



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MIGRATION CRISIS BETWEEN VALUES, POPULISM, AND XENOPHOBIA:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CENTRE-LEFT OPPOSITION IN THE UNITED
KINGDOM, HUNGARY AND TÜRKİYE**

Master's Thesis

Baki Laleoğlu

Political Science

August 2024



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ÖZET

Göç, insanlık tarihi kadar köklü bir olgu olmasına rağmen günümüzde çağdaş siyasi kurumlar ve toplumlar üzerinde karmaşık bir etki yaratmaktadır. Liberalizmin zafer iddialarına karşın, son yıllarda illiberal demokrasiler ve alternatif kalkınma modelleri ortaya çıkmış ve bu iddia gücünü kaybetmiştir. Nitekim dünya refah ve imkan açısından tarihinin zirve noktasında olmasına rağmen bireyler, gruplar, ülkeler ve hatta kıtalar arasındaki siyasi, ekonomik ve toplumsal eşitsizlik ve adaletsizliklere çözüm bulunamadı. Üstelik varlığını bu eşitsizlik ve adaletsizliğe itiraz üzerine inşa eden ve bu bağlamda siyasi açıdan başarılı olabilmek için en doğru zamanı yaşayan “sol” ideoloji ve aktörler ise siyasi olarak kendi içerisinde bir kriz yaşamakta, özellikle Avrupa’da bireylerin endişe ve taleplerine cevap vermekte yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu çalışma da söz konusu sorundan hareketle mevcut liberal dünya düzeninin bir parçası olarak sol ideolojiyi liberal düzenle uyumlu bir şekilde temsil etme iddiasındaki sosyal demokrasinin, Avrupa’da yaşanan göç krizine yönelik tepkisini karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda benzer ideolojik konumlanmaya sahip merkez-sol muhalefet partilerinin göç krizine niçin farklı reaksiyonlar gösterdiği sorusunun cevabı aranmaktadır. Göçmen krizi yaşayan ve sağ partilerin uzun zamandır iktidar olduğu Birleşik Krallık, Macaristan ve Türkiye vakalarındaki merkez-sol muhalefet partileri, sırasıyla İşçi Partisi, Macar Sosyalist Partisi (MSZP) ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) liderlerinin göç krizine ve göçmenlere yönelik söylemleri üzerinden karşılaştırılacaktır. Bu tezin ana iddiası ise Birleşik Krallık ve Macaristan vakalarındaki aktörlerin sosyal demokrat değerlere uygun bir şekilde göçmenlere yönelik pozitif ve kapsayıcı olarak nitelendirilebilecek bir tutum sergilemesine rağmen Türkiye vakasında incelenen aktör olan CHP lideri Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu’nun tam aksi şekilde zenofobik popülist bir konumlanmaya sahip olduğudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç, Göçmen, Zenofobik Popülizm, Sosyal Demokrasi, Merkez Sol.

ABSTRACT

Migration, a long-standing phenomenon, has become a complex issue which challenges modern political institutions and societies. Despite claims of liberalism's dominance, recent decades have seen the rise of illiberal democracies and alternative development models. While global prosperity is widespread, unresolved political, economic, and social inequalities persist which in turn lead to a crisis in left-wing ideology. This study aims to compare the reactions of center-left parties, which are seen as representatives of leftist ideology within the liberal world order, to the migration crisis in Europe. It focuses on the United Kingdom, Hungary, and Türkiye, where right-wing parties dominate and analyze the discourses of the Labour Party, MSZP, and CHP leaders, respectively. The thesis contends that while leaders of the Labour Party and MSZP adopt pro-immigrant stances consistent with social democratic values, CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in Türkiye employs a xenophobic populist discourse that contradicts the party's social democrat ideology.

Key Words: Migration, Immigrant, Xenophobic Populism, Social Democracy, Centre-Left.

ABBREVIATIONS

AK PARTY: Justice and Development Party
CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis
CEAS: Common European Asylum System
CHP: Republican People's Party
EU: European Union
HDP: Peoples' Democratic Party
IOM: International Organization for Migration
MDSD: Most Different System Design
MHP: Nationalist Movement Party
MSSD: Most Similar System Design
MSZP: Hungarian Socialist Party
NHS: National Health Service
SPD: Social Democratic Party of Germany
SYRIZA: Coalition of the Radical Left
UK: United Kingdom
UKIP: United Kingdom Independence Party
UN: United Nations
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USA: United States of America

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Although the phenomenon of migration is as old as humanity, it has become a significant challenge for political institutions and society, particularly in the last decade. While the rapid increase in migration and the inability of state and respective institutions to manage it are often highlighted as the main issues, the underlying problems driving individuals to migrate have been largely ignored. Fukuyama (1992) declared that liberalism—philosophically as values, politically as democracy, and economically as capitalism—was the ultimate victor of history, signaling the end of humanity's philosophical evolutionary process. However, this argument collapsed within a decade with the rise of illiberal democracies, authoritarianism, and alternative development models like that of China.

However, despite the world reaching unprecedented levels of prosperity and opportunity, political, economic, and social inequalities and injustices persist among individuals, groups, countries, and even continents. Left-wing ideology, which fundamentally opposes these inequalities and injustices and is positioned for potential success, is currently facing a political crisis, particularly in Europe, and is failing to address the concerns and demands of individuals (Manwaring & Kennedy, 2018). This is due to its diminishing appeal among its traditional base of labor and low-income voters, who are increasingly aligning with far-right and populist actors (Gethin et al., 2022), as well as its inability to convincingly attract other voter groups.

Based on this issue, this study aims to comparatively analyze the reactions of social democrats, who claim to represent leftist ideology within the current liberal world order, to the migration crisis in Europe. Specifically, it seeks to answer why center-left opposition parties with similar ideological positions react differently to the migration crisis. The analysis will focus on the center-left opposition parties (between 2015 and 2023) in the United Kingdom, Hungary, and Türkiye, where right-wing parties have long been in power. The discourses of the leaders of the Labour Party, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), and the Republican People's Party (CHP) regarding the migration crisis and migrants will be examined.

The main argument of this thesis is that while the leaders in the U.K. and Hungary adopted a pro-immigrant stance consistent with social democratic values, the actor analyzed in the case of Türkiye, CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, employed a xenophobic populist discourse that contrasts with CHP's ideological positioning.

The study begins with an introduction and then continues with a discussion of the migration crisis in Europe which is followed by a theoretical framework where such concepts as migration, populism, and social democracy are briefly handled. After these, the available scholarship on the relationship between these three main issues will be reviewed by specifically referring to the existing gap in the literature. Here the methodology of the study will also be explained. Subsequently, the discourses of party leaders in the U.K., Hungary, and Türkiye will be investigated. After the comparative analysis, the conclusions will be discussed. Finally, the limitations and contributions of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 2. MIGRATION CRISIS IN EUROPE

2.1.THE CONCEPT OF MIGRATION

Migration is a complex phenomenon both as an action and a concept. The current debates in the literature and the use of the term in daily language, particularly in the media and politics, further add to this complexity. There are notable differences in both theoretical and conceptual explanations or definitions in the literature, stemming from the varied ways of defining the action and the concept of migration.

A theoretical analysis reveals that both recent and older literature on migration focus on different perspectives, with each theoretical approach explaining the concept and action from its own viewpoint. In this context, migration theories can be categorized into "Functionalist," "Historical-Structural," "Network, Transnational and Migration Systems," and "Migration Transition" (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 28-51). Each of these categories encompasses various theories and approaches.

Since this study does not delve into migration theory, these theories will not be discussed in detail. However, it is important to highlight the theoretical divergence because different perspectives on migration stem from varying interpretations of the act of migration and its underlying causes, which in turn affect related concepts. This divergence leads to issues with definitions and terminology. A key reason for this is the lack of an internationally agreed-upon and universally accepted definition of migration (International Organization for Migration, 2024, p. 20). Terms like "migration" and "migrant" are defined differently by various institutions and organizations, depending on political, social, economic, and even legal and statistical contexts.

The primary issue with concepts and definitions related to migration concerns the reasons behind the act of migration and the definition of the individual undertaking it. The United Nations (UN) and its International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019) define a migrant as "an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay

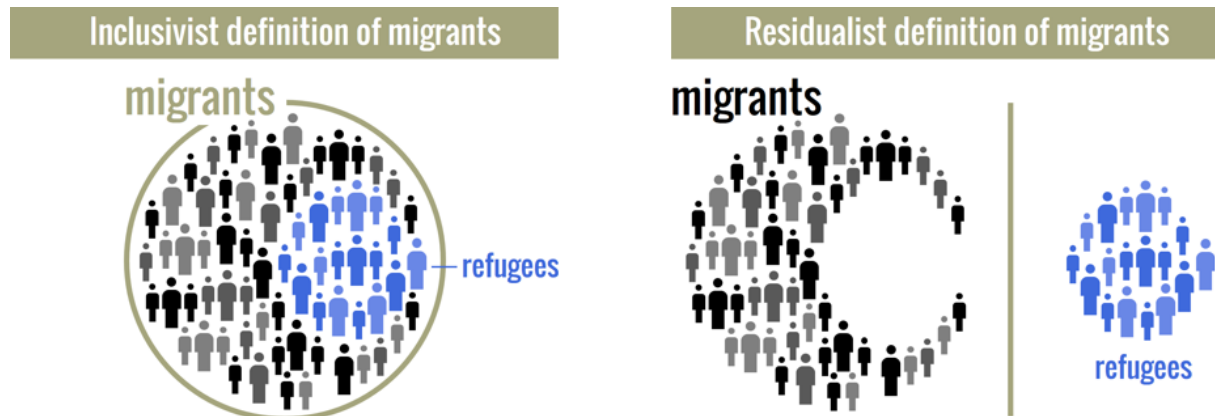
understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons." However, alternative concepts and definitions, such as immigration, immigrant, voluntary/involuntary/forced migration, refugee, asylum seeker, and forced displacement, are also widely used in both the literature and international discourse (Erdal & Oeppen, 2017; Solimano, 2010; Brettell & Hollifield, 2015; de Haas, 2023; Carling, 2017).

In this context, most of these concepts are related to the reasons behind individual migration. Instead of defining each concept separately, it is more useful to focus on the practical divergence, in addition to the theoretical differences mentioned earlier, to understand the root of the problem. This issue is closely tied to international law and the concept of "refugee." The lack of a specific and universally accepted definition of "migrant" is partly due to this issue. However, the concept of "refugee" has been clearly defined and agreed upon by international treaties. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is "A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951). According to this agreement, "refugee" is an international status, and those who acquire this status are entitled to the rights and protections granted by international law.

This is where the divergence in concepts and definitions becomes evident. The current structural difference stems from the "inclusivist" and "residualist" views, unlike the distinctions in the literature concerning migration and different types of migrants. Briefly, the inclusivist view defines all individuals who change their place of residence as "migrants," regardless of their reasons or conditions, including refugees (Carling, 2017). In contrast, the residualist view distinguishes between refugees and migrants, defining the latter as individuals who relocate for reasons other than war or other conditions that provide refugee status (The Meaning of Migrants). In this context, IOM's definition of a migrant is "inclusivist," while the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' definition—"Migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some

cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons" (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016)—represents the "residualist" view.

Figure 1. Inclusivist and Residualist Definitions of Migrants (The Meaning of Migrants).



The divergence primarily aligns with the migration policies of institutions and states. States, which often seek to limit or control migration, tend to adopt the residualist view to make a distinction between "refugee" and "migrant." According to this view, refugees are seen as forced migrants with political motivations, thus considered deserving of protection. In contrast, migrants are perceived as moving voluntarily and for economic reasons, and therefore, are not seen as deserving of the same protections. This discrepancy between international legal obligations and the sociopolitical motivations of states is a key reason for the conceptual and definitional issues arising from this dichotomy (Hamlin, 2021, pp. 1-3).

This study does not aim to resolve or analyze the complexities of migration concepts in depth. However, since the study focuses on the "migration crisis," it briefly addresses the complexities of migration concepts. The primary motivation for this analysis is to clarify the scope of the alleged "crisis" discussed in the next section and to avoid potential issues arising from conceptual confusion. In this context, the concept of "migration" is preferred for its inclusiveness. The study adopts the IOM's (2019) following definition of migration due to its inclusiveness: "The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a state." This "umbrella definition" encompasses various terms such as refugee, migrant, and others, free from the distinctions influenced by social, economic, legal, or political perspectives.

2.2.WHY MIGRATION IS CONSIDERED A "CRISIS"

The real "crisis" in migration and immigration is not rooted in theoretical definitions and debates but in the practical realities experienced by individuals and states. Globally, millions of people migrate each year, either voluntarily or forcibly, creating the need for effective political, economic, and social management of these large and often sudden population movements. Such migrations impact various sectors, including education, economic welfare, municipal services, and public order, directly affecting the daily lives of individuals as well as the resources and institutions of states (Sahin-Mencutek et al., 2022, pp. 1-5).

In the literature, migration is often termed a "crisis" in reference to the sudden influx of migrants that Europe experienced in 2015. This surge, detailed in the following chapters, presented a new challenge for Europe's international and national institutions, particularly states and the European Union (EU), which struggled to manage it effectively. The initial phase of this sudden shock revealed Europe's difficulty in handling the situation adequately (Jones et al., 2017, pp. 2-3).

The media was the first institution to define and popularize the issue as a "crisis," and this discursive choice significantly influenced the perception of migration and migrants in the subsequent period (Haynes, 2016; Altheide, 2002, p. 46). The media's portrayal of migrants, particularly through themes of victimhood, threat, and dehumanization, shaped public discourse (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017, pp. 3-4). Consequently, migration and migrants, often associated with problems, have been negatively represented in the discourses of pragmatic politicians and even some non-governmental organizations (Menjivar et al., 2019). There is an empirically supported consensus in the literature that the media (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017), politicians, and certain NGOs have contributed to the rhetorical framing of the "crisis." Thus, the concept of "crisis" is predominantly Eurocentric. The EU felt the need to make a definition in "their own context" and legally and directly defined the situation as a "migration crisis". According to the European Commission (2020), the migration crisis is defined as:

"a) An exceptional situation of mass influx of third-country nationals or stateless persons arriving in an EU Member State or disembarked on its territory following search and rescue (SAR) operations, being of such a scale and nature, taking into account, inter alia, the population, GDP and geographical specificities, including the size of the territory of the EU Member State concerned, that it renders the well-prepared EU Member State's asylum,

reception or return system non-functional such that there may be serious consequences for the functioning of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) of the Common Framework as set out in the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation; or

b) a situation of instrumentalisation where a third country or non-state actor encourages or facilitates the movement of third-country nationals and stateless persons to the external EU borders or to an EU Member State, with the aim of destabilising the European Union or an EU Member State where such actions are liable to put at risk essential functions of an EU Member State, including the maintenance of law and order or the safeguard of its national security."

Therefore, it is evident that, following the media's lead, politics has also framed the migration crisis in a negative context.

On the other hand, as highlighted by the definition, the predominant trend in characterizing migration as a "crisis" is tied to the securitization of migration. Both the literature on securitization, particularly the securitization of migration (Huysmans, 2000; Weiner, 1995; Bello, 2020), and various studies on the post-2015 migration crisis (Estevens, 2018; Jones et al., 2017; Quinn, 2016; Menjivar et al., 2019) underscore this trend in Europe's approach to migration. Also, the securitization of migration is often framed around four themes: internal security, national security, economic security, and cultural security (Boyraz, 2022, p. 116). This in turn leads to anti-migration and anti-immigrant attitudes by creating a perception of security versus threats. Consequently, the negative portrayal and securitization-oriented approach by the media and politics play a significant role in framing migration as a crisis. Furthermore, academia has also adopted this conceptualization.

Additionally, the concepts of "border regime" and "border security" are frequently emphasized in discussions about the migration crisis. In line with the securitization of migration and migrants, the border issue, initially prominent in Europe and later extending to the USA, has been framed both as a "crisis" and a "solution," particularly by ultra-nationalist and/or xenophobic populist parties and leaders. In this context, failures in border security are depicted as a crisis, while robust border controls that prevent migrants from entering are portrayed as a solution (Georgi, 2019, pp. 97-102; Campani, 2019). As illustrated by the definition above, the concept of borders plays a crucial role in understanding and accepting the crisis, especially in European countries. European countries and international institutions, notably the EU, have

primarily focused on preventing migration, fortifying the border regime, and enhancing border security as their initial search for a solution (Jones et al., 2017).

Additionally, there are critical perspectives in the literature regarding the term "migration crisis." While "migration crisis" has become widely accepted and prevalent, some studies challenge the negative framing of migration and migrants through securitization (Squire et al., 2021). Two studies that effectively summarize this critical approach are worth noting. The first is the study by Sahin-Mencutek et al. (2022), based on data from the international RESPOND Project. This study highlights the governance aspects of the so-called crisis, arguing that it can be addressed through appropriate institutional measures, legal regulations, and actors.

The second study by de Haas (2023) contends that the crisis is not caused by migration itself but by the political response to it. According to de Haas, European states and international institutions, including the UNHCR, create an exaggerated and unjustified negative perception of migrants by misrepresenting their numbers. De Haas argues that this creates an artificial crisis for political reasons, even though most migrants stay in neighboring countries and the number of migrants in Europe is far below the potential capacity. Therefore, de Haas posits that there is not a migration crisis, but a political crisis related to migration. Additionally, some argue that migration is not a crisis but a solution to challenges such as an aging population and the need for affordable labor. These studies offer significant alternative viewpoints in the literature.

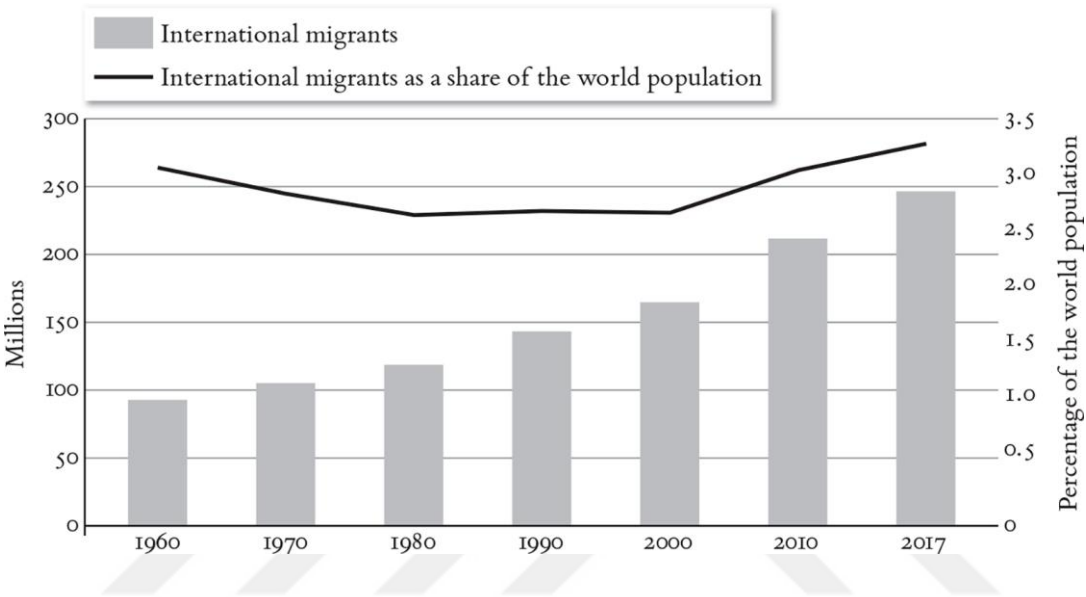
2.3.A BRIEF GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN EUROPE

To fully grasp the discussions surrounding this issue, it is essential to briefly summarize the origins and progression of the crisis. This crisis, which profoundly impacted Europe politically, economically, socially, and in other areas, represents a significant turning point. Some even liken its effects to Europe's equivalent of 9/11 (Krastev, 2017, p. 19). Understanding the factors that triggered this crisis is therefore the crucial first step in analyzing its broader implications.

