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## **Radical Right-Wing Parties in Western Europe and their Populist Appeal: An Empirical Explanation**

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## **Abstract**

In a majority of Western European countries, the vote share cast for radical right-wing populist parties in national elections was over 10% by 2015, reaching 46% in Austria's 2016 presidential election. Policy agendas of national governments have also moved to the right, demonstrating greater restrictiveness on immigration and skepticism toward the EU. With data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, European Social Survey, Multiculturalism Policy Index, and Parliaments and Governments Database, we extend current models of electoral support for far-right parties by assessing whether the ethnic majority's sense of discrimination and safety help explain the allure of the right-wing message. Does right-wing populist voting by majority group members reflect their sense of being personally disadvantaged in a multicultural state beyond their more general opposition to immigration as bad for the country? Building on the multivariate model of voter preference developed by Inglehart and Norris (2016), we look specifically at majority group members in thirteen Western European states and add two measures of personal grievance: sense of being in a group that is discriminated against and fear of walking alone at night. Our results suggest that along with their stance against immigration and multiculturalism, their socioeconomic appeals and ideological signals, radical right-wing populist parties draw majority group members' votes by stoking their sense of personal grievance as members of a group that is discriminated against.

## **Radical Right-Wing Parties in Western Europe and their Populist Appeal: An Empirical Explanation**

### **Introduction**

Recent research exploring the electoral support of right-wing populist parties has focused on voters' demographic characteristics, cultural orientation and economic circumstances (cf. Inglehart and Norris 2016). As yet unexamined is the question of whether natives who favor these parties feel that they are vulnerable to discrimination in a multicultural nation that seems to them to be more responsive to minority concerns than to those of the ethnic majority. We therefore aim to deepen current understanding of voters' attraction to the far-right message by investigating whether majority group members' sense of being in a group that faces discrimination and their fear of crime actually influence their vote or party stance.

Radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe have adopted a "civic zeitgeist" (cf. Halikiopoulou, Mock and Vasilopoulou 2013), striking a "rhetorical balance . . . that is explicitly critical of, but nonetheless operates within, the system" (Halikiopoulou et. al., 2013: 111). As active agents shaping their own destiny (cf. Mudde 2007), right-wing parties herald their conformity with mainstream democratic policies, including multiculturalism and civil rights for minorities, even while they promote an exclusionary ethic. Populist party platforms on the radical right defend restrictionist policies as necessary to prevent Europe from being inundated by non-western immigrants who are described as not supporting democracy or accepting of the rule of law: These parties frame their anti-immigrant stance as "a position *against* racism" (emphasis in the original) (Halikiopoulou et. al, 2013:123), that is, against the intolerance they accuse outsiders of harboring.

Sense of discrimination and fear of crime are personal grievances indicating respondents' view of their own disadvantage in the midst of multiculturalism. Perceptions of being handicapped in contrast to newcomers in the distribution of state resources and feelings of vulnerability to criminal victimization might highlight the appeal of populist parties even among those who are not opposed to the diversity and multiculturalism associated with immigration in Europe. The case of Jews and gays in France supporting the National Front offers one such example. These groups typically do not identify themselves as ethnic minorities in Europe, but rather as members of the majority. Their status as members of the ethnic majority in European states has emerged gradually through concerted and persistent efforts against anti-Semitism and homophobia by European minority protection agencies such as the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. Far-right populist parties claim that Europe's acceptance of Muslim asylum-seekers undermines the status of Jews and gays as majority group members because of perceptions of Islam's incompatibility with democratic values. Rather than assuming that asylum-seekers will take on European values over time, far-right populist parties warn that Europe will weaken its human rights protections for "native" Europeans.

This is a complicated message, as many who vote for far-right parties are anti-Semitic and homophobic, but France's National Front has followed exactly this path to increase its mainstream support. First, the National Front made a public and sharp break with the anti-Semitism and homophobia of its early days and its honorary president Jean-Marie Le Pen

(Willsher 2014; Polakow-Suransky 2016). Then, increasingly the National Front and other far-right parties in Europe—including those in Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany—“claimed the progressive causes of the left—from gay rights to women’s equality and protecting Jews from antisemitism—as their own, by depicting Muslim immigrants as the primary threat to all three groups . . . [and] themselves as the only true defenders of western identity and western liberties . . .” (Polakow-Suransky 2016).

It is hard to think of a more compelling platform with which to draw mainstream majority voter support, especially in Western European states where majorities have been schooled in the importance of maintaining the rights of gays, Jews and women. It is not difficult to imagine that once raised in reference to historically protected groups in Europe, the issue of vulnerability to discrimination and bias attack can be seen as personal to majority group members grappling with the news of terrorist attacks on their own soil. This volatile environment may motivate members of the ethnic majority to feel an affinity with far-right populist parties that their parents would have rejected. Financially, citizens recovering from the 2007-8 recession might resent state funds going to help settle immigrants, even asylum seekers, and feel the sting of discrimination in this shift of government priorities. Even while they restructure their discourse to avoid the “extremist” label, far-right parties now offer the very messages and policy prescriptions such as restricting immigration or even mass deportations that appeal to majority group members with deep-rooted feelings of discrimination.

The rhetoric of right-wing populist parties focuses on triggering feelings of vulnerability to outside forces and providing voters with a path toward protection from these same forces. Majority group members who cast their vote for far-right parties may be seeking cover from the discrimination and vulnerability that they perceive in the midst of global economic and population changes. By beckoning to majority group members’ sense of personal grievance right-wing populist parties stoke these voters’ sense of discrimination and may thereby attract their vote. Marine Le Pen’s 2011 speech in Metz offers one example: “Farmers, workers, job seekers, young people, craftsmen, shopkeepers, employees, civil servants, pensioners, people in rural areas, you are the forgotten ones, you are the invisible majority . . . crushed by the madness of the financial system . . . For them and their God, the triple A, you are triple nothings.” (Cited in Ivaldi 2016:231).

