

The Effect of Xenophobia on Voter Support for Parties of the Extreme Right in Western Europe: A Macro-Level Analysis

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Abstract

This project assesses how xenophobia within a population translates to support for parties of the extreme right in Western Europe. Extreme right parties have experienced a dramatic rise in support at the polls with both the prominence of post-material values in voter decision-making and the party dealignment. They represent Western Europe at its most volatile: the extreme right echoes salient concerns about a stagnating economy and increasing multiculturalism. The party family staunchly opposes immigrants and minorities, blaming them for much of Europe's domestic strife. Extreme right rhetoric is wrought with xenophobic sentiment. How does the key attitudinal variable of xenophobia affect voter support for parties of the extreme right on the macro-level? Using data from Eurobarometer 53, a survey posing questions regarding Western European citizens' attitudes, and controlling for other variables postulated in the literature to be affectors to support for the extreme right, we quantitatively assess the relationship between xenophobia and vote share for parties of the extreme right in Western European democracies. Although not as powerful an affecter as immigration, xenophobia is demonstrated to be an important causal determinant to voter support for parties of the extreme right.

Why Model Voter Support for Parties of the Extreme Right?

The world is getting smaller. The forces of globalization have increased the scale and scope of communication, commerce and cultural outreach. Modern day advances allow farmers in France to sell their gourmet cheeses to cosmopolitan Chinese; a car manufactured in Idaho by a Japanese automaker is shipped overnight to its buyer in Germany. Such feats in commerce and subsequent meshing of cultures could only have been imagined by businessman and international connoisseurs in the past.

In Europe, the growth of the European Union has allowed free movement of goods, capital, and people between the borders of the continent. More importantly, globalization has facilitated the flow of international immigrants across Europe's collective border. Such freedom of mobility represents the greatest hopes of some, and the worst fears of others. Immigrants from West and North Africa and Asia continue to emigrate northward by the boatload to Europe in search of better political and economic lives for themselves and their posterity. European countries, immobilized by stagnant economies, an aging population, and a relatively volatile political climate,

have responded with mixed emotions to their new, darker-skinned and culturally-conspicuous neighbors. In all, Europe has reluctantly accepted its newcomers. However, immigrant birth-rates far outweigh those of the indigenous, and first-generation European-born children of immigrants are caught between their traditional cultures and those of Europe; cultural friction increasingly characterizes the situation. Riots by culturally-estranged and economically-handcuffed French-born Arab youth in the fall of 2005 serve as a blood-curdling reminder of what could be in store for Europe in the future.

Most interesting is the effect that immigration has had on European politics. Parliamentary systems in Europe allow researchers to quantitatively study the effects that this looming culture clash has had on European voting tendencies. Europe has in no doubt been affected; the recent popularity of parties representing the extreme right has polarized many across the continent. In the last two decades alone, many such parties have tripled their vote shares.¹

These parties represent European politics at its most volatile. Led by the Front National in France, they advocate an anti-system, populist brand of politics and voice a rather salient discontentment with the political status quo in Europe. More importantly, however, these parties voice a staunch resistance to immigration and multiculturalism. Many of the parties of the extreme right flaunt outright xenophobia and cultural extremism.¹

Europe's strongest parties of the extreme right are the aforementioned Front National in France, the National Alliance and the Northern League in Italy, the Flemish block in Belgium, and Austria's Freedom Party which has even broken into government coalitions in the past.¹ Although many of these parties have not had sufficient electoral success to warrant them considerable policy sway, many have had important affects on national political campaigns due in large part to their ability to set the topic of discussion and force other parties to recognize their most salient and controversial issues and establish positions on them.²

As in any democratic system, the rise of the extreme right in Europe can be fundamentally attributed to party popularity at the polls; these parties have mobilized to their present state because they attract voters. Therefore, understanding the factors behind voter support for parties of the extreme right in Europe is crucial to understanding this party family and its future. Deeper understanding will allow for more in depth analysis of the cultural friction behind much of Europe's domestic unrest, as well as shed light on the potential strength and scope of such cultural turmoil in the future. Perhaps more importantly, un-

Understanding voter support for the extreme right might allow researchers to anticipate extreme right policy preferences as such parties grab power within the framework of Europe's democracies. In this manner, understanding voter support for the extreme right will allow for better overall characterization of the party family itself in the context of an evolving Europe.