As a matter of fact, in terms of international migration, the percentage of migrants relative to the total population achieved a certain stability after 1960, with increases occurring at a relatively slow pace. However, since around 2000, there has been a notable upward trend in international migration. Although the percentage increase has not been dramatic, the number of international migrants has risen to approximately 250 million, mirroring the rapid growth of

the global population. This post-2000 increase can be largely attributed to globalization and the enhanced communication and transportation opportunities provided by advancements such as the internet. When combined with compelling factors like conflict, war, and economic crises; political, economic, and social instability has further accelerated migration (de Haas, 2023).

Figure 2. International Migrants and International Migrants as a share of the World Population (de Haas, 2023).



The term "crisis" for Europe primarily stems from the sudden surge in the number of migrants arriving on the continent, referred to in various terms in the literature, such as "illegal immigrant," "asylum seeker," or "refugee." Although estimates of migrant numbers and figures from international organizations regarding the peak of the crisis in 2015 vary—such as 1.83 million according to the European Parliament (2017), approximately 1.325 million according to Pew Research (2016), and 1.255 million according to Eurostat (2016)—there was a dramatic increase in both percentage and absolute terms compared to previous years.¹ Aside from the numerical differences, the primary trigger for this sudden surge and the consequent difficulties in managing it, is the conflict environment in the Middle East. Statistics indicate that migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq account for a significant portion of this increase, which has more than doubled (Eurostat, 2016).

¹ There are differences even in the statistics announced by official institutions. For example, there are different statistics announced by Eurostat in different time periods. The main reason for this is that a significant portion of migrants reach European borders illegally and enter the countries unregistered. This is because the numerical difference over time is due to the increase in the number of registered migrants. However, despite all these, the difference in statistics persists. For this reason, the sudden increase in the number of migrants rather than the number of migrants is emphasized more here.

Figure 3. Annual Number of Asylum Applications Received by EU-28 Countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015 (Pew Research, 2016).

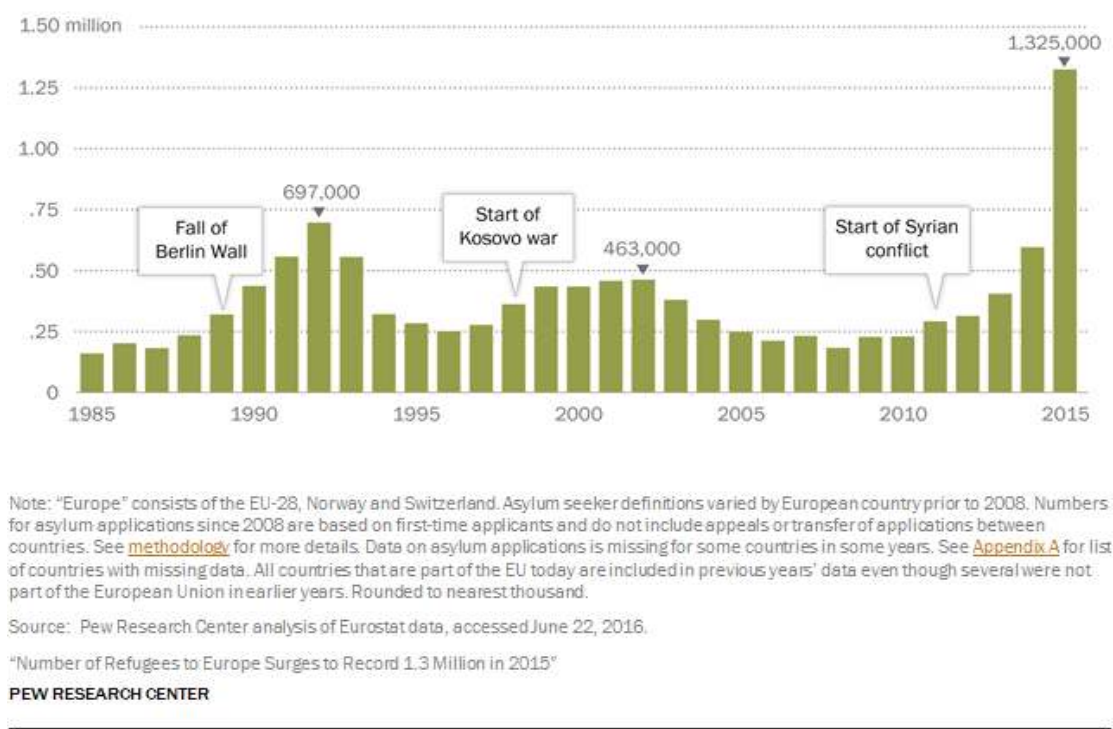
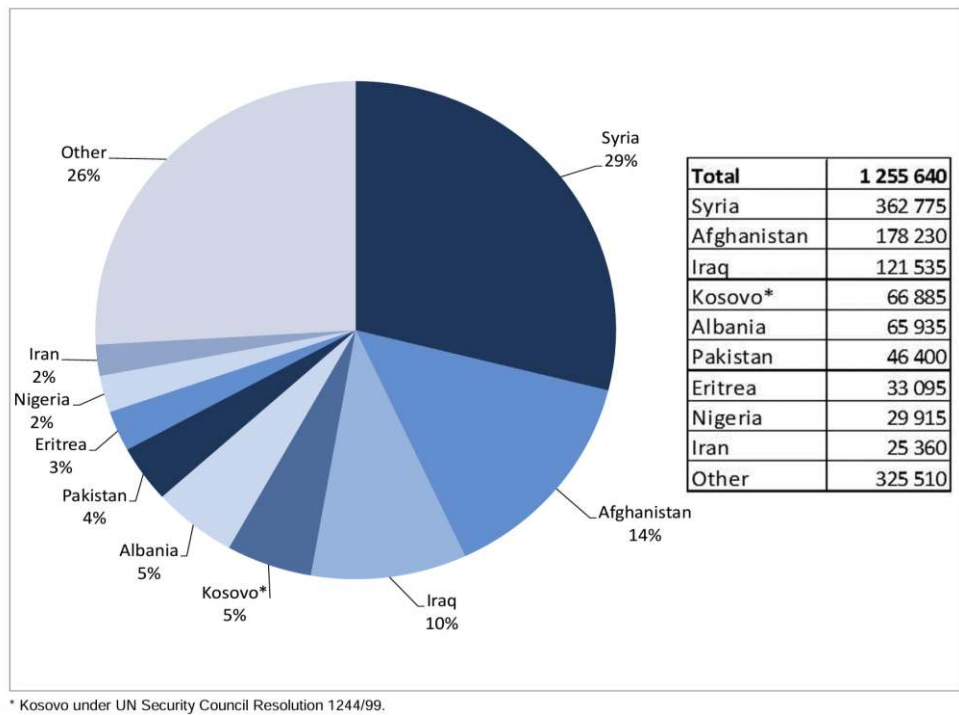


Figure 4. First Time Asylum Seekers in the EU Member States by Country of Citizenship, 2015 (Eurostat, 2016).

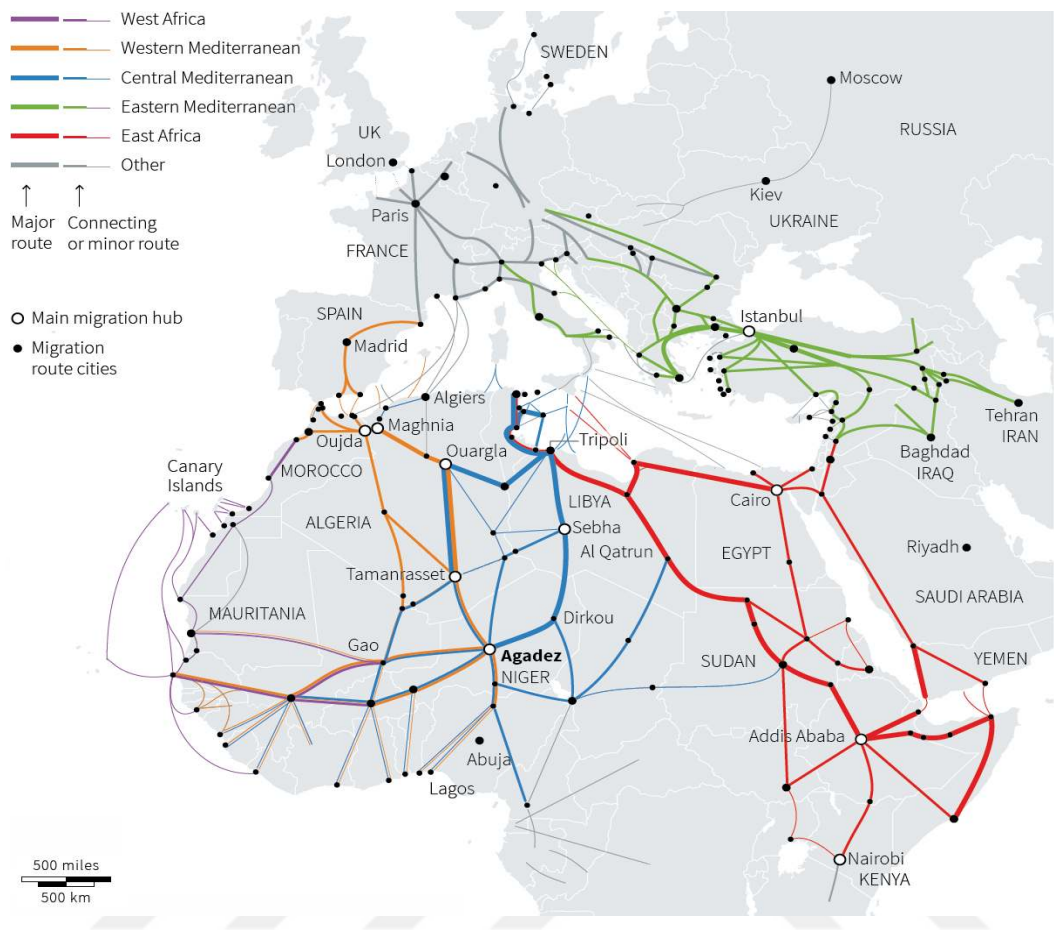


The Arab Spring, which began in 2011 in North Africa and the Middle East, served as an early warning for Europe. The ensuing conflicts and instability led to the creation of a Mediterranean migration route, particularly through Libya and Tunisia, which became a primary channel for tens of thousands of Arab and African migrants seeking to reach Europe (Fargues & Fandrich, 2012, pp. 5-9). This was a clear indication that Europe was unprepared to manage sudden migration in terms of legal regulations and capacity (Vohra, 2020). European international organizations, notably the EU, responded with inadequate regulations, human right violations and measures, failing to establish effective cooperation with countries like Italy, which were at the forefront of the migration crisis and felt its impacts most acutely (Domestic-Met, 2015, pp. 111-117).

The situation worsened as the Arab Spring faltered and the Syrian conflict escalated into a civil war. By April 2013, over 1 million people had fled Syria to neighboring countries, with the majority seeking refuge in Türkiye, the EU's next-door neighbor (Jones et al., 2017, p. 3). Despite these clear signs, the EU did not adequately address the humanitarian crisis in Syria as it also failed to prepare for a potential influx of migrants. Consequently, the Mediterranean and Southern Europe became primary routes for migrants from Africa and Türkiye, while the Balkans served as a key route for those from the Middle East. All the while, the EU and European countries failed to take significant action to control the increasing migration flow.

By 2015, this lack of preparation culminated in a major crisis, with Europe struggling to manage the sudden influx of over 1 million migrants in political, economic, social, and even legal terms. The crisis was exacerbated by the unequal and unfair distribution of the migration burden among European countries (Pew Research, 2015), the EU's inability to establish a robust institutional and international management mechanism, and growing dissatisfaction among the public. This confluence of factors deepened the crisis and highlighted Europe's challenges in managing the migration surge effectively.

Figure 5. Main Migration Hub and Migration Route Cities (Reuters, 2016).



CHAPTER 3. MIGRATION CRISIS AND XENOPHOBIC POPULISM

Although the migration crisis has a complex structure with different contexts, the most critical point for Europe has been its impact on the political structure. Primary reason why the migration crisis was described as "Europe's 9/11" was the damage to the liberal values-oriented understanding of democracy, of which Europe, together with the USA, has been the strongest representative and even the defender and popularizer for nearly a century. This is because the migration crisis brought with it a new wave and rise in European politics, which already had populist and xenophobic history and political roots (Poynting & Briskman, 2020).

However, just as in the case of migration and immigration, we encounter a conceptual problem when discussing the rise of populism. The literature broadly agrees on the existence of a crisis regarding migration but diverges in defining this crisis with different concepts. Similarly, the rise of populism, particularly in Europe, is defined using various terms, and there are significant differences in understanding what populism precisely entails.

3.1. POPULISM AS A CONTESTED TERM

Populism stands as one of the most contested and complex terms within the social sciences. It is deliberately referred to as a "term" here because, in literature, there is no clear consensus on whether it represents a concept or a phenomenon (Urbinati, 2019, p. 114). Specific papers are dedicated to exploring this distinction, such as Lara's (2018) treatment of populism as a concept and Urbinati's (2013) examination of it as a phenomenon. Despite these efforts, Panizza (2005) notes some level of agreement among scholars regarding the understanding of populism as both an "anti-phenomenon" and a phenomenon characterized by "worshipping the people." Consequently, there is no common definition of populism, nor is there a consensus on who qualifies as populists and the criteria for populism.

The lack of clarity surrounding the definition of populism has persisted for approximately fifty years. Early comprehensive studies, such as Ionescu and Gellner's "Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics" (1969), depicted populism variably as an

ideology, a symptom, and a movement by different authors. Ionescu and Gellner themselves vaguely described populism as "a sort of recurring mentality appearing in different historical and geographic contexts as the result of a special social situation" (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969, p. 3). Since then, scholars have continuously attempted to construct conceptual frameworks and theories, yet these efforts have not achieved enduring success. Consequently, theoretical discussions in the literature have received limited attention, with scholars often focusing more on case studies or regional comparisons (Taggart, 2000, p. 10-11). However, for this paper and due to its limitations, a theoretical review is deemed more efficient.

Theoretical and conceptual discussions often explain populism through various categorizations and terms. For example, Canova (1981) acknowledged the impossibility of reducing all cases of populism to a single definition and instead proposed characterizing populism in terms of variants. She identified seven typologies of different variants, including farmers', peasants', and intellectuals' populism, as well as populist dictatorship and democracy, reactionary populism, and politician's populism. Similarly, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013a) categorize populism historically and regionally, highlighting agrarian populism in Russia and the US, socioeconomic populism in early 20th-century Latin America, and xenophobic populism in contemporary Europe. These categorizations, while providing historical context, implicitly acknowledge the challenge of defining populism due to its diverse manifestations across regions and periods. Therefore, focusing on common core concepts, as will be discussed later, facilitates a clearer understanding of populism.

In addition to being viewed as a concept, populism is also defined in the literature as an ideology, a political strategy, and a discourse (Oswald et al., 2022, p.4). Mudde defines ideological populism as emerging in societies divided into "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," advocating for the general will of the pure people (2004, p.543), while Betz (1994, p.4-5) describes it as a discourse or rhetoric that exploits public sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment. Furthermore, populism is seen as a communication strategy employed by charismatic leaders to garner support from the people (Albertazzi and McDonell, 2015). Kriesi (2018, p.10) argues that in Latin American cases, populism is a political strategy of personalistic leadership aimed at obtaining or leveraging direct power or support from unorganized and non-institutionalized supporters.

Finally, some scholars offer alternative explanations for populism. Lipset (1960, p.175) suggests that populism arises as a reaction from disgruntled, psychologically displaced, socially

isolated, economically insecure, uneducated, unsophisticated, and authoritarian individuals at all levels of society to modernization, akin to other extremist movements that blame modernization for their failures. In contrast, Müller (2018) contends that populism only occurs within representative democracies, asserting that as long as representative democracy exists, there will be political actors who claim to represent the "true voice" of the "pure people." Moreover, he argues that populism is a natural consequence and "perpetual shadow" of representative democracy, a notion famously articulated by Canovan (Anselmi, 2018, p.23).

3.2.MIGRATION CRISIS AND RISE OF XENOPHOBIC POPULISM IN EUROPE

On the other hand, despite some conceptual problems with populism, there is a clear consensus in the literature that populism is on the rise in Europe. However, because populism is a "thin-centered ideology" (Mudde, 2004, p. 544), its political definition or ideological positioning varies. As Mudde (2004) emphasizes, there is a "terminological chaos" in the literature, which includes his own work too, due to the lack of a clear definition. This chaos is not mainly due to differences in approach but to the absence of a clear and universally accepted definition (Mudde, 2017, p. 12). Thus, while there is a common understanding of populism's emergence, the lack of a precise definition has led to conceptual confusion.

To summarize the debates and diversity in the literature, the popular concepts used to define populist parties often include the adjectives "right" or "nationalist." Additionally, the terms "far," "extreme," and "radical" are frequently employed to describe the degree of these adjectives (Spanje, 2011, pp. 298-300; Perliger, 2012, pp. 13-14). The rhetoric and methods of these parties, in the populist context, can be summarized as instrumentalization for getting elected, staying in power, and creating a process of authoritarianism or illiberalization. Consequently, the adjective "authoritarian" is often used to complement the definition of populism (Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Levitsky & Way, 2010).

Moreover, the concept of "new (right) populism" appears in the literature, although less frequently (Deangelis, 2003, pp. 75-76; Hartleb, 2018). However, it is important to note that there are definitions and studies focused on "left populism," and there is a "left populism" debate, particularly regarding some parties in Spain and Greece, or figures such as Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of the United Kingdom Labour Party. Thus, populism is not exclusively identified with the "right" (Prentoulis, 2021; Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014).

Aside from the complex conceptual debate in the literature, three points need clarification before discussing xenophobic populism and the migration crisis in Europe. First, populism in general, and xenophobic populism in particular, have roots in Europe that predate both the 2015 migration crisis and the 2008 economic crisis. Populism began to rise and spread in Europe in the 1990s, with populist parties and actors typically integrating xenophobia and authoritarianism into their ideologies and approaches (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, pp. 34-36; Akbaba, 2018, pp. 204-207). By the 21st century, populist parties had risen across Europe. Several critical developments have triggered xenophobic populism, including the negative effects of globalization and the new economic order on certain social segments, the rise of terrorism and Islamophobia post-9/11, the expansion of the EU, and increasing socio-economic problems resulting from the migration of Eastern Europeans to Western European countries. Therefore, the trend of populism, while not new, was significantly accelerated or strengthened first by the 2008 economic crisis and then by the 2015 migrant crisis. Thus, Xenophobic populism—a populist approach that began slowly in the 20th century, centered on political, economic, and social dissatisfaction and antagonism toward "foreigners" in general, and "immigrants," particularly Muslim immigrants—has grown stronger after these crises (Cohen, 2006; Castles et al., 2014, p. 202; Zulianello, 2019, pp. 158-159).

