Strangers and Settlers: Migration and conflict in a nativist world

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Migration is politically consequential in every region of the world, in wealthy and poor countries, and many kinds of political regimes. People crossing international borders can spark locals' ire but so can migration within countries or even within towns. *Strangers and Settlers* is the first global comparative study of nativist reactions to both domestic and international population flows.

Migration politics takes place within a nativist status quo. Governments deter migration and help locals maintain political and economic superiority over newcomers. Explicitly nativist political activism is often held in check by this abundance of existing nativist policy.

In this context, most migrants become politically disadvantaged strangers. Nativist movements against stranger migration are fragile, usually undermined by political incumbents implementing pro-local measures. Activism opposing international immigration is especially short-lived, while the nativist policies it provokes are more durable.

Migration can spark sustained nativist activism only in the rare instances that political incumbents are unwilling to side with locals against migrants. The most common scenario of this kind is settler migration: migrants who are organized and backed by a government or who come a core government constituency. Settler migrants are more likely than other migrants to be economically advantaged over locals, to accumulate local power, and to be precursors to violence between nativist activists and the state.

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MIGRATION AND CONFLICT

> "Being British is more than merely possessing a modern document known as a passport. . . . It is to belong to a special chain of unique people who have the natural law right to remain a majority in their ancestral homeland."[1]

This sentiment comes from the 2010 election manifesto of the British National Party (BNP). It captures why the BNP is considered a nativist political party. Nativists believe the interests of longtime residents of a place should take priority over interests of newer arrivals. Here, the BNP argues that the British are a "chain of unique people" with a right to preeminence in Britain.

The BNP's manifesto recommended ending international immigration. To pull that off, Britain would have to leave the European Union (EU). The EU is a group of European states that have agreed to act as a collective in some respects, especially economic policies. Citizens of EU countries can live and work anywhere in the Union.

The BNP wrote its anti-migration, anti-EU platform in expectation of a great electoral triumph. The party was coming off its best election ever in 2009: BNP candidates had won two seats in the European Parliament, the legislature of the EU.

The BNP's 2009 victory was one of a string of successes for immigration skeptics in Europe and North America. Nativist parties increased their presence in the European Parliament in 2009, 2014 and 2019. In 2016, Donald Trump won the US presidency after promising to build a wall against unauthorized migration. The ethno-nationalist Freedom Party of Austria was a junior partner in national government from 2017 to 2019. In France in 2022, the National Rally—a new name for the anti-immigrant National Front—became the largest opposition party in the legislature for the first time. The Sweden Democrats had their best ever election in fall 2022 after campaigning against migration and multiculturalism.

In Europe and North America, nativist parties are typically on the far-right of the political spectrum. They mingle with neo-Nazis, fascists, and white supremacists. Some nativist parties, including the BNP, are linked through their founders or oldest members to the original Nazi Party and its sympathizers.

1 BNP 2010, p. 23.

Nativist movements can also be violent. In 2016, as Trump crossed the US holding rallies, anti-Semitic and anti-minority vandalism and harassment followed in his wake.[2] In the 1980s and 1990s the BNP spent most of its time street brawling. Ex-leader Nick Griffin fondly described that era of "holding confrontational marches and meetings where the far left were guaranteed to come along and smash it up and then having a punch-up."[3] BNP members have been charged with bombing a leftist party's headquarters and throwing Molotov cocktails at a mosque.[4]

European and North American nativists see their success as a consequence of increased global migration. The United Nations (UN) estimates that 281 million people live outside the country of their birth. That corresponds to 3.6% of the world population, which is the highest rate the UN has recorded since the 1970s.[5] An even larger number of people will live away from their birthplace for a part of their life. Others are circular migrants, cycling regularly through multiple places.[6] The number of refugees and internally displaced people has doubled since 1991.[7]

Great Britain has not been immune to these trends. Between 1951 and 2001, the foreign-born share of the British population doubled from 4% to 8%.[8] Migration to Britain jumped again in 2004, when ten countries in Eastern Europe joined the EU. Policymakers knew the 2004 expansion might mean "an overwhelming stream of migrants from the East."[9] To avoid an influx, the old EU members gave themselves the option of restricting migration from new EU countries for up to seven years. Only Britain, Ireland, and Sweden opted to allow labor migration from new EU states immediately. By 2006, at least four

2 Feinberg, Branton, and Martinez-Ebers 2022.

3 Castle 2009.

4 Goodwin 2011.

5 McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou 2021.

6 "Circular" migration refers to an individual or family moving through a routine circuit of places. "Nomadic" communities move in a larger group, either periodically relocating or making a repeating cycle. When a nomadic community shifts its traditional route or geographic range for relocation, that is a form of permanent migration.

7 UNHCR 2022. A "refugee," according to the 1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, is someone who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted 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." If a refugee is given "asylum" by a host country, that means the country agrees not to return them involuntarily to the country of their nationality. An "asylum-seeker" has crossed an international border and is applying for recognition as a refugee. Involuntary migrants who have not crossed an international border are called "internally displaced people." The category "internationally displaced people" refers to all involuntary migration across international borders, even people who do not meet the legal criteria for refugee status, such as (in most cases) people fleeing a natural disaster rather than persecution.

8 Rendall and Salt 2005.

9 McDowell 2009, p. 20.

hundred thousand workers had come to Great Britain from Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Romania.[10] Migration shot to the top of polls about British voter's greatest worries.[11]

1.1 THE BNP'S FLOP

Despite this promising context, the BNP imploded after 2009. In the 2010 general elections for the British Parliament it won no seats. Membership and organizational capacity dwindled. In the 2015 elections the BNP fielded just eight candidates and won under two thousand votes countrywide.