What is the Relationship Between Xenophobia and Support for the Extreme Right?

This project seeks to understand voter support for parties of the extreme right on the unit of the European population. We will explore the connection between voter attitudes and support for parties of the extreme right. Voter attitudes are factors other than political and economic outlook that likewise shape voter trends and issue-positions. Where past research has focused on the effects of ideological (left/right) proximity and immigration, as well as the effects of protest voting on support for parties of the extreme right, we consider the effects of the fundamental attitudinal variable xenophobia in the macro-level.³ In the scope of this project, xenophobia is defined as discomfort with people of other races and/or religions. Because many parties of the extreme right preach anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism to an extent that is often outright xenophobic, xenophobic sentiments are doubtlessly an attitude that might shape voter support for these parties.

What is the effect of xenophobic tendencies in a population on support for parties of the extreme right? This is the fundamental question posed and answered here. The ramifications of such a question are many. By understanding the salience of xenophobia in voter decision-making, one can then consider the social circumstances affecting voter attitudes, understand the way these attitudes manifest themselves in the political schema, and forecast the future of parties of the extreme right in the context of a volatile Europe.

Literature Reviewed

Parties of the extreme right have been a popular subject of study among political scientists, psychologists, and sociologists alike because they do not lend themselves to the mould of the classical political party. They are especially interesting when considering voter behavior. Researchers have considered methodological issues such as tabulating support for the extreme right, and independently assessing the salience of institutional, economic, and attitudinal factors influencing extreme right support. Still others have used comparative means to assess the factors that contribute to individual extreme right party success and failure.

Golder provides a groundbreaking model for support of the extreme right.⁴ He considers various causative variables to an individual party's relative success at the polls. His work is based on three main hypotheses. The Materialist hypothesis argues that unemployment increases support for parties of the extreme right only when immigration is high. The Institutional hypothesis argues that more permissive electoral systems function to increase the vote share of the extreme right. Finally, the Ideational hypothesis argues that high immigration increases

support for the extreme right regardless of other factors. His data affirms both the Institutional and the Ideational hypotheses finding both variables of electoral permissiveness as well as immigration to be significant positive affecters to vote share. Golder establishes a framework for understanding the economic and political factors that benefit parties of the extreme right in the context of European democracies.⁴ More importantly to this project, he provides a valuable set of controls that must be considered when attempting to quantitatively gauge support for parties of the extreme right using other external variables, such as xenophobia.

Norris also analyzes the rise of the radical right.⁵ She argues that voter support for this party family is a product of a complex synthesis of voter attitudes, party processes, and political structures. She downplays the importance of immigration rates and economic stability. On a macro-level, Norris argues against the value of attitudinal variables in predicting support for extreme right parties.

Radical right parties can gain ground in societies where attitudes toward ethnic minorities remain relatively liberal and tolerant, such as Norway, as well as faring poorly elsewhere in countries where the public proves more hostile toward outsiders...⁵ (p. 167)

However, the analyst does support the value of attitudinal variables in predicting support for the extreme right on the level of individual voters. Mainly, she argues that cultural protectionism, or the desire on the part of the individual to mitigate the effects of external cultural influences on his society, is the fundamental attitudinal cause for support for parties of the extreme right.⁵ In the context of Golder's work, Norris rejects the Materialist and Ideational hypotheses and accepts the Institutional hypothesis on the macro-level.