The second point relates to the meaning, relationship, and usage of the concepts of xenophobia and populism, which are the preferred terms in this study, as a continuation of the first issue. The term of xenophobia is more commonly used in the literature to describe the rhetoric and attitudes against migration and migrants and their relationship with populism. However, xenophobia alone does not constitute the focus of these definitions. Populism is at the center of almost all definitions, and the framework of populism is defined with various supporting adjectives.

At this point, the concept of xenophobia is less preferred than concepts such as "far," "extreme," "radical," "right," or "nationalist." In the literature, "exclusionary populism" (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013b; Kaltwasser et al., 2017) or terms like "nativism," "racist," or "national populism" (Rattansi, 2020; Vieten & Poynting, 2016) are more commonly used to emphasize the nationalistic tendency.

The third and final point to be emphasized here to understand both the concept and the context of xenophobic populism for this study is the dominant relationship established in the literature between xenophobic populism and right-wing politics. As summarized above,

xenophobia is inherently and commonly associated with right-wing or nationalist ideology. However, this has led to the neglect of the relationship between leftist ideology and xenophobia.

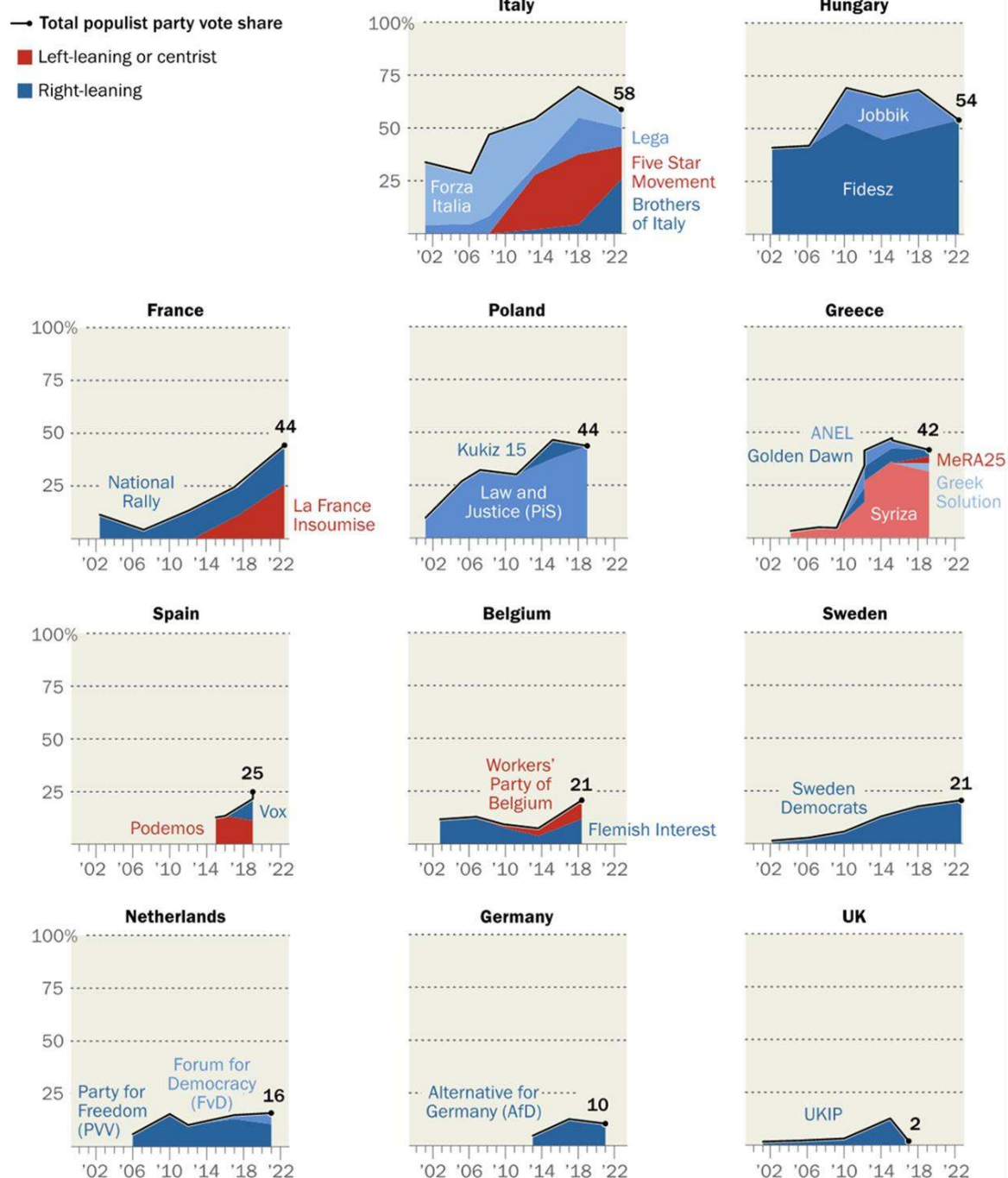
Studies indicate that individuals and politicians with leftist values or ideology also exhibit xenophobic tendencies or attitudes, although these findings remain in the minority within the literature (Kopyciok & Silver, 2021; Dimari, 2012; Prentoulis, 2021; Skleparis, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to theoretically analyze the link between leftist ideology, social democracy, migration, immigration, and xenophobia.



Figure 6. Vote Share in National Legislative Elections (Silver, 2022)

Populist parties have increased their vote shares in many recent European elections

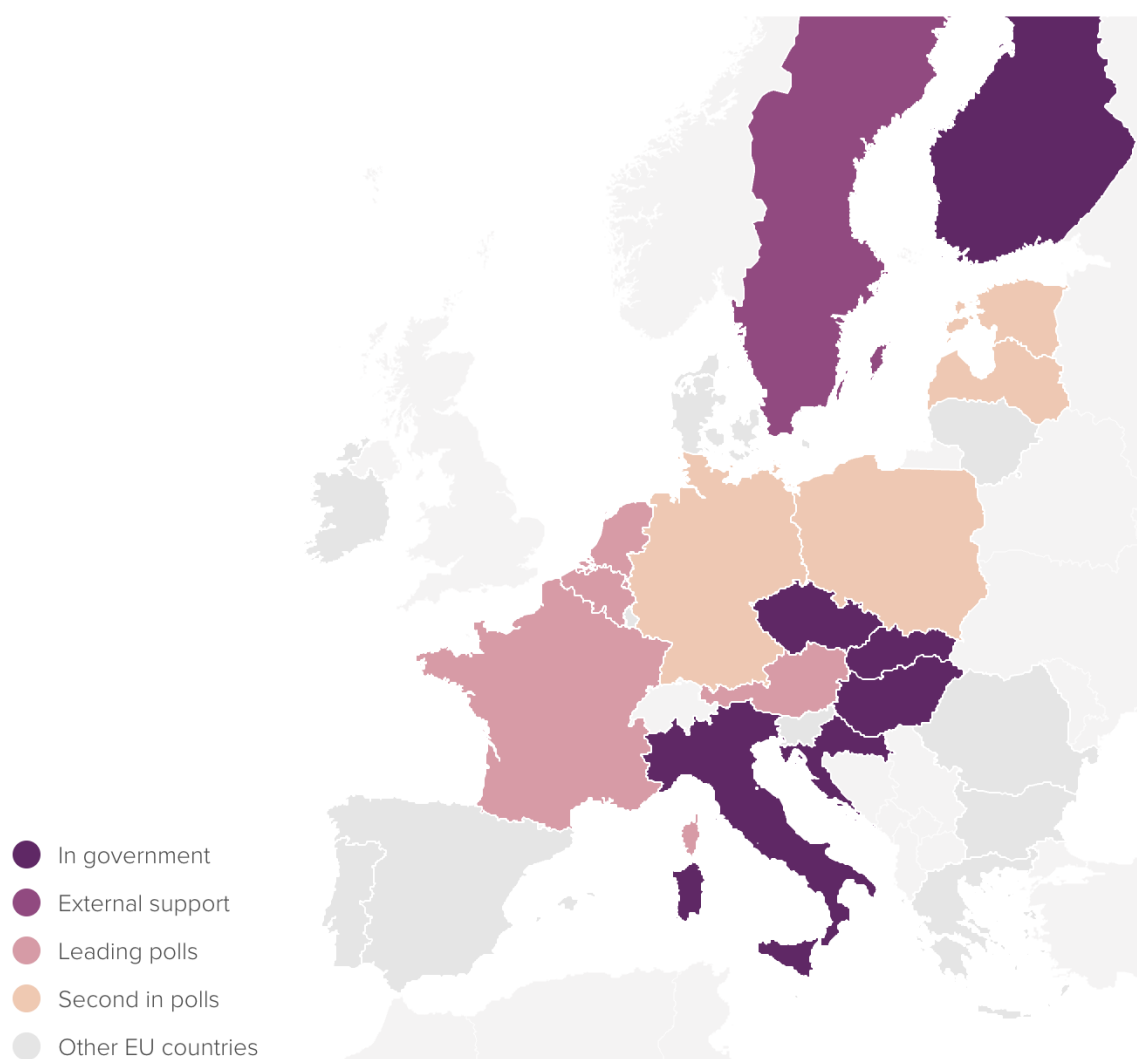
Vote share in national legislative elections



Note: Data presented is only for 2000-2022; some of these parties have competed in elections and won vote share for longer than that period. Party list vote is used for Germany; first-round results are used for France. For more on European populist parties, see Appendix.
Source: ParlGov, Swedish Election Authority and the Guardian.

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Figure 7. The Hard Right in the EU (Coi, 2024)



*Affiliated with either the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) or the Identity and Democracy (ID) groups in the European Parliament. Hungary is the exception to this rule: Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party quit the center-right European People's Party (EPP) group in 2021 amid criticism over his democratic record. Polling data as of May 23, 2024.

SOURCE: POLITICO research

By Giovanna Coi

CHAPTER 4. IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY TO MIGRATION

To understand how social democracy approaches migration and immigration as an ideology or politics, it is first necessary to examine its political roots and ideals. In the literature, social democracy has often been overshadowed by liberalism, which has dominated democratic theory over the past century. The primary reason for this is the "revisionist" nature of social democracy. It developed later than other democratic theories and was critical of the more dominant Marxist and socialist theories (Thompson, 2009, pp. 94-95).

This revisionist, reformist, and balancing approach is evident in both the theoretical discussions and definitions of social democracy. The diversity of definitions in the literature underscores this. The effort to find common ground between socialism and liberalism dates back to the post-World War II period, when political conflicts between these two theories had not yet intensified. For example, Bernstein (1993) defines socialism as "organized liberalism" and sees the aim of social democracy as the democratization and protection of the state and its political institutions against the unjust class-dividing nature of capitalism. Thus, social democracy's stance against capitalism to protect liberal values and social and ethical principles dates back to the 19th century. However, social democracy was considered part of socialism until after World War I and was not seen as a separate ideology. Therefore, although the intellectual roots of social democracy go back much further, it was only in the second quarter of the 20th century that it was recognized as a politically independent theory (Kastning, 2013, p. 5).

On the other hand, when we focus on the differences in definitions in the literature, the emphasis on the reactionary and reformist or revisionist foundations of social democracy attracts attention. For example, Thompson (2009, p. 94) defines social democracy as a reactionary "tradition" against the political, economic, and social dominance of Anglo-American liberal capitalism in the West. His emphasis on "tradition" here stems from his description of social democracy as "an amalgam of semi-socialistic ideas and theories", which

he describes as an endeavor to balance the harsh marketist side of capitalism. A similar approach is also seen in Goes (2024) who argues that social democracy, as an ideology and political movement, was born out of the need for "balance" that emerged as a result of industrialization and democratization in the 19th century, and since then, it has aimed to protect individuals and society against capitalism by protecting social rights as well as the rights of liberalism. Therefore, the roots of social democracy emphasize the idea that socialism can only make practical politics through democratic institutions and that liberal and social rights should coexist (Goes, 2024).

Thomas Meyer's recent work has significantly impacted the literature, especially concerning the theory of social democracy. In his renowned book "Theory of Social Democracy," co-authored with Lewis P. Hinchman (2007), Meyer defines democracy as a form of government and social democracy as an ideology for the proper functioning of democracy. Meyer posits that democracy is a system where all members of society have equal political rights, making "equality" and "justice" indispensable and prerequisite principles for democracy.

Meyer argues that the relationship between "market capitalism" and democracy is problematic because market capitalism inherently creates inequality among individuals due to competition. This economic inequality naturally leads to power imbalances, which in turn result in unequal access to economic, political, and social rights. Thus, for democracy to function ideally and protect individuals' rights, a balanced relationship between market capitalism and democracy must be established. Social democracy, according to Meyer, advocates for this balance through a reconciliation of "positive and negative liberties and rights." Achieving this balance is the state's responsibility and is possible through appropriate laws and regulations (Meyer & Hinchman, 2007).

This theoretical framework, grounded in positive and negative freedoms and rights, has facilitated the definition of social democracy around "core values" in the literature. It has strengthened the theoretical debate that is already moving in this direction. Social democracy has thereby clarified its distinctions from liberalism, emphasizing core values, and from socialism, by putting democratic values in the center. In the literature, definitions of "core values" draw inspiration from the French Revolution, highlighting three main points: freedom, equality, and solidarity (Kastning, 2013; Gombert, 2009; Hickson, 2016; Sandbrook et al., 2007). These three concepts are foundational in political philosophy debates. Although this

study does not delve into theoretical discussion and development, it will briefly summarize how social democracy defines these three concepts in the context of values.

Freedom: As mentioned above, social democracy considers freedom in the context of balancing "positive and negative" freedoms. In this context, it is the right of the individual to both decide and implement what they want to live or do, in other words, to determine how they want to live and to live in that way without the pressure or intervention of society or the state. However, both the rights of other individuals must be protected, and the individual must have the opportunity to access resources that can provide this, such as economic, social, or educational opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to have the opportunity to live this freedom as well as having freedom itself. Institutions and the state should be obliged to both protect freedoms and ensure that these freedoms can be put into practice through legal regulations (Kastning, 2013, pp. 7-9). It is precisely at this point that the other value manifests itself.

Equality: The concept of justice is frequently used instead of equality in the literature. At this point, it is essential to understand the context of these concepts. Although the difference between equality and justice in political philosophy and theory is a separate subject of debate, social democracy approaches these concepts in a more practice-oriented manner, focusing on the issue of "the distribution of material and non-material goods" (Gombert, 2009). Therefore, while it carries some ambiguities in the theoretical sense, equality and/or justice as a value can be defined as the elimination of political, economic, and social disadvantages and inequalities that may arise due to reasons beyond the individual's control or because of their own choices, which can be called equality of opportunities or equal opportunity. The most important example of this can be summarized as education. According to social democracy, education is one of the most critical prerequisites for both individual and social justice in terms of awareness and equality of opportunity and providing individuals with the opportunity to receive adequate and qualified education is essential for democracy and the values in question (Meyer & Hinchman, 2007).

Solidarity: Solidarity as a value may be the clearest concept of social democracy. This is because social democracy, while distinguishing itself from its radical roots, also aims to establish a more balanced relationship between the individual and society. For example, social democracy preferred to be a "people's party" rather than a "working-class party" and a "people's party" rather than a "class party" (Ciddi, 2009). As a result, solidarity can be described as "the will to assist each other because one sympathizes with others and to provide support between

the generations and people" (Kastning, 2009). However, it should be differentiated from the exclusive and discriminatory form found in far-right extremism. Solidarity in social democracy is not based on national identity but on social identity, and it is inclusive.

Considering the ideological foundations of social democracy shaped by core values, it can be expected to be more positive and embracing toward migration and immigrants, at least in theoretical terms. Although the three core values are listed above, additional concepts such as income redistribution, egalitarianism, multiculturalism, internationalism, and universalism can be seen as complementary values. Indeed, these values are traditionally associated with the left and social democracy (Kopyciok & Silver, 2021). Therefore, social democracy has a positive value and approach to the issue of migration and migrants, especially based on solidarity and social integration.

However, as partially summarized above, some socio-political and socio-economic problems related to migration and migrants have come to the fore in Europe even before the 2015 migration crisis. It can be said that social democracy and center-left parties also have difficulty in taking a position on this problem. The discourses formed by anti-immigrant and even xenophobic populist parties confirmed the existence of citizens who, one way or another, saw immigrants as a social or economic problem. For center-right parties, it became a matter of addressing voters' socio-political and cultural concerns, while for center-left parties, economic concerns were more pressing. Therefore, although social democracy had a theoretically positive and inclusive approach, the need to address the concerns of individuals arising from different reasons led to a conflict between values and practical politics (Manwaring, 2021, pp. 139-158).

At this point, it is necessary to mention the concept of the centre-left. In this study, the concepts of social democracy or social democrat and centre-left will be used synonymously. This approach follows the trend in the literature where the right-left spectrum is used to describe the ideological positioning of political parties. Both theoretical and practical studies have shown that social democratic parties are often defined as centre-left, making the terms nearly synonymous (Gagne & Hilmer, 2019; Mudge, 2018; Manwaring, 2021; Sancar, 1998).

CHAPTER 5. METHODOLOGY

5.1.CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

As can be seen, the theoretical debates on migration, populism, and social democracy reveal that the relationship between these three concepts has been neglected. The literature often focuses on the relationships between migration-populism, migration-social democracy, or left-populism, but it rarely examines the possible common ground between all three points. The hypothesis of this study is that the CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, despite defining itself as a social democrat, has shown a xenophobic reaction to Türkiye's migration crisis that contradicts left ideological values. The main reason for this is that it has pursued a strategy of winning votes with a populist approach against the AK Party. This study aims to reveal this situation by comparing the reactions of social democratic parties in the U.K., Hungary, and Türkiye toward the migration crisis and analyzing the statements of their leaders about migrants and the migration crisis using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method. Therefore, this study claims to contribute to the gap in the literature with its hypothesis, methodology, and originality.

On the other hand, when the studies in the literature on the reaction of social democratic parties to the migration crisis and the preference for xenophobic populist discourse and/or strategy, which is the subject of this study, are analyzed both in general terms and with a focus on Türkiye and CHP, the gap is easily noticed. Although there are studies in the literature on migration, the management of migration, and the relationship between migrants and social democracy, they mostly emphasize the failure of social democracy in theoretical terms to say something new or persuade voters who react to this situation in immigrant societies, its inability to respond to the anti-immigrant populist political rise, and its doctrinal or principal "dilemma" (Manwaring, 2021; Cuperus, 2018; Latham et al., 2020; Goes, 2024).

In parallel to this, there is an interesting and exceptional study by Gluhovic (2019). In summary, Gluhovic discusses the reaction of left intellectuals and thinkers to the migration crisis, argues that there is not enough reaction to the problems and criticisms in the context of left values, and criticizes the left intelligentsia in Europe. This study highlights the gap in the

literature by focusing on the inadequate response from leftist intellectuals and their failure to uphold and advocate for core leftist values in the face of the migration crisis.

On the other hand, there are also studies on case analyses regarding social democratic parties' preference for more restrictive policies toward immigrants. These studies are primarily related to Scandinavian-style social democratic parties, such as those in Denmark (McManus & Falkenbach, 2022; Nedergaard, 2018) and Sweden (Hinnfors, 2012). Notably, an empirical study by McManus and Falkenbach (2022) reveals that mainstream parties, to wit center-left parties, rarely achieve electoral success by imitating the discourses and strategies of populist radical right parties, particularly concerning immigration. The Danish example is highlighted as an exception in this context.