More recently, in what the *New York Times* (Nossiter 2017) described as “a fiercely nationalistic speech to diplomats in Paris” in February, 2017, Ms. Le Pen continued this theme. While pitching a pro-Russian stance for France and Europe, she asserted that the “singularity of the world’s populations is not soluble merely in the market” and pointed to “lies of globalization and liberalism.”

Jungar (2016:112) describes a similar platform on the part of the radical right-wing True Finns (PS) promising protection to citizens from global economic forces. The PS still directs its attention to the “deprived ordinary people” in Finland, “particularly the rural population”, even while increasingly targeting “groups--pensioners, unemployed and the sick—who have been under pressure with the weakening of the Finish welfare state after the economic crises in the 1990s and post-2008”. And in the Netherlands, The Party for Freedom’s (PVV) 2014 slogan, “tough on immigration, soft on care”, represented an anti-elitist appeal to the common citizen (Akkerman 2016:147), a promise to deliver on the welfare state (to care for the elderly, for example) by reducing the costs to the taxpayer of mass-immigration (Akkerman 2016).

## Significance and Growth of Right-Wing Populist Appeal

Understanding the reasons for mainstream support of far-right populist parties in Europe is important to those who aim to maintain a liberal democracy with minority protections and who see the radical right as a threat to it. Cas Mudde (2010:7) reminds us (citing Lucardie 2000:175) that the populist radical right seeks to purify established parties that have been “betrayed or diluted”. This purification is seen to require leaders who will clean up corruption, reduce immigration and strengthen security (Mudde 2010:7). Policy agendas at the national and European level are moving toward these right-wing priorities, even where the governing coalition does not include a right-wing populist party. In Britain, for example, the right-wing UKIP obtained only 7.9% of the vote in national elections between 2010-15 (Akkerman et. al. 2016:2), yet succeeded in its 2015 Brexit initiative, through which a majority of voters in the UK supported the referendum to leave the European Union. Ending free movement of people across European borders was part of Brexit’s appeal to its supporters. In France and the Netherlands, political conversation has also moved to the right and focused on protection of “natives” (cf. Polakow-Suransky 2016). In buttressing his conclusion that “Europe has been turning to the right for more than two decades,” Yilmaz (2012:369) quotes *Der Spiegel*’s (2010) analysis that right-wing populist parties “are exploiting fear of Muslim immigration and frustration with the political establishment—and forcing mainstream parties to shift to the right” (Yilmaz 2012:368). Driven by the growing support of these far-right parties and their anti-immigrant message, elected political leaders have abandoned terminology promoting multiculturalism, instead “mainstreaming” programs to reduce disparity rather than focusing on racial, ethnic or immigrant minorities (cf. Collett and Petrovic 2014). Angela Merkel, for example, launched her 2016 reelection bid by backing a ban on full-face veils (Smale 2016b), a nod to public opinion against the veil vociferously articulated by Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West).

Right-wing populist parties seeking mainstream support have reached out to majority group members in Europe by stoking their sense of vulnerability to discrimination and crime as a consequence of multiculturalism and immigration (2016). In Germany, rising support for the AfD (Alternative for Germany) gained traction from reports of assaults committed by migrants at the 2016 New Year’s Eve celebrations in Cologne (cf. Noak 2016; Smale 2016a). Some countries, including France, Belgium and the UK have experienced recent acts of terror and live under the threat of additional attacks in a heightened security climate. Meanwhile, conflict induced migration from Syria, Eritrea, Libya and elsewhere and resulting demands for asylum have underscored superdiversity in global economic and socio-political organization. As *The Guardian* (Polakow-Suransky 2016) noted:

Among French voters threatened by the country’s new diversity, rejection of a multicultural society increasingly takes the form of longing for a bygone era. And peddling nostalgia is the centerpiece of many new far-right parties across Europe. In France, Marine Le Pen has promised a return to a time when the French had their own currency and monetary policy, when there were fewer mosques and less halal meat, when no one complained about nativity scenes in public buildings, and when French schools promoted a republican ethos of assimilation.

In French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut's words: "A growing number of French people feel uncomfortable in their own country . . ." (Polakow-Suransky 2016). Jews and gays, in the past staunch supporters of traditional center left and labor parties, have reconsidered and now sometimes support right-wing populist parties to combat the new enemies that they see in Muslims. This apparent contradiction was epitomized by Pim Fortyn, the openly gay far-right leader in the Netherlands who was assassinated in 2002 by an animal rights activist. To some in the Netherlands today, Wilders and his Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) represent a "lesser evil" (Polakow-Suransky 2016) in light of growing awareness of the Muslim presence in Europe. From this perspective backing the far right can be seen as a necessary strategy for facing a new enemy. Similarly, the Danish People's Party has drawn majority white voters away from the Social Democrats by combining an anti-immigrant stance with an agenda promoting health care and assistance for the elderly. This siphoning off of the traditional base of voters who in the past were stalwart supporters of Labor and the Social Democrats has fueled the rise of far-right populist parties in Europe and weakened support for legislating minority protections.

Akkerman, de Lange and Rooduijn (2016:1) trace the origin of the growth trajectory for populist right-wing party vote share in Western Europe to the 1990s, when the "adoption of anti-immigration and populist master-frames opened up an escape route from the margins for many radical right-wing populist parties," enabling parties in France, Austria, Norway and Switzerland to earn the support of over 10% of the electorate during the decade. The average percentage of the vote cast for right-wing populist parties in national elections in the thirteen states of our study grew from 8% in the 1990-1999 decade to 12.5% by 2010-2015 when eight of these thirteen nations saw 10% of the vote go to right-wing parties (Akkerman et. al. 2016:2).

Right wing party political platforms have increasingly drawn voters in Europe, as evidenced by large gains in recent local, state, national and EU parliamentary elections. In some countries, radical right parties have become important enough electorally to participate in governing coalitions. The Danish People's Party (DF), for example, earned 7.4% of the vote in national elections in 1990-1999, saw that figure rise to 16.7% during 2010-2015, and "agreed to support minority governments" beginning 2001 (Akkerman et. al. 2016:2-3). A mainstay on the right, Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ) captured 22% of the vote in national elections in the 1990s and formed a government coalition with the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in 2000. (The FPÖ was replaced as government partner in 2006 by a splinter group, the BZÖ, Alliance for the Future of Austria). In the 2016 presidential election, the FPÖ candidate, Norbert Hofer, earned enough votes to require a run-off, ultimately losing to former Green party leader, Alexander Van der Bellen, but with 46% of the vote. In October 2017 Sebastian Kurtz "coopted much of the far-right's agenda" (Eddy 2017) to win the Austrian Chancellor election despite representing the center right People's Party (of Christian Democratic origin). The new coalition government sworn in two months later included the Freedom Party (FPÖ) for the first time in a decade, underscoring the influence of the far-right agenda in Europe. Similarly, the far-right Alternative for Germany emerged as the third largest party in the September 2017 German federal election, forcing coalition talks lasting over four months (*BBC News* 2018).

## Literature Review

Much of the empirical research on far-right parties has been synthesized by Inglehart and Norris (2016) in a recent paper describing their investigation of whether economic inequality or cultural backlash best explains populist party support. Their study involved 268 political parties

in 31 European countries. The authors concluded that background demographic characteristics of respondents and their *cultural values*--including anti-immigration attitudes, mistrust of global and national governance, authoritarian values and position on the right-wing ideology scale--provided the best fitting model of right-wing populist voter support in Europe. Majority group members were the most likely supporters. These researchers utilized an anti-immigration scale created from three related European Social Survey questions. In their discussion of right-wing party voters, Inglehart and Norris stress that *cultural values* and religiosity had more predictive utility than economic circumstances. Respondents who were most negatively disposed toward immigration were more likely to vote for a right-wing populist party.

The extent to which respondents personalize their distrust of immigration, global forces and national governance in terms of their own vulnerability to discrimination or criminal victimization remains to be considered. Recent research findings suggest that state multicultural orientation in Europe has a positive impact on majority group members' sense of being in a group that is discriminated against even when respondent background characteristics are controlled. Specifically, in a study of fourteen European states, Jackson and Doerschler (2016: 258) found that:

Multicultural policies directed at the school curriculum, media, dress-code exemptions, in the form of dual citizenship, in funding for ethnic group cultural preservation and in the form of affirmative action all increase the sense of discrimination reported by majority group members.

These results suggest that majority group members feel negatively targeted by the multicultural policies put in place to foster the integration of immigrant minorities. Those who identify as natives may feel that they are being asked to give up their prominence to make room for the lifestyle and cultural development of minority populations.

Such a contrast can be drawn between Europe's cosmopolitan urbanites and their suburban and rural neighbors who feel that their culture and institutions are being diluted and security undermined by policies designed to accommodate minority groups. As the *New York Times* (Lyman 2016) put it in this headline, "Like Trump, Europe's Populists Ride a Wave of Rural Discontent to Victory." Quoted in this article, the mayor of a small Polish village had the following assessment: "The elites in the city are detached from reality . . . They no longer understand the needs of ordinary people . . ." The diversity of cities, epitomized by immigrants, represents a threat to the conformity and security of village life. Mr. Van der Bellen's victory in the Austrian presidential election has been partly attributed to his "concerted effort to woo rural voters after narrowly winning the first round of voting in May on the strength of urban votes" (Lyman 2016). Reaching out to voters beyond the city may have provided assurance of his concern for their safety and representation in the face of global population shifts. This kind of "attentive politicking" (Lyman 2016) may be important as voters grapple with diversity and the uncertainty triggered by daily images of the persistent foreign conflicts that give rise to asylum-seeking migrants. Research supports this conclusion.

Jackson and Doerschler (2016: 258), for example, found that majority unease with multiculturalism in European countries extended to feelings of safety. Even after controlling for background characteristics, majority group members felt less safe when walking alone in the local area after dark in states with multicultural policies requiring



diversity in the media, dress code exemptions and affirmative action. These results reflect those of previous research on the determinants of concern about crime. Fear of crime has been found to be greatest among those who are most concerned about the economic and civil rights advances of minorities (cf. Heinz, Jacob and Lineberry, eds., 1983; Jacobs and Tope 2007; Dollar 2014) and where the visibility of minorities is greatest even in multivariate equations where the crime or victimization rate is controlled (cf. Liska, Lawrence and Sanchirico 1982; Heinz, Jacob and Lineberry, 1983; Skogan 1995; Lane and Meeker 2003, 2011).

Such findings leave open the question of whether it is anti-immigrant attitudes themselves or the sense of discrimination and fear of crime triggered by some multicultural state policies that lead majority group members to vote for radical populist far-right parties. In the paragraph below, Akkerman, de Lange and Rooduijn (2016:5) point out that nativism is central to the ideology of right-wing populist parties, leading to “anti-European” and “anti-Islam stances.” In their words,

The nativist critique on Islam stems from the observation that Islamic values are at odds with liberal democratic values, such as the autonomy of the individual, democracy, emancipation of homosexuals and women, equality of men and women, freedom of expression, and separation of church and state (Akkerman 2005, 2015; Betz 2007; Betz and Meret 2009; Zuquete 2008).