The BNP lost many of its voters to the UK Independence Party (UKIP). UKIP started in 1993 as a single-issue party, opposing British membership in the EU. It had loose ties to the BNP until 2006, when it re-positioned itself as the party for migration skeptics who could not stomach the BNP's far-right ties. In 2010, UKIP won twice as many votes as the BNP. By 2014, polls revealed UKIP was the party that British voters most trusted on the issue of international migration. The Conservative Party, one of Britain's two major parties, was previously top on this metric. It now fell to second place.[12] In the 2014 European Parliamentary elections UKIP took more seats than any other party.

The Conservatives reacted by accepting UKIP's signature policy: promising to hold a referendum on leaving the European Union ("Brexit"). Unlike UKIP, the Conservative Party couldn't claim it had always been skeptical of the EU—a Conservative prime minister ushered Britain into the Union in 1972. Nonetheless, polls showed the Conservatives had shored-up their credibility with anti-immigration voters.[13]

After winning the 2015 general elections, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron introduced a bill for a non-binding referendum on EU membership. That step was easy. The act passed Parliament 544 to 53. Yet, both the Conservatives and their biggest rival, the Labour Party, were split internally over Brexit. Cameron favored staying in the Union and hoped the referendum would undermine both UKIP and his anti-EU rivals in the Conservative Party.

When the vote was held in 2016, a narrow majority of British voters opted to leave the EU. Recent immigrants and EU citizens could not cast ballots in the referendum. About one-sixth of eligible voters were immigrants or descendants of recent immigrants, most from former British colonies. These voters were more likely than others to favor staying in the EU,[14] although a third voted for exit.[15]

10 McDowell 2009.
11 Ford, Jennings, and Somerville 2015.
12 Dennison and Goodwin 2015.
13 Maynard 2021.
14 Alabrese et al. 2019.
15 Jennings and Glaister 2021.

UKIP leaders treated the Brexit results as vindication, reveling in the incredulity of pro-EU politicians and enjoying Cameron's resignation. Yet, with its signature issue gone, UKIP slid into oblivion. Its voters deserted the party for the Conservatives.[16] UKIP dropped to 1.8% of the vote in 2017 and 0.1% in 2019.

In retrospect, the BNP and UKIP acted, at most, as canaries in the coalmine, alerting the larger parties of growing public opposition to migration. Both the Conservatives and the Labour Party took more nativist policy stances in response.[17] Even as the Brexit vote demonstrated public appetite for nativist ideas, UKIP and the BNP fell apart as organizations.

Elsewhere in Europe, nativist parties have been similarly unstable. The nativist surge between 2002 and 2017 benefited 25 political parties in 14 countries.[18] Five years later, in 2022, eleven of those parties were extinct. Five of the survivors were barely clinging on after winning less than one percent of the vote in post-2017 election. European support for nativism is not gone; other parties have taken up these issues. As organizations, however, Europe's nativist parties proved fragile.

1.2 MIGRATION SKEPTICS

The Brexit era of British politics is an instance of backlash against international migration in a wealthy democracy. That is the most familiar form of nativism. It is not the only form.

Nativism is the belief that locals interests deserve to be prioritized over the interests of outsiders. Nativists do not necessarily want to end migration. Their goal is to ensure locals' economic, social and political advantages over newcomers.

Nativists make their own definitions of "local" and "outsider." Few nativists care about the finer points migration laws, like legalistic distinctions between refugees, asylum-seekers, and immigrants. Nativists may object to people from ethnic groups they deem non-local, regardless of passports. For example, Puerto Ricans are US citizens, but the Trump administration made a habit of referring to Puerto Rico as if it were another country.[19] Before Brexit, an EU citizen in Great Britain was not legally an immigrant. Pro-Brexit campaigners ignored that technicality. "It has been a triumph for ... UKIP that the term 'EU immigrant' managed so decisively to enter public debate,"[20] despite being a legal oxymoron.

16 Mellon et al. 2018.

17 Within weeks of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections, the Labour-controlled government announced it would reserve space in public housing for locals and tighten the rules for British citizenship (MacDonald 2009; Woodcock 2009).

18 Davis and Deole 2017.

19 Blake 2019.

20 Dennison and Geddes 2018, p. 1140.

Ethnicity can outweigh an individual's birthplace. Most Welsh nativists would consider an ethnically-Welsh person born in England more local than someone without Welsh ancestors born in Wales. On the other hand, nativists sometimes draw a line between locals and migrants from the same ethnic group. Latin American colonists rebelled against the Spanish Crown in the 1800s in part because of conflict between locally-born, ethnically-Spanish settlers and newly-arrived "Peninsulares" born in Spain.[21]

Not all nativists focus on international migration. The Ga-Dangme Society is a political movement in Accra, the capital of Ghana. The organization's name captured its conviction that "the Ga-Dangme [ethnic group] are ... indigenes and all others are thought of as migrants"[22] to the city, including people from other parts of Ghana. The next section discusses India's Shiv Sena party, which inspired the label "sons of the soil" party to capture movements against internal migration.[23]

Finally, nativists may or may not think of themselves as indigenous. For example, from 1871 to 2007 the Australian Natives' Association campaigned against non-white migration to that country. Their unironic use of the word "native" asserts that white Australians—although descended from Europeans—are more local to that country than non-white migrants.

This book is about nativist movements regardless of how they define locals and non-locals. It is also about nativists who operate in very different contexts: low and high income societies, more and less democratic political systems. The payoff for the book's scope is demonstrating consistent patterns in migration politics despite wide variation in nativists' ideas and environments.

To preview some of those parallels, consider a political party quite unlike the BNP or UKIP. The Shiv Sena started in India in the 1960s. It operated in a much poorer economy and a newer democracy than Great Britain. The Sena objected to migration from elsewhere in India instead of international migration. It became more successful and more violent than the British nativist groups. Yet, the Sena faced a problem early on that the BNP and UKIP would have recognized. As soon as it had a good election, its signature idea was implemented by its political rivals.

1.3 WHERE ARE THE MAHARASHTRIAN NAMES?

In the early 1960s Bombay City—which is now called Mumbai—was India's largest city and the capital of Maharashtra state. Maharash-

21 B. Anderson 1983.
22 Owusu 2008, p. 178.
23 Weiner 1978.

tra's major language is called Marathi. People from Maharashtra are Maharashtrians.

Bombay City became India's most important commercial and trade hub during British colonialism. In 1853 the first railroad in British India opened there. Hundreds of thousands moved to the city for work in cotton mills, most from surrounding areas of Maharashtra. Bombay City also drew thousands of ethnic Tamils, Malayalis and Kannadigas from farther south. At that time, southern India had more English-language schools than Maharashtra. English-speaking South Indians went to Bombay City for clerical jobs and the colonial bureaucracy.[24]

By 1961, about one-third of the residents of Bombay City were internal migrants—i.e., they had been born in an Indian state other than Maharashtra. People who were not native Marathi speakers were 56% of the city's population.[25]

At about the same time, a political cartoonist named Bal Thackeray founded a weekly magazine, *Marmik*. Sales were mediocre until he started writing diatribes against South Indians living in Bombay City. *Marmik* began a weekly column listing owners and executives of the city's major corporations. Each week's list was followed by a rhetorical question: "Where are the Maharashtrian names?"[26] The roll call of non-local surnames built Thackeray's case that South Indians had succeeded at the expense of Marathi locals. *Marmik* circulation soared.

Thackeray started the Shiv Sena shortly after as a fraternal organization.[27] Sena members promised to only hire or sell land to Maharashtrians and to boycott non-Maharashtrian stores. The Sena provided services in poorer Marathi neighborhoods. But its real vocation was violence. Sena thugs beat up South Indian street vendors and vandalized South Indian restaurants. The Sena burned down poor minority neighborhoods, then gave the land to followers or sold it to speculators.[28]

In 1968, Sena candidates ran for the city legislature. The party's top policy proposal was that 80% of jobs in Bombay be reserved for Maharashtrians.[29] Its election manifesto, *Shiv Sena Speaks*, argued that "Maharashtrians feel that in the State of Maharashtra, they, who are the sons of the soil . . . find their interests woefully neglected." The phrase "sons of the soil" is reminiscent of the BNP's talk of British "ancestral land." The shared premise is that a place can belong to an ethnic community. In that place, the local ethnic group has a right to preeminence.

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24 Weiner 1978.
25 Katzenstein 1975, p. 1957.
26 Gupta 1980.
27 Shiv Sena means "Shiva's Army," referring to a 16th century king.
28 Appadurai 2000, p. 646.
29 Gupta 1980, p. 114.

The Shiv Sena won a third of the seats on Bombay's municipal corporation in 1968, demonstrating the potency of Marathi identity politics.

At that time, the government of Maharashtra state was controlled by a political party called the Indian National Congress. The Congress government took note of the Sena's strong municipal elections. It reacted by implementing preferential hiring for Marathi-speakers in government jobs statewide. It also pressured the private sector to create Marathi preferences.

The state government had the political latitude to do this for two reasons. First, its constituency was the entire state, with a Marathi-speaking majority, and not only the diverse capital city. Second, the Congress party had (and still has) two parallel organizations in Maharashtra: one in Bombay City and one outside of it. In 1968, the state government was mostly drawn from the outside-of-Bombay wing of the party. One of its motives for creating pro-Marathi reservations was to undermine rival politicians in the Bombay City faction of Congress, who were more electorally dependent on non-Marathis.

The reservations also seemed to cut "the ground away from under the Sena's feet."[30] For the next ten years, the Sena functioned as a subordinate faction of the Congress Party. Congress dictated what races the Sena contested and chose targets for Sena violence. By 1980, the Sena was a minor political force in Bombay City and had no following elsewhere in Maharashtra.

The Shiv Sena came roaring back from the political wilderness starting in 1985. To do so, it reinvented itself as a Hindu nationalist party. The primary targets of its ire shifted from South Indians (who are overwhelmingly Hindu) to Muslims. The Sena's main grievance against Muslims was intangible: "Muslims were seditious. It was their presumed lack of political identification with the Indian nation rather than their societal position that was the subject of Shiv Sena's diatribes."[31] Anti-Muslim rhetoric was a pivot away from talking about migration. Muslims in Maharashtra are indigenous people whose ancestors converted centuries ago.

This version of the Sena was much harder for the Congress Party to mimic. Congress was a national party with a less flexible brand. In national elections Congress courted Muslim votes and had some prominent Muslim candidates. The Sena, meanwhile, had Thackeray, whose bona fides as a Marathi chauvininst were beyond question.

Fortified against imitators, Shiv Sena controlled the Bombay City government for all but four years between 1985 and 2022. It won control of the state government in 1995 and was a major player in state politics until 2022. Up to Thackeray's death in 2012, the Sena stayed focused on rhetorical victories, such as renaming Bombay

30 Abraham 1979, p. 285.

31 Katzenstein, Mehta, and Thakkar 1997, p. 376.

City as Mumbai and requiring Marathi street signs.[32] Chauvinist symbolism and Sena violence have made intolerance a more visible part of Maharashtra's public life.[33]

The Shiv Sena, the BNP, and UKIP all had a similar dilemma at one point in their careers. Once they gained electoral traction, incumbent political actors undermined them by implementing their most popular ideas. The BNP and UKIP evaporated. The Shiv Sena became a subordinate faction of the incumbent party, then reinvented itself with less focus on migration.

Collapse, submersion in another party, and rebranding are all common fates for nativist movements. But a small number of nativist organizations do something much more dramatic: they go to war.

1.4 THE BATTLE OF BULDUN

About one-third of ethnic civil wars stem from an anti-migration backlash.[34] The insurgents seek an autonomous region or independent country because they want to halt or reverse migration to their area. In the southern Philippines, one such war has lasted for decades.

The Philippines is an archipelago country. About half the country's population lives on the large northern island of Luzon. The capital city, Manila, is also there. Near the southern end of the island chain is Mindanao, the second most populous island, with 25% of the national population.

The kingdoms and polities of Luzon and the central Philippines were conquered by Spain over the course of the 16th century. Spanish colonial officials directly administered these areas. They made Roman Catholicism the state religion. Spanish was the language of administration. Efforts to popularize a single Filipino language—based on indigenous Tagalog—came much later.

Spain had less success overthrowing the sultanates in Mindanao and nearby islands. It settled for partial control via treaties with local monarchs. The population was not converted to Christianity. Spanish administrators called all southerners "Moros," although they spoke multiple languages and were politically divided into different sultanates. Also, smaller communities living outside the sultanates practiced local religions instead of Islam.[35]

In 1898, the United States won the Spanish-American War and took control of the Philippines. The US initially kept a bifurcated colonial administration.[36] In the north, a Filipino legislative assembly became

32 After Thackeray died, the Sena became more factionalized and its brand blurred. The idea of expanding quotas for Marathi-speakers came back to the agenda. In 2022, the Sena disbanded into two successor parties.

33 Hansen 2001; Hansen 2005.

34 Fearon and Laitin 2011.

35 Tigno 2006.

36 Adam 2016.

a platform for elected native politicians. In the south, feudal leaders called *datus* were intermediaries between the Americans and locals.[37]

American administrators and Filipino legislators in Manila saw Mindanao as a promising frontier with much more unused land than Luzon.[38] Those tracts were promising for commercial farming and timber harvesting and for resettling landless people from the northern and central Philippines. Manila elites hoped land grants would prevent peasant rebellions and communism.[39]

To start this transformation of Mindanao, the Public Land Law was extended to the southern Philippines in 1906. The law called for peasants to receive titles to their land. Unsettled territory became government property. Some of that land was turned over to American investors for commercial agriculture, like rubber and peanut plantations.[40] Manila also offered plots to northerners willing to go south. By 1917, there were seven government-sponsored migrant villages in Mindanao.[41]

After the Philippines became independent in 1946, migration to Mindanao skyrocketed. Between the 1950s and 1970s, about fifty thousand families were placed in Mindanao by government resettlement projects.[42] That was a drop in the bucket compared to the number who came on their own. Between 1939 and 1960, net migration to the south was about 750,000 people, double the size of the 1939 population. Muslims fell from a majority to 34% of the population.[43]

Accounts from Mindanao in the 1950s and 1960s are like stories from the California gold rush. Adventurers, bandits, and shady lawmen scrambled for their fortunes. Most migrants' first order of business was to buy land. Swindlers peddled worthless titles or sold the same plot to multiple buyers. Or they sold real land, waited until migrants had cleared the forest, and then sent bandits to chase them away. Some government bureaucrats sold speculators useful information on upcoming public works like roads. Others bought up soon-to-be-valuable tracts for their relatives in the north. Plots were sold out from under locals who had been unable to get a title out of the opaque and corrupt bureaucracy. Or datus cashed out their community's shared lands in violation of the public land law.

Both locals and migrants were vulnerable to swindles and violence. But, on average, migrants fared better than the locals. They had more experience with the Manila-based bureaucracy and legal system. Government administrators were transplants from the north. Most

37 Thomas M. McKenna 1998.

38 Suzuki 2013.

39 Quimpo (2014). Concern about rural unrest turned out to be prescient: from 1942 to 1954 the Hukbalahap ("Huk") Rebellion mobilized landless soldiers in central Luzon.

40 Fraiser 2001.

41 Suzuki 2013.

42 Tigno 2006.

43 Thomas M. McKenna 1998, p. 116.

exerted themselves more on behalf of their Christian coethnics than the locals.[44]

Locals and newcomers looked for means to protect their holdings, turning to hired bandits. Alliances between civilians and professional bandits initially crossed linguistic and religious lines.[45] As the economic gap between newcomers and the indigenous population grew, banditry evolved into clashes between distinctly Muslim and Christian militias. Politicians contributed to that process by using militias during local elections.

The "Battle of Buldun" in 1971 was a turning point. It began with a fight between Muslim and Christian loggers. Several Christians died. Expecting retaliation, Muslims in the town of Buldun put up barricades.[46] When the civilian police tried to pass the fortifications, residents fired on them, killing the commanding officer. The government turned to the Philippine Army. Instead of trying to enter Buldun, the Army used artillery to bomb the town, including the civilian population trapped there.

Multiple Moro insurgent groups were founded shortly after. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) became the most powerful of them by winning backing from the Libyan government and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The MNLF's manifesto demanded an independent state where Moros could be free "from the terror, oppression and tyranny of Filipino colonialism."[47] The accusation of colonialism has two meanings here. The first is foreign rule. The second is characterizing migration to Mindanao as invasion. Migrants might be indigenous to the Philippines but they were foreigners in Mindanao.

The MNLF's proposed escape from colonial rule was an independent country. Thus, unlike the parties discussed above, the MNLF had separatist aims. The BNP and UKIP might be called separatist against the European Union but not Great Britain. The Shiv Sena was accused of secessionism when it first called for "Maharashtra for Maharashtrians" but that slogan turned out to be a call for ethnic preeminence, not independence.

A common compromise between separatist movements and central governments is regional autonomy.[48] Migration complicates that solution. It erodes locals' demographic advantage in the autonomous region. Even when locals still have numbers on their side, the possibility of further migration diminishes confidence that autonomy will survive.[49]

44 Thomas Michael McKenna 1990, p. 254.
45 Fraiser 2001.
46 Thomas M. McKenna 1998, pp. 153–4.
47 Quoted in Santos Jr. et al. 2010, p. 329.
48 L. Anderson 2014; Lacina 2017.
49 Fearon and Laitin 2011.

For example, the 1976 Tripoli Agreement was the first, short-lived plan for Moro self-rule in the southern Philippines. It called for an autonomous area incorporating 13 provinces on Mindanao and surrounding islands. Those talks broke down. In 1987, a new government in Manila tried to revive the deal. By that time, however, eight of 13 provinces were plurality Christian.[50] The government argued for plebiscites to determine what areas would be in an autonomous Muslim area. The MNLF quit the negotiations in protest, realizing the referendums would probably cut the size of any autonomous area dramatically.[51]

I described above how the Conservative Party in Britain eclipsed anti-migration activists by implementing nativist policies. The Congress Party in Maharashtra did the same in the 1960s. Multiple regimes in Manila have tried the same strategy without success. A military dictatorship unilaterally created a Muslim autonomous area in 1976. A democratic government tried the same thing in 1989. These plans failed because neither regime could bring itself to put large numbers of Christian migrants under the jurisdiction of local Muslim rule.[52] The recurring stumbling block in these plans is that the center is politically vulnerable if it compromises against migrants' interests:

> In August 2008, the government and [Moro rebels] were on the verge of signing a "Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain" (MOA-AD) . . . after some Christian landlords and politicians whipped up anti-Muslim sentiments, the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order against the signing . . . [President] Arroyo, who was then fending off impeachment, abandoned it.[53]

Migrant interests were a comparatively small roadblock for the British Conservative Party's Brexit referendum. Most newcomers could not vote in the Brexit poll or regular elections. The Maharashtrian Congress could look past migrants' objections to Marathi job reservations in the 1960s because non-Marathis were a minority in the state and because migrants were constituents of the regime's rivals.

In the absence of a negotiated settlement, war in Mindanao has continued. Fighting peaked between 1973 and 1976, when 100,000 people were killed.[54] At least 10,000 people have been killed since 1976 and over two million people have been forcibly displaced.[55] The

50 Quimpo 2014, p. 147.

51 The newest autonomous arrangement in Mindanao is the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It covers parts of 6 of the Tripoli Agreement's 13 provinces, with many non-Muslim areas opting out by plebiscite (Agence France-Presse 2019; Quimpo 2014, p. 147).

52 Adam 2016; Quimpo 2014; Santos Jr. et al. 2010.

53 Quimpo 2014, p. 147.

54 Podder 2012, pp. 18–19.

55 Environment and Social Development Unit East Asia and Pacific Region 2003; Lacina and Gleditsch 2005; Schiavo-Campo and Judd 2005.

MNLF has fractured multiple times since the war started and, by the mid-1990s, other militants were more active. As of 2023, two rebel groups are operating in Mindanao.

1.5 STRANGERS AND SETTLERS

Descriptions of the MNLF do not typically compare it to nativist organizations in the UK or India. Instead, the Moro insurgents are classified with separatists, religious radicals, peasant rebellions, or indigenous movements. Likewise, profiles of the BNP or UKIP rarely mention the Shiv Sena. Instead, British nativists are compared to other opponents of international immigration, right-wing extremists, and white identity movements. A narrative about the Shiv Sena is likely to put it in the context of sons-of-the-soil politics, ethnic parties, or Hindu nationalism.

These divisions tend to separate accounts of nativism against politically weak migrants from accounts of backlash against politically strong migrants. For example, research on the politics of international immigration primarily deals with migrants at the political margins of the host society. On the other hand, a book on indigenous politics often focuses on disadvantaged locals confronting powerful migrants. Separating these topics discourages direct comparisons of migration politics across the gamut of possible local/newcomer balances of power. It is easy to lose sight of how important the distribution of political power is for understanding nativist movements.

In this book I distinguish "settlers"—migrants who are politically advantaged in national politics relative to natives—from "strangers," migrants who are politically disadvantaged relative to the locals. My premise is that this initial power balance is the defining feature of a migration politics episode. Everything else—economic hierarchy, legal categories like nationality, and even folk beliefs about who is a local—tends to adjust according to the balance of governing and, ultimately, coercive power.

1.5.1 *In a strange land*

Most migrants are strangers, meaning they have less political power in the country's central government than locals have. Migration typically takes place within a status quo of nativist policies that protect the political and economic preeminence of locals over newcomers. Even when governments have relatively liberal policies on migration, the motivation is typically instrumental rather than a reflection of migrants' political strength. The regime may expect migration to benefit the economy or provide low cost labor. Sometimes, a regime simply decides preventing migration is too expensive to bother with.

Migrants' political weakness is most obvious when they are ineligible for important types of political participation. For example, in most countries, temporary international migrants cannot vote. Even when migrants have legal access to political participation, there may be practical barriers for newcomers trying to exercise those rights.[56] People in the US are less likely to be registered to vote and to turnout to vote after they move residences.[57] Indian bureaucrats are notorious for obstructing domestic migrants trying to register to vote in a new place.[58] In the capital, New Delhi, newcomers to the city were 25% less likely than locals to have a voter ID card and up to 33% less likely to vote in 2013–15.[59] Russian regional bureaucrats also discriminate against internal migrants while politicians resort to "tolerating or orchestrating physical attacks against would-be residents."[60]

When migrants can participate politically, there is, of course, the potential for them to cause political change.[61] Their political disadvantages are structural as well as legal, however. They are typically outnumbered. The migrant population of an area includes some people who are planning to be there temporarily and others whose length of stay is limited by law. Still other migrants have attractive exit options if the local situation takes a turn for the worse—relatives or a social network at their point of origin, for example.[62] Migrants with a planned or possible departure date are less likely to follow local politics or overcome the barriers to participation.

Migrants may also have difficulty organizing because of cultural heterogeneity, such as the use of many different languages.[63] Migrants are less likely than locals to be connected to each other by social networks. Newcomers' political and economic interests may not converge. For example, migrants planning to relocate permanently will care about longer-term issues than those planning a shorter stay. Migrants traveling with their families may not favor the same policies as solo workers.

Migrants may also develop an affinity with locals more rapidly than they coalesce with each other. Voluntary migrants have strong economic incentives to assimilate to local society, particularly if they are outnumbered.[64] Polls from wealthy democracies suggest that migrants' political views tend to converge fairly quickly with locals' views.[65]

56 Braconnier, Dormangen, and Pons 2017.
57 Gay 2012.
58 Gaikwad and Nellis 2021.
59 Based on Table 5.5 and Table 5.7 in Kumar and Banerjee (2021).
60 Light 2016, p. 3.
61 Grant 2020; Khanin 2000; Weiner 1978.
62 Fearon and Laitin 2011; Weiner 1978.
63 R. M. Dancygier 2010; Thachil 2017.
64 **laitineeuro**; Alba and Nee 2003.
65 R. Dancygier and Saunders 2006; De la Garza and Yang 2020; Powell, Clark, and Nowrasteh 2017.

What about political systems where locals have limited or no rights of political participation? In a strict autocracy, are migrants and locals equally politically powerless? Not quite. The factors that advantage locals in legal collective action also advantage locals when it comes to illegal forms of collective action, from graffiti to anti-regime protests to terrorism. Also, even autocratic regimes have to appease some constituencies to stay in power—e.g., a particular ethnic group, the military, or labor unions. An autocratic regime's critical constituencies are typically disproportionately made up of locals.

1.5.2 *Who are settlers?*

Settlers are the rare migrants who have more political power than locals. Most settlers fall into one or both of two categories: people who belong to a regime's core support base or migrants whose success is tied up with the regime's schemes for national security.

A regime's core constituents become settlers if they migrate to a place where the locals are politically unimportant to the government. The settlers' political leverage in this scenario depends on whether their cause is important to core government supporters who have not migrated. Christian migrants in Mindanao are an example of this dynamic. Settlers' sway in Manila, particularly at the early stages of migration, depended on northern sympathy with their situation.

A settler that has the sympathies of a government's core constituents is probably a domestic migration. Occasionally, foreign newcomers also have an affinity with the government's core supporters. For instance, in 2016 the Russian government wanted more Russian-speakers to move to the eastern-most part of the country. Russia's far east has a weak economy. The indigenous population is not ethnically Russian. Moscow offered cash and eventual citizenship to foreign Russian-speakers willing to move to the far east. About eight thousand ethnically-Russian foreigners took the deal.[66]

Second, migrants can be considered settlers if the central regime believes their success is relevant to national security. The government might want migrants to be a loyal presence in a territory coveted by a rival or where the local population seems hostile. It is risky to sponsor migration out of a fear of seditious locals. The prophecy could be self-fulfilling if migration causes new grievances. Nonetheless, regimes try it. For instance, one of the Russian government's motives for settling Russian-speakers in the east was anxiety that the local population might have stronger links to China than Moscow. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party encourages members of the dominant, Han Chinese ethnic group to move to what Beijing sees as rebellious peripheral regions, such as Tibet.

66 Kolipaka 2021; Xinhua 2017.

When governments feel particularly brazen, they send migrants to land they only aspire to control. In 2014, Moscow occupied the Crimean peninsula, part of neighboring Ukraine, and moved its partisans to live there. Israeli sponsorship of settlements in land occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War is another example.

Regimes often prefer their own citizens and/or members of the country's dominant ethnic group for security-related settlements. If necessary, they will tap foreigners and ethnic outsiders. In the 1800s, the Mexican government recruited Americans to settle where Texas is now, hoping the migrants would be a buffer against the growing Comanche Empire. In the 1950s, the Bolivian government was worried it would lose even more land to Paraguay—Bolivia had already renounced its claim to twenty thousand square miles of territory after losing the Chaco War in 1935. To shore up control of what was left, the government sponsored German, Japanese and American Mennonite migrants to the Bolivia/Paraguay frontier.

1.6 WHAT HAPPENS TO NATIVIST MOVEMENTS?

Whether or not migrants have influence with the central government, host societies may resent them. Newcomers might compete with locals for resources like jobs or housing. Or locals might dislike the migrants for less tangible reasons, such as ethnocentrism or xenophobia. Nativist activists try to direct this discontent. What happens next depends on whether the migrants are strangers or settlers.

1.6.1 *Strangers and the nativist's dilemma*

When migrants are strangers, nativist organizations can have rapid success but tend to falter not long after their first real political victory. The nativist laws and policies they catalyze are more enduring.

Nativist organizations can simmer for a long time drawing small crowds for protests, public disorder, petitions, or electioneering. Membership and public support surge when migration is a top-of-mind issue for locals, such as after an increase in the rate of migration.[67] Nativist organizations have two advantages at this point. The first is the relative political weakness of migrants. The second is the popularity of the premise that locals should have priority over outsiders. Coming chapters review global polls to show that majorities and supermajorities in scores of countries endorse local privileges at least in the abstract. Even large numbers of migrants agree with that principle. Nativists thus have the twin advantages of a popular cause and weak opponents.

Yet, these advantages prove double-edged. The same conditions make it easy for incumbent politicians to implement nativist policies.

67 Dennison 2019; Dennison and Geddes 2019; Golder 2003.

Regimes may observe nativist activists' success or they may independently read the public mood. They introduce pro-local policies, reducing the political salience of migration. At this point, the best case scenario for the nativist organization is probably the Shiv Sena's route. It can merge with an established organization or reinvent itself around other grievances. Trying to press on with nativism is less promising because the incumbents have preempted the most popular parts of the anti-migrant program. What is left are measures that the political mainstream finds bizarre or inhumane. All but the most extreme members of the group drop out. Rebellion or anti-state violence is unattractive given the high personal costs and the swing in public enthusiasm in favor of political incumbents.

The ironic result of this cycle is that explicitly nativist activism is rare compared to nativist policy. Also, most of the world's nativist policy infrastructure was created by mainstream politicians rather than nativist parties in power.

This description of the world is at odds with the conventional wisdom of an increasingly mobile and transnational world. It is true that migration between and within countries is higher now than fifty years ago. There are also major free movement treaties in parts of the world, such as the EU or the MERCOSUR agreement in Latin America.

The global status quo is not, to be sure, nativist if we define that term as the belief that migration should not occur. The nativism embodied in our world's politics is the belief that locals deserve preeminence politically, socially and economically over newcomers. This is the structure of international law and the nation-state system. It informs domestic political institutions that are increasingly ubiquitous such as sub-national elections and community property laws. Political incumbents promote migration at times for varied reasons, not the least of which is the hope that higher labor mobility could expand the economy. Yet, migration liberalization happens within the envelope of a consensus that, first, places belong to the people already there and, second, the interests of this rooted population take precedence over those of migrants and would-be migrants. The first part of this book details this nativist status quo by examining pro-local public opinion, pro-local laws, and the amount of international and internal migration in the world.

1.6.2 *Settlers: The exception that proves the rule*

Settlers are the rare migrants who have more political power in the national government than locals have. Settlers and the regimes that back them have a wealth of ideologies they can choose from to justify their deviation from the idea of locals' rights—squatters' rights, pioneer spirit, nationalism, race theory, divine command, *terra nullius*, and on and on. Those ideologies will, often, give way to a sense of

locals' rights when the settlers have established themselves as the locals. Depth of conviction is neither here nor there: settler migration succeeds or fails on the military strength and political commitment of the government behind the settlers.

Compared to other newcomers, settlers are more likely to have educational and economic advantages over locals, to take prestigious jobs, or push up living costs. For example, Han Chinese migrants in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region make up less than 10% of the population but hold half of the government jobs, along with 75% of the posts in banking and insurance.[68]

Settlers may also be emboldened by their ties to the government. During the westward expansion of the United States, there was a chronic pattern of pioneers moving to areas legally off-limits to Americans under a treaty with a native nation. These pioneers gambled that the US government would break the treaty instead of evicting them. Sometimes migrants lost their bet and were forced out by indigenous or federal action. Yet, successful settler gambles accumulated into massive land loss for Native Americans.

Nativists considering political action against settlers face bad odds. The government is likely to stonewall at best and violently repress locals at worst. Even if the government wanted to help locals, it would be constrained by its core supporters' concern for the settlers or by whatever national security scheme inspired the settlements.

On the other hand, locals have some resources for resisting newcomers. They have the initial advantage in numbers. Locals have an existing social network to help them coordinate, while migrants may not. Locals' knowledge of the area is superior. Settlers may be physically isolated from each other and from state power.

Armed with these advantages, locals can try to evict, intimidate, or attack migrants. Some people will leave. Others will be deterred from migrating. Yet, there is also a high risk that settlers will respond with violence of their own, expecting forbearance or even help from the central regime.

If the government intervenes repeatedly in local-versus-settler clashes, local militancy may become anti-state insurgency, as happened in the Philippines. Settlers initially fight alongside or within government security forces. If the local insurgents do very well, the government may eventually try to compromise with them. At that point, settler versus government fighting is possible. Near the end of the Algerian War of Independence, French settlers fought against Paris to try to prevent decolonization.

To be clear, settler migration does not usually provoke a war. More often, the government can deter or repress local resistance. Odds are that local people will be marginalized or displaced by settlers instead of becoming guerrillas. Yet, nativist movements against settler migra-

68 Côté 2015, p. 141.

tion have the potential to become insurgencies. Nativist movements against migrant strangers do not have that potential.

1.7 MIGRATION POLITICS IN MANY GUISES

Backlash against migration has many variants, including separatism, indigenous mobilization, ethnic parties, and radical right politics. This book is about patterns that hold despite that great variety of nativist tactics and ideologies. It considers nativism against both international and subnational population flows, in high and low income settings, and in more or less democratic countries. The key to making sense of this variety is the distinction between migrant strangers and settlers. To make this case, I draw on scholars who have studied the balance of political power between various types of migrants and locals.[69] I cannot give the reader full accounts of the puzzles and debates within all of the literature relevant to migration. My goal is to synthesize the remarkable consistencies in the existing scholarship.