Van der Brug *et al.* argue that voter support for parties of the extreme right is based mainly in ideological (left/right) proximity, anti-immigrant stance, and relative party strength; they illustrate that such votes are not protest votes as is largely assumed.³ Their study of the 1994 European elections in seven electoral systems shows that voter support for parties of the extreme-right is no less based on rational choice than is support for mainstream parties. The researchers provide evidence that support bases of parties of the extreme right can be discussed in the same vein as those of other, more mainstream parties.³

The work of Van der Brug *et al.* is important because it implicitly argues that the political and economic outlook in a particular country has a large impact on voter support for parties of the extreme right. If voters vote based on rational judgment of policy preferences, then it is likely that their opinions on policies change with the political and economic situation in their particular country. This might indicate that the recent increase in support for parties of the extreme right at the polls is more a product of Europe's increasing political volatility and deepening economic stagnation rather than variables concerned with voter attitudes toward people of different races and/or religions. This framework directly contradicts Norris's analysis, which downplays economic and political variables in the macro-level, while supporting Golder's Materialist hypothesis.

Fetzer's work on voter support bases for anti-immigrant and/or nativist parties focuses on voter economic self-interest and cultural marginality as explanations for support for these parties.⁶ He argues that sociological and psychological models for voter behavior do not mesh sensibly with anti-immigration party policy preferences and methodology. Using survey data and multivariate analyses focusing on France, Germany and the United States, he assesses the strength of economic self-interest and cultural marginality as affecters to voter support for anti-immigrant parties. His findings indicate that although economic self-interest is at best a "luke-warm" predictor to voter support for the extreme right, cultural marginality is a strong predictor; the more culturally marginalized a voter feels, the less likely s/he is to vote for an anti-immigration/nativist party.⁶

Cultural marginality can be understood as an inverse of Norris's variable of cultural protectionism: majority cultures, those that are not culturally marginal, show cultural protectionism. In this sense, because Fetzer argues that cultural marginality is an inverse predictor to an individual voter's propensity to vote for the extreme right, and because Norris argues that cultural protectionism directly influences an individual's vote toward the extreme right, Norris and Fetzer implicitly agree on an important micro-level attitudinal cause to voter support for parties of the extreme right.

Fetzer's work also discusses the Allport-Pettigrew Contact hypothesis, which stipulates that contact can improve the overall relationship between natives and immigrants when this contact is meaningful and cooperative. However, when contact is casual, it tends to increase xenophobia on the part of the native, further isolating immigrants. He applies this theory to both Germany and France and discusses both cases.⁷

Schain discusses the tactics of the Front National in achieving surprising success in the 1997 parliamentary elections in France.² He attributes their success to three fundamental capacities. First, the party was able to unite voters on previously opposite sides of the political spectrum; it mobilized the working class by capitalizing on fears that immigrants had, and would continue to stifle the French unskilled labor market. At the same time the party maintained its more traditional right wing ultra-conservative support. He also discusses the Front National's masterful use of French labor unions in establishing "party machine" style campaigns. Finally, he hails the party's ability to control the campaign agenda by forcing other parties to consider controversial issues such as immigration, the present state of French politics, and French suburban conditions and articulate stances on them. In this manner, he implicitly warns that the Front National has established a model by which other parties of the extreme right might seize power across Europe.²

Schain's breakdown of the Front National's success fundamentally agrees with Fetzer's understanding of support bases for parties of the extreme right. Fetzer argues that economic self-interest and cultural marginality are both significant affecters to an individual's decision to support the extreme right. It is clear that working class support for the Front National stems directly from economic self-interest; while the party's traditional right wing ultra-conservative support base represents the least culturally marginalized in France. Those who are more

culturally marginalized are proportionally less likely to vote for parties of the extreme right. Therefore, it follows that those that are least marginalized are most likely to vote for the extreme right. In this manner, the Front National garners strength from both the economic self-interest of the working class, and by tapping their constituency's least marginalized voters.^{6,2}

De Witte also models support bases for the extreme right; he takes a multi-disciplinary approach to contrasting strong support for the Vlaams Blok, a Belgian party of the extreme right, and weak support for the corresponding party in the Netherlands.⁹ He analyzes the political systems of each country, the comparative attitudes of each country's citizens, and the agonistic effect both factors have on one another; he calls these three factors supply, demand and mobilization respectively. He argues that

...[s]upply, demand, and mobