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In the Shadow of the Tower: Spatial proximity to mosques, visible diversity, and support for the radical right

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ABSTRACT

Growth in racial, ethnic, and religious minority populations in western societies has coincided with the growing success of nativist and radical right political parties. A leading target for nativist politicians has been Islamic religious symbols, particularly mosques. But does the presence of mosques within citizens' milieux influence their political behaviour? To explore this question, we draw on longitudinal survey data from the Netherlands augmented by a web-scraped list of Dutch mosques to investigate the influence of local context – both architectural context in the form of spatial proximity to mosques and local demographic context in the form of visible diversity – on support for the Party for Freedom (PVV), a radical right, nativist political party. Our analyses reveal that while proximity to a mosque increases support for the radical right, proximity to a mosque with a *minaret* exerts a stronger effect. Also, closer proximity to a mosque with a minaret and greater local diversity amplify the differences in party support between the left and right. These findings allow us to better understand the impact of symbolic cultural threat on voting for nativist parties.

1. Introduction

The Essalam Mosque in Rotterdam, the largest mosque in the Netherlands, featuring two 50-metre-tall minarets and a dome 25 metres high, officially opened in December 2010 after a years-long process involving contentious public consultations, insinuations of links to terrorist financial networks, and construction beset by delays. Once completed, the mosque was seen by some as a symbol of the city's diverse, multi-ethnic population, whereas others saw it as an ostentatious, foreign design that highlighted the failure of Muslims to integrate into Dutch society (Maussen, 2009). Though notable, the case of the Essalam Mosque is not unique, as the construction of mosques in the Netherlands has historically attracted controversy, especially when they became conspicuous features of public space (Maussen, 2004).

The increasing prominence of mosques in the Dutch landscape has coincided with the emergence and consolidation of the Dutch radical right, especially the rise of the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom, or PVV), and its leader Geert Wilders. Wilders has notably stated that the Essalam Mosque did not belong in the Netherlands, but rather in Saudi Arabia, and has proposed closing mosques and Islamic schools in the

Netherlands, as well as banning the Quran. Since its foundation in 2006, the PVV has established itself as one of the major forces in the Netherlands' (very) fragmented political landscape, until recently the second most important party in the Dutch lower chamber in terms of seats, behind the party of Prime Minister Rutte (VVD).

The Dutch case highlights how increased immigration to Western democracies from non-Western countries has led to demographic and societal changes, and thereby heightened perceptions of threat among majority ethnocultural groups (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018; Kaufmann, 2018). Such anxieties have been exploited by radical right parties in several European countries, which have combined political attacks on their opponents and fear-based appeals (Nai, 2018). Fuelled by a questionable narrative that frames Islamic terrorism as indicative of a “clash of civilisations” (Huntington, 1996), many radical right parties in Europe and beyond have positioned themselves as those prepared to fight the “Islamisation of the West.”

At the level of mass political behaviour, evidence indicates that support for radical right politicians is a function of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments (Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016; Lubbers & Coenders, 2017; Savelkoul et al., 2017). Even though radical right parties advance exclusionary forms of social identity (Eatwell &

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Goodwin, 2018), there is, to date, little empirical evidence at the level of individual voters that sustained exposure to Islamic cultural symbols shapes political behaviour.

In this article, we endeavour to fill this gap by examining how proximity to mosques and visible diversity in one's local context drives individual-level support for radical right political parties. Both country-specific and cross-national studies have endeavoured to explain support for radical right parties as a function of a wide range of socio-demographic contextual factors, yielding varying results. These include the concentration of immigrants or ethnocultural minority groups, growth in minority groups, distance to high-concentration minority neighbourhoods, urban-rural context or population density, unemployment, and the concentration of highly-educated residents (e.g., Berning & Ziller, 2017; Evans & Ivaldi, 2021; Kaufmann, 2017; Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012; van Gent et al., 2014; van Wijk et al., 2019, 2020). The contribution of this paper lies in its broader conception of local context, and its focus on how these contexts moderate the effect of individual-level political orientations on support for the radical right. We advance a conception of local context that takes in not only demographic context, but also key features of the built environment – i.e., mosques, and their architectural features, in particular minarets. Existing studies have neglected local architectural context, and our results demonstrate its importance to shaping support for the radical right. Further, we advance and test theoretical expectations focused on how local context and individual-level political orientations *interact* and thereby shape support for the radical right in what are known as disposition-situation interactions in political psychology (Hibbing et al., 2014a; Sniderman et al., 1991).

We advance our argument as follows. The next section focuses on local architectural context and develops our reasoning that Islamic symbols – in particular, mosques – can engender perceptions of threat and thereby support for the radical right. The section that follows details how local demographic context in the form of visible diversity (and increasing visible diversity) can be perceived by some as a symbolic threat, fuelling support for the radical right. We then present our survey data, taken from the Netherlands Longitudinal Lifecourse Study (NELLS), describe how we augment these survey data with a web-scraped and geocoded list of Dutch mosques, and describe our statistical methods. We then present the results of our statistical analyses and discuss their substantive interpretation. The conclusion reflects on the broader relevance of the Dutch case and offers some directions for future research.

2. The symbolism of mosques and the radical right

Muslim places of congregation such as mosques are seen by nativists as a threat to Western values and culture because they symbolise the incursion of a foreign, incompatible culture (Betz & Meret, 2009). Hafez (2014, p. 495) puts it bluntly in asserting that for some groups in Western societies, mosques make “visible the imagined Muslim ‘enemy within’”. Yet mosques, as with any place of worship, can be indistinct and fade into the local surroundings, or they can be highly conspicuous. The social discomfort would seem to be most strongly associated with the latter – most notably when the mosque is adorned by noticeable minarets. These minarets are described by certain political entrepreneurs as a fundamental threat to majority cultures and identities. In the case of Switzerland, minarets have been the subject of bans in an attempt to limit the proliferation of Islam (Betz & Meret, 2009). Minarets depart from traditional Western architectural traditions. They thus stand apart from other features of their built environment, and link the local Muslim population to the wider, international discourse surrounding Islam (Mayer, 2011), furthering the “enemy within” narrative.

At the same time, mosques are not simply symbols of a changing religious landscape. Their construction can act as a concrete signal that society is undergoing important demographic shifts, and that there is a growing number of immigrants in one's milieu (Mayer, 2011). As

expected by theories of group threat (Blumer, 1958; Bobo & Hutchings, 1996), the construction of mosques and a changing built environment can be a source of anxiety for some, as they may indicate a growing challenge to the dominant local culture (Dunn, 2005). The construction of mosques thus confronts Westerners with two important societal changes. Both local culture and demography are being forced to change by immigration. For some, these changes are not only unwelcome, but also threatening.

These important societal changes – and the collective anxieties they generate – have been associated with the recent rise in the electoral fortunes of radical right movements (Bonikowski, 2017), such as the Lega (Nord) in Italy, the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (SVP) in Switzerland, and the *Dansk Folkeparti* in Denmark. These political entities advance a nationalism that espouses an exclusionary form of social diversity (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018).

Radical right parties have mobilised not only against non-European (typically Muslim) immigration, but they have also targeted the symbols associated with such immigration. In radical right discourse, Islamic symbols weaken local cultures and identities, and Islamic culture is incompatible with Western values. Consequently, Muslim migrants cannot assimilate to the host culture (Betz & Meret, 2009). According to Brubaker (2017), these political movements have even shifted from nationalism to “civilisationism” as they portray Islam as not just a national threat, but as a threat to Western civilisation. It is therefore unsurprising that protests against mosques – particularly those with minarets – have played an important mobilising role in European far right nationalism (Hafez, 2014).

In sum, mosques are portrayed as symbols of a foreign culture, and further have fuelled nativist rhetoric from radical right political parties. Yet, to our knowledge, no prior research has explored the relationship between exposure to mosques and radical right party support. This maintains even though a growing body of scholarship has shown that proximity to salient features in one's built environment can influence political behaviour and attitudes across a wide range of policy domains and country contexts – for example, with proximity to mosques and Islamophobic attitudes in Australia (Gravelle, 2021), and proximity to the US–Mexico border and expressions of nativism (Gravelle, 2016) and support for increased border security in the United States (Gravelle, 2018a).

An explanation for such proximity effects in public attitudes is found in construal level theory (Trope & Liberman, 2010) which posits that mental representations of objects that are spatially (or temporally) proximate are detailed and concrete (a “low-level” construal); objects that are distant are represented abstractly (a “high-level” construal) (Trope et al., 2007). Thus, for some societal groups, mosques and minarets in one's milieu are a very real (and not an abstract) consideration. This may lead to heightened perceptions of threat, and shape voting behaviour accordingly. Based on the arguments above, we advance the following hypothesis:

H1.0. Residing near a mosque increases the likelihood of majority group members supporting a radical right party.

Yet, as previously mentioned, mosques can be inconspicuous. It stands to reason that it is truly minarets that stand apart. They not only amplify the visibility of the mosque, but also reinforce the non-Western changes that have occurred at the neighbourhood level. Therefore, if spatial proximity to mosques influences political attitudes through the symbolic threat that they engender, this relationship should be more pronounced for mosques with minarets. We thus put forth a complementary hypothesis on spatial proximity to mosques:

H2.0. Residing near a mosque *with a minaret* increases the likelihood of majority group members supporting a radical right party.

At the same time, not all segments of the electorate may react the same way to a mosque in their milieu. We would of course expect that those on the political right will be drawn to radical right parties, since

left-right political orientations structure evaluations of parties and candidates (Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016; Jost et al., 2009). Yet positing a uniform effect of political orientations on radical right party support would be overly simplistic. Research in political psychology has repeatedly found that left-right ideological orientations are linked to both psychological and physiological reactions to aversive stimuli (Dodd et al., 2012). This is to say that those on the political right are more likely than those on the left to perceive as threatening and to pay greater attention to unfamiliar aspects of their environment (Feldman & Stenner, 2011; Hibbing et al., 2014b; Jost, 2017; Jost et al., 2003). Conservatives have an epistemic need to avoid uncertainty and to manage threats (Jost & Napier, 2012). It is important to highlight here the interplay implied between individual political orientations and local context, including the built environment. As Jost and colleagues put it, it is important to consider “situations as well as dispositions” (2003, p. 340). Some individuals may be predisposed toward a particular form of political behaviour, but there needs to be an external stimulus or trigger (such as a perceived threat) to convert a predisposition into behaviours aimed at maintaining the existing social order, such as supporting radical right parties and candidates (Feldman & Stenner, 2011; Jost et al., 2003; Oxley et al., 2008). To wit, in the American context, Gravelle (2016) finds that those on the political right and who reside closer to the US–Mexico border – an ostensible source of threat – are more likely to express restrictionist immigration attitudes than those who live farther away. Border proximity (a trigger) thus amplifies the effect of partisanship (a predisposing factor).

Applied to the Dutch case, we hypothesize that it is voters on the political right for whom proximity to mosques shapes the likelihood voting for the radical right. After all, the Dutch multi-party political system offers centre-right alternatives, such as the *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, or VVD) and the *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* (Christian Democratic Appeal, or CDA), both of which were until the 2021 election in the coalition government. Yet, it is those right-leaning Dutch voters (who are predisposed to supporting the PVV) and who reside near mosques (a negatively valenced external trigger) who are most likely to experience heightened perceptions of threat, and who are most likely to pledge support for the PVV. This leads us to advance the following hypotheses relating to the interaction of political ideology and proximity to mosques.

H1.1. Residing near a mosque increases the likelihood of *right-leaning* majority group members supporting a radical right party.

H2.1. Residing near a mosque *with a minaret* increases the likelihood of *right-leaning* majority group members supporting a radical right party.

3. The symbolic threat of visible diversity

The neighbourhoods citizens inhabit are characterized not only by features of the built environment, but also their demographics – in particular the local-level concentration of outgroups. Radical right parties often portray immigrants generally and Muslim immigrants in particular as both an economic and a symbolic (cultural) threat to the host society. Cultural factors related to social diversity typically emerge as the stronger predictor of voting for radical right parties over economic factors (e.g., Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016; Evans & Ivaldi, 2021; Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012; Oesch, 2008; Savelkoul et al., 2017). At the same time, Muslim places of worship tend to be located in areas where a local congregation is present. If a citizen of the majority group lived near a mosque, they would also be likely to be in regular contact with members of the Muslim minority. This points to local demographic context as a set of related phenomena that are nevertheless distinct from proximity–distance (cf. Gravelle, 2021).

The effects of local demographic context have been theorised in various ways. Drawing on earlier theories of intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), research on nativism has often found “positive contact” effects: larger local minority or foreign-born populations are

associated with reduced nativist attitudes among ethno-cultural majorities (Gravelle, 2019; Newman, 2013). Other research drawing on theories of group threat (Blalock, 1956) has found that over-time increases in minority or foreign-born populations are associated with increased nativist attitudes (Gravelle, 2016, 2019; Kaufmann & Goodwin, 2018). This research makes an important distinction between the effects of *levels* of minority or foreign-born populations and over-time *changes* in their size on the expression of nativist attitudes (Kaufmann, 2017).

Studies focused more directly on support for radical right parties have yielded mixed results. Some studies find that larger minority or foreign-born populations are associated with lower support for the radical right (Evans & Ivaldi, 2021) while increasing minority or foreign-born populations are associated with greater support (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018; Kaufmann, 2017). To wit, recent studies find that direct exposure to the influx of Syrian refugees increased support for populist radical right parties (Dinas et al., 2019). Studies focusing on the Dutch case have at times found that high-concentration immigrant areas exhibit higher voting for the PVV (Savelkoul et al., 2017; van Wijk et al., 2020), while other studies found no effect of minority or foreign-born local context, nor change in local context (Berning & Ziller, 2017; Lubbers & Coenders, 2017; van Wijk et al., 2019). Such varied (and sometimes contradictory) findings may be partly attributable to defining “local” context at widely varying levels of resolution (Kaufmann & Goodwin, 2018; van Wijk et al., 2020). Still other studies find evidence of higher support for the radical right in areas of low immigrant concentration that are close to areas of high concentration – a so-called “halo effect” – that is theorised as resulting from exposure to immigrants without meaningful intergroup contact (Evans & Ivaldi, 2021; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013; van Wijk et al., 2020).

Existing theory and research thus provide a basis for hypotheses linking local context, change in local context, and the surrounding context (halo) on support for the populist radical right. At the same time, existing studies have not tested the level, change, and halo hypotheses alongside the mosque proximity hypothesis, though previous research on nativist attitudes in the United States indicates that proximity effects and demographic context effects may hold at the same time (Gravelle, 2016). Our contention is that it is important to define and measure local context in ways that capture both architectural context and demographic context. This leads to the following three hypotheses:

H3.0. Higher concentrations of non-Western immigrants in an area (higher visible diversity) decreases the likelihood of majority group members supporting a radical right party.

H4.0. Increasing concentrations of non-Western immigrants in an area (increasing visible diversity) increases the likelihood of majority group members supporting a radical right party.

H5.0. Higher concentrations of non-Western immigrants surrounding an area (higher visible diversity in the “halo”) increases the likelihood of majority group members supporting a radical right party.

As with proximity to mosques (or mosques with minarets), the effects of visible diversity and increasing visible diversity may be most pronounced among those on the political right. As noted above, conservatives are predisposed to perceiving threat when faced with unfamiliar aspects of their environment (Feldman & Stenner, 2011; Hibbing et al., 2014b; Jost, 2017; Jost et al., 2003). Those on the right also tend to hold more negative perceptions of outgroups – Muslims in particular – than those on the left (Gravelle, 2018b, 2021; Jost, 2017; Jost et al., 2009). When confronted with an unfamiliar environment or with social or demographic change, conservatives are more likely to perceive a threat to the existing social order and to behave in ways intended to defend it (Jost et al., 2003). Still, existing studies have typically considered the effects of outgroup concentration (or growth) on support for the radical right as an external trigger without considering potential interactions with individual-level political predispositions.

Recent studies of immigration attitudes in Europe, the US, and

Australia provide clear evidence of such interactions. Higher local-level concentration of outgroups and increases in outgroups' size over time increase the expression of restrictionist attitudes among those on the political right (Gravelle, 2016, 2019; Karreth et al., 2015). This leads to the following three hypotheses relating to the interactions of political ideology with local demographic context:

H3.1. Higher concentrations of non-Western immigrants in an area (higher visible diversity) increases the likelihood of *right-leaning* majority group members supporting a radical right party.

H4.1. Increasing concentrations of non-Western immigrants in an area (increasing visible diversity) increases the likelihood of *right-leaning* majority group members supporting a radical right party.

H5.1. Higher concentrations of non-Western immigrants surrounding an area (higher visible diversity in the "halo") increases the likelihood of *right-leaning* majority group members supporting a radical right party.

4. Data and methods

To test these hypotheses, we draw on data from the Netherlands Longitudinal Lifecourse Study (or NELLS) conducted between December 2008–May 2010 and February–December 2013. The NELLS survey is conducted using face-to-face interviews with 15–45 year-olds, and is designed as a stratified cluster sample of Dutch municipalities (with stratification by region and level of urbanisation). Within clusters, respondents are selected from the Dutch population registry by stratified random sampling using age group, country of birth, and parents' country of birth strata. Though the sample design incorporates oversamples of respondents of Moroccan and Turkish origin, we restrict our analyses to the subset of respondents who self-identify as having Dutch ethnicity and being non-Muslim, born in the Netherlands, with parents born in the Netherlands, and who participated in both waves of the survey. This yields a sample of 1685 respondents, or 3370 respondent-wave observations. Focusing on the ethnic Dutch, native-born population also aligns us with best practices in the study of ethnocultural attitudes among majority racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups in Western societies (Kaufmann & Goodwin, 2018), for example, non-Hispanic whites in the US (Gravelle, 2016), and the European-descendent, English- and French-speaking majorities in Canada (Gravelle, 2018b).

The two-wave panel design of the NELLS study presents certain analytical opportunities, even in the presence of attrition from the panel (i.e., wave non-response). Since both survey waves recorded respondents' party support, there is an opportunity to examine support for the radical right in a dynamic political environment. The 2010, 2012 Dutch general elections saw the PVV rise to third place in both the popular vote and in the number of parliamentary seats. The data also allow for an examination of the effects of a change in socio-demographic context in support for the radical right when respondents move between survey waves, and when the local demographic or spatial context itself changes.

The NELLS data contain several survey items that capture our concepts of interest. Our measure of support for a radical right political party asks simply: "Which political party do you prefer?" and respondents are directed to select their response on a tablet computer without disclosing their response to the interviewer, thereby mitigating social desirability effects. We focus on those who indicate their preference for the PVV, contrasted with those who prefer all other political parties (or no party). This indicates that roughly 1 in 5 (19.1 percent) of the sample support the PVV, though this proportion varies across time: 14.7 percent in wave 1, and 23.4 percent in wave 2. To capture left–right ideology, we rely on a question capturing survey respondents' self-placement on a 0 to 10 left-to-right scale, rescaled 0 to 1 (mean = 0.53, SD = 0.20). The NELLS survey data contain several covariates, including sex, age, and education.

By special arrangement, we obtained respondent postcodes from the

NELLS principal investigators. This allows us to append postcode-level census data from Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Specifically, we calculate the percentage of the non-Western immigrant population for 2009 (wave 1) and 2013 (wave 2), and the five-year percentage point change in the non-Western immigrant population for 2004–2009 (wave 1) and 2008–2013 (wave 2) to capture local demographic change. Given the younger age profile of NELLS respondents, we elect to use a measure of recent demographic change as opposed to change over a longer time frame. We also calculate our measure of the immigrant concentration "halo" by first finding all postcodes within 2.5 km of respondents' own postcodes (using postcode centroids). We then subtract the percentage of non-Western immigrants in respondents' postcodes from the percentage of non-Western immigrants in the surrounding postcodes. Negative values (implying residing in an area of higher non-Western immigrant concentration than the surrounding area) are set to zero. These procedures align with those used in other studies testing halo effects (e.g., van Wijk et al., 2020).

While many studies of the effects of local context on political behaviour use linearly-scaled contextual variables – almost as an uninterrogated default – research on the psychology of sensory perception points to a log transformation as the more appropriate specification. According to "Fechner's law," human perception of a stimulus is a logarithmic function of its physical magnitude; fixed increases in the magnitude of a stimulus are therefore perceived as diminishing increases in the stimulus (Leshner & Pfaff, 2011). This general principle is also supported by evidence from the Netherlands showing that *perceived* outgroup size is a logarithmic function of *actual* size (Laméris et al., 2018). Accordingly, we log-transform our measures of non-Western immigrant concentration, percentage point change in non-Western immigrant concentration, and non-Western immigrant halo.

Though local data on specifically Muslim concentration are not available from the CBS, it worth highlighting that Muslim-majority countries predominate among the sources of non-Western immigration to the Netherlands. This has historically included Morocco, Turkey, and present-day Indonesia. More recent sources of immigration include the former Yugoslavia, as well as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria (cf. Rath, 2009). Data on non-Western immigrant concentration thus serve as the best available and most appropriate measures of the level and change in level of visible diversity in and surrounding respondents' local areas. They have also been used in other studies of Dutch political behaviour (e.g., Savelkoul et al., 2017; van Wijk et al., 2020). Table A1 in the online appendix presents a set of models using measures of Moroccan and Turkish immigrant concentration that yield results very similar to those we present below.

Calculating proximity to mosques, however, presents a practical challenge. We overcome this challenge by using a set of geospatial and data science tools. First, survey respondents were geocoded based on their four-digit postcodes using postcode centroids. (Respondent postcodes were obtained from the NELLS principal investigators.) It is worth noting that high-resolution respondent-level geographic indicators are not available for other potential data sources, such as the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study. We acknowledge that areal geocoding using Dutch four-digit postcodes implies some loss of accuracy as compared to geocoding respondents using their full postcodes (comprising four digits and two characters, often indicating a range of street addresses). Still, Dutch four-digit postcodes are relatively compact areas (with a median area of 5.5 km²), especially compared to the geographic units used for geocoding and relied upon in other published studies, such as European NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 regions (Berezin & Díez Medrano, 2008; Kuhn, 2011), US ZIP codes (Gravelle, 2016, 2018a), Australian postcodes (Gravelle, 2021), or the first three characters of Canadian postal codes (Gravelle, 2014a,b), all of which are substantially larger areas. Further, maximal locational accuracy needs to be weighed against the preservation of respondent confidentiality and the prevention of respondent reidentification (Gutmann & Stern, 2007). We would assert that areal geocoding at the four-digit postcode level balances these considerations

while still allowing us to undertake meaningful analyses.

A list of Dutch mosques and their street addresses was created by scraping the website www.moskeewijzer.nl (translated as “mosque pointer”), which serves the Muslim community in the Netherlands and provides mosque locations and information on the groups they cater to. Mosque addresses were then geocoded using the Google Maps application programming interface (API). We then manually reviewed the mosque latitude–longitude coordinates in Google Maps to ensure that a mosque was visible at each location, and made corrections to addresses and latitude–longitude coordinates where necessary. These processes yielded an initial list of 428 mosques across the Netherlands. This manual review also allowed us to code each mosque location as either having a minaret present or not. Two coders coded the presence of a minaret with high inter-coder reliability (Kappa = 0.85; 94.4% coder agreement); a third coder adjudicated between differently-coded mosques to produce the final codes. We were also mindful that our listing of Dutch mosques postdates the NELS survey data collection, meaning that our initial list includes mosques built after the surveys were conducted. To mitigate introducing errors into our distance calculations, we conducted manual online searches of the Dutch national land registry system (Kadaster) to ascertain each mosque’s year of construction (or conversion to a mosque). This allows us to use only those mosques built as of 2008 or 2012 in our distance calculations for the first and second NELS survey waves, respectively. Our final lists thus contain 375 mosques (90 with minarets) for wave 1 and 396 mosques (100 with minarets) for wave 2. The spatial distribution of mosques across the Netherlands is shown in Fig. 1.

With both geocoded survey data and validated, geocoded lists of mosques along with codes for the presence of minarets in-hand, we then perform spatial joins between the datasets to obtain both the distance to the nearest mosque and the distance to the nearest mosque with a minaret. Finally, we employ a logarithmic transformation on these geodetic distances. This transformation is informed by the concept of

“distance decay” from geographic theory (Eldridge & Jones, 1991; Taylor, 1971) which posits that the density of social interactions and travel are functions of distance. Further, empirical results suggest that the optimal transformation of distance is the logarithmic transformation. Phenomena as varied as the spatial distribution of friendships (Preciado et al., 2012) and daily travel patterns (Halás et al., 2014) exhibit a logged distance pattern. Studies of public opinion and political behaviour align with these results. Several studies find that the effect of distance to a salient geographic feature on public attitudes decays as distances become ever greater. This applies to a variety of features of the built environment, including international frontiers (Berezin and Díez Medrano, 2008; Gravelle, 2014a, 2016, 2018a; Hangartner et al., 2019), hydraulic fracturing well sites (Clarke et al., 2016), oil pipelines (Gravelle & Lachapelle, 2015), electricity transmission lines (Mueller et al., 2017), and indeed even mosques (Gravelle, 2021). We follow this established practice in using logged distance to the nearest mosque in our models.

Though some might consider it implausible for mosques to exert any influence on attitudes or behaviours beyond some threshold (for example, 5, 10, or 20 km), we elect to remain consistent with existing research in using a continuous measure of distance without imposing an arbitrary maximum threshold on the distance values. Though the “friction of distance” is assumed to increase with ever greater distances, it is never absolute (Eldridge & Jones, 1991).

It is important to acknowledge that other contextual effects on support for the PVV are also plausible. These include measures of the local socio-economic context, including income and educational attainment, which other studies of support for the populist radical right have examined (e.g., Evans & Ivaldi, 2021; Savelkoul et al., 2017; van Gent et al., 2014; van Wijk et al., 2019, 2020). There is also the issue of population density to consider. Given that most Dutch mosques and non-Western immigrants are found in densely-populated urban areas, our hypothesized effects relating to proximity to mosques and local visible diversity may in fact be due to urbanity, which has been shown to predict support for the populist radical right in some studies (van Gent et al., 2014) but not others (Berning & Ziller, 2017; Evans & Ivaldi, 2021). Accordingly, we also control for population density (population per square kilometre) at the postcode level. An alternative model specification (reported in Table A2 in the online appendix) that includes postcode level-measures of the percentage of residents classified as high-income, and percentage of residents classified as having higher education yields results that do not alter our substantive conclusions.

Our dichotomous measure of party support points to some form of generalised linear model such as logistic regression. At the same time, the NELS data are longitudinal, with two observations per respondent. Also, respondents reside within a finite set of local contexts (proxied by their postcodes) and thus subject to the same contextual influences within each locale. Further, respondents may relocate between waves of survey data collection, implying a change in their local contexts. To address this set of issues, we fit generalised linear mixed models with cross-classified (or “non-nested”) random effects (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). To be exact, we specify random intercepts by postcodes and by respondents, allowing for respondents to be nested within different postcodes at different points in time.

Since our explanation of PVV support focuses on local contextual factors interacting with individual-level political predispositions, a potential criticism is that proximity to mosques and socio-demographic context are not exogenous to political beliefs and party support, and our results may be due to residential self-selection. Though outwardly plausible, research on support for the radical right in the UK using longitudinal survey data (Kaufmann, 2017) has established that the direction of these relationships is from local context to party support, and not the reverse.

More to the point, the two-wave panel design of NELS allows us to assess whether the ethnic Dutch electorate on the political right (particularly supporters of the radical right) are more likely to relocate,

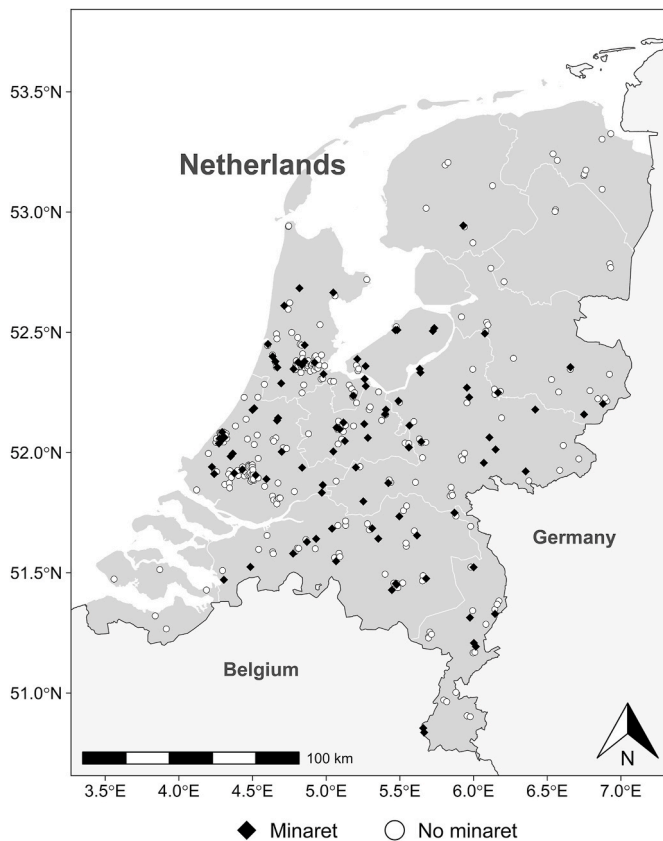


Fig. 1. Map, mosques in the Netherlands (2013).

and when relocating, to choose residences further away from mosques, or in less visibly diverse (or diversifying) areas. To do so, we estimate a set of finite mixture models (McLachlan & Peel, 2000) in which we model simultaneously: (1) whether respondents relocated to a different postcode between the 2008–2010 and 2013 waves of the survey (or not), and (2) conditional on having relocated, whether the respondents: moved closer to or farther away from the nearest mosque, or mosque with a minaret, to an area with a less (or more) visibly diverse population, or to an area with a slower (or faster) rate of demographic change (These models are reported in Table A3 in the online appendix.).

Briefly stated, we find no compelling evidence that residential self-selection is politically driven among the ethnic Dutch population. The 105 NELLS panel respondents who relocated do not differ systematically in their political characteristics from the 1580 who did not. Some of the demographic effects are perhaps expected: the mixing probabilities indicate that respondents who are younger, better educated, in smaller households, who rent, and who reside in an apartment are more likely to relocate. They also provide weak evidence that PVV supporters are less (not more) likely to relocate, yet the normal (non-zero) components of the models make clear that when they do relocate, their political orientations do not systematically influence their choice of residence (cf. Kaufmann, 2017).

With longitudinal data, fixed effects models are sometimes preferred over random effects models because they control for unobserved factors. With a dichotomous dependent variable, however, they require that one subsets the data to examine only those cases where there is change in the value of the dependent variable, and further, that the independent variables change in value for a substantial proportion of the sample (Allison, 2009). Fixed effects models are therefore not well suited to assessing the effects of time-invariant independent variables. In the case of the NELLS data, variability over time is limited on key variables: there are only 30 respondents (or less than 2 percent) who changed their party support to (or away from) the PVV between waves 1 and 2, and who also experienced a change in proximity to a mosque with or without a minaret. In our view, discarding 3310 respondent-wave observations out of 3370 (more than 98 percent of the data) while substantially increasing the variance of our estimates is hardly worth the promised reduction in bias. Given the characteristics of the NELLS data, we maintain that generalised linear mixed models are fit for purpose. We nevertheless take advantage of the two-wave structure of the NELLS data and undertake an analysis of switching party support to the PVV in 2013 from another party in 2008–2010, the results of which are directionally consistent with our main results below (see Table A4 in the online appendix).

5. Results

The generalised linear mixed models yield several notable results (see Table 1). Model 1 provides strong (if unsurprising) confirmation of the relationship between left–right ideology and support for the PVV: those on the political right are significantly more likely to express support. To illustrate this in substantive terms, we can calculate predicted probabilities of supporting the PVV while setting sex to male, year to 2013, and all other independent variables at their means or reference values while systematically varying the values of ideology. A person identifying as far left has only a 0.003 probability of supporting the PVV; this increases to 0.07 for a person identifying with the ideological centre; a person identifying as far right has a 0.68 probability of supporting the PVV.

Turning to the spatial and contextual variables, our results are generally in line with our expectations. (It is worth highlighting that the contextual relationships discussed below hold while controlling for population density, which does not itself exert a statistically significant effect.) The relationship between distance to a mosque and PVV support is statistically significant, supporting $H_{1,0}$ and indicating an overall mosque “proximity effect.” The main effect of postcode-level non-

Western percentage is negatively signed (in keeping with theoretical expectations) but is not statistically significant at conventional levels, providing weak support for $H_{3,0}$, and for a “positive contact” effect of greater neighbourhood-level visible diversity and decreased support for the far right. By contrast, there is strong evidence that increasing visible diversity exerts a positive effect on support for the PVV. There is also evidence of a positive effect of greater visible diversity in surrounding areas (i.e., a halo effect) on support for the PVV. Overall, these patterns of results – reduced support for nativism or the far right with higher levels of visible diversity but heightened support with increasing levels of visible diversity – differ from previous studies of support for the radical right in the Netherlands (Savelkoul et al., 2017; van Wijk et al., 2019, 2020) yet they align with findings from other Western democracies (Gravelle, 2016; Kaufmann, 2017).

Given that some Muslim gathering places may be far less conspicuous than an archetypal minaret-topped mosque, we consider whether it is proximity to a minaret – rather than proximity to simply any mosque – that triggers perceptions of threat, and thus influences support for the PVV. We test this in Model 2, and find a significant negative effect larger in magnitude than the overall mosque proximity effect seen in Model 1, implying that among the ethnic Dutch electorate, it is closer proximity to a minaret-adorned mosque that is most strongly associated with higher support for the PVV. Because Model 1 and Model 2 are non-nested models, their fit is compared using the Akaike information criterion (AIC). The lower AIC for Model 2 indicates better fit, and is thus the preferred model. This finding offers clear support for $H_{2,0}$. Translating this result into predicted probabilities is again helpful. The probability of expressing support for the PVV at a distance of 500 m is 0.22; it is 0.15 at 2 km, 0.12 at 5 km, 0.10 at 10 km, and 0.08 at 20 km.

The results from Models 1 and 2, though, only provide evidence of the additive effects of the measures of local context (both architectural and demographic). As previously discussed, different segments of the ethnic Dutch population may react differently to proximity to a mosque (whether adorned with a minaret or not), neighbourhood-level visible diversity, or change in visible diversity over time based on their political predispositions. Models 3–7 examine these possibilities by testing separate interactions between left–right ideology and each of distance to the nearest mosque, distance to the nearest mosque with a minaret, local non-Western immigrant concentration, percentage point change in local non-Western immigrant concentration, and non-Western immigrant concentration in the surrounding area.

Model 1 found a significant additive (or overall) effect of proximity to a mosque, and Model 3 yields only weak evidence of an interaction between ideology and logged distance to a mosque. Model fit improves only slightly over Model 1 ($\chi^2(1) = 2.49, p = 0.115$). Still, the negative coefficient of the interaction term suggests (albeit tentatively) that at higher values for ideology (i.e., further to the right), closer proximity to mosques is associated with higher support for the PVV. This offers at best provisional support for $H_{1,1}$.

By contrast, Model 4 yields a statistically significant interaction between ideology and logged distance to a mosque with a minaret. The coefficient of the interaction term is again negatively signed; overall model fit compared to Model 2 is also significantly improved ($\chi^2(1) = 4.52, p = 0.034$). This similarly implies that for those on the political right, closer proximity to minarets is associated with higher support for the PVV, supporting $H_{2,1}$. Because interactive models are often difficult to intuit, it is again helpful to translate the results into predicted probabilities. Doing so makes clear that the effect of proximity to a mosque with a minaret increases support for the PVV mainly among the political right – its main base of electoral support, but also those predisposed to react to threats in their environment. To illustrate, the predicted probabilities of supporting the PVV change little for self-identified Dutch leftists and centrists. For those on the far left, the probability of PVV support is (perhaps unsurprisingly) consistently below 0.01. For those in the political centre, the probability of PVV support at a distance of 500 m is 0.17; it is 0.12 at 2 km, 0.10 at 5 km, 0.09 at 10 km, and 0.07 at 20 km.

Table 1
Explaining support for the party for freedom (PVV).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
<i>Fixed Effects</i>														
Intercept	-3.13	(0.26)***	-3.16	(0.26)***	-3.12	(0.26)***	-3.17	(0.21)***	-3.15	(0.26)***	-3.16	(0.26)***	-3.18	(0.27)***
Male	0.32	(0.16)*	0.33	(0.16)*	0.33	(0.16)*	0.34	(0.16)*	0.34	(0.16)*	0.33	(0.16)*	0.34	(0.16)*
ln Age (Years)	-0.19	(0.28)	-0.24	(0.29)	-0.18	(0.28)	-0.25	(0.29)*	-0.24	(0.28)	-0.24	(0.29)	-0.24	(0.29)
Education (ref = Upper secondary)														
Lower secondary or less	-0.74	(0.25)**	-0.78	(0.25)**	-0.72	(0.25)**	-0.77	(0.25)***	-0.75	(0.25)**	-0.78	(0.25)**	-0.78	(0.25)**
Non-university tertiary	-0.06	(0.23)	-0.07	(0.23)	-0.06	(0.23)	-0.07	(0.23)	-0.06	(0.23)	-0.07	(0.23)	-0.07	(0.23)
University/Technical University	0.39	(0.22)†	0.41	(0.22)†	0.38	(0.22)†	0.40	(0.22)†	0.41	(0.22)†	0.41	(0.22)†	0.41	(0.22)†
Left-Right (0-1)	6.61	(0.49)***	6.57	(0.49)***	6.54	(0.49)***	6.47	(0.50)***	6.54	(0.49)***	6.56	(0.50)***	6.58	(0.50)***
Year: 2013	0.78	(0.13)***	0.78	(0.13)***	0.78	(0.13)***	0.79	(0.14)***	0.79	(0.13)***	0.78	(0.13)***	0.79	(0.14)***
Postcode population per km ² (/10,000)	-0.42	(0.34)	-0.13	(0.33)	-0.41	(0.34)	-0.13	(0.33)	-0.13	(0.33)	-0.13	(0.33)	-0.12	(0.33)
ln Distance to Mosque (km)	-0.25	(0.11)*	-	-	-0.21	(0.12)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ln Distance to Minaret (km)	-	-	-0.30	(0.08)***	-	-	-0.27	(0.09)**	-0.30	(0.08)***	-0.30	(0.08)***	-0.30	(0.08)***
ln Postcode % Non-Western (+1)	-0.14	(0.17)	-0.21	(0.17)	-0.14	(0.17)	-0.21	(0.16)	-0.28	(0.17)	-0.21	(0.17)	-0.21	(0.16)
ln Postcode % point change Non-Western (5-year) (+5)	0.98	(0.34)**	1.02	(0.35)**	0.94	(0.34)**	1.00	(0.35)**	0.98	(0.35)**	1.01	(0.37)**	1.03	(0.35)**
ln Halo Postcodes % Non-Western (+1)	0.21	(0.09)*	0.15	(0.09)†	0.21	(0.09)*	0.15	(0.09)†	0.15	(0.09)†	0.15	(0.09)†	0.07	(0.09)
Left-Right × ln Distance to Mosque	-	-	-	-	-0.60	(0.38)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Left-Right × ln Distance to Minaret	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.71	(0.34)*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Left-Right × ln Postcode % Non-Western	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.21	(0.57)*	-	-	-	-
Left-Right × ln Postcode % point change Non-Western	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.13	(1.73)	-	-
Left-Right × ln Halo Postcodes % Non-Western	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.39	(0.41)***
<i>Random Effects (Crossed)</i>														
Intercept (Respondents)		2.64		2.76		2.60		2.80		2.72		2.76		2.84
Intercept (Postcodes)		0.30		0.22		0.30		0.19		0.21		0.22		0.17
N (Respondent-Wave Observations)		3370		3370		3370		3370		3370		3370		3370
N (Respondents)		1685		1685		1685		1685		1685		1685		1685
N (Postcodes)		351		351		351		351		351		351		351
Log Likelihood		-1231.40		-1227.77		-1230.15		-1225.51		-1225.54		-1227.77		-1221.68
AIC		2492.79		2485.55		2492.31		2483.03		2483.07		2487.54		2475.36

Notes: Models are generalised linear mixed models estimated by restricted maximum likelihood using bound optimization by quadratic approximation. All continuous variables are mean-centred.

† $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

For those on the far right, however, the probability of PVV support at a distance of 500 m is 0.93; this drops to 0.85 at 2 km, then 0.76 at 5 km, 0.68 at 10 km, and 0.58 at 20 km (see Fig. 2).

Model 5 yields a significant interaction between ideology and postcode-level non-Western percentage, supporting H_{3.1}. The coefficient for the lower-order local non-Western percentage term is significant and negative, implying that when ideology is at its (centrist) mean, higher levels of visible diversity *reduce* support for the PVV. At the same time, the coefficient for the higher-order interaction term is significant and positive; model fit also improves over Model 2 ($\chi^2(1) = 4.47, p = 0.034$). This indicates that for those on the right, higher levels of visible diversity *increase* support for the PVV. Calculating predicted probabilities again helps to clarify these patterns of results. Once more, the predicted probabilities of Dutch leftists supporting the PVV are vanishingly small and consistently below 0.01. For those in the political centre, the probability of PVV support is 0.13 when the local non-Western percentage is 2 percent, 0.10 at 5 percent, 0.09 at 10 percent, 0.07 at 20 percent, and 0.06 when it is 50 percent. In contrast to the pattern of declining support with greater visible diversity among those in the centre, those on the right increase their support with greater levels of diversity: the probability of PVV support is 0.69 when the local non-Western percentage is 2 percent, 0.73 when it is 5 percent, 0.76 when it is 10 percent, 0.79 when it is 20 percent, and 0.83 when it is 50 percent (see Fig. 3). Higher levels of local visible diversity thus amplify the differences in party support between the left and right in the Netherlands.

The results from Model 6 provide no evidence of an interaction between ideology and postcode-level change in non-Western immigrant concentration, failing to support H_{4.1}. The effect of neighbourhood-level demographic change, then, is best captured as the significant additive effect found in Model 1 and Model 2. To illustrate its effect, predicted probabilities are again helpful. For those on the far left, the predicted probability of supporting the PVV is consistently below 0.01 regardless of local demographic change over the preceding five years. For those in the political centre and in a postcode with no demographic change, the probability of supporting the PVV is 0.09, increasing to 0.12 given a postcode with a 2 percentage point increase in the non-Western immigrant population, and 0.17 given a postcode with a 5 percentage point increase in the non-Western immigrant population. On the right, residing in a postcode experiencing no demographic change entails a 0.72 probability of supporting the PVV, increasing to 0.79 given a postcode with a 2 percentage point increase in the non-Western population, and 0.84 given a postcode with a 5 percentage point increase in the non-Western immigrant population (see Fig. 4).

Just as local non-Western immigrant concentration amplifies

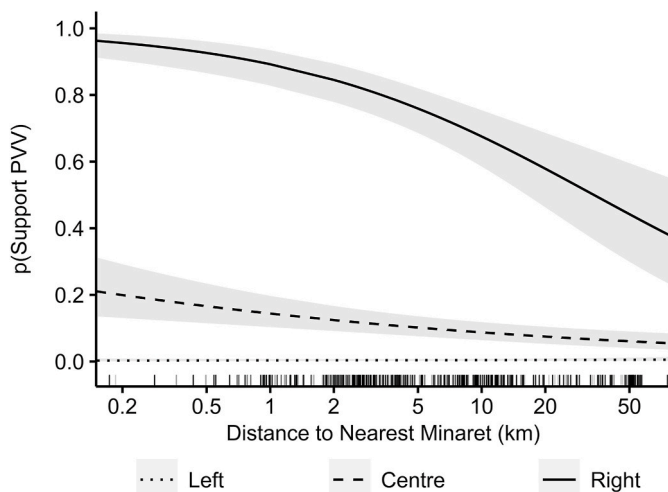


Fig. 2. PVV support, ideology, and distance to mosque with minaret.

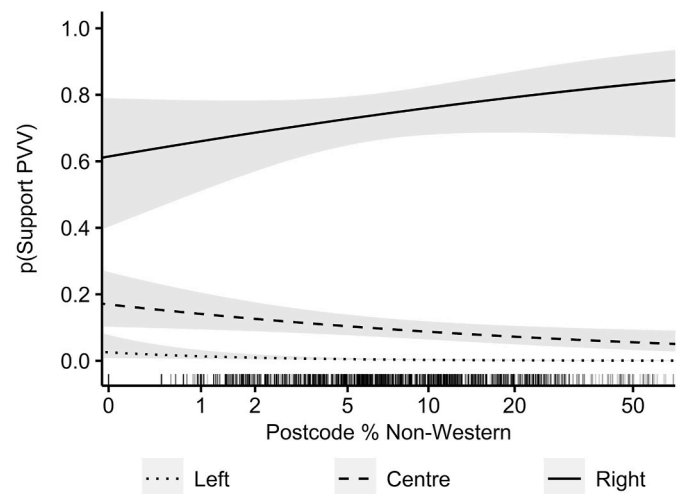


Fig. 3. PVV support, ideology, and local non-western percentage.

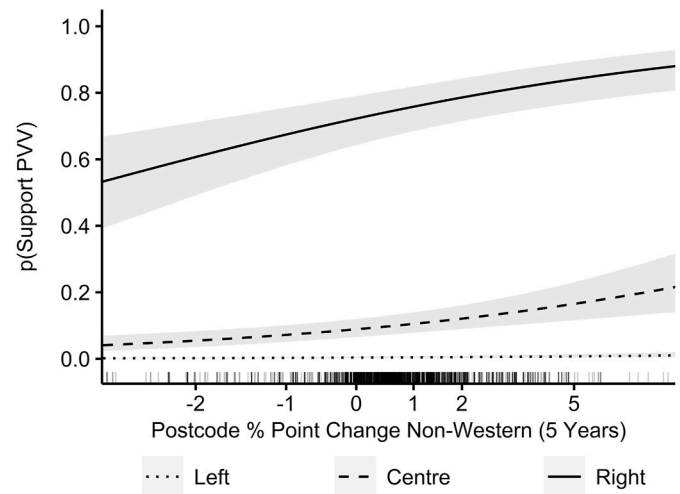


Fig. 4. PVV support, ideology, and change in local non-western percentage.

differences between left and right in PVV support, so does non-Western immigrant concentration in the surrounding area. Though we find some evidence for an overall “halo effect,” Model 7 yields a significant interaction between ideology and non-Western immigrant concentration in surrounding postcodes. Once again, the coefficient for the higher-order interaction term is significant and positive, and model fit improves over Model 2 ($\chi^2(1) = 12.18, p < 0.001$). Predicted probabilities are again useful in explicating this effect. The predicted probabilities of Dutch leftists supporting the PVV are (once more) consistently less than 0.01; for those in the political centre they are never greater than 0.10. By contrast, support for the PVV among those on the right increases with greater visible diversity in surrounding areas: the probability of PVV support is 0.62 when the surrounding area’s non-Western percentage is the same or lower than one’s local area, 0.78 when it is 2 percentage points higher, 0.86 when it is 5 percent points higher, 0.90 when it is 10 percentage points higher, and 0.94 when it is 20 percentage points higher (see Fig. 5).

Considering some of the demographic covariates, men are more likely to support the PVV than women. No significant differences emerge between Dutch voters of different ages. The NELLS data also reveal increasing support for the PVV with higher levels of education. Following the levels of the Dutch education system, respondents with a lower secondary education (or less) are less likely to support the PVV than those with an upper secondary education (the reference category),

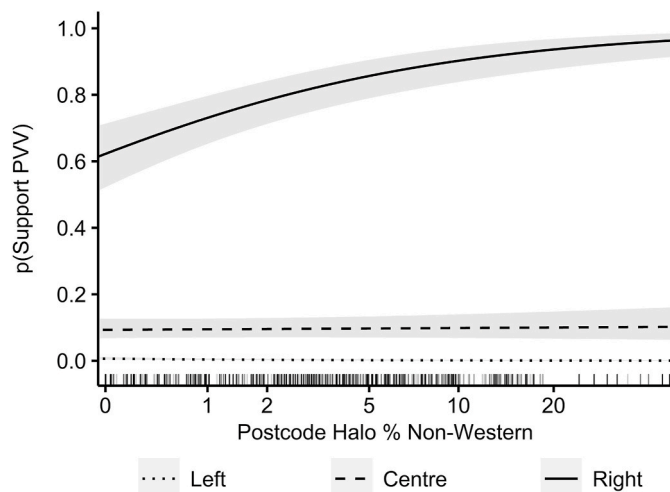


Fig. 5. PVV support, ideology, and surrounding-area non-western percentage.

while those with a university or technical university education are more likely to support for the PVV. This finding differs from previous research, which has either found a negative effect of higher education (e.g., de Blok & van der Meer, 2018; Savelkoul et al., 2017; van Gent et al., 2014) or no effect (e.g., Berning & Ziller, 2017; Lubbers & Coenders, 2017), and may be due to the younger age profile of the NELLS sample.

6. Conclusion

In the wake of several highly mediated acts of terrorism by Islamic radicals in Europe, threat-induced anxiety and nativism are currently at a historic high. This coincides with liberal anxieties about the rise of authoritarianism as an existential threat to democratic governance (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Still, it is important to emphasise that the rise and electoral success of radical right parties predates the current democratic turmoil. Further, the cueing of nativism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia by the radical right is not new. At the individual level, substantial evidence exists about the importance of psychological dispositions and political attitudes for the support of radical right (Aichholzer & Zandonella, 2016). Yet, the evidence linking environmental exposure to cultural symbols associated with such nativist tropes to individual-level support for radical right parties is surprisingly scarce. Our aim here has been to address this gap in empirical social science. By joining survey data from the Netherlands Longitudinal Lifecourse Study with a web-scraped and geocoded list of Dutch mosques and population data, we examined the extent to which a broadened conception of local context that encompasses proximity to mosques (as a feature of local architectural context) along with aspects of local demographic context accounts for support for the radical right in the Netherlands.

Our results allow us to better understand the influence of local changes caused by growing visible diversity on party support and, more specifically, the manner in which symbolic threats can influence political behaviour. Firstly, the findings lend support for our mosque proximity hypothesis ($H_{1,0}$), but even more strongly our minaret proximity hypothesis ($H_{2,0}$). Substantively, then, proximity to mosques can increase the likelihood of voting for a radical right party, and the visibility of its symbolism (in the form of a minaret) amplifies the effect. The importance of such a result is likely not lost to anyone thinking beyond the Dutch case and considering the infamous 2009 Swiss referendum banning minarets, spearheaded by the far-right SVP (Fetzer & Soper, 2003; Mayer, 2011). If our results hold outside the Netherlands, such a ban could have the unintended effect of reducing electoral support for the SVP.

Our results also lend support to the effect of local demographic context ($H_{3,0}$ and $H_{3,1}$). Larger local-area proportions of residents from a

non-Western background decrease the likelihood of voting for a radical right party, but on further inspection, those on the political right appear “immune” to the liberalising effect of local visible diversity. This aligns with findings from other Western democracies (Gravelle, 2016, 2019). The greater sensitivity of citizens on the right to proximity to mosques with minarets and to visible diversity in their milieu is also in line with past research on the interactive relationship between left–right ideology and perceptions of threat (Feldman & Stenner, 2011; Jost, 2017; Jost et al., 2003), and points to a type of disposition-situation (or person-environment) interaction that shapes support for the radical right.

Our project has thus been to explicate how political behaviour is a product of both individuals’ political dispositions and the particular contexts (encompassing both the built environment and demography) where they find themselves (Sniderman et al., 1991). Such disposition-situation interactions have important implications for politics and policy in increasingly diverse and diversifying Western societies.

Broadly, they suggest that both rapid demographic change and resultant changes to the built environment are likely to produce (indeed have produced) political backlash among a segment of society (Kaufmann, 2018). Further, such backlash is not merely political, but is deeply rooted in psychological needs to manage uncertainty and avoid threat (Jost et al., 2003; Jost & Napier, 2012). This suggests that there are few avenues for blunting it and blunting support for the radical right short of more tightly controlled immigration and more active integration policies. Still, the extent to which mosques, and especially minarets, as well as the presence of residents of non-Western background will shape political behaviour may be largely limited to citizens who identify with the political right. It is therefore important to recognise that while perceived threats from non-Western aspects of the local context can trigger behavioural adjustments among part of the citizenry, there is nevertheless a potentially larger group of citizens for whom non-Western architectural and demographic signals fail to produce an attraction to the radical right.

More concretely, our findings have important implications for debates regarding the integration of non-Western religious minorities into Western societies, especially for Muslim communities. At first thought, our results might point to simply foregoing minarets to avoid political backlash from a segment of the native population, yet such a recommendation would disregard the aspirations of the religious minority to be seen and accepted by the host society. Muslim communities in the Netherlands have desired to come out from their hidden places of worship and have a more prominent public presence (Beekers & Tamimi Arab, 2016; Maussen, 2009). Therefore, such a collective self-sacrifice, or imposition (as is the case in Switzerland), might not be welcomed. It might even prove counterproductive in the pursuit of greater social integration.

We nevertheless have to wonder about the specific aspect of minarets that triggers such reactions in certain individuals. Is it that they signal social change, or that they represent foreignness? Our findings do not give much credence to sociodemographic changes and diverse social environments being an overwhelming trigger of far-right preferences. Rather, the architecture of mosques has been an important battleground in the integration debate. Mosques that represent an Orientalist expression have been accused of reflecting an unhelpful nostalgia for the homeland that hinders the integration of Muslims in Western societies (Avcioglu, 2007; Sunier, 2021). By contrast, mosques that have broken from traditional aesthetics to embrace local and modern architectural elements, such as the Westermoskee in Amsterdam that uses traditional Dutch brickwork, has been interpreted as signalling a desire to integrate into the host society, though this reflected a concession by project leaders to win municipal approval (Roose, 2012). The greater use of “native” architectural elements might aid in limiting the triggering effect of minarets, though we cannot be certain that such a strategy would reduce far-right backlash. Further research is required to identify the

specific pathways linking features of the built environment (such as minarets) to support for the far-right.

It is also evident that further research is needed to investigate the relationships we identify in different political and geographic contexts. For instance, it would be important to understand the relationship between nativist support and proximity to minority places of worship in cases with longstanding religious minority groups (e.g., Muslims in Russia) in order to isolate the impact of foreign threat caused by immigrant communities versus generalised cultural threat to the majority group. Furthermore, it would also be beneficial to explore this relationship in different temporal contexts (e.g., during times of economic growth versus times of economic contraction). While the impact of visible diversity can be complicated to grasp, it is essential to thoroughly understand it in order to propose policies that promote positive intergroup relations.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary analyses and replication materials related to this article have been placed in an Open Science Framework (OSF) repository, accessible at <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/HKDGFR/>.

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