attempts to alter immigration policies. In the case of immigration, those who feel ostracized from society by having lost their jobs tend to turn to parties promising the restoration of a better past and the elimination of social tensions. When economy is doing poorly, the citizens are more likely than before to develop an acute sense of dislike towards immigrants who are often accused of exacerbating the economic problems. The perennial unemployment crisis as well as the stalling economy in the EU fuel the feelings of resentment aimed at immigrants. Anti-immigration campaigns [solutions] themselves take on importance separate from the problems if they do not go beyond TV speeches or advertisements (Kingdon, 1995). Another approach helping us understand why immigration stay on agenda is the concept of national mood:

....the notion that a large number of people in the country are thinking along certain common lines, that this national mood changes from one time to another in discernible ways, and that these changes in mood have important impacts on policy agendas and outcomes (Kingdon, 1995, 146).

Potential agendas that are congruent with national mood and that enjoy interest group support or lack organized opposition are more likely to rise to agenda prominence than items that do not meet such conditions (ibid, 149). Le Pen and Haider, among others, are the masters of

artfully creating and exploiting the anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe for their own purposes. Pervasive anti-immigration rhetoric can lead to Schattschneider mobilization, which occurs from opposition to existing subsystems and can lead to the destruction of subsystem- the existing immigration policies (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993).

Finally, we can argue that immigration can be viewed as an “easy issue” about which everyone is well informed and does not need expertise to make decisions (Mooney, 2001, 7). These “easy issues” are characterized by high salience to the general public as well as a higher than normal level of citizen participation precisely because of its ostensible simplicity (ibid, 8). Thus, people believe they can make their own decisions and what can be easier than equating immigration with the existing problems in their society?

Immigration: *Impact of the Far-right Politics*

The rise of the popularity of the extreme right can be explained using the approach of negative and positive feedback as described by Baumgartner and Jones (1993). Negative feedback is essentially criticism to the status quo but within the terms of debate that the status quo established and minor adjustments are made to reconcile criticism. This leads to incremental change. On the other hand, new ideas are critical in stimulating positive feedback as new ideas serve as shocks that alter the terms of debate and it leads to non-incremental change. Undoubtedly, when the far-right leaders define a condition as problem and call for an immediate solution, it is congruent with the concept of positive feedback, which typically occurs when there is a large number of participants [voters], and when there is some expectation of success [e.g. belief that if the leaders curb immigration, the unemployment will go down]. However, as Baumgartner and Jones (1993) have pointed out, the political system will balance itself out in punctuated equilibrium. Negative feedback shows that minor adjustments are being made within the terms of accepted debates. One could recall that after Le Pen received more votes than the incumbent president Jacques Chirac in the first round of the presidential election in France, mass demonstrations took place as millions of

people protested against Le Pen and his party. In immigration issue, the governments make minor changes such as changing a quota for asylum application but they do not make dramatic changes such as stopping immigration completely. Institutions are constrained by the groups they already serve and it is difficult for a single institution to enact major policy change (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 58).

However, even in spite of the absence of abrupt and dramatic changes in immigration laws in Western Europe, the immigration issue has become an important and controversial part of political debate in the continent. The success of the far-right parties cannot be measured only in electoral terms, for they have influenced to some extent the agendas and policies of major political parties and governments as well as “national mood”. By exploiting the society’s apprehension concerning the presence of foreigners, the extreme right has helped to dictate the terms in which the issue is debated with other politicians. In place of a serious discussion on racism, nationalism, culture, or the economic and societal malaise, many immigration laws were hastily and restrictively rewritten (Lee, 1997, 23).

Faced with an electoral surge in the extreme right, the traditional parties have to counter the rise of the radicalism. What Western European political parties appear to be doing is incorporating the far-right policies, at least partially modified form despite a potential danger of bringing the extreme right more towards the center or giving some credibility to the extremism. One of the changes in immigration laws in France, the so-called Pasqua Law which was introduced in 1993, allows mayors of the cities to decide whether a French citizen may marry a foreigner and they can decide whether the proposed marriage is a marriage of convenience for immigration purposes and prevent it from happening (Braun, 1997, 104). Obviously, this power can be easily abused in the hands of mayors by refusing to grant a marriage based on personal assumptions. Moreover, certain events may attract even more supporters to these parties. Far-right groups have regularly been vilified as racist but Pim Fortuyn’s death is proof that some right-wing politicians are victims of a

campaign of hate and intolerance by their opponents, and that is what Le Pen and others have long claimed (CNNa).

Even in countries where pollsters the extreme right political parties' share of the vote is on the wane, the radical right's anti-immigration and law and order programs are being incorporated into center-right policies. Thus, in the Netherlands, where the Pim Fortuyn has been dead for almost three years, the Fortuyn agenda lives on in government, particularly integration, immigration and crime policies (BBCc). In France, where Chirac, in 2002, resoundingly staved off the challenge posed by Le Pen in the second round of the presidential elections, extremism has not been defeated. On the contrary, the interior ministry has launched a drive to win back FN voters to the mainstream right, by promoting hard-line policing and expelling undocumented workers. In this climate, newspapers are drawing attention to the continuing appeal of Le Pen, and the popularization of his ideas about immigration and law and order in provincial France, as well as in its industrial wastelands (BBCa).

Furthermore, as the radical right moves Europe's political center of gravity to the right, they are prompting governments from one end of the continent to the other to toughen their stance against outsiders. Especially after September 11 [a key event], with security a top priority, Europe's multicultural vision of itself seems to be in doubt. Immigration is a message that the leaders of Europe's dominant centrist parties have been reluctant to hear or to counter. Fortuyn and his counterparts elsewhere "articulated problems with immigration that other politicians refused to address," explains Hans Wansink, a commentator with the liberal Dutch daily *De Volkskrant* (BBCc). "Right-wing parties have a chance only when the politicians don't do enough to win over the understanding of the majority population," adds Klaus Bade, head of the Migration Research Institute at the University of Osnabruck in Germany (ibid). Germany passed its first immigration law restricting the flow of immigrants after WWII in September 2002, mainly due to an upsurge in the far-right support (ibid). "The faster the law is instituted and the more pragmatically it is applied, the more right-wing propaganda will lose ground," explains Dr. Bade (ibid).

We can see that elsewhere in Western Europe, several governments have found themselves boxed into a corner by anti-immigrant parties, and obliged by electoral politics to borrow aspects of their approach. For example, the former Spanish conservative Prime Minister José Maria Aznar said his goal was to further curb immigration so as to forestall the rise of a Spanish Le Pen (CNNb). In Denmark, the government depends on parliamentary support from the far-right Danish Peoples Party. The Danish government promised to tighten up its immigration policy, making it harder to claim refugee status, cutting back on financial aid to new immigrants, and denying foreigners a “green card” for seven years (ibid). It also announced in the wake of the murder of the Dutch filmmaker that

“...when an asylum seeker is rejected the person concerned must leave the country. There is good reason for this. If Denmark cannot send people back... its whole asylum system will collapse. Countries which do not fulfill their duty to take back their own citizens must not, *of course*, be rewarded with Danish development aid... Denmark is not an immigrant-country and has never been so. Therefore, we will not accept a transformation to a multiethnic society...” (ibid).

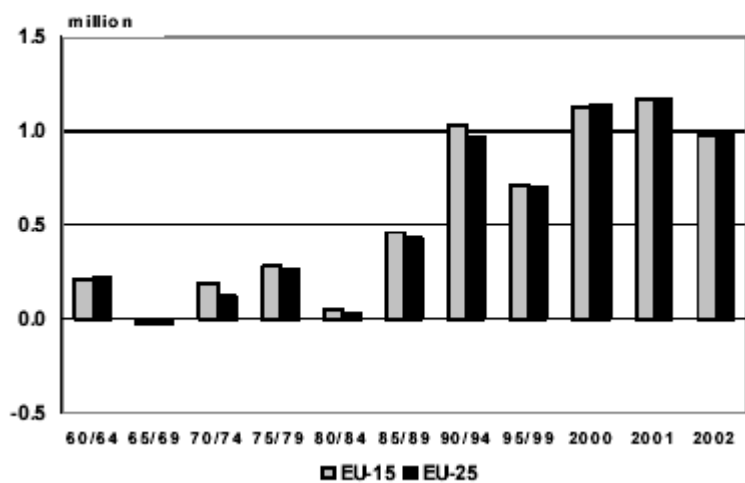
We are also witnessing the appearance of new anti-immigrant political parties. In Spain, where the anti-immigration Platform for Catalonia made unexpected gains in May’s nation-wide regional and municipal elections, the Francoist-leaning Frente Español says that it will, in future, contest elections. In Ireland, the anti-abortion campaigner, Justin Barrett, has vowed to establish a new oppositional movement against immigration (BBCb). Austria’s Interior Ministry has announced that a new extreme right-wing party has been founded in Austria, which wants to keep Austria for the Austrians and calls for a halt to what it terms the “increasing influx” of foreigners (CNNb).

Conclusion

Across Europe, in a violent wake-up call to ruling elites, far-right parties beating the anti-immigrant drum have seized on people's concerns about crime and foreigners to shape a new political agenda. Immigration now plays a central role in discussing the far-right issues and the extreme right policy entrepreneurs have portrayed it as the main cause of today's problems in Europe. We know that some policy entrepreneurs, who can be motivated to promote a certain agenda by many reasons, use the windows of opportunity- local and parliamentary election cycles- to depict immigrants as scapegoats responsible for everything troubling the society in order to advance their goals and change the political landscape in the system. Moreover, we saw that, while the policy entrepreneurs have managed to portray the restricting immigration as a remedy for the society's ills, institutional arrangements in the parliamentary democracies of Western Europe do not allow changes happen easily which is why we do not witness a rapid curbing of immigration to the European countries despite the adjurations to do so by the far-right leaders. This paper illustrated that the issue of immigration in Western Europe has been captured by policy entrepreneurs on the political right in addition to the right-wing success in framing the issue in policy debates. It is therefore likely that mainstream politicians and parties will find it necessary, in the near future, to adopt some of their issues. The mainstream parties are already adopting some the far-right's policies and are attempting to reduce immigration because these parties want to prevent the further rise of the radical right. And because the radical right entrepreneurs have succeeded to a large extent to affect the "national mood" and turn immigration into a dominant discourse, the democratic Europeans governments will be forced to modify their policies.

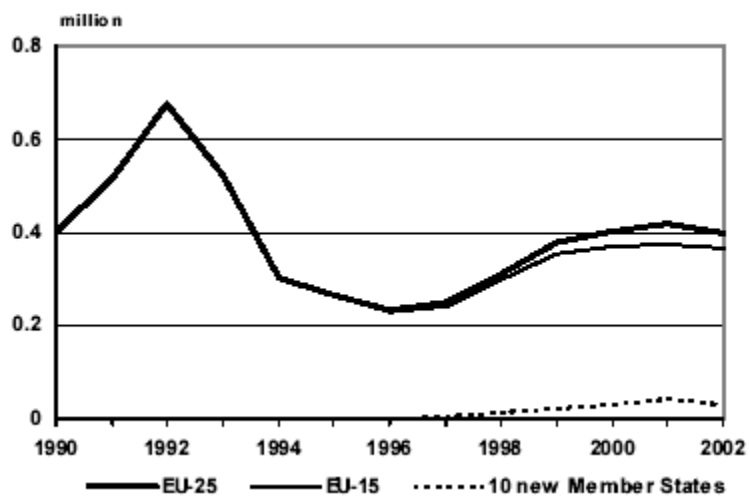
Appendix

F-1: Net migration in the EU, 1960-2002



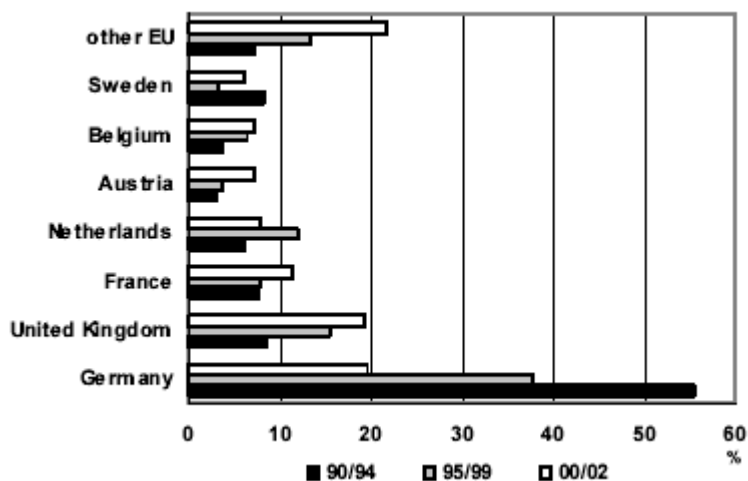
Source: Eurostat

F-2: Asylum applications in the EU, 1990 - 2002



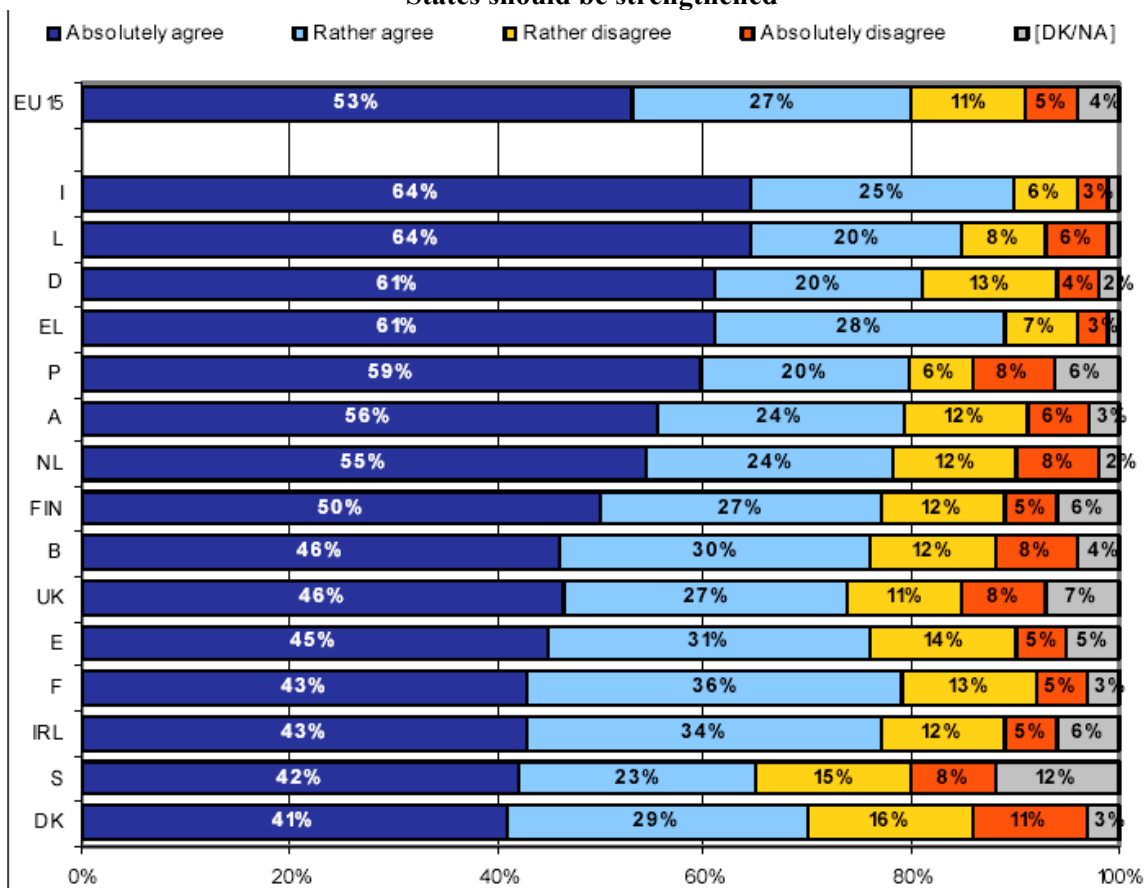
Source: Eurostat

F-3: Distribution of asylum applications in the EU, 1990-2002



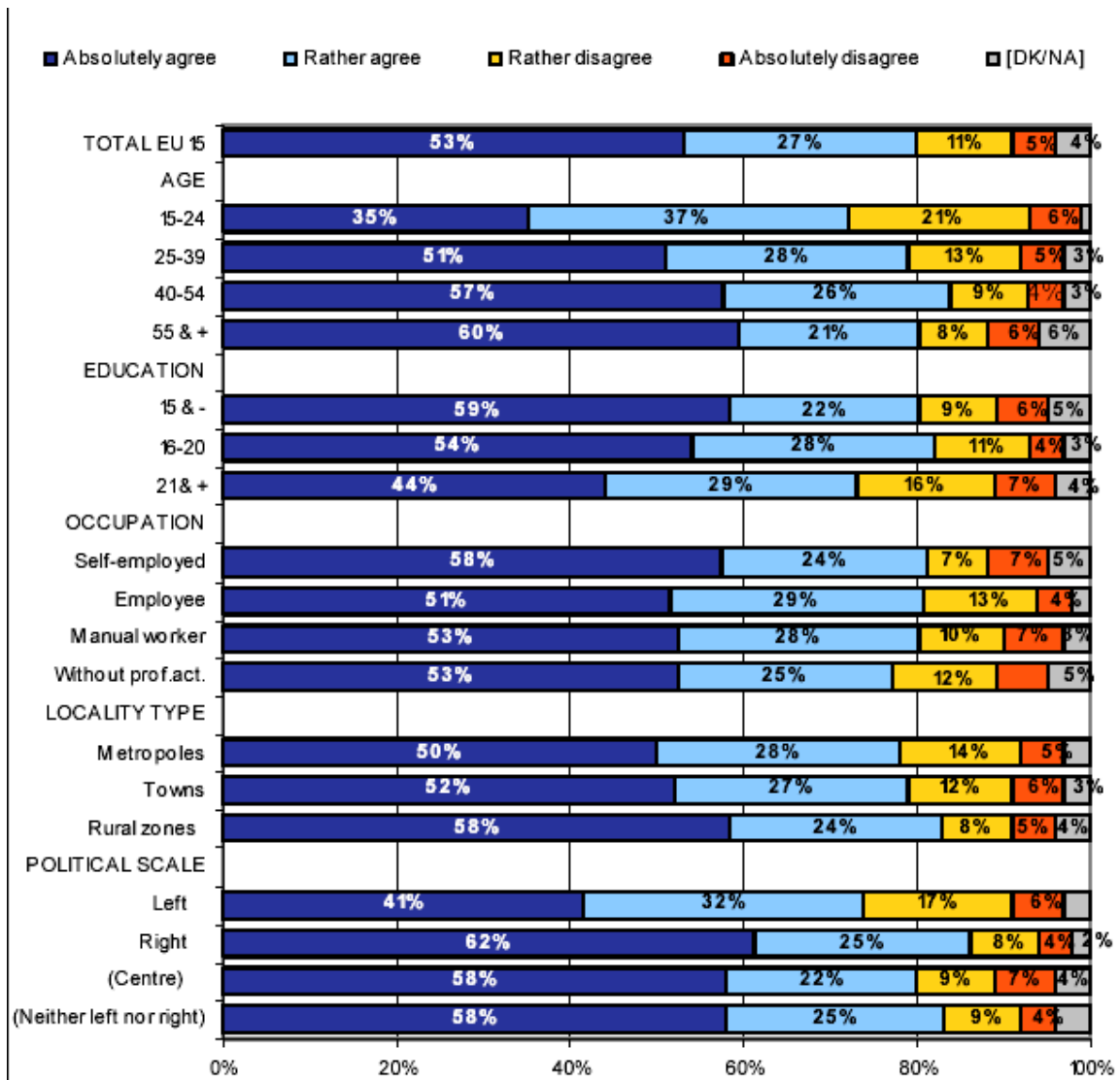
Source: Eurostat

Table F- 4 Controls of entry into the European Union for persons coming from non-Member States should be strengthened



Source: Eurobarometer

Table F-5 Controls of entry into the European Union for persons coming from non-Member States should be strengthened (Breakdown by socio-demographic and other categories)



Source: Eurobarometer

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