Similarly, case studies on migration, social democracy, and populism often focus on political actors defined as left-populist in the literature, such as former U.K. Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, SYRIZA in Greece, and Podemos in Spain, and do not discuss xenophobia or xenophobic populism (Prentoulis, 2021; Mudde, 2017). Another notable study on the migration crisis and discourse is undertaken by Barlai et al. (2017), which summarizes the perspectives of various political actors and parties in European countries post-migration crisis. However, this study does not establish a relationship between social democracy and xenophobia nor approach the issue from this perspective.

Although few, there are also holistic studies on leftist ideology, migration, and xenophobia. These studies, generally empirical, focus more on the far-left rather than social democracy, and emphasize voter behavior. They reveal that migration and immigrants also increase xenophobic tendencies among left-wing voters, particularly for economic reasons, and this affects voting behavior, although the intensity varies depending on the country (Edo et al., 2019; Kopyciok & Silver, 2021).

On the other side of the issue, there are no studies on the relationship between CHP, migration, social democracy, and populism, particularly xenophobic populism. While there are quite comprehensive studies on Hungary and the UK, which are other cases to be compared in this context, particularly focusing on xenophobic populism and the migration crisis, it is noteworthy that there is no comprehensive study or research on Türkiye, especially concerning CHP. Populism-themed studies on Türkiye mostly problematize the AK Party's political position and strategy from a democratic perspective. The literature interestingly labels the AK

Party and the democratic regime in Türkiye with various terms such as democratic backsliding (Ugur-Cinar, 2023), populism and/or right-wing populism (Cinar, 2024), authoritarianism (Esen & Gumuscu, 2020), right-wing authoritarian populism (Öztürk, 2023), illiberal democracy (Kirişçi & Sloat, 2019; Göl, 2017), electoral autocracy (Coşkun & Kölemen, 2021), hybrid regime and competitive authoritarianism (Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Arslantaş & Kaiser, 2023; Esen & Gumuscu, 2016), and even Islamic populism (Özen, 2019).

However, it is interesting, surprising, and even suspicious that despite the large number of studies on populism and democracy in Türkiye, there are almost no studies on CHP, especially those focusing on populism and migration. For example, Aytaç and Ezgi (2019), in their study analyzing populism in Türkiye in a general context, do not address CHP in a populist context at all. Boyraz (2020), on the other hand, in his study that analyzes populism in Türkiye directly through the CHP, neither mentions migration and migrants nor the CHP's stance on these issues, but only discusses left-wing populism historically and the populist outbursts of CHP actors from an economic perspective. Similarly, Şener et al. (2021), in their study analyzing the discourse of Ekrem İmamoğlu, a prominent figure of the CHP and the mayor of Istanbul, approach the issue from a left-populist perspective and present this as a positive development. However, interestingly study has no content, analysis, or evaluation on migration or migrants in Istanbul, the city with the highest number of Syrian migrants in Türkiye.

Moreover, in another surprising study, while analyzing the positions of parties in Türkiye on nationalism and Syrian migrants, the Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-immigrant stance is not mentioned at all. Although the subject of the study is limited to nationalist parties, it is noteworthy that the CHP, whose opposition to the AK Party's immigration policy is well known, is not mentioned in the study, which touches on various issues such as the 2023 elections, alliances, political system changes, and political positions (Secen et al., 2024).

In the existing studies on CHP and migration, the party's anti-immigrant stance is again surprisingly addressed without passing the populist or xenophobic test or being evaluated in this respect. The most characteristic example of this is the study that takes Türkiye and CHP as cases and both interviews CHP MPs and analyzes the party's political documents (Irgil & Norman, 2024). In this study, the CHP's position is described as "similar to opposition counterparts in the Global North" (Irgil & Norman, 2024, p. 11). Anti-immigrant attitude and political strategy are softened through the concept of "honorable return," arguing that the CHP differs from "right-wing populism" (Irgil & Norman, 2024, p. 12-13).

Similarly, another study compares the attitudes of the German and Turkish social democratic parties, SPD and CHP, toward immigrants, claiming that both parties have essentially the same goal and try to achieve it in different ways. This softens the anti-immigrant attitude through dependency theory and the goal of social democracy to protect "social peace" (Yılmaz, 2023). Erdoğan (2020), in his empirical study stating that negative attitudes toward Syrians are higher among opposition voters, leaves the CHP and its voters in the background, focusing instead on the opposition in general, the reaction to the AK Party's immigration policy, and the definition of the *Millet İttifakı* (Nation Alliance). Additionally, Özipek's (2021) report evaluates Kılıçdaroğlu's rhetoric in terms of xenophobia but not populism.

Considering all these points, the only study that partially reveals the Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-migration and anti-immigrant attitudes is the two reports published in December 2022 and August 2023 as part of the project "Political Party Representation of Anti-Immigration Attitudes: The Case of Turkey," supported by the Heinrich Böll Foundation Türkiye Representation. These reports analyzed the parliamentary group speeches of the five major parties in the parliament—AK Party, CHP, HDP, MHP, and İYİ Party—conducted elite interviews with MPs from these parties, and examined party programs and election manifestos through content analysis. In this study, it was found that CHP, despite being ideologically positioned on the center-left, has a similar attitude toward anti-immigration as İYİ Party and MHP, which are defined as nationalist and right-wing or even far-right parties in the literature (Balta et al., 2022). However, the CHP or Kılıçdaroğlu's attitude is not evaluated in any populist context within this study.

The other study analyzed the "migration debate" in the 2023 elections. This study highlights that the alliance in which the CHP participated utilized anti-migration rhetoric and noted that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the CHP and the common candidate of the majority of the opposition bloc, strengthened his nationalist discourse by allying with the anti-immigrant Zafer (Victory) Party and its leader Ümit Özdağ in the second round. However, this study also lacks emphasis on or output related to populism or xenophobia (Balta et al., 2023).

Finally, two theses in Turkish academia are relevant to this study's subject matter. The first is Uyar's (2021) PhD thesis, which employs both content and discourse analysis to compare the reactions of parliamentary parties in Italy, Hungary, and Türkiye regarding the "refugee crisis" as reflected in their election manifestos from 2006 to 2018. This study differs from the current one in focus, context, content, and methodology. The second is Fedai's (2023) master's

thesis, which qualitatively and quantitatively compares right-wing populism and immigration policies in the USA, Hungary, and Türkiye. This study also diverges from the current research for similar reasons related to focus and methodology. Additionally, Evirgen's (2021) master's thesis shares methodological parallels with this study but differs in subject matter.

In summary, there is a notable absence of studies that simultaneously analyze social democracy, migration, and xenophobic populism. The primary reason for this gap is the theoretical opposition between leftist ideology and social democratic values and xenophobia. This study seeks to fill this gap and contribute to the literature by examining how social democratic and left-wing parties can and do carry xenophobic populist tendencies, particularly in the context of migration and political strategy.

5.2.RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As noted, this study seeks to answer the research question: "Why do center-left opposition parties respond differently to migration crises?" To address this question, a combination of "Most Similar System Design" (MSSD) and "Most Different System Design" (MDSD) will be employed, examining cases in the U.K., Hungary, and Türkiye. The dependent and independent variables will be summarized as follows (Lindberg, 2024; Global Party Survey, 2019):

Table 1. Comparison of Labour Party, MSZP, and CHP

Cases (2015-2023)	United Kingdom	Hungary	Türkiye
	Labour Party	MSZP	CHP
Main Opposition since	2010	2010	2002 ²
Membership of Socialist International	Yes	Yes	Yes
Main Centre-left actor in the party system	Yes	Yes	Yes
Existence of a right-wing prime minister or president	Yes	Yes	Yes
Same ruling party since becoming the opposition	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Conservative Party	Fidesz	AK Party
Ruling party types based on rhetoric (Global Party Survey, 2019)	Moderately Populist	Strongly Populist	Strongly Populist
Migration flow with a crisis in 2015	Yes	Yes	Yes
EU membership status of countries	Left (2020)	Yes (2004)	Candidate (1999)
Regime types of countries (V-Dem, 2024)	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Autocracy	Electoral Autocracy
Number of leader changes in the party since 2015	2	3	0
Perspective to migration	<i>Pro-Immigrant (Moderately)</i>	<i>Pro-Immigrant</i>	<i>Anti-Immigrant</i>

As shown in the table, these selected cases exhibit both similarities and differences. Despite the Labour Party and MSZP demonstrating a pro-immigrant attitude towards the migration crisis, the CHP differs with an anti-immigrant perspective. Although all three are centre-left parties in opposition to right-wing governments, the differences among these parties can be highlighted through a comparative analysis using MSSD. In this context, EU membership status, regime types, and leader changes, which might be considered possible reasons for these differences, can be ruled out through MDSD. This comparison reveals that regime types are not a determining factor, as the U.K. and Hungary show similar results despite their different regime types, while Türkiye and Hungary show different outcomes despite their similarities in almost all issues especially regarding their regime types. Furthermore, while MSZP in Hungary has a pro-immigrant stance, CHP in Türkiye adopts an anti-immigrant position, indicating that different results can emerge within similar dynamics. Therefore, a

² CHP is in opposition since its re-establishment in 1992 but main opposition party against AK Party since 2002.

combination of MSSD and MDSD is employed to identify the possible reasons for these differences. Cases were also selected according to this reason, which makes possible to use both MSSD and MDSD at the same time.

At this point, both the identified outcomes and the underlying reasons will be explored using the "Critical Discourse Analysis" (CDA) method. While various qualitative and quantitative methods can reveal the comparative outputs and their possible causes, CDA is preferred for its ability to provide an in-depth and critical analysis. Given the existing gap in the literature, the main research question and argument of this thesis necessitate a critical and thorough examination. This approach is essential because the study posits that there is a case (CHP) that contradicts theoretical expectations. CDA is particularly suitable for testing this claim.

The second reason why CDA is technically more appropriate for this study is its practicality in testing the theoretical relationship between migration, social democracy, and xenophobic populism. CDA is a research approach that focuses on examining how text and speech in social and political contexts reflect and perpetuate power imbalances, dominance, and unfairness. Through this critical lens, analysts aim to uncover, critique, and challenge social injustices by closely analyzing language and communication (van Dijk, 2015, p. 352).

In the context of social democracy, one of the most fundamental problems that can produce inequality and discrimination between individuals politically, socially, and economically, thereby damaging democracy, is discrimination. Xenophobic populism toward migrants represents a significant contemporary issue in terms of the political production of this discrimination, conflicting with social democratic values. If a social democratic party finds itself on the wrong side of this conflict, CDA is an effective method to expose this contradiction.

The third reason for choosing CDA is its focus on uncovering the abuse or manipulation of power perpetuated through texts and speeches (Huckin et al., 2012, p. 107). Politicians, through their influence on society and their wielded political and institutional power, can easily cause social inequality and discrimination. CDA is particularly suited to reveal such abuses of power by critically analyzing the language used by these political figures.

Finally, CDA is methodologically distinguished from other approaches in this study by its unique features (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 70-280): "CDA addresses social problems, power relations are discursive, discourse constitutes society and culture, discourse does

ideological work and it is historical, the link between text and society is mediated, discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory, and discourse is a form of social action".

On the other hand, CDA also has some methodological weaknesses. According to Aydın-Düzgit and Rumelili (2019, pp. 300-303), CDA often encounters criticism for their perceived lack of objectivity and tendency to engage more in political argumentation rather than academic research. However, theoretically, this approach rejects the idea of complete objectivity. Particularly in CDA, researchers are not expected to uphold absolute objectivity; instead, they are tasked with uncovering the social mechanisms of oppression, domination, and exclusion embedded within discourse from a critical perspective. This involves being guided by theoretical frameworks, conducting systematic analyses, and maintaining continual self-reflection throughout the research process. Consequently, the critical dimension inherent in these approaches assumes a specific political stance on the part of the researcher, emphasizing the vital importance of self-reflexivity. In this context, the analyst is viewed as inseparable from the discursive (and/or non-discursive) context within which society functions.

The most significant potential drawback of this approach is "selection bias." To mitigate this risk, the analysis will focus exclusively on the public statements made by political party leaders. Leaders are chosen because they exert the greatest influence on both party policy and public opinion. To further refine this focus, only speeches given by leaders in the year leading up to local, general, and referendum elections will be analyzed. This one-year time frame was selected to ensure a robust dataset on migration and migrants, particularly in the U.K. and Hungary, as leaders who failed in the elections left office, and to limit this to the period close to the election periods when leaders make more statements on critical issues.

On the other hand, the data, specifically the explanations, were obtained via Google searches conducted in their original languages with specific concept and time restrictions.³ This method allows any individual or researcher to access the data using a similar approach. Additionally, the overall time frame was set from 2015 to 2023, reflecting the period widely recognized in the literature as the beginning of the migration crisis.

³ The concepts in question are - with the names of the leaders - English: migration, migrant, asylum seeker, refugee, anti-immigrant, pro-immigrant, xenophobia, nativism. Hungarian: migráció, migráns, bevándorló, menekült, menedékkérő, bevándorlóellenes, bevándorlópárti, idegengyűlölet. Turkish: migration, migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, anti-migrant, pro-migrant, Syrian, Afghan.

Table 2. Leader(s) and Election(s) (2015-2023)

Cases (2015-2023)	United Kingdom-	Hungary	Türkiye
	Labour Party	MSZP	CHP
Leader(s) and Election(s)	<i>Ed Miliband</i>	<i>József Tóbiás</i>	<i>Kemal Kilicdaroglu</i>
	2015 General Elections	2016 Referendum (Migrant Quota)	2015 General Elections
	<i>Jeremy Corbyn</i>	<i>Gyula Molnár</i>	2015 General Elections (Snap)
	2016 Referendum (Brexit)	2016 Referendum (Migrant Quota)	2017 Referendum
	2019 European Parliament Elections	2018 General Elections	2018 General Elections (Snap)
	2019 General Elections (Snap)	<i>Bertalan Tóth</i>	2019 Local Elections
		2019 Local Elections	2023 General Elections
		2019 European Parliament Elections	
		2022 General Elections	
		<i>Ágnes Kunhalmi</i>	
		2022 General Elections	
		2022 "LGBT" Referendum	

CHAPTER 6. THE UNITED KINGDOM

6.1.MIGRATION CRISIS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The issue of migration and immigration as a political, economic, and social problem has a longer history for the U.K., at least compared to most European countries. This is because the U.K. attracted significant numbers of immigrants from former colonial states, especially after the de-colonization process that started after World War II. When the families of the immigrants came to the U.K. in the following period, the island almost as a whole became a multi-ethnic social structure. As a result, some political and social segments, especially the far right, started to trigger anti-immigration and anti-immigrant sentiments.

Another factor fueling opposition to migration and immigration in the U.K. was its relationship with the European Union and the continent. The increasing integration of EU member states, both politically and socially, was a constant point of debate concerning the U.K.'s political autonomy. Historically, the U.K.'s geographical isolation set it apart from major continental countries like Germany and France. This distinction was not merely a feature of the 20th century but is rooted in the existential and political philosophy of the British Empire, which in turn influenced the state and society's unique, traditional, and independent political perceptions and assumptions. As a result, the U.K. has often been described as "with Europe, but not of it; linked but not comprised; interested and associated, but not absorbed" (Churchill, 1930).

However, beyond these factors, the economic challenges faced by the U.K. during the decolonization process and the economic cooperation attempts with former colonies raised concerns about the impact on local businesses and producers within the EU, particularly concerning the common and free market. Consequently, the U.K.'s political and economic union with Europe has been a point of contention, even after its accession to the EU. Although Euroscepticism is often seen as a "British phenomenon" in the literature, it became the origin of a political vein for both U.K. and European populist actors in the 1980s with former U.K.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her objections to the single market and the EU (Wassenberg, 2020).

Despite these factors, anti-immigration and anti-immigrant sentiments did not gain a populist political response in the U.K. until after 2000. This delay was partly due to the U.K.'s majoritarian electoral system, which limited the ability of smaller parties to achieve power and representation in Parliament (van Kessel, 2015, p. 144). However, the EU's admission of eight former Soviet and Eastern bloc countries in 2004 sparked a negative reaction toward migration and migrants in the U.K. Tony Blair's government had anticipated that the influx of labor from these countries would significantly boost the economy, particularly in industrial sectors. As a result, the U.K. opened its borders to citizens from these new member states without implementing an "integration" policy. Consequently, the U.K. became one of only three EU countries to do so. The unexpected rise in "illegal migration" and higher-than-anticipated immigration, with around 100,000 new arrivals in one year, led to significant backlash and dissatisfaction toward "EU immigrants" (Lord, 2018, pp. 57-59; Clark et al., 2014).

The economic crisis of 2008 further intensified these reactions. The crisis fueled a populist approach among right-wing parties, particularly the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP), as they sought "enemies" to capitalize on the negativity stemming from the economic downturn. Although UKIP was initially founded around Euroscepticism and operated as a "single-issue party," it increasingly attracted attention by making populist appeals on immigration issues in the 2000s. This strategy led to a significant surge in votes for UKIP in local and European Parliament elections, if not in general elections. The rise of UKIP pressured the Conservative Party to adopt a tougher stance on immigration and the EU to a certain extent. In 2013, then-Prime Minister David Cameron, who also led the Conservative Party, promised an EU referendum on "Brexit" to address the growing Euroscepticism and to attract voters who were supporting UKIP. He anticipated that a referendum would likely result in a vote to remain, thereby resolving the issue and diminishing UKIP's influence (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p. 370). However, this strategy backfired when UKIP unexpectedly topped the European Parliament elections in 2014, surprising both the U.K. and the EU (van Kessel, 2015, pp. 152, 157-159). UKIP's success, particularly its first-place finish, was critical for the stability of the traditionally two-party political system in the U.K. This development elevated Brexit and opposition to immigration as major political issues, alongside economic concerns.

During this period, the Labour Party faced complex challenges regarding immigration. The party was criticized for its "open door" policy and the decisions made in 2004, particularly during Tony Blair's tenure. Despite this, the Labour Party continued to uphold its traditional social democratic values influenced by the anti-racism movements of the 1960s and 1970s. They championed the cultural benefits of immigration through a metropolitan liberal and internationalist perspective, advocating for a pluralistic and diverse society while being cautious about criticizing mass immigration due to its potential associations with racism and xenophobia. The party highlighted the economic advantages of immigration, particularly for large businesses, noting that immigrants often address skill shortages in the labor market, reduce costs for businesses and consumers, and contribute to public services, such as the National Health Service with doctors and nurses being employed from various parts of the world (Hickson, 2016, pp. 79-80).

However, despite maintaining its social democratic stance, the Labour Party began to experience a divergence of opinion on immigration among its ordinary voters, particularly within the working class. A notable incident illustrating this rift occurred in 2010 during an election visit by then Labour leader and U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown. When 65-year-old party member Gillian Duffy raised concerns about the economic impact of immigrants and public debt, Brown responded politely. Yet, he later insulted Duffy in a private conversation that was inadvertently recorded, saying "That was a disaster...she was just a bigoted woman who said she used to be Labour" (BBC, 2010). This incident, despite Brown's subsequent apology, starkly highlighted the growing disconnect between Labour's leadership and its electorate on the issue of immigration.