Significant in understanding the attraction of the anti-Islam position is that it appeals to a set of beliefs voters have, rather than their experience. While much is made of the impact of immigration flows in stimulating animosity toward Muslims, those with the greatest bias have the least direct experience with immigrants or Muslims in their neighborhoods or daily life (Yilmaz 2012: 371; Karapın 2002; Berggren 2007). Traditional political parties, “bogged down in the details of integration policy . . . have created integration specialists, immigration offices and integration conferences, but . . . have lost sight of citizens’ concerns . . .” (*Der Spiegel* 2010). In pitting immigrants portrayed as Muslims against those who think of themselves as “natives” in competition for government programs (for example, pensions in contrast to integration assistance) far-right parties appeal to mainstream audiences in apparently bias neutral terms, but with examples suggesting zero-sum policy comparisons that disadvantage native populations.

Authoritarianism and populism join nativism in the programs of radical right-wing populist parties. Akkerman et. al. (2016:2) use both the party’s program and its ideology in developing a list of radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. Their focus is on whether these parties have moved into the mainstream to earn voters, and whether their success in gaining some degree of inclusion in office (even in coalitions) moderates their aims. (See Akkerman, deLange and Rooduijn eds., 2016; Jupskas 2016.) Multiple grievance mobilization models have been utilized by right-wing parties in Europe, and their effectiveness has been evaluated by Ivarsflaten (2008). She compared the appeal of models focused on the dislocations of *economic change*, of *political disillusionment* (elitism--including distrust of the EU, and corruption), and of *immigration* (viewed as a crisis in the 1980s and 1990s because it grew significantly despite policies discouraging or banning it in Western Europe). In her 2002-3 research on seven successful populist right parties, Ivarsflaten (2008:17) found that only the *immigration* grievance

was consistently mobilized by all successful populist right parties. The other two grievance mobilization models—over economic changes and elitist and corrupt politics—contributed to the explanation of the populist right vote in some countries. However, populist right parties also performed well electorally without mobilizing these grievances.

Ivarsflaten's study included the FPÖ in Austria; *Vlaams Blok* in Flanders, Belgium; SVP in Switzerland; DF in Denmark; FN in France; Lijst Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands and FRP in Norway. With a larger, more representative group of European states and parties, and with the benefit of Inglehart and Norris's model, we augment Ivarsflaten's consideration of immigration as a key component of a right-wing populist party platform and examine the sources of the immigration grievance's appeal to ethnic majority voters.

### Research Question, Data and Analysis

Are right-wing party voters who think of themselves as members of the majority in Western European states intolerant of diversity and the multicultural policies put in place to accommodate it through national and global governance structures? Or do "majority" voters in Europe also harbor personal grievances—a sense of being in a group that is discriminated against and a fear of crime—that contribute to their far-right party vote? We focus our investigation on Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The populations of these thirteen Western European states are more accustomed to diversity than their Eastern, post-Communist block neighbors (see European Commission 2013). Countries in Western Europe have implemented more minority inclusion and protection initiatives than have the "newcomer" European states.

In state and party selection, we follow Akkerman et. al. (2016: 21), who include: "most countries in Western Europe and focus on electorally successful radical right-wing populist parties with stable party organizations . . . parties that have already gained an electoral breakthrough and for whom national office is, at least in the longer term, a realistic option". The nativism, authoritarianism and populism on which the programs of these parties are built rest on an ideology promoting hostility to Europe and Islam (Akkerman et. al., 2016: 5). Akkerman et. al. (2016) culled the list of right-wing parties in these states on the basis of expert analysis in the literature (see Akkerman et. al. 2016, and, for example, Akkerman 2005, 2015; Betz 2007; Betz and Meret 2009; Carter 2005; DeLange 2007; Meret and Siim 2012; Mudde 2007, 2013; Zuquete 2008) and information available in Doring and Manow's (2016) Parliaments and Governments Database.

**Table 1. Percent Vote Share for Radical Right-Wing Parties in Western Europe (European Social Survey Rounds 1-7, 2002-2014)**

		2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Austria								
N=585	Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)	--	--	1.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.2
% Total=7.25	Freedom Party (FPÖ)	5.6	5.6	7.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.0
Belgium								
N=637	Front National (FN)	0.6	1.8	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.3
% Total=7.89	Vlaams Belang	6.5	9.7	8.5	7.5	4.8	3.4	2.1
Denmark								
N=966	Danish People's Party (DF)	7.5	7.5	7.7	9.6	8.0	8.9	12.1
% Total=11.97	Progress Party (FrP)	0.8	0.9	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Finland								
N=724	Finns Party/True Finns (PS)	0.4	1.1	1.1	4.0	5.8	13.4	13.9
% total=8.97								
France								
N=681	National Front (Front National/FN)	6.1	7.7	5.7	2.5	4.4	10.0	11.9
% total=8.44	National Repub Movement (MNR)	1.1	0.8	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Germany								
N=253	Republicans (REP)	0.5	1.2	0.3	0.9	0.1	0.3	--
% total=3.14	Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.6
Greece								
N=125	Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)	0.0	1.5	N/A	3.8	4.2	N/A	N/A
% total=1.55	Golden Dawn	0.0	0.0	N/A	0.0	0.2	N/A	N/A
Italy								
N=58	Northern League (LN)	1.8	4.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.5	N/A
% total=.72%								
Netherlands								
Total=923	Centre Democrats (CD)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
% total=11.44	List Pim Fortuyn/LPF	13.6	2.9	4.9	1.6	--	--	--
	Party for Freedom (PVV)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	12.7	6.8	8.1
Norway								
Total=1438	Progress Party (FRP)	16.0	15.0	17.4	15.7	16.0	11.2	12.6
% total=17.82								
Sweden								
Total=248	New Democracy (NyD)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
% total=3.07	Sweden Democrats (SD)	--	--	--	--	3.4	4.4	4.9
Switzerland								
Total=1385	Swiss People's Party (SVP)	18.6	26.8	22.7	25.1	24.0	17.6	20.0
% total=17.16								
United Kingdom								
Total=47	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	--	--	0.5	--	--	--	7.4
% total=.58								
Total								
N=8070/117249 respondents								
% total=6.4								

Note: N/A indicates that the ESS data was not collected for that country while -- indicates that the particular party did not register a valid percentage among survey respondents.

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Table 1 lists the countries and parties included in our analysis. For each of two states, Germany (AfD-Alternative for Germany) and Greece (XO-Golden Dawn), we added one right-wing party to the analysis (beyond those suggested by Akkerman, et. al., 2016) because of recent gains in electoral support at the national level putting them on par with other parties in the table. The measure of voter support in Table 1 reflects responses to the European Social Survey for each of seven survey rounds (administered biannually between 2002 and 2014). (See Appendix.) The actual vote share is reported in Table 2.

**Table 2. Radical Right-Wing Parties in Western Europe: Party Positions on Immigration and Multiculturalism, Number of Seats in National Parliament and Left-Right Orientation**

Country	Party	IM <sup>1</sup>	MC <sup>2</sup>	Seats <sup>3</sup>	%Vote <sup>4</sup>	L-R <sup>5</sup>
Austria	BZO	9.9	9.9	21	3.5	8.8
	FPO	8.7	8.6	52	20.5	8.3
Belgium	VB	9.6	9.6	18	5.8	9.7
Denmark	DF	9.7	9.5	37	16.7	9.2
Finland	PS	9	9.4	39	18.3	6.6
France	FN	9.8	9.7	35	13.6	9.7
Germany	AfD	9.3	9.2	7	4.7	8.7
Greece	LAOS	9.3	9.3	15	1.8	9.1
	XA	10	10	21	7	8.7
Italy	LN	9.5	5.8	117	4.1	7.8
Neth	PVV	9.9	9.8	24	12.8	8.8
Norway	RP	9	8.7	41	16.3	8.8
Sweden	SD	9.8	9.8	49	12.9	8.7
Switz	SVP	8.6	9.5	65	28.9	7.4
UK	UKIP	10	9.8	24	7.9	7.8

<sup>1</sup>Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2014 Immigrate\_Policy=position on immigration policy (Fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration-10 Fully in favor)

<sup>2</sup>Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2014 Multiculturalism=position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (0=Strongly favors multiculturalism-10=Strongly favors assimilation)

<sup>3</sup>Parliaments and Governments Data Base (ParlGov) 2016 Seats in National Parliament

<sup>4</sup>Akkerman, de Lange and Rooduijn, 2016: 2. (Their source is [www.parl.gov.org](http://www.parl.gov.org))

<sup>5</sup>ParlGov 2016 Left Right 0-10 scale mean value in left/right dimension

Tables 2 and 3 provide contextual and party orientation for the nations in our study. Information on the strength of each party (seats held in the national parliament and percent of the vote earned in the recent national election), party position on immigration policy, party orientation to multiculturalism/assimilation, and party left-right orientation are indicated in Table 2, drawn from sources including the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the Parliaments and Governments Data Base (ParlGov) as indicated. The anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism stances of most of these parties were extreme (shown in the first two columns of numerical data in Table 2), as is true for their right-wing orientation (last column in Table 2). An exception can

be found in Finland, where the PS (True Finns), scoring 6.6 on the 10-point scale, is not quite as right-leaning as most of the right-wing parties in the other states.

**Table 3. Country Context: MPI, Discrim, Safety**

Country	MCP <sup>1</sup>	Discrim <sup>2</sup>	Safety <sup>3</sup>
Austria	1.5	3.8	3.19
Belgium	5.5	4.8	2.98
Denmark	0	3.3	3.37
Finland	6	7.6	3.27
France	2	9.5	2.98
Germany	2.5	3.4	2.97
Greece	2.5	4.2	2.71
Italy	1.5	2.9	2.87
Netherlands	2	6.0	2.99
Norway	3.5	4.7	3.4
Sweden	7	7.0	3.24
Switzerland	1	3.4	3.22
UK	5.5	11.0	2.83

<sup>1</sup> Multiculturalism Policy Index, 2010 Summary Score, Banting, Kymlicka 2016  
<http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/>

<sup>2</sup> Percentage identifying with Discriminated Group, 2002-2014 (rounds 1-7)  
 European Social Survey

<sup>3</sup> Avg. Feelings of Safety (1-4, 4=very safe), 202-2014 (rounds 1-7) European  
 Social Survey

For each country, Table 3 offers summary measures of state characteristics, including the overall orientation to multiculturalism in state policy (MCP), the percentage of majority group members indicating that their group is discriminated against, and the average feeling of safety of majority group members. The MCP Index (Banting and Kymlicka 2013) reflects eight dimensions of multicultural policy implementation in the state: constitutional affirmation, school curriculum, media, exemption, dual citizenship, funding, bilingual education and affirmative action. States with the highest scores (like Belgium and the UK) have the most fully developed set of multicultural policies across the areas listed.

We turn now to individual-level examination of the predictors of majority group members' vote for the right-wing party in their most recent national elections and their indication of the party they feel closest to. (The Appendix provides information on variable coding.) To measure voter preference, background variables and attitudes we use data from the European Social Survey pooled from the seven rounds conducted from 2002-2014. We begin with the model recently developed by Inglehart and Norris (2016) in their comparison of the predictive power of the economic insecurity and cultural backlash explanations of the rise of populism. Because both dependent variables are dichotomous, we use logistic regression. Our model builds on that of Inglehart and Norris (2016) and Ivarflatsen's (2008) findings regarding the importance of the immigration grievance in far-right party platforms. We examine the

determinants of two measures of right-wing populist party support among majority group members in the thirteen Western European states in Table 1.

In their paper, *Trump, Brexit and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash*, Inglehart and Norris (2016:17) offer a study based on the preferences of all voters in 31 European countries (EU member states in addition to Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey) and support for 268 parties. Our more limited geographic and party context as well as our inclusion of only ethnic majority voters allows us to focus on the personal grievances of those who identify themselves as majority group members in affluent, culturally Christian Western Europe. We isolate this group because the nativist, protectionist platforms of far-right parties promise the greatest benefits to them. The European Social Survey (ESS) question asking respondents if they “belong to a minority ethnic group in the country” provided our selection of “majority” group members (those who do not identify with an ethnic minority). Our model controls for respondents’ attitude toward immigration, right-wing ideology self-placement, mistrust of global and national governance, authoritarian values, religiosity, urbanization, sense of economic insecurity, education, employment status and personal characteristics including age, gender and education.

### Findings

Tables 4 and 5 set out the main findings regarding the individual level determinants of far-right support by ethnic majority group members. All three models (A, B and C) in Tables 4 and 5 were developed using data from the European Social Survey and the parties listed in Table 1. Models A and B reflect for our 13 states and 22 parties the most predictive and parsimonious models determined by Inglehart and Norris (2016) in their study of 31 European states and 268 parties. Their model generally holds up in our subset of states, though with some interesting variation that can be attributed to our exclusive focus on majority group members, Western European states, and smaller range of parties.

**Table 4. Effects of Feelings of Discrimination and Safety on Vote for Far-Right Party**

	Model A			Model B			Model C		
	B	s.e.	Sig.	B	s.e.	Sig.	B	s.e.	Sig.
<b>Controls</b>									
Age (Years)	-.007	.001	***	-.012	.001	***	-.012	.001	***
Gender (Male)	.431	.029	***	.378	.036	***	.336	.037	***
Education	-.252	.011	***	-.072	.015	***	-.079	.015	***
Religiosity	-.021	.005	***	-.032	.006	***	-.033	.006	***
<b>Economic and Cultural Variables</b>									
Non-Professional				.313	.041	***	.321	.041	***
Unemployed				.252	.039	***	.243	.039	***
Live on Social Benefits				-.282	.083	**	-.280	.083	**
Subjective Economic Insecurity				-.007	.025		-.012	.025	
Urbanization				-.107	.016	***	-.096	.017	***
Anti-Immigration Scale				.025	.001	***	.026	.001	***
Mistrust Global Governance				.004	.002	***	.004	.002	***
Mistrust National Governance				.008	.002	***	.007	.002	***
Authoritarian Values				-.002	.001		-.001	.001	
Rightwing Self-Placement				.294	.009	***	.294	.009	***
<b>Discrimination and Safety Variables</b>									
Feeling of Belonging to Discriminated Group							.201	.061	**
Feeling of Safety Walking Alone in Dark							.064	.023	**
Constant	-2.177			-5.873			-6.083		
Nagelkerke R2	.021			.150			.152		
% correctly predicted	95.9			95.8			95.8		

Data: ESS (2002-2014)

\*\*\*p&lt;.001, \*\*p&lt;.01, \*p&lt;.05

In Table 4 we see three noteworthy differences between our findings and those of Inglehart and Norris for the base models A and B (which do not contain our test variables, sense of discrimination and feeling of safety, found in Model C). First, we find that the likelihood of voting for the far-right party decreases with age, while Inglehart and Norris found older people to be more likely to vote for far-right parties. We attribute this difference to our focus on advanced democracies in Europe where a multicultural orientation gradually became well-established in the decades after World-War II. Acceptance of diversity was further emphasized during the push

against racism and xenophobia initiated by the European Commission through the 1997 European Year Against Racism.

Our findings also show that those who are more religious are less likely to support far-right parties. This makes sense in the advanced democracies of Western Europe, where in most states half of the population does not identify with any religion. In these states, those who think of themselves as natives and do attend religious services are still unlikely shape their daily routine or politics on the basis of religious dictates. In Western Europe, support for the white Christian nationhood promoted by far-right parties may have little to do with one's level of religiosity, and more to do with nostalgia for the days when immigrants were fewer.

Finally, we do not find that support for authoritarian values significantly influences the right-wing party vote in Western Europe, in contrast to the findings of Inglehart and Norris for their larger group of states and parties. Again, it is likely that our focus on the subset of Western European states and smaller group of parties accounts for this difference. Authoritarian values are operationally defined in the ESS on the basis of five questions focused on the importance of strong government, following the rules, behaving properly, following traditions and living in secure surroundings. Because the lifestyle of majority group members in Europe's established democracies does not reflect these values, it is unlikely that far-right parties would gain much traction in appealing to them. In eastern European states and Turkey, an authoritarian party orientation might have more appeal to those who identify with the majority than it does in Western Europe.

Model C in Table 4 provides the effects of feelings of discrimination and sense of safety on the likelihood of a majority group member's vote for a far-right party in the last general election in their state after controls for background characteristics (age, sex, education and religiosity) and economic and cultural variables (employment type and status, economic insecurity, urbanization of one's neighborhood, anti-immigration score, mistrust of global and national governance, authoritarian values and right-wing self-placement). Our two test variables bring respondents' sense of personal grievance into the model. Those who feel that they are members of a group that is discriminated against are significantly more likely to vote for the far-right party in their state despite controls for personal, economic and cultural variables in the model. This result supports the personal grievance model of far-right support, suggesting that majority group members who feel that they are in a group that is discriminated against are more likely to take the far-right populist party's message to heart. Although sense of safety (when walking alone in the local area after dark, 1-4, 4=very safe) is also a significant predictor of the far-right vote in model C, its direction is opposite from that predicted by the personal grievance model. Those who feel safe are more likely to cast a far-right vote than are those who feel less safe.

The urbanization control variable in this model may help explain the findings regarding sense of safety. The negative impact of urbanization on the far-right vote in the multivariate model suggests that those who live in the least urban areas (5=big city--1=rural) are most likely to vote for the far-right party. It's likely that those who live in more rural areas feel safe walking alone in the local area at night (OECD 2017) so that sense of safety does not explain their right-wing vote despite far-right rhetoric about the crime associated with immigration.

The two personal grievance measures together (in Table 4, Model C) improve the explanatory power of the model (as the slight increase in the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  indicates). Sense of discrimination is a positive predictor of the far-right vote, as expected. But sense of safety (possibly more characteristic of those living in suburban and rural areas), rather than feeling



unsafe walking at night, predicts the far-right vote in the multivariate Model C. While fear of crime is a major stump speech talking point of far-right parties in Europe, the data suggest that those who vote for these parties are typically not fearful.

**Table 5. Effects of Feelings of Discrimination and Safety on Standing Closest to Far-Right Party**

	Model A			Model B			Model C		
	B	s.e	Sig.	B	s.e.	Sig.	B	s.e.	Sig.
<b>Controls</b>									
Age (Years)	-.010	.001	***	-.015	.001	***	-.014	.001	***
Gender (Male)	.472	.035	***	.337	.043	***	.256	.045	***
Education	-.216	.013	***	-.063	.018	***	-.074	.001	***
Religiosity	-.017	.006	**	-.031	.007	***	-.031	.007	***
<b>Economic and Cultural Variables</b>									
Non-Professional				.315	.050	***	.310	.050	***
Unemployed				.214	.047	***	.206	.047	***
Live on Social Benefits				-.166	.094		-.148	.094	
Subjective Economic Insecurity				-.038	.030		-.019	.030	
Urbanization				-.166	.019	***	-.139	.020	***
Anti-Immigration Scale				.022	.001	***	.023	.001	***
Mistrust Global Governance				.009	.001	***	.009	.002	***
Mistrust National Governance				-.002	.002		-.001	.001	
Authoritarian Values				-.001	.001		-.001	.001	
Rightwing Self-Placement				.277	.010	***	.278	.010	***
<b>Discrimination and Safety Variables</b>									
Feeling of Belonging to Discriminated Group							-.111	.079	
Feeling of Safety Walking Alone in Dark							.180	.028	***
Constant	-2.367			-5.154			-5.883		
Nagelkerke R2	.021			.136			.138		
% correctly predicted	96.6			96.4			96.4		

Data: ESS (2002-2014)

\*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table 5 provides the results of the same models A, B and C in predicting whether respondents feel closer to a populist party than all other parties (1=close to a populist party, 0=not). Unlike for the right-wing vote itself, Model C for standing closest to a populist party shows that sense of being in a group that is discriminated against is not a statistically significant predictor. This finding raises the question of whether those who vote for right-wing parties do so even while they do not feel closest to them, possibly to “shake things up”. Otherwise the results are quite similar to those discussed above for the right-wing vote in Table 4. Again we see that those who feel close to right-wing parties more typically feel safe (not unsafe) walking in their neighborhoods in the dark. In addition, anti-immigrant attitudes, mistrust of global governance, right-wing self-placement, living in a less urban location, and lower religiosity significantly predict majority group members’ affinity for right-wing parties in these Western European states as they did for the right-wing vote itself.

### Conclusions

In Western Europe at least, those majority group members who feel vulnerable to discrimination are more likely to vote for the right-wing party in national elections, even after their other personal characteristics are taken into account. These include their right-wing orientation, hostility to immigration, urban/suburban/rural location, mistrust of global and national governance, as well as their religiosity and educational, economic and employment levels. Sense of being in a group that is the target of discrimination does not lead to personal affinity with the right-wing. But feeling part of a group that is discriminated against does contribute to majority group member voting for the right-wing party, possibly in the hope of gaining greater sway from changes in “the system.”. Future research based on interviews with populist right-wing party voters from the ethnic majority is needed to confirm this conclusion.

Our results also suggest that cultural context has an impact on the popular appeal of far-right parties. Findings for the thirteen advanced Western European democracies examined here differed in three key areas from those of the 31 European state group in the Inglehart and Norris model. First, likelihood of voting for the far-right party decreases with age in Western Europe, while it increased with age in the wider 31-states study, even after controls for other influences on voting. Secondly, in Western Europe the religiosity of majority group members reduces their support for far-right parties, rather than increasing it as Inglehart and Norris found in their larger European region which had over three times as many states and encompassed Eastern Europe and Turkey. Thirdly, and probably also reflective of the regional differences in the studies, we found that support for authoritarian values does not influence the right-wing party vote in Western Europe, while Inglehart and Norris reported that those with authoritarian values were more likely to support the right-wing party. Overall, the differences between our results in Western Europe and those of Inglehart and Norris for their larger group of states including Eastern Europe and Turkey suggest that the determinants of right-wing party support are not invariant of cultural context. Examination of voter support for right-wing parties should take into account the history of liberal democracy in the state, including the extent to which religion influences daily life for the majority. It may be that state policies explicitly focused on maintaining liberal democratic traditions make a difference over time. Older voters schooled in them may be less likely to support nativism; voters living in advanced democracies may not be moved to cast their vote on the basis of their religiosity alone; and authoritarianism may be seen to have no place in politics for those living in the post-World War II democracies of Europe.

More investigation is also warranted to assess the degree of influence that right-wing populists have on the “mainstream parties on the left—the social democrats” (Bale et al. 2010) and ultimately on the positions their voters hold. Do right-wing parties “punch above their weight” by adopting the priorities of the left (such as health care, housing and assistance for the retired) or delegitimizing them (as right wing parties have done with immigration and support for asylum seekers) thereby influencing the stance of competitor parties? By 2010-2015 the influence of some right-wing parties on public policy was more significant than their vote share warranted, as the Brexit vote demonstrated in the UK. The mechanisms through which these parties sometimes exercise outsized influence on public policy warrant examination. Similarly, the implications for voter choice of the 2010 Multiculturalism Policy Index (MCP) summary score for each European state (in Table 3) calculated by Banting and Kymlicka (2013) require further consideration: The influence of a state’s far-right parties sometimes seems to contradict the extensiveness of the state’s level of multiculturalism. It makes sense that UKIP, for example, earned only 7.9% of the vote share in the UK national election, since the UK has a relatively high MCP score, reflecting decades of state policy in the direction of multiculturalism. Widespread public support for minority inclusion and protection would have been behind that policy development and implementation. Yet the anti-immigrant impetus to the Brexit vote contradicted that history, and suggested outsized support for a far-right position in light of the UK’s liberal democratic history.

The British vote to leave the European Union was a cause forcefully championed by UKIP, but it eventually earned the strenuous support of some mainstream conservative party figures and aroused only lukewarm and divided opposition from the liberal party. Was Brexit a success at mainstreaming by UKIP even though the party hadn’t reached the vote share of its European counterparts? Do we see in the British case an example in which public opinion moved toward the platform of the radical right-wing party without a sizeable vote for that party? Akkerman et. al. (2016:20) point out that “mainstreaming need not only be apparent in party agendas; it can also take place at the level of public opinion.” The radical party has succeeded at mainstreaming even without increasing its own vote share if it moves the center-right or center-left parties toward its message and policy directions (see Usherwood 2016). Examples are provided by the increasingly restrictive immigration policy positions of conventional political parties and their backing away from overt support for multiculturalism in favor of assimilation-like policies.

The nativist social policies encouraged by right-wing populist parties are likely to create conflict in the interconnected future toward which European states are inexorably moving. Over 11% of the population in European states is foreign born, and in 2016, this figure was as high as 18% in Sweden and Austria, and 30% in Switzerland (Pew Research Center 2016). While the recent migrant surge has impacted these figures positively, Europe, like the United States, has relied on immigrant labor for about a tenth of its work force for over half a century. In 2015, the average of foreign born among employed workers in European states was 7.4 percent, but as high as 26% in Switzerland (*Eurostat Statistics Explained* 2016). While right-leaning voters might not appreciate the benefits of diversity in the work force, it’s likely that the low birth rate characteristic of ethnic majority populations in European countries will make foreign workers a necessity, at least at the levels Europeans now see. Demands for elder-and child-care, restaurant and agriculture work as well as higher skilled positions in medicine, science and technology will continue to bring a heterogeneous population to Europe. Our results raise questions as to whether Western European states will have the electoral support within their ethnic majority

populations to maintain the civil rights for immigrants that these liberal democracies currently provide and that will be necessary given the diversity in their demographic future. Far right parties in Europe have positioned themselves as the protectors of national heritage and native populations. Accommodation of diversity in the civil society will be weakened over time if centrist parties continue to follow the right-wing's lead by mainstreaming the call for immigration restrictions, increased internal and border security, and criminalization of minority populations. Using Cas Mudde's (2010) terminology we conclude that the pathological normalcy with which the populist right has radicalized mainstream values must be recognized and resisted by centrist parties if liberal democratic policies are not to fall by the wayside.

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## Appendix A. Variables, Question Wording, and Coding (ESS 2002-2014, Rounds 1-7)

Variable	Question Wording	Coding
<b>Dependent Variables</b>		
Prtvt	Party voted for in last general election.	1=voted for far-right party, 0=other
Clsparty	Feel closer to a particular party than all other parties	1=close to far-right party, 0=other
<b>Demographic, Economic, and Cultural Variables</b>		
Age	Age of respondent	Years
Gndr	Gender	1=male, 0=female
EduLvl	Highest level of education	1-5, 5=highest
Rlgr	How religious are you?	0-10, 10=very religious
Isco08	Non-Professional	1=non-professional, 0=other professions
Uemp3m	Ever unemployed for over 3 months	1=yes, 0=no
Hincsrca	Live on Social Benefits	1=living on unemployment or other social benefits, 0=living on other sources of income including pension, salary and self-employment
Hincfel	Subjective Economic Insecurity	1=living comfortably on present income, 2=coping on present income, 3=finding it difficult on present income, 4=finding in very difficult on present income
Domicil	Domicile, respondent's description (urbanization)	1=farm or home in countryside, 2=country village, 3=town or small city, 4=suburbs or outskirts of big city, 5=big city, 0-100 scale
<b>Anti-immigrant scale</b>		
Imbgco	Immigration bad or good for country's economy	0-10, 10=bad for country
Imueclt	Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	0-10, 10=undetermined
Imwbct	Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	0-10, 10=worse place
<b>Mistrust Global Governance Scale</b>		
Trunited	Trust in the United Nations	0-100 scale
Treurop	Trust in the European Parliament	0-10, 10=no trust
<b>Mistrust National Governance Scale</b>		
Trstplt	Trust in national politicians	0-10, 10=no trust
Stfgov	How satisfied with the national government	0-10, 10=extremely dissatisfied
Stfdem	How satisfied with the way democracy works in country	0-10, 10=extremely dissatisfied
Impsafe	How much each person is or is not like you: Important to live in secure and safe surroundings	1-6, 1=not at all like me, 6=very much like me
<b>Authoritarian Values Scale</b>		
Impsafe	Important to live in secure and safe surroundings	0-100 scale
lprule	Important to do what is told and follow rules	1-6, 1=not at all like me, 6=very much like me
lpphrp	Important to behave properly	1-6, 1=not at all like me, 6=very much like me
lptrgv	Important that government is strong and ensures safety	1-6, 1=not at all like me, 6=very much like me
lmptrad	Important to follow traditions and customs	1-6, 1=not at all like me, 6=very much like me
Lrscale	Placement on left-right scale	0-10, 10=far right
<b>Discrimination and Safety Variables</b>		
Dscrgrp	Member of a group discriminated against in this country	1=yes, 0=no
Aesfdrk	Feeling of safety of walking alone in local area after dark	1-4, 4=very safe