Discussions of the politics of international immigration often presume that the key to this phenomena is something about international politics. The politics of immigration are essentially debates about the fate of the nation-state in a globalizing world[70] or displaced rage against the EU. The psychology of this debate is a tug-of-war between older, nationalist identities and transnational or cosmopolitan identities. One of my goals in this book is to challenge this premise. All of the features of the politics of international immigration are also present in some times and places in debates about domestic migration. The key to understanding nativism is the clash between migration of any kind and the ideal of local priority. The nature of the administrative boundaries that migrants cross is secondary.

1.7.1 *A Nativist World*

Migration politics unfolds in a world where nativist principles already hold sway. The first part of this book, titled *A Nativist World*, is about how regimes limit and screen migration and protect the preeminence of locals over newcomers. It is also about the broad consensus in public opinion that underlies these arrangements. Many years of data from countries in every region of the globe show majority acceptance of one basic premise of nativism: people who already live in a place have a right to it that newcomers or would-be migrants do not have.

Chapter 2 is about the legal infrastructure around international and domestic population movements and humanitarian migration. Nationalism is the ideology providing the intellectual under-girding

69 E.g., Boone 2014; Côté 2015; R. M. Dancygier 2010; Fearon and Laitin 2011; Katzenstein 1979; Mitchell 2022; Weiner 1978.

70 Dauvergne 2009.

of this infrastructure. Explanations of nativism against international immigration often point to national identities, hypothesizing that people who feel culturally threatened by immigrants are the most likely to reject them. As that literature expects, in surveys people who have strong national identities and see their nationality as a narrowly ethnic community are especially opposed to international immigration. That pattern is one of the reasons that international and domestic migration politics are often studied separately. Although this is a strong and well-documented relationship, it can be misinterpreted. People with weak national identities, members of minority ethnic groups, and immigrants have more liberal views on immigration than others. However, all of these groups are, on average, wary of international newcomers, which suggests nationalism is not the sole basis for how people think about migration politics.

Nativism is logically distinct from nationalism, older, and ideologically broader. People can believe in local priority at multiple, nested geographic levels. In Chapter 3, I argue that nationalism borrows some of its appeal from nativism, rather than the other way around. The idea of locals' rights is built into political institutions around the world, especially laws about land and political participation. Chapter 3 also discusses data about how people think about local priority in opinion polls. The idea that locals deserve precedence over international migrants is endorsed by majorities to super-majorities of people in over one hundred countries. There is less information available about how many people accept the ideal of locals' rights within countries. The studies we have find evidence of a widely-shared conviction that the rooted population has priority over newcomers, even from the same country. People do not seem to feel any contradiction between believing in the special rights of locals at national and sub-national levels simultaneously.

Chapter 4 turns to the complaints leveled against migration on behalf of locals: that newcomers cause insecurity or crime, take local jobs, use too many shared amenities, or make if difficult for locals to find housing or farm land. I review research on whether each impact exists but, more importantly, I discuss all the policy levers governments use to determine how migration will effect the host community. These various interventions are incumbents' tools for holding off nativist challengers. They are also the most likely demands of upstart nativist activists.

The final piece of the case that we live in a nativist world is in Chapter 5. I use models of international and within country migration to see if different kinds of administrative borders prevent migration that might otherwise occur. Not surprisingly, both international and subnational borders discourage some population movement. Then, I examine how much difference specific nativist institutions and policies make when they are implemented and taken away. The chapter shows

how profoundly governments curtail migration and the variety of tools they use to do this.

Together, chapters 2 to 5 set the context for thinking about the careers of nativist movements. A convincing account for the lack of nativist political activism in a particular time and place needs to ask if the absence is primarily thanks to the many nativist policies already in place.

1.7.2 *Part 2: Strangers and settlers*

- Chapter 6: Migration politics when migrants are politically marginalized
  - Migrants are usually politically weaker than locals. Nativists gain momentum when migration becomes salient—e.g., after an increase in migration.
  - Migrant political weakness makes it easy for political incumbents to undermine nativist challengers by implementing nativist policy.
  - Data on regionalist parties in India, right-wing parties in Europe, and indigenous parties in Latin America show that nativist party success often precedes incumbents implementing nativist policy.
  - The same data show that nativist parties tend to decline after mainstream parties implement pro-local policy.
- Chapter 7: Migration politics when migrants are politically powerful
  - I use IPUMS data on the ethnicity of international and domestic migrants to identify settlers based on ethnic ties to the central government.
  - I compare settlers to other migrants and to locals on socioeconomic indicators. Compared to other migrants, settlers are more likely to enter a host society at the top of the economic hierarchy.
  - There is a positive correlation between settler migration and subsequent anti-state violence. Other forms of domestic and international migration do not predict anti-state violence.
  - The presence of settlers is a better predictor of nativist violence than measuring the degree of cultural and economic difference between migrants and locals.
- Chapter 8: Environmental disaster, strangers and settlers
  - The distinction between strangers and settlers offers a new perspective on the question of whether environmental migration leads to conflict.

- Most people pushed to migrate by environmental catastrophe are politically marginalized at their destination. Governments prevent nativist backlash by discriminating against migrants and, if necessary, expelling them.
- Environmental disasters that strike in a country's ethnic core create a demand for migration. Such migrants are likely to have political advantages over locals, creating a risk of locals using anti-state violence.
- Data analysis shows that environmental disasters in India are only correlated with subsequent violence if the disaster causes migration out of the country's ethnic heartland.