After the Labour Party's loss in the 2010 general elections, new leader Ed Miliband sought to address the disconnect with the electorate through his political discourse and strategy. Recognizing the concerns of citizens, especially of lower-income groups regarding "wages and job prospects," the Labour Party committed to tackling "illegal" and unskilled migration. This shift in focus became central to the party's strategy leading up to the 2015 elections (Griessler, 2017, p. 340).

6.2.ED MILIBAND: LOSE-LOSE SITUATION

In the 2015 elections, the main strategy of the Labour Party and Ed Miliband was that the immigration problem was related to a more accurate "system" and that this problem could

be solved with the necessary regulations. At this point, their main promises in the elections were recruiting 1,000 new border staff and exit checks, keeping the cap on workers from outside the EU, making immigration illegal for employers to undercut British workers by exploiting migrants, and creating a new rule that is a two-year wait before EU migrants can claim out-of-work benefits (BBC, 2015a). Therefore, the general approach and discourse were based on "controlling" the arrival of new migrants. While there was no negative attitude toward existing migrants, "control" was emphasized through the system (Batchelor, 2015).

In fact, Ed Miliband's primary strategy was to counterbalance the negative perceptions associated with the "control" discourse on immigration by highlighting his own background as the child of an immigrant family. This approach was intended to provide a positive narrative on immigration, addressing the expectations of some social democratic voters. Miliband underscored this in his speech outlining the Labour Party's stance and promises on migration for the elections:

"I am the son of immigrants, parents who came here as refugees fleeing from the Nazis. I am incredibly grateful and proud that Britain enabled my parents to build a home here and have a family. They worked hard and made their contribution to this country. And I am proud of the contribution that immigrants of all origins, races, and faiths have made to Britain over the years" (Labour List, 2014).

Therefore, it can be clearly stated that Miliband preferred to fulfill the expectations of this voter group toward him in this way. On the other hand, the "workers" also had expectations. At this point, Miliband preferred to fulfill these expectations by emphasizing the "control" discourse:

"But for that contribution to benefit all our citizens and not just some, immigration has got to be properly managed and there have to be the right rules in place. That's why I have been determined to change Labour's approach to immigration since we lost the General Election in 2010. When people worry about the real impact immigration has, this Labour Party will always respond to those concerns, not dismiss them. It isn't prejudiced to worry about immigration, it is understandable. So let me say how we will act to address peoples' concerns. People want there to be control of immigration. And I agree. That means strengthening our borders, with proper entry and exit checks. And we will introduce those checks. It means longer controls when

new countries enter the European Union: we got it wrong in the past and we've learned from it" (Labour List, 2014).

The issue of control can be regarded as an indicator of an implicit negative attitude, both in terms of taking lessons from the criticisms of the open-door policy followed by the Labour Party in 2004 and the emphasis that the issue of "concern" about migrants is understandable. This is because there is no direct targeting or negative attitude toward migrants, and the technical aspects of the issue are indirectly emphasized. At this point, especially border control comes to the fore. Another issue is related to integration policy:

"And my point today is also that control doesn't stop at the borders. It is also about fair rules when people get here. Fair rules mean people integrate into communities and learning English. It's what my parents did. Fair rules mean that entitlement to benefits needs to be earned. You should contribute before you claim. So when people come here they won't be able to claim benefits for at least two years" (Labour List, 2014).

Although Miliband framed the issue of immigration within the context of social justice and "fair rules," the overall approach revealed a more exclusionary and restrictive stance when directly addressing immigrants. The focus on the labor dimension was a strategic response to the populist rhetoric of right-wing parties, which claimed that immigrants were "stealing jobs" and "lowering wages":

"But it isn't just the benefits system that needs to be fair. I think for too long, we've ignored what's been happening at work: to people's jobs and wages. We know that so many workplaces are so far from being fair today. And that is especially true in some workplaces with a large number of workers who have come from overseas. There are truly shocking stories of people in Britain today having their wages stolen and having to live in the most appalling conditions: exploited because they come here from abroad. When people can be exploited for low wages or endangered at work, it drags the whole system down, undercutting the pay and conditions of local workers" (Labour List, 2014).

In this context, dissatisfaction and negative attitudes toward migrants become more pronounced, which naturally conflicts with the values of social democracy, particularly the principle of solidarity. Despite this, Miliband gradually softened his stance and adopted a more positive discourse over time. For instance, in a speech addressing workers' concerns about immigration, he highlighted his personal immigrant background to present a more empathetic

view of migrants. Miliband emphasized that halting immigration was not a viable option for the U.K. However, this approach also sought to obscure the ideological contradictions inherent in his emphasis on fairness while still addressing the populist concerns about immigration:

"I am the son of immigrants who came here with nothing. They benefited from the opportunities that Britain had to offer and built a life for our family. My parents' story is not unique. For generations, hard-working immigrants, eager to make their way, have helped build our country, and they do so today. But this party will never again dismiss people's concerns about immigration. Britain should not - cannot - close ourselves off from those who can contribute to our economy and our country. People do want to know that there are fair rules. Fair rules so that benefits should be earned, so people must contribute before they claim, and fair rules to prevent businesses from recruiting at slave wages, exploiting migrant labour to undercut pay and condition" (Wintour, 2015).

In his approach, Miliband consistently highlighted the positive aspects of immigration. When proposing or promising measures to control immigration, he emphasized the beneficial impact of immigrants on the U.K. Rather than targeting immigrants negatively, he directed his criticism toward employers who exploit immigrants as "slaves" by paying them illegal low wages, and thus he adopted adopting a left-populist stance:

"Immigration makes us stronger, richer, and more powerful as a nation. But making immigration work for everyone and not just a few, means people should contribute before they claim and we should never, ever allow companies to undercut wages and conditions of workers here by paying slave wages to those brought in from overseas" (Labour List, 2015).

As can be seen from this speech, especially in the Labour Party's traditional voter group of workers and low-income groups, an approach that it is the bosses, not the immigrants, who are responsible for the perception of "stealing their jobs from them" that triggers anti-immigrant sentiment is noteworthy. Although implicit, there is a positive and protective approach here.

On the other hand, migration became a lose-lose issue for the Labour Party during the election period (The Conversation, 2015). While the Conservative Party and UKIP evaluated the immigration issue together with the economy and turned the accelerating Euroscepticism into an opportunity for this, the Labour Party was caught between two different voter groups. In particular, low-income voters wanted to hear a concrete solution for immigrants who were targeted by the right-wing parties, while voters of different ethnic backgrounds, who constituted

a significant proportion of the party's electorate, wanted to hear a more inclusive, protectionist, and positive discourse on immigrants. As a result, the Labour Party and Miliband preferred to conduct the election process with a more balanced attitude, partly due to this situation.

However, Miliband's emphasis on "controls on immigration" led to backlash among some voters, particularly those who valued social democratic principles. The U.K., with its rich history of immigration, had traditionally seen the Labour Party as a staunch advocate of multiculturalism, diversity, and solidarity. For many in this group, these values appeared to be under threat.

UKIP and similar groups had long criticized the "open-door" policy on immigration, especially concerning illegal migration, and continued to push a xenophobic populist agenda with slogans like "send them back" (Mountain, 2023; BBC, 2015b). Miliband's focus on "control" aligned with the Conservative Party's stance (Portice & Reicher, 2018) disappointed social democratic and leftist supporters who expected a stronger defense of these values. This dissatisfaction was exacerbated when the Labour Party, during the campaign, released a mug with the slogan "controls on immigration," which was seen as a further concession to xenophobic sentiments and fueled additional criticism (Bush, 2015).

In summary, the discourse on immigration and migration used by Ed Miliband and the Labour Party during the 2015 election was marked by relative neutrality and ambivalence. This indecision led to a lose-lose situation for both Miliband and the party. Following the 2010 electoral defeat, Miliband criticized his party's immigration policy, acknowledging the need to address the concerns of lower-income groups and workers by revising the policy (Bale, 2014). Consequently, while Miliband initially adopted a harsher stance focused on the economic impacts of immigration, he gradually softened his approach during the election campaign, avoiding direct negative targeting of migrants.

Despite emphasizing "control" and "fairness" in his discourse, Miliband did not employ xenophobic language or adopt an inclusive social democratic approach. He avoided setting a concrete annual cap on immigrant admissions, unlike right-wing parties. This ambivalent rhetoric and strategy failed to effectively address the anti-immigrant sentiments represented by UKIP and the Conservative Party, while also disappointing social democrats who sought a more immigrant-friendly and values-oriented discourse.

6.3. JEREMY CORBYN: RESISTANCE OF LEFT VALUES

After the 2015 elections, Jeremy Corbyn unexpectedly replaced Ed Miliband as Labour Party leader. The election of Corbyn, who had never been a serious candidate for any ministerial or similar position despite being an MP for a long time, and who did not have much original weight within the party other than being an experienced figure, led to a radical change in terms of both discourse and policy for the Labour Party. In the following period, Corbyn became one of the left-populist examples in Europe, especially in the political science literature (Mouffe, 2018; Prentoulis, 2021). The leadership style displayed by Corbyn was interpreted as being successful only thanks to his populism within the party and at the grassroots, despite his lack of charisma (Chiengkul, 2021, p. 75). Others have described the discourse and strategy used by Corbyn as radical-left (Seymour, 2017; Goodger, 2022). All these debates are related to Corbyn's taking a completely clear stance and position on all critical issues, especially on the issue of immigration, and his discourses that were deemed "too" harsh even by his party.

On the issue of immigration, Jeremy Corbyn took a distinctly pro-immigrant and leftist approach, contrasting sharply with Ed Miliband's more neutral and implicit stance. Corbyn's discourse centered around the argument that immigration itself was not a crisis or problem; rather, he positioned the real issues as stemming from the Conservative Party's governance. According to Corbyn, the government's austerity measures and cuts to essential public services such as health, education, and housing were the true sources of societal problems. He argued that immigrants were being used as a scapegoat to divert attention from these failings.

The most important discourse that Corbyn used in his strategy after taking office, especially during the Brexit process in 2016, was shaped in this direction. Corbyn frequently used the concepts of "failure of government" and "turn anger to government":

"It's a failure of our government to properly fund local authorities. It's a failure of our government to provide housing for people. It's a failure of our government for the first time in twenty years, thirty years maybe, attacking school budgets. It's that that is the problem and they [voters] should turn their anger toward this government and the austerity that's been put forward by Cameron and Osborne over the past six years" (Pope, 2016).

During the Brexit referendum campaign, Jeremy Corbyn maintained a firm pro-immigrant stance, despite internal differences within the Labour Party and among those who favored Miliband's more neutral rhetoric (Bates, 2023). Corbyn consistently argued against

numerical immigration restrictions, stating that such measures were impractical and ineffective as long as there was visa liberalization within the EU since without fair income distribution among EU member states, economically larger countries would continue to attract migrants seeking better opportunities and asserted that blocking migrants would not provide a lasting solution to migration issues (Pope, 2016).

Corbyn's position during this period was characterized by a clear pro-immigrant perspective. He denounced opponents of immigration and their rhetoric as xenophobic, describing their actions as "demonizing" migrants. By doing so, he framed migrants as victims rather than criminals:

"We will be standing up to the xenophobia of UKIP attacking Europe or demonizing immigrants doesn't increase anyone's pay, it doesn't build a single home, it doesn't treat a single patient, provide a single child with a free school breakfast" (Corbyn, 2016a).

Similarly, Corbyn firmly rejected discussions about tightening border controls or "closing borders," arguing that such measures were both impractical and unjust. Additionally, he highlighted the crucial role of migrants in the health sector, particularly within the NHS, and underscored their positive contributions to social life:

"We cannot and should not want to close the borders, not for European citizens wanting to come here, tens of thousands of whom work in our NHS, and not for British citizens who want to take advantage of opportunities elsewhere in Europe" (Murphy, 2016).

The U.K.'s primary migration challenge was managing illegal entries from EU countries and former colonies. However, with the onset of the migration crisis in 2015, a new wave of migrants from the Middle East began entering the country illegally, particularly from France and across the English Channel. This situation provided a significant opportunity for right-wing populist actors, especially those advocating for Brexit. They exploited the migration crisis, which had triggered a domino effect across Europe, to advance their political agendas, both in elections and in the push for Brexit.

Despite the heightened focus on migration, the U.K. accepted only 8,000 Syrian refugees during the crisis (Gietel-Basten, 2016, p. 676). The 2015 elections thus became a prerequisite for the solution of the immigration issue in one way or another and for Brexit,

rather than fundamental issues such as the economy, and then Brexit turned into a turning point to measure the balance or imbalance of the society divided into two on the issue of immigration.

The Labour Party's position in the referendum was, with a few exceptions, in favor of remaining in the EU. The Conservative Party, on the other hand, was split in two, with powerful figures within the party, such as the then Prime Minister Cameron and the then Home Secretary Theresa May, who would later become Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party, on the "Remain" side. Partly popular figures within the Conservative Party, such as Boris Johnson, supported the "Leave" side together with UKIP. The main slogan was "Take back control". The result was 51.9% in favor of "Leave" (BBC, 2016).

However, even though the referendum failed the Labour Party, Corbyn did not take a single step back from his pro-migration/immigrant position. As a matter of fact, in his speech on the referendum results, Corbyn chose to re-emphasize his position, and his emphasis on "enriched" and "prejudice" is quite remarkable in this respect:

"Politicians are often accused of being afraid about talking about immigration. I am certainly not. I believe migration has enriched our country, our culture, and our communities. But I also understand that rapid changes to communities can bring tensions and strains on services... We must talk about immigration but we will never pander to prejudice" (Corbyn, 2016b).

Although Prime Minister Cameron recognized the election results as a failure for him and resigned, Corbyn managed to maintain his position despite fierce opposition within the party. The issue of immigration was the subject of the harshest criticism both within the party and in the public opinion. However, all this did not cause Corbyn to change his strategy and discourse. Corbyn continued his current discourse both after the referendum and in the early elections of 2017. At this point, he continued to emphasize that the blame was not on immigrants, but on the Conservative Party governments, that the Conservative Party blamed immigrants, and that immigrants were "demonized" by the Conservative Party:

"It isn't migrants that drive down wages, it's exploitative employers and the politicians who deregulate the labour market and rip up trade union rights. It isn't migrants who put a strain on our National Health System, it only keeps going because of the migrant nurses and doctors who come here filling the gaps left by politicians who have failed to invest in training. It isn't migrants that have caused a housing crisis; it's a Tory government that has failed to

build homes. Immigration can certainly put extra pressure on services and that's why, under Gordon Brown, Labour setup the Migrant Impact Fund to provide extra funding to communities that have the largest rises in population. What did the Tories do? They abolished it and then they demonise migrants for putting pressure on services" (British Political Speech, 2016).

Similarly, Corbyn's pro-immigrant stance was not just about a positive attitude toward immigrants. He argued that immigrants should be defended against hate crimes, emphasizing that this was a necessity. Notably, he approached the issue comprehensively, addressing direct racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism.

"As politicians, as political activists, as citizens, we must have zero tolerance toward those who whip up hate and division, stand together against racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, and defend those being demonized. It has been shaming to our multicultural society that assaults on migrants have increased sharply since the referendum campaign, a campaign that peddled myths and whipped up division" (British Political Speech, 2016).

After the referendum, early elections were decided in June 2017 after the problems related to the management and method of the process of leaving the EU. In the election campaign, while the issue of the rapid finalization of the Brexit process was at the forefront, immigration was again at the forefront of the issues discussed. However, Corbyn's position on immigration did not change again and he continued to produce discourse entirely in line with leftist values. The issues he emphasized and the concepts he used in his discourse did not differ. Moreover, unlike his predecessor, Corbyn clearly emphasized the "necessity" of taking a pro-immigrant position both in his discourse and in his party's election manifesto, despite differences of opinion within the party and even fierce opposition (Manwaring & Smith, 2020, p. 42). The concept used was "blame", as Corbyn frequently emphasized (The Labour Party, 2017, p. 28).

On the other hand, Corbyn's harshest statement on immigration during the election period was accusing Prime Minister May and the Conservative Party government of xenophobia. While he repeatedly argued that the government used immigrants as a scapegoat for its failures, Corbyn's speech featured particularly strong and direct expressions of criticism:

"Conservative Party leaders have sunk to a new low this week as they fan the flames of xenophobia and hatred in our communities and try to blame foreigners for their own failures... Once again, they are making false promises on immigration they cannot deliver. Instead of

turning people against each other; ministers should take action now to deal with the real impact of migration... They should stop the abuse of migrant labour to undercut pay and conditions, which would reduce numbers. They should support communities with high levels of migration and they should set out a positive agenda for fair migration" (Cowburn, 2016).

In this speech, Corbyn used terms such as "fanning the flames of xenophobia and hatred," "turning people against each other," and "abuse" to clearly position immigrants as "victims". His emphasis on "support" and a "positive agenda" further highlighted his pro-immigrant perspective, rooted in leftist values.

Corbyn also rejects the claim that the number of immigrants is too high, which is another controversial issue regarding immigration. He argues that if working conditions, especially wages, are improved, the U.K. will no longer be a major attraction for migrants from economically disadvantaged EU countries. This supports his argument that there is not an immigration problem per se, but rather an issue of "exploitation of migrant workers". Thus, he continues to focus on the economic system from a leftist perspective rather than on the migrants themselves (BBC, 2017).

On the other hand, the party and voter pressure on Corbyn forced him to propose some solutions to migration, at least in terms of political pragmatism. Therefore, in addition to his pro-immigrant position, Corbyn made statements on the management of migration, especially with the effect of the pressure on him. At this point, Corbyn used the term "reasonably managed migration", but even while emphasizing this, he did not refrain from reminding the leftist point of view:

"Labour is not wedded to freedom of movement for EU citizens as a point of principle. Labour supports fair rules and reasonably managed migration as part of the post-Brexit relationship with the EU... Unlike the Tories, Labour will not offer false promises on immigration targets or sow division by scapegoating migrants" (Labour List, 2017).

The use of terms like "freedom of movement" and "scapegoating migrants," along with an emphasis on "fair rules and reasonably managed migration," is quite significant. These statements consistently highlight Corbyn's leftist stance on migration. Through this approach, he maintains his position despite criticisms and pressures regarding solutions. This stance will form the basis of the discourse in the 2019 early general elections.

Following the 2017 election defeat of the Labour Party, Corbyn's position on immigration was criticized more harshly, especially by some other media groups and elites within the party. So much so that Corbyn was accused of being far left and even Marxist or having a socialist agenda during and after the election (Manwaring & Smith, 2020, p. 29). However, Corbyn again managed to maintain his leadership and did not change his position on immigration.

In 2019, in addition to the EU Parliament elections, general elections were held as a result of the Conservative Party's decision to hold early elections again as a result of the failure to reach a consensus on the process of leaving the EU membership. The strongest claim of Corbyn and the Labour Party was that if they came to power, they could repeat the referendum on staying in or leaving the EU. At this point, attention was drawn to the economic and social crisis that would be caused by the failure to reach an agreement both within the U.K. and between the EU and the U.K. and the possibility of a "no-deal Brexit" and the economic and social crisis it would cause in the U.K., especially among citizens (Lee, 2019).

During the 2019 election process, Corbyn reiterated his views on immigration, emphasizing the "right to free movement within the EU," a stance that, while not new, was considered quite "progressive" (Bloodworth, 2019). This and discourse was frequently used both in the 2019 general election manifesto and in Corbyn's speeches in addition to the positive attitude toward the immigration issue. This discourse was partly used to show voters the possible risks and negative consequences of a "no-deal Brexit". Because in the event of a no-deal Brexit, the right to free movement with EU countries could disappear. This was a major concern for both EU citizens living in the U.K. and U.K. citizens living in the EU (The Labour Party, 2019). Corbyn instrumentalized this concern and used it to win votes in his election campaign:

"I have made my case very clear about the value of migration to our society, about the stability of people living in our society, about the horrors of the hostile environment created deliberately by Theresa May, and others, and the uncertainty that so many EU nationals have been put through" (BBC, 2019).

As can be seen in this statement, Corbyn, while maintaining his pro-immigrant stance, especially emphasized the concepts of "uncertainty" and "hostile environment", which can be evaluated as an effort to trigger concerns even for negative reasons.

Another stage of this strategy was to emphasize the repercussions of the concerns and potential problems caused by the risk of a no-deal Brexit in different contexts such as family and economy. At this point, Corbyn preferred to reiterate the potential risks while continuing to positively define migration and migrants in the classical sense around leftist values such as diversity and multiculturalism:

"A lot of EU nationals have made their homes in this country and made a massive contribution to our society ... many of those families have been through unbelievable stress. So they absolutely must have the right to remain and bring their families here... Also, there are also huge economic demands. There are 40,000 nurse vacancies in the NHS, partly because so many EU nationals have left. We have a shortage of doctors. We cannot exist in isolation... Therefore there has to be migration into Britain in order to maintain our economy and our services" (Mason, 2019).

Corbyn, in fact, strengthens his pro-immigrant stance, which he has maintained mostly ideological and value-based until today, with practical and economic reasons, by using a discourse that their absence will be a problem, in contrast to the immigrants whose presence is accused of causing problems in the health and economic sectors. Therefore, it can be said that in the 2019 election process, unlike the previous ones, Corbyn exhibited a pro-immigrant position and discourse for both ideological and practical reasons.

Finally, it's important to mention that although not directly related to the immigration issue, there were accusations of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, particularly during Corbyn's leadership. While Corbyn did not accept these accusations, research conducted by the party and investigations by independent institutions "identified serious failings in leadership and an inadequate process of handling anti-Semitism complaints" (BBC, 2020). Consequently, Corbyn was expelled from the party.

6.4. CONCLUSION

As a result, it can be said that the Labour Party, and the centre-left opposition in the U.K., displayed a partially neutral attitude under Ed Miliband's leadership and a clear pro-immigrant stance under Jeremy Corbyn in response to an anti-immigration and anti-immigrant government. The difference between the two leaders can be attributed to their individual differences. Although both leaders are ideologically left, Miliband is closer to the center. He aimed to manage the dissatisfaction of traditional lower-income and labor voters while

responding to increasing anti-immigrant discourse and populism in the context of Euro-skepticism. However, both the change in the party system and the transformation in the electoral groups show that the Labour Party is losing ground with the traditional electorate, especially among the highly educated and urban voters (Gethin et al., 2022). For this reason, Miliband could not convince the working class, which he had already started to lose with his strategy and discourse by remaining neutral, against more radical discourse and populism, and he could not satisfy this group by failing to show the resistance that the voter group more inclined to support him wanted to see against xenophobic populism on immigration and immigrants. Therefore, even though he has an implicit positive approach as an individual, he has displayed an ambivalent or neutral attitude due to pragmatic reasons.

Jeremy Corbyn, on the other hand, resisted the division of his party on this issue and took a direct very clear and genuine pro-immigrant stance. Until the 2019 elections, the main motivation for this stance, as seen in his discourses, was the entirely leftist ideology and its new and traditional values such as diversity, multiculturalism, inclusiveness, and solidarity. In the 2019 election period, Corbyn, on the other hand, although he sought a different search due to the pressure on him, found the opportunity to support the pro-immigrant stance for economic and practical reasons by turning the solution into an opportunity for the Conservative Party to seriously put the no-deal Brexit option on the table. Therefore, in the case of the U.K. and the Labour Party, it is seen that the centre-left opposition has partially adopted a pro-immigrant stance.

CHAPTER 7. HUNGARY

7.1. MIGRATION CRISIS IN HUNGARY

The Hungarian party system has, until now, been characterized by a distinctive polarization. A right-wing conservative and a social liberal wing have faced each other almost intransigently since the late nineties (Becker, 2010). The expert judgment-based indices showed that right-left polarization reached significant levels in the 2000s (Enyedi, 2016). This polarization is variously associated with populism. At this point, it is often interpreted that Fidesz's previous nationalism has merged with populism (Enyedi, 2016). In this sense, the most prominent issue is the populist discourse and policies produced through anti-immigrant sentiments.

Although Hungary is a small country with roughly 10 million citizens, its important geopolitical position became more visible during the migrant crisis due to its Schengen external borders (Barlai & Sik, 2017). Hungary was recognized as a popular migration destination, especially in the 1980s. In 1989, it became a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention "relating to the status of refugees", further facilitating asylum procedures (Barlai & Sik, 2017, p. 149). After 1990, the civil war in Yugoslavia brought a new wave of migrants to Hungary, followed by Muslim Bosniaks fleeing persecution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then Romanians and Albanians fleeing Kosovo toward the end of the 1990s. Following the 1997 lifting of the geographical restriction, the first asylum seekers from countries affected by armed conflicts outside Europe, notably Iraq, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, began to arrive (Barlai & Sik, 2017). Finally, the civil war in Syria has triggered the largest wave of migrants to Europe so far and Hungary has been one of the affected countries. The number of asylum seekers from non-European countries increased significantly compared to previous years (Juhász et al., 2015). However, it is worth noting that Hungary was not seen as a destination for migrants in the migration crisis, but as an intermediate station or transit point to Western Europe (Juhász et al., 2015). Indeed, by the end of 2015, a total of 391,384 refugees and asylum seekers entered Hungary through its southern border, most intent on transiting the country to get elsewhere in

Europe (Goździak, 2019). However, only a few thousand asylum seekers remained in the country (Juhász et al., 2015):

Table 3. Asylum Seekers in Hungary and Persons Granted International Protection Status

Year	Asylum seekers	Refugees	Subsidiary protection	Tolerated stay
2000	7,801	197	-	680
2001	9,554	174	-	290
2002	6,412	104	-	1,304
2003	2,401	178	-	772
2004	1,6	149	-	177
2005	1,609	97	-	95
2006	2,117	99	-	99
2007	3,419	169	-	83
2008	3,118	160	88	42
2009	4,672	177	64	156
2010	2,104	83	132	58
2011	1,693	52	139	14
2012	2,157	87	328	47
2013	18,9	198	217	4
2014	42,777	240	236	7
2015	177,135	146	356	6
2016	29,432	154	271	7
2017	3,397	106	1,11	75
2018	671	68	281	18
2019	500	22	31	7
2020	117	83	43	4
2021	40	21	17	2
2022	46	10	20	-
2023	31	11	11	4
2000-2023 Total	321,703	2,785	3,344	3,951

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2021)

In 2015, migration debates in Hungary were heavily influenced by the broader European migration crisis, which significantly shaped the government's discourse and policies on migration. After the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in Paris, Hungary's immigration policies and rhetoric became even more stringent (Remenyi et al., 2022). Viktor Orbán declared, "While I am PM, Hungary will not become an immigration destination. We don't want to see significantly sized minorities with different cultural characteristics and backgrounds among us. We want to keep Hungary as Hungary" (Lestyánszky, 2016). This marked the beginning of increasingly harsh rhetoric and policies towards migrants.

Key measures included the construction of a 175 km long and 4-meter-high barbed wire fence along Hungary's borders with Croatia and Serbia, a 2016 referendum opposing the EU's "immigration quota" plan, and the 2018 "Stop Soros Law," which criminalized assistance to "irregular migrants." Additionally, Fidesz's election campaigns and discourse during election periods were often dominated by anti-immigrant sentiments.

MSZP, both historically as the strongest representative of the left and with its ideological positioning and opposition representing the centre-left in contemporary terms, has strongly opposed Fidesz's anti-immigrant policies and discourses. Orbán's anti-immigrant discourses were frequently criticised and his policies were protested by the party. For example, in reaction to Fidesz's barbed wire fence on the border between Croatia and Serbia, a group of MSZP party members gathered in front of the Fidesz headquarters to protest against this decision. In this protest, the statement of Ágnes Kunhalmi, who would later become MSZP co-chair, became the main slogan and attitude of the opposition (Furko, 2019, p. 352; Hirtv, 2019). In his statement, Kunhalmi said: "Today Hungary does not have a major problem with migration. This is a fake problem created by Fidesz" (MSZP, 2015a) and stated that the real problem is the emigration of Hungarians, that the number of those applying for residence is insignificant compared to those leaving the country, and that many Hungarians are forced to work abroad due to the government's bad policies (Gábor, 2015). Kunhalmi's statement became one of the main discourses of MSZP in the following period. In addition, MSZP argues that Orbán creates an atmosphere of fear and anxiety over migrants and thus strengthens his power. According to MSZP, the migrant issue requires a humanitarian approach.

7.2. JÓZSEF TÓBIÁS : "HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION"

During the 2016 immigration quota referendum, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and its president, József Tóbiás, were vocal critics of the government's anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric. Tóbiás specifically targeted the barbed wire fences erected along Hungary's borders, arguing that they were neither effective nor humane. His discourse highlighted the need for a solution-oriented and humanitarian approach to dealing with migrants.

"The government has not been looking for a solution for eight months, it is magnifying the problem and using too many resources for this. No one thinks it is a good thing that hundreds of thousands of people have settled in Hungary. We have always said this: The safety of the Hungarian people comes first, everything else comes later. But if we are dealing with migration,

migrants must be treated humanely... The truth is that the Prime Minister's policy fuels fear and thus empowers those who want Europeans to be afraid" (MSZP, 2015b).

Stating that the solution is not a barbed wire fence or a policy of fear, Tóbiás stated that the joint action of the EU member states is necessary for the solution:

"First and foremost, joint action by EU Member States is necessary. Joint protection of borders, a common registration, distribution, and deportation system, joint funding... A fast-reacting European force must be established in co-operation with national security services. This is the basis for joint action" (MSZP, 2015b).

While the debate on barbed wire fences at the borders was still ongoing and MSZP was harshly criticizing the government's stance, a quota referendum was on the agenda in Hungary. This is another factor shaping the opposition's migration discourse. Especially after the migration crisis in 2015, the European Union wanted to implement a resettlement plan and quota application to prevent the accumulation of migrants in certain countries. Accordingly, migrants would be resettled depending on the population size, gross national product, asylum applications, and unemployment rates of the countries. In this context, it was envisaged that Hungary would accept 1,294 migrants. However, the Hungarian government strongly opposed this plan (Gessler, 2017). While the discussions on the European Union's quota decision continued, the government would decide to put the issue to a referendum.

Before the referendum process, one of the main discourses of the government was that immigrants were taking the jobs of Hungarians. Indeed, "If you come to Hungary, you must not take the jobs of the Hungarians" was the main slogan of the anti-immigrant campaign in 2015, in the run-up to the referendum (Dercsényi, 2017). In a parliamentary question, then-president József Tóbiás demanded to know how many migrants had taken jobs away from Hungarians (24Hu, 2015). As a result, he received the answer that only 101 people recognized as migrants started work and 66 people recognized as migrants were dismissed from the labour offices. Tóbiás complained that no one checks the accuracy of campaigns, adverts, and discourse on the migrant issue in general (MSZP, 2016a). He also emphasized at every opportunity that the government was conducting a hate campaign on this issue, which was creating "fear" rather than creating solutions (MSZP, 2015c).

As the immigration debate raged, Victor Orbán announced on 24 February 2016 that the government would launch a referendum against the EU immigration quota. The Parliament adopted the referendum resolution on May 10, 2016. MSZP persistently opposed the

referendum, emphasizing that the government was seeking to consolidate its power over migrants. President Tóbiás stated that *"the government's referendum issue is not about migrants, but about consolidating its own political and economic power"* (MSZP, 2016b). At the same time, Tóbiás emphasized that the government is afraid of the people, does not want to face Hungary's problems, and increases hostility toward migrants by "fear-mongering":

"There is enough real fear in the country because of insecurity: People are afraid of not being able to make a living, of not being able to pay their bills, school and health care costs. People are afraid of the future. The government manipulatively and consciously capitalizes on this fear" (MSZP, 2016c).

The MSZP's main attitude toward the referendum was "boycott". There are two main reasons for this: The MSZP and the anti-referendum group seemed to have little chance of winning, given the government's escalating anti-immigrant stance since 2015 and the fact that it was supported by a significant part of the population. Secondly, a significant part of the opposition voters was also skeptical about immigration or opposed the quota system for various reasons: "A poll by Republikon Intézet at the beginning of the campaign period showed that 60% of left-liberal voters sided with the government on the quota" (Gessler, 2017, p. 89). Based on these, a boycott was seen as the most reasonable option. For the referendum to be considered valid, a 50% turnout was required and according to the polls, the willingness of left-wing voters to participate in the referendum was not very strong (Gessler, 2017, p. 89). An invalidation of the referendum seemed the most promising strategy since the referendum needed a 50% turnout and the polls shed doubt on left voters' willingness to participate (Gessler, 2017, p. 89).

7.3. GYULA MOLNÁR: "FAKE REFERENDUM AND CLINGING TO THE EU"

During the referendum period, the MSZP saw a leadership change when Gyula Molnár was elected as chairman on June 25, 2016, replacing József Tóbiás (Daily News Hungary, 2016). In his initial statements, Molnár emphasized a boycott of the referendum. He argued that participating in the referendum threatened the unity of the European Union and that the referendum was a tool for promoting populist policies detrimental to European cohesion. Molnár stated, *"In the quota referendum, we are asking people to stay at home to show their opposition to populist policies that threaten the unity of Europe"* (Maszol, 2016). He also criticized Prime Minister Orbán, saying, *"Orbán wants to call on us to break European laws"* (MSZP, 2016d).

Molnár, like Tóbiás, stated that the referendum served as a political cover for other problems and argued that the government was "trying to cover up corruption and the extraordinary problems in education and health" (MSZP, 2016d). He often said that the referendum was about diverting attention away from the problems. *"Education, health, and corruption are real problems, but today we are dealing with problems that do not exist in Hungary"* (MSZP, 2016e). Molnár's statement was reminiscent of Kunhalmi's characterization of "fake problems" in 2015. However, Molnár acknowledged that there is a migration problem, which is the biggest problem of the 21st century for Europe and the world. He argued that a solution was necessary at this point, but that the way to do this was to address the problem in a humanitarian way, without creating an atmosphere of fear (MSZP, 2016f). For this reason, Molnár preferred to use the characterization "fake" for the referendum.

There were two reasons for it: Firstly, according to him, the issue that was the subject of the referendum (immigration quota) was not really a problem, because Molnár emphasized that there was no "mandatory" resettlement quota: *"With the latest developments in Europe, it has become clear that the demand from Brussels for a mandatory resettlement quota is not on the agenda. In fact, there is no referendum in Europe and a referendum has no consequences in terms of public law."* (MSZP, 2016g) Therefore, it was unrealistic for Hungary to hold a referendum on something that was not mandatory. He therefore repeatedly called for the referendum to be canceled, even though the elections were only a short time away (MSZP, 2016f). Another reason for his characterization of the referendum as a "sham" was his claim that it was being used by the government to obfuscate existing problems. *"This is a fake referendum on how to cover up the scandalous situation in education, the astonishing situation in the health sector and the facts, together with the hate campaign of the past months"* (MSZP, 2016f).

Additionally, Molnár asserted that the MSZP did not support the settlement quota but criticized the referendum and the government's approach as hateful (Népszava, 2016). He echoed similar sentiments to those of Tóbiás, accusing Orbán of creating a climate of fear to consolidate his power. Molnár feared that a successful referendum for Fidesz would effectively give Orbán a "blank mandate," urging the government to clarify "what the public law consequences of the referendum will be and what it is asking voters to support" (MSZP, 2016e). He also expressed concerns that the referendum was a step towards undermining the European Union and potentially leading to Hungary's exit from the EU. Molnár warned that the

referendum might be a precursor to broader anti-EU measures, emphasizing that the best strategy was to boycott the vote (MSZP, 2016h; MSZP, 2016i).

The referendum with the question "Do you agree that the European Union should have the power to impose the compulsory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly of Hungary?" was held on October 2. The turnout in the elections was 44%. As the turnout was below 50%, the referendum was declared invalid. Molnár described the referendum as "a very expensive poll" (Magyar Nemzet, 2016). Orbán, on the other hand, said that the elections had achieved their goal, recalling that 98% of the voters had voted "no" and that Hungarians had made clear what they wanted in terms of mass migration (Magyarország Kormánya, 2016). Although the referendum was deemed invalid, it is possible to say that it has lasting consequences for migration policies and discourses. According to major opinion polling organizations, Fidesz's popularity increased by 4% to 49% after the referendum (Furko, 2019, p. 358).

Especially the referendum was held on October 2, 2016, and the increasing anti-immigrant stance of the government afterward drew the reaction of the European Parliament. About a year before the 2018 election process, the European Parliament initiated proceedings against Hungary under Article 7 (European Parliament, 2017). In the parliamentary resolution, which means the suspension of Hungary's voting rights in the Council of the European Union, it was stated that developments in Hungary over the last few years have led to a serious deterioration in the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights, as well as freedom of expression, academic freedom and the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees (European Parliament, 2017). One of Molnár's first statements on the issue was "This decision clearly shows that Europe is fed up with what the Hungarian government is doing. From now on, the fate of the 2018 elections is 'Viktor Orbán or Europe'" (Magyar Hírlap, 2017). On the other hand, Fidesz, in its election campaign, said: "The UN wants us to accept migrants on a continuous basis. Hungary decides, not the UN" and posters with this slogan were frequently used (VOA News, 2018). Molnár, on the other hand, re-adopted the rhetoric that Orbán's anti-immigrant policy, which he had used frequently in the 2016 referendum, had alienated Hungary from the European Union.

During this period, Fidesz's campaign was heavily focused on anti-immigrant rhetoric. The party positioned itself as the protector of Hungarians against perceived threats, with immigrants often framed as these threats. Additionally, Fidesz targeted George Soros, a Jewish

businessman, by linking him to immigrants. The government accused Soros of orchestrating a plan to bring one million asylum seekers to Europe annually through NGOs funded by him. This accusation, known as the "Soros Plan," became a central theme in Fidesz's campaign, epitomized by their slogan "Stop Soros."

In response to the Soros campaign, Molnár criticized it, stating: "We'd really like to be able to see this Soros plan if there's already a consultation about it ... but it's clear that Fidesz is doing nothing more than updating its elections database. The consultation is about nothing more than that" (Spike, 2017).

On the other hand, during the 2018 election process, Fidesz began to draw a parallel between the settlement of gypsies and immigrants (Biró, 2018). In this sense, the statement of János Lázár (Minister of the Prime Minister's Office), a minister in the Orbán government, "We have been living with Romanies for 600 years and we have not been able to integrate them so far, so how are we going to integrate immigrants from another world, another culture, another identity?" was also on the agenda (24Hu, 2018). Molnár stated that this statement was a "cheap vote-winning technique" and that it was openly hostile to gypsies. Therefore, he started to emphasize in his discourse that the issue has now reached a racist dimension.

The elections were held on 8 April 2018, with a turnout of 69.41% (the second highest turnout in Hungarian elections) and the MSZP bloc received only 12.44% of the votes (Deloy, 2018). The night after the election results were announced, President Molnár resigned. In his speech announcing his resignation, Molnár once again emphasized that the government had only talked about immigration in the election campaign (Webradio, 2018).

7.4. BERTALAN TÓTH: "COMMON SOLUTION"

After Gyula Molnár's resignation, Bertalan Tóth took over as MSZP leader. During his tenure, MSZP faced several significant elections, including the 2019 European Parliament (EP) elections, the 2019 local elections, and the 2022 national elections. In the run-up to the May 26, 2019 EP elections, Tóth continued to echo the claim that Fidesz was attempting to distance Hungary from the European Union—a recurring theme under previous leadership. This was one of the main discourses of the election process (Tamás, 2019). Tóth highlighted migration as a key issue that required a unified European solution. He argued that the EP elections were crucial for addressing this challenge and called for pro-European politicians to counteract "populist politicians who betrayed their country." In the same speech, he described migration as "an important issue that needs to be tackled together" and said: "Migration is a common challenge

for the European Union, but there is a common solution that can tackle and solve the problem". At this point, he said that "the more widespread the rules of the European Union are, the more secure the fate of Hungarians will be" (Hirado, 2019).

Tóth emphasized that Fidesz had recently fallen into an anti-European position and therefore the EP elections were more important than ever. Tóth emphasized that MSZP, on the other hand, had a pro-European position in contrast to Fidesz, as they pursued a harmonious and common attitude with the EU on many issues, especially on the migration issue. Tóth, who felt the need to clearly state their position on migration, made the following statements:

"We have never said or even thought that Hungary should be turned into a migrant country. Period. Yes, the migration crisis is a serious problem both at European and global levels, and it is also Hungary's problem. Point (...) As long as some people want to solve the migration crisis and others want to take advantage of it, the migration crisis will remain unresolved. But you and your prime minister (Orbán) do not want to use the migration crisis, you do not want to solve it. On the other hand, we, the pro-European Hungarian leftists and patriots, want to solve the migration crisis. And it is clearer than ever that a solution is only possible through European co-operation. You, on the other hand, refuse and block this co-operation because you want to use this crisis for your own domestic political purposes." (Tóth, 2018).

Although in this statement Tóth states that he sees migration as a problem, he argues that it is not among Hungary's priority problems in the current situation. He stated that migration is a result of inequality because capital is concentrated in the hands of very few people in the world, while many are pushed to the periphery of society. Emphasizing that this is the case in Hungary, Tóth stated that the biggest problem here is not immigration; it is the health system (Pécsma, 2019).

The turnout in the eventual elections increased from 29% to 44% compared to 2014. "This might be due to the parties' claims of the election being decisive in terms of its repercussions on Hungarian politics" (Susánszky and Kritzinger, 2020). Indeed, Orbán warned that if the Socialists gained a majority in the European Parliament, they would accelerate immigration and stated that "the EP elections are about the future of Europe because they will decide whether pro-immigration or anti-immigration forces will rule Europe". In response to this, Tóth argued that Fidesz aims to leave the European Union and reminded that 84% of

Hungarian voters 16 years ago decided in favor of the country's accession to the EU and said that they support EU membership without hesitation.

In the run-up to the local elections, Tóth emphasized that these elections were not only about mayorships. He believed that the victory of the opposition's joint mayoral candidate was important not only for the capital but for the whole country:

"This could be a big result not only for the capital but also for the opposition and Hungary. That is why I always say, if we win, we will wake up to a new country, because it will be a different political environment, a different political atmosphere" (Infostart, 2019).

On the other hand, he explained that even at the very beginning of the election campaign he was sure that Fidesz would build its campaign on migration, whereas MSZP would not pursue such a strategy. Tóth stated that they believe that the Hungarian people want not only border security but also security in their daily lives, including wages, healthcare, and the provision of social benefits. At this point, he emphasized that MSZP also focuses on representing society (Kiss & Mariann, 2018). He emphasized the importance of establishing common rules with the European Union and adopting these rules and stated that the migration trend can be stopped in this way (Nepszava, 2019).

In addition, Tóth argued that the migration and immigration problem in Hungary was caused by the government's policies. According to him, inequality was one of the main causes of the problem:

"In Hungary, a quarter of the country's wealth is in the hands of 1% of the population. The resulting dissatisfaction enables extreme, populist, right-wing parties to gain strength. This is also why they can effectively scapegoat migrants, because the average person thinks: I have almost nothing, I'm having a hard time, and even what I have is being taken away by migrants. By the way, migration itself is born out of inequality: Those who can are fleeing poverty and war" (György, 2019).

Tóth therefore argued that the solution was to reduce inequalities. He believed that this could be achieved in partnership with the European Union: "The European Union must simultaneously ensure the protection of the peace and security of its citizens and realize the idea of humanism" (György, 2019).

He also criticized the Fidesz government, claiming that Orbán had behaved inconsistently on immigration. In a speech in which he addressed Orbán, he said: "When we

talk about migration, we hear that he is granting settlement permits to people who are close to the Syrian dictator or the Russian secret service, which causes migration." Tóth also stated that little is said about Hungary's real and serious problems, that hundreds of thousands of Hungarian young people are preparing to leave the country, that there is a significant shortage of teachers, and that these are the real problems, not immigration (Parlamenthu, 2021).

On the other hand, in the period leading up to the elections on 3 April 2022, the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine and the fact that many Ukrainian citizens left their country and came to Hungary caused the issue of migration to come to the agenda through Ukrainian migrants. Tóth emphasized the need to adopt a humanitarian approach to this issue, and for this purpose, with Tóth's initiatives, MSZP started to collect donations for Ukrainian migrants (MSZP, 2022a).

7.5. AGNES KUNHALMI: UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS

On 3 April 2022, Hungarian Parliamentary Elections were held. However, these elections were different from the previous ones. As well as electing members of the National Assembly on 3 April, Hungarians voted in a referendum on questions related to new laws on the promotion of LGBT+ topics to minors (Csanyi, 2022)⁴. For this reason, the LGBT+ issue and the referendum held in this sense became the main focus of election campaigns and discourses. Therefore, the issue of migration was not a priority agenda item for both the opposition and Agnes Kunhalmi, who became co-president of the party in 2020. In addition, Russia's attack on Ukraine six weeks before the election day was another factor that determined the main discourses of the election (Farkas et al., 2024).

In addition, in the run-up to the 2022 elections due to the Russian-Ukrainian War, the issue of migration and migrants started to come to the agenda through Ukrainian migrants. Because many Ukrainian migrants fleeing the war came to the Hungarian border. Kunhalmi criticized the government, saying that the government did not carry out any humanitarian activities at the border. He also stated that this attitude of the government is worrying. "It seems that the aid provided to those fleeing from Ukraine to our country is all civilian initiatives," Kunhalmi said (MSZP, 2022b).

⁴ The four questions asked in the referendum were: (1) Do you support subjecting minors to sessions on sexual orientation in public schools without parental consent? (2) Do you support the promotion of sex change treatments (properly: gender confirmation surgery) for minors? (3) Do you support subjecting minors without any restriction to sexually explicit media content that may affect their development? (4) Do you support making available to minors media content that depicts sex change (properly: gender confirmation surgery).

Of course, Fidesz regularly used elements of previous successful election campaigns, such as the struggle against migration and the fight against Brussels (Csanyi, 2022). Orbán emphasized the opposition's pro-immigrant stance, warning that "only his own party can guarantee a firm stance on the acceptance of migrants. In this sense, he stated that "the European Union is in favor of migration waves, while he is at war with Brussels" (Deloy, 2022). Therefore, the tendency to address the migration problem, which has increased since the 2016 referendum, based on Euroscepticism through pro- and anti-EU positions has continued in this election process. Kunhalmi claimed that a change of government in Hungary would "benefit the whole EU" (Vaski, 2022).

During this process, Fidesz often argued that the opposition was pursuing the "deceptive and harmful policy of 2015" on migration. In this sense, it argued that Kunhalmi called migration a "fake problem" in 2015 and that he was pursuing an ostrich policy on migration. In this sense, Fidesz used the discourse of "Hungary belongs to Hungarians" throughout the election process, emphasizing that the pro-immigrant policies of the socialists were not wanted by Hungarians (Hirtv, 2021). However, Kunhalmi did not directly respond to the criticisms leveled against him over his statements in 2015. Kunhalmi's primary agenda was the alliance formed within the opposition, education, health, etc. issues. In this sense, he often criticized the government's policies.

7.6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the 2015 migration crisis which was faced by the EU has profoundly influenced Hungarian politics. In response to the strong and persistent xenophobic and anti-immigrant stance of Fidesz and Orbán, MSZP has adopted a pro-immigrant position. This stance is evident both in the public statements of MSZP leaders and in the party's initiatives supporting migrants, including aid and donation efforts.

As a matter of fact, almost all presidents agree that the issue of migration is brought to the agenda through hatred and fear. In this sense, it is emphasized that the issue of migration should be handled in a more humanitarian way. This is one of the most important indicators of MSZP's pro-immigrant stance. However, the MSZP leaders believe that Orbán has adopted a populist stance on the issue and thus consolidated his power through anti-immigrant sentiments. Another common point among the chairmen is the idea that the government is preventing the discussion of problems in the fields of economy, education, health, etc. by prioritizing the issue of migration.

It is seen that the most prominent issue in the statements of MSZP leaders on migrants is the criticism of Orbán. Firstly, József Tóbiás insistently emphasized that Orbán was conducting a policy of "hatred and fear" over migrants. Tóbiás also claims that the government is trying to strengthen its power through the migration issue. For this reason, he opposed the migration quota referendum in 2016. Molnár also adopted Tóbiás's position but preferred to develop a harsher discourse over the referendum. In this sense, he accused Orbán of trying to leave the European Union and regarded the referendum as the first step toward this. This idea started to gain weight in MSZP's discourse on the immigrant issue. Thus, anti-immigrant was identified with anti-EU and pro-immigrant with pro-EU. The fact that all MSZP leaders stated that EU co-operation was necessary for the solution of the migration problem reinforced this idea. At this point, in response to Orbán's fearful propaganda that migrants would disrupt Hungary's cultural, social, and demographic structure, MSZP leaders frequently stated that these anti-immigrant policies and discourses put Hungary at risk of leaving the EU.

On the other hand, MSZP leaders generally think that a more holistic improvement as well as a humanitarian approach is necessary for the solution of the migration issue. In this sense, they argue that Hungary's main problems are issues such as education, health, and economy and that improvements in these areas are decisive in people's attitudes toward migration and migrants. It can also be said that all this discourse and approach is essentially in line with leftist values and ideology.

CHAPTER 8. TÜRKİYE

8.1. MIGRATION CRISIS IN TÜRKİYE

As noted, Türkiye became the primary destination for migrants traveling from the Middle East to Europe during the 2015 migration crisis. However, Türkiye has long been an important hub or transit country for migrants due to its strategic location and its historical and cultural connections with the Balkans, the Middle East, and North Africa, which stem from its Ottoman heritage. Indeed, even before the 2015 migration crisis, Türkiye was a destination for forced migration from neighboring countries, especially toward the end of the 20th century. With the First Gulf War and Saddam Hussein's attacks on Kurds living in Northern Iraq, a mass Kurdish migration from Iraq took place in 1988 and 1991. In the same year, in 1989, Türkiye became the destination country for the Turks who left the country as a result of the assimilation policy in Bulgaria. Hundreds of thousands of people migrated to Türkiye in this short time. In the 1990s, Bosnians and Kosovo Albanians migrated to Türkiye during the civil war and genocide in Yugoslavia (Kaya, 2023).

At the end of 2010, when the Arab Spring started, Türkiye had a very stable and strong political and economic structure. It had an economically rapidly growing economy, a politically stable government of 8 years, and a democratic and secular republic that was nearly a century old, even though it had its setbacks. In this respect, Türkiye was seen as a "model" for Muslim countries in the Middle East (Kirişçi, 2023). Even though Türkiye was labeled as "neo-Ottomanism", it claimed to be a regional power with an active foreign policy. Indeed, with the onset of the Arab Spring, Türkiye preferred to be on the side supporting the uprisings, especially in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria (Aras & Akarçeşme, 2011).

The uprising in Syria has escalated into a civil war involving multiple actors and providing a foothold for terrorist organizations. With the involvement of foreign powers, particularly Russia, the USA, and Iran, the intensity of clashes and civilian casualties has surged. Consequently, Syrian civilians, especially those living in areas controlled by anti-regime groups, have increasingly sought refuge in neighboring countries. Migration, which

began to accelerate in 2013, peaked in 2014 and 2015. Türkiye emerged as the primary destination for Syrian migrants, due both to its proximity to the conflict and its status as the longest-bordering neighbor (UNHCR, 2024).

During this process, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his government followed an open-door policy. As President as of 2014 and Prime Minister before that, Erdoğan explained this policy with the discourse of "due to the responsibility coming from Islamic civilization" (Daily Sabah, 2016a), and built his positive and inclusive discourse on concepts such as "Syrian brothers" (Onum, 2018) and "Ansar and Muhajir" (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2015). However, the issue turned into a humanitarian crisis especially after 2015, when Türkiye was overstretched in terms of capacity and migrants started to cross from Türkiye to Europe, especially through illegal migration routes, and migrants started to lose their lives especially in the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. In the meantime, Erdoğan frequently accused Europe of "irresponsibility" toward the events in Syria (Presidency of The Republic of Türkiye, 2014).

As migration became a political crisis for Europe, the EU and Türkiye signed an agreement in March 2016 aimed at curbing irregular and illegal migration. Under this agreement, the EU committed to providing Türkiye with financial assistance, expediting accession negotiations, and addressing various other issues. In return, Türkiye agreed to take measures to prevent irregular and illegal migration and to accept the return of migrants who had crossed illegally to the Greek islands while the EU, in turn, would accept a corresponding number of migrants through legal channels (European Parliament, 2024).

This agreement was the main reason that turned the migration issue into a crisis in Turkish domestic politics. Although the open-door policy had already caused some controversy between the AK Party and other parties, especially the main opposition party CHP, the increasing number of migrants reaching millions and the government's agreement with the EU brought the issue to a crisis point. In 2014, CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu claimed that accepting 1.5 million migrants was "treason" (Daily Sabah, 2016b). Therefore, migration and migrants have become Türkiye's political crisis.

8.2. KEMAL KILIÇDAROĞLU AND XENOPHOBIC POPULISM

It is safe to argue that CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has adopted a strongly anti-immigration and anti-immigrant stance as the migration issue has become a prominent public

concern, often using xenophobic rhetoric, particularly during elections. So much so that even though his party has taken more solution-oriented and inclusive steps from time to time in political terms (CHP, 2016) or Kılıçdaroğlu has made positive outbursts, especially toward Syrians at certain moments, these have remained exceptions in the process.

Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-immigrant stance can be attributed to several factors. These include his position as an opposition leader, the AK Party's attempt to further pacify secularism and other ethnic groups through Sunni-national identity, the instrumentalization of migrants in foreign policy, the issue of integration of migrants, and security (International Crisis Group, 2016). Regardless of the validity of these reasons, the core issue is that Kılıçdaroğlu, as the leader of a party professing social democratic and leftist values, persistently employs xenophobic rhetoric that amounts to "de-humanization" (Özipek, 2021, pp. 8-9). Even if Kılıçdaroğlu did not trust the motivation or sincerity of Erdoğan and the AK Party after the civil war in Syria triggered mass migration, he never supported this policy when it was obvious that Erdoğan and the AK Party displayed a humanitarian approach in practical terms; on the contrary, he copied the xenophobic populist discourses in Europe and used anti-immigrant sentiments to gain gains against Erdoğan in domestic politics.

Kılıçdaroğlu maintained his use of xenophobic populist rhetoric from 2014, when the migration issue began escalating into a crisis for Türkiye, through to the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2023. During this period, there were four parliamentary elections, two presidential elections, one referendum, and one local election. Despite not securing victories or leading in any of these elections, Kılıçdaroğlu managed to retain his leadership role. Throughout this extended period, the core of his discourse, despite occasional variations, remained a xenophobic tone in the anti-immigrant context.

At this point, when analyzed from 2015 onwards, Kılıçdaroğlu's most important discourse on Syrian migrants in particular, and later on Afghan and Pakistani migrants in addition, is shaped through "sending them back", as seen in UKIP and other xenophobic populist actors. Kılıçdaroğlu persistently maintained this discourse from 2015 until his last election in 2023:

"(The CHP) will send our Syrian brothers back. We will say to them, 'Sorry, but go back to your hometown.' Every person is happy in the land where he was born...We have humanity

in our hearts. We love people. We respect people. This is our core ideology" (Daily Sabah, 2015).

This discourse used by Kılıçdaroğlu before the June 2015 general elections draws attention to its contradictory structure. The concepts of sending Syrians back to their "hometown" and limiting people to their place of birth and humanity, love, and respect are used in the same speech. At this point, it can be said that Kılıçdaroğlu needed this emphasis to avoid being accused of being "racist" or "xenophobic". However, in addition to the "send them back" discourse, the claim that "Every person is happy in the land where he was born" stands out as a product of a completely xenophobic approach.

Concurrently, it is notable that Kılıçdaroğlu has consistently strengthened and revised his repatriation discourse. Over time, there has been a shift in his rhetoric, with a growing emphasis on "repatriation" and the term "Syrian brothers-sisters" (CHP, 2019a) becoming more prominent. Additionally, the phrase "on their own will" was incorporated into the discourse in subsequent periods. This evolution appears aimed at softening or concealing the xenophobic undertones in his rhetoric:

"What did we say about our Syrian brothers? We said we will send them with drums and zurna, we will send them with their own will." (CHP, 2022a)

In the recent period, it is observed that Kılıçdaroğlu has added a time limit to the repatriation discourse. In this way, this discourse, which is no longer effective because it has been repeated for a long time, is tried to be made striking again by hardening/reinforcing it. However, this time, the emphasis on "honorable return" is added to the discourse again. Thus, the xenophobic tone is tried to be softened again:

"When you go to the ballot box, you will see the Six Arrows there, you will put your seal under the Six Arrows with a clear conscience and you will see that within 2 years at the latest, all migrants, all refugees will go to their own countries with dignity" (CHP, 2023).

Finally, the emphasis on "2 years" changed after the agreement and alliance with Ümit Özdağ and the Victory Party, which literally copied the discourse and strategies of populist far-right parties in the West and adapted them to Türkiye, before the second round of the 2023 presidential elections, and the two years were transformed into Özdağ's discourse and reduced to one year (Medyascope, 2023).

Another negative emphasis in Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse against Syrian migrants, which he repeated for a long time, is the discourse of "mendicant" and "panhandling". By frequently describing Syrians as "mendicant" in his speeches, Kılıçdaroğlu constructed a negative identity in social perception or reinforced the existing negative perception. At this point, the context in which he used this discourse is also noteworthy. This is because Kılıçdaroğlu uses this negative emphasis as a counter-discourse to criticize Erdoğan's oft-repeated statement that "we spent 30 billion USD for migrants":

"You said everywhere that you spent 30 billion dollars on Syrians. 30 billion dollars is easy to say. We look at Syrians, most of them are beggars, these people are poor, there are Syrians dying of hunger" (CHP, 2017).

"Where did they spend 30 billion dollars? If they had spent 30 billion dollars, all Syrians would be homeowners now, most of them beggars on the streets" (CHP, 2018a).

At this point, the "30 billion dollars" discourse has been employed to argue that these funds have been both spent and not effectively utilized economically. Through this rhetoric, Kılıçdaroğlu aims to channel voter frustration from lower-income groups toward the government, positioning Syrians as the focal point of this discontent.

Another method of Kılıçdaroğlu's strategy to turn the reaction against Syrians into an advantage is the "first class-second class citizen" distinction. In parallel to the "30 billion dollars" issue, Kılıçdaroğlu created a dichotomy of "Turks vs. Syrians" through areas such as citizenship (Sözcü, 2017), social assistance, unemployment, hospital and education services (Anka, 2017):

"They spent 30 billion dollars on Syrians. They became first-class citizens and Black Sea hazelnut producers became second-class citizens" (Gazete Duvar, 2017).

"There are such places, such environments where our citizens are second class and Syrian citizens are first class. If you go to the hospital, Syrian citizens are first class, our citizens are second class. He opens a shop next to a shopkeeper, our shopkeeper pays taxes, he is a second-class citizen, Syrian is a first-class citizen" (CHP, 2018b).

Therefore, it is at least theoretically contradictory with its own ideological positioning for a social democratic party to defend the rights of its own citizens in this respect, but to do so by marginalizing immigrants. At this point, it can be said that Kılıçdaroğlu's polarising

discourse is shaped by nativism rather than ethnicity. This is because Kılıçdaroğlu includes the Romanies, who are a minority in social terms, albeit not legally or officially, within the definition of "native" and positions Syrian migrants as a common enemy:

"You are the people who have the most deep-rooted history of this country. You were there when Mehmet the Conqueror took Istanbul... 'I want a good education for my children, I want proper treatment in the hospital', 'You don't look after me as much as you look after Syrians. You don't give me as much money as you give them. They are first-class citizens, I have been here since Fatih and I am still a third-class citizen. You will revolt, you will say 'we do not accept'" (CHP, 2018c).

Two points are emphasized in this explanation. The first of these is the nativist discourse. The concepts of "rooted" and the conquest of Istanbul are used to define Romanies as natives and to establish the distinction between host and foreigner in relation to Syrian migrants. The second emphasis is on "third-class citizens". This reinforces the traditional assertion that Romanies are discriminated against and positioned as second-class citizens through Syrian migrants and that the second class has been relegated to the third class. However, here, both the government and the migrants are made targets for the Romanies, rather than the discourse of "the political power is to blame, not the migrants", which could be seen as more in line with left-wing values, as seen, for example, in Corbyn.

Another highly problematic discourse of Kılıçdaroğlu from a humanitarian point of view is his statement about the migrants who had to leave Syria due to the war: "3.5 million Syrians live in this country. Train them, arm them, send them back and let them fight for their own country" (CHP, 2018d). Considering the timing and context of this statement, Kılıçdaroğlu made a statement in relation to Türkiye's "Operation Olive Branch" in Afrin. Therefore, he argues that "Syrians", not Turks, should fight in Syria, not from an anti-war position. At this point, Kılıçdaroğlu's frequently repeated populist discourse is based on martyrdom: *"There are 3.5 million Syrians in Türkiye. Their young people will swim in the sea and have fun, while my young sons and daughters will be martyred in Syria. I am not an enemy to anyone, but I want to question who brought Türkiye to this state!"* (CHP, 2019b) As can be seen in this statement, Syrian migrants are socially targeted and a polarization strategy is pursued, despite claims to the contrary.

In addition to all these, another theme of Kılıçdaroğlu's approach and discourse that conflicts with social democratic values is securitization. In this respect, the themes of national and internal security as well as social and cultural security have been brought to the forefront, and migrants from Iraq and Afghanistan have been instrumentalized alongside Syrian migrants.

"Brother, what is the Syrian's fault? You opened the door, you say 'come as much as you want', you say 'come with your gun', you say 'come with your bomb'. You leave with weapons when you want, you return when you want. Who is to blame? It is not the Syrian's fault, you gave him the opportunity... The fault lies with those who destroyed the border, who destroyed the concept of border. Who? Those in power" (CHP, 2022b).

"We will send our Syrian brothers and sisters to their homeland within 2 years at the latest, without putting a black stain like racism on the forehead of this honorable nation. I want Syria, Iran, and Afghanistan to know this. We say it openly and clearly. There is no secret account behind us. We have no prejudice against any country, or citizen, more precisely against any foreigner, but we want to live freely in our own country. We do not want the demographic structure of our own country to change." (Bali, 2023).

The two common points of these two statements, besides the securitization of migration and migrants, are Kılıçdaroğlu's efforts to justify himself or to distance himself from a negative perception by constantly emphasizing that he is "not racist", "not hostile to foreigners" and "tolerant". This is because it is seen that Kılıçdaroğlu, while clearly displaying an anti-immigrant stance, uses some expressions that can be taken as xenophobic and even racist, and since he is aware of this, he feels obliged to underline that he is not.

Another key theme in Kılıçdaroğlu's migration discourse is his criticism of Erdoğan and the AK Party government, particularly regarding Syria and broader foreign policy issues. Notably, Kılıçdaroğlu's rhetoric includes terms like "interfering in the internal affairs of other countries" (Politik Yol, 2018) and the "Middle East quagmire." He also accuses Türkiye of being "the EU's refugee warehouse" and has pledged to cancel the readmission agreement with the EU unless arrangements are made more favorable to Türkiye (Euronews, 2023).

Another aspect of the xenophobic tone in Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse is his inconsistent use of speculative figures regarding the number of migrants. While he initially used figures that somewhat aligned with the numbers reported by state institutions (Migration Department, 2024), he has increasingly deviated from this practice. Kılıçdaroğlu has cited figures such as

3.5 million, 3.6 million, and 4 million with considerable variability. At times, he has also mentioned notably higher numbers, such as 6.5 million. The peak of this variability occurred in 2023, when he cited a figure of 10 million in the lead-up to the presidential second-round elections.

During the 2023 election period, Kılıçdaroğlu intensified his use of xenophobic populist rhetoric. As the unified opposition candidate against Erdoğan, except for the far-right Victory Party and its candidate, Kılıçdaroğlu faced a challenging first-round result where Erdoğan narrowly missed winning outright (49.52%) while Kılıçdaroğlu trailed significantly (44.88%), despite the opposition's efforts. Given these results, Kılıçdaroğlu's path to victory in the second round was uncertain. To improve his chances, he negotiated with the far-right, anti-immigrant Victory Party and its leader, Ümit Özdağ. Following this agreement, Kılıçdaroğlu's rhetoric became increasingly xenophobic, adopting and amplifying Özdağ's claims of 10 million Syrians in Türkiye and framing the election as a referendum on whether foreigners should stay or leave:

"Decide if you love your homeland! 10 million Syrians are not enough? Should 10-20 million more come? Remember, you will vote for yourself, not for me. Those who love their homeland should come to the ballot box... This is no longer an election, it is a referendum" (Tele 1, 2023).

8.3. CONCLUSION

In summary, the CHP stands as the most prominent, institutional, and traditional representative of social democratic ideology and the center-left in Türkiye. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has led the party for 13.5 years. However, particularly following the Syrian civil war, Erdoğan's open-door policy toward migrants has become a central focus of Kılıçdaroğlu's opposition strategy. Although Kılıçdaroğlu has attempted to frame his anti-immigrant stance within broader contexts such as foreign policy, economics, and democratization, these efforts have not mitigated the nativist and xenophobic tone of his discourse.

At this point, it is evident that Kılıçdaroğlu frequently attempts to distance himself, the CHP, or society from negative labels such as "racist" and "enemy" to rationalize or obscure the nativist and xenophobic elements in his rhetoric. Similarly, he engages in criticizing Erdoğan and the AK Party government, blaming the government rather than the migrants, a tactic seen in other political contexts as well. However, it is clear that these efforts have not been successful in mitigating the contradiction between Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse and leftist values or the

principles of social democracy. By emphasizing grievances among Turkish citizens that he attributes to migrants, particularly Syrian migrants, Kılıçdaroğlu places them at the center of negative sentiments, thereby targeting and socially segregating them.

Finally, Kılıçdaroğlu's statement in which he tried to justify himself can best summarize this situation: *"I've said it many times, by God, Syrians will be a curse on the nation ... I'm not saying 'Take Syrians and throw them into the fire'"* (CHP, 2020).



CHAPTER 9. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As observed, the discourse of center-left parties during migration crises often shares similarities, particularly when their leaders adopt a pro-immigrant stance. In these cases, social democratic values are emphasized, with a common strategy asserting that negative attitudes or approaches toward immigrants are not due to the immigrants themselves but rather the result of failed government policies.

However, migration remains a challenging issue for social democrats. Factors such as globalization, migration, and economic crises have created a growing divide between center-left parties and their traditional voter bases. Consequently, the new left parties have increasingly represented educated, middle, and upper-income groups through liberal and progressive values (Gethin et al., 2022). The opposite is also true for the centre-right and conservative parties.

This is at the root of the difficulty or dilemma faced by centre-left parties in the migration crisis. The xenophobic and anti-immigrant populism of far-right parties has attracted voter groups that the centre-left has lost, and social democrats have felt the need to renew and even reposition themselves on this issue. The problem is that for social democrats, ideologically traditional or new values conflict with this need (Downes & Loveless, 2018). Nevertheless, some social democrats have at least revised their rhetoric with an anti-immigrant stance and have pursued success against right-wing and populist parties. However, this strategy has not brought electoral success to social democrats with few exceptions (McManus & Falkenbach, 2022).

Empirical studies have also shown that politically anti-immigrant policies and discourses do not have a positive effect on electoral success (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2020, p. 254; McManus & Falkenbach, 2022). Similarly, studies show that centre-right parties can compete better with xenophobic populist or extreme-right parties on immigration (Reeskens & van der Meer, 2021). At this point, the hypothesis that the preference for harsher and more restrictive discourses by centre-right or left-wing parties in dealing with the migration crisis will prevent the loss of votes to parties positioned further to the right has not yet been proven.

In practice, however, it appears that anti-immigrant and xenophobic populist parties can influence the discourse of centre-right and left-wing parties in terms of increasing the anti-immigrant tendency (Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2020, p. 15).

At this point, the example of Ed Miliband, which is analyzed especially in the U.K. case, proves this claim. As seen above, Miliband, with a more neutral approach, tried to develop a balanced position to the traditional position of the Labour Party on immigration and built his discourse accordingly. In this way, he thought that he would convince voters who were "worried" about immigrants. However, in this regard, it could compete neither with the centre-right nor the populist right. On the contrary, he was criticized especially for the "control" discourse he used. His successor Jeremy Corbyn, on the contrary to Miliband, preferred a completely pro-immigrant position on immigration despite all the pressure and criticisms within the party. In this respect, he has even been accused of being radical, yet he has clearly developed a discourse based on left values.

In the Hungarian case, against Victor Orban-Fidesz and their xenophobic populist approach, which is defined as one of the main examples of authoritarian populism in the literature, it is seen that the position of MSZP and its leaders is also pro-immigrant. As a matter of fact, despite the change of leaders, MSZP has tried to hold on to both the left and liberal values of the EU with its pro-EU stance. Moreover, despite the electoral failures and even the political and institutional damage of this failure, it did not give up this position.

On the other hand, Turkish case is quite different from the previous two examples. This is because the CHP and its leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, despite its social democratic ideology and positioning on the centre-left in the political spectrum in general, have preferred a completely anti-immigrant stance on migration. When the discourses are analyzed, it is seen that this is the opposite position of the AK Party and its leader Erdoğan, who prefer a pro-immigrant and inclusive policy and are criticized in this respect.

However, Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-immigrant stance is very similar to the xenophobic populist discourse put forward by right-wing or far-right parties in Europe, and it is even common, as can be seen in the slogan "send them back". At this point, to understand why Kılıçdaroğlu prefers a discourse that is completely contrary to the ideological position of his party, the political strategy on which this discourse is built should be understood.

When the discourses are examined, it is seen that Kılıçdaroğlu uses two important strategies such as "welfare chauvinism" and "securitization of migration", which are identified with right-wing or xenophobic populist parties in the literature. Firstly, in his discourse, Kılıçdaroğlu puts Turkish voters and Syrian migrants in opposing rival positions, especially in areas such as employment, education, health, and social assistance. Accordingly, as a developing country, Türkiye has to share its limited economic resources with Syrian migrants. This naturally means that everyone has to share the cake on their plate with "foreigners". However, according to Kılıçdaroğlu, the money spent on Syrian migrants should be allocated to the citizens of Türkiye. This attitude is clearly in line with the definition and examples of welfare chauvinism in the literature (Eick, 2024; Careja & Harris, 2022). In this way, Kılıçdaroğlu tries to win votes by increasing the social reaction and opposition in favor of the government, often in a manipulative way.

The second strategy is Kılıçdaroğlu's presentation of Syrian migrants as a threat in different political, economic, and social areas such as border security, internal security and national security, economy, cultural and social fabric, population and demographic structure. This is in line with the framework set out in the theory of securitization in general and the securitization of migration in particular, and again stands out as a common point of authoritarian, far-right, and xenophobic populist parties in the literature (Miş, 2012; Jaskulowski, 2019, Boraz, 2022). As a matter of fact, populists frequently use threats, fear and the dichotomy of "people vs. public enemy" and are instrumentalized to win votes.

As can be seen, Kılıçdaroğlu takes advantage of Erdoğan's inclusive, positive attitude and policy toward migrants and uses the populist discourses and strategies of the parties that have turned the migration crisis into an opportunity and gained political success in Europe. Moreover, although this situation contradicts his ideological positioning, Kılıçdaroğlu and his party have continued this discourse for almost 10 years.

Kılıçdaroğlu's xenophobic populist discourse can be explained by two variables that differ between the cases when the comparative analysis is taken into consideration: Membership of the EU and leader changes in the party. At this point, in fact, the U.K. can be considered a member due to its recent departure from the EU, since the possible effect of membership status here only indicates the existence of an institutional level in terms of democratic values. This is because the EU, at least theoretically, only accepts countries whose institutions have exceeded a certain level of democracy. In this respect, the U.K. fulfills this democratic level. Hungary, on

the other hand, can be evaluated with the assumption that it was above this threshold at least in the recent past. Therefore, even if the claim that Türkiye has not achieved a certain democratic level with its institutions in this context is accepted as true, this does not fully explain the difference between the cases that led to the output of the research.

At this point, the second difference may be more explanatory. It is observed that in both the Labour Party and MSZP, leaders who fail to achieve electoral success for a certain period of time leave their positions. This is a natural outcome in institutions and actors where accountability and democratic culture are developed (Lindberg, 2013). In the CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's leadership continued despite the electoral failures. Even after the 2023 election defeat, Kılıçdaroğlu refused to resign from the party leadership and lost the leadership election for which he was a candidate again. This, in fact, shows that the CHP and Kılıçdaroğlu are negatively differentiated from their counterparts. This divergence may explain why the party's leader persistently and consistently uses a xenophobic populist discourse despite its ideological positioning and values.

Four potential counter-arguments can be developed against characterizing Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse as xenophobic populism or explaining it through institutional and personal issues related to democracy and accountability. The first counter-argument suggests that Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-immigrant rhetoric is a pragmatic, even opportunistic, strategy aimed at responding to Erdoğan's alleged populist and authoritarian rule, as claimed in the literature. Some studies propose pragmatism as an alternative approach to countering populism (Petersen, 2022). However, this counter-argument conflicts with definitions within populist theory. According to literature, political actors who use discourses like Kılıçdaroğlu's are clearly classified as xenophobic populists. From a theoretical standpoint, if Erdoğan is considered a populist, Kılıçdaroğlu should also be defined as a xenophobic populist according to the same theory and literature.

Another point, related in part to the previous argument, is the Kılıçdaroğlu's perception of Erdoğan's pro-immigrant stance and Syrian migrants as a threat to Türkiye's secular and democratic system. However, this perception does not justify a xenophobic populist approach. Defending these values through xenophobic rhetoric ultimately violates other fundamental values.

Third counter-argument suggests that Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse and politics might be better characterized as nativism rather than populism. Some research distinguish between nativist and populist actors. For instance, Pappas (2018) contends that nativists in Europe are often liberal toward their own kind but anti-democratic toward outsiders. In contrast, illiberal populists are defined as broadly anti-democratic, exhibiting majoritarian tendencies regardless of whether they target minorities, natives, or immigrants (Pappas, 2018). From this perspective, Kılıçdaroğlu could be seen as a nativist rather than a xenophobic populist, as illustrated by his inclusion of Romany citizens as part of the native category. However, this nativist-populist distinction requires further discussion, as it has not yet gained widespread acceptance in the literature or been thoroughly examined.

Lastly, identifying CHP as a nationalist or nationalistic social democrat party based on Kemalist principles, which used by party to define its founding ideology, could be argued as the true answer to why Kılıçdaroğlu use anti-immigrant rhetoric. However, this argument also problematic, because CHP identified itself as “a modern democratic left political party that embraces the principles of freedom, equality and solidarity of social democracy” (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2018, p. 9), not nationalist or else. Kemalist principles or CHP's ideological positioning problems and discussions are not subject of this study. On the other hand, making a definition for CHP based on its ideological uniqueness could be a problematic approach. Yet international organizations and institutions accept CHP as a social democrat party, as mentioned above. So, justification Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-immigrant stance through this “nationalistic” approach does not explain the conflict between Kılıçdaroğlu's xenophobic rhetoric and social democrat values or principles.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

To summarize, this study examines how centre-left opposition parties respond to the migration crisis in countries where right-wing parties are in power, focusing on social democratic values, during the period 2015-2023. The analysis includes the Labour Party in the U.K., MSZP in Hungary, and CHP in Türkiye as case studies. Methodologically, the study compares the leaders' discourses on migration and migrants using Critical Discourse Analysis.

As a result of the study, it was observed that Ed Miliband, the first leader analyzed in the U.K. case, maintained a neutral stance on immigration, while Jeremy Corbyn, the second leader, was clearly pro-immigrant. In Hungary, József Tóbiás, Gyula Molnár, Bertalan Tóth, and Ágnes Kunhalmi were found to exhibit a pro-immigrant attitude consistently. Finally, in Türkiye, CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the only actor analyzed in the Turkish case, demonstrated an anti-immigrant stance and employed a xenophobic populist discourse.

In this respect, the study intersects theories of social democracy, migration, xenophobia, and populism, contributing to both populism studies and the literature on Türkiye. The existing populism literature predominantly focuses on Erdoğan in the Turkish context, with a lack of comprehensive analysis on Kılıçdaroğlu's anti-immigrant stance. However, Kılıçdaroğlu's discourse aligns closely with far-right actors in Europe. Therefore, it is concluded that Kılıçdaroğlu should be defined as a xenophobic populist according to existing literature. This finding underscores the importance of examining democratization through institutional and actor-based lenses, rather than solely ideological positioning.

On the other hand, the comparative analysis conducted using the CDA method in this study offered an in-depth examination but also faced limitations due to the breadth of data. Future research could expand by examining additional cases and data related to the areas covered in this thesis. Furthermore, the study was constrained by time, allowing only for analysis of a specific period. Nonetheless, this study aims to contribute to the literature by providing a general framework for understanding these complex issues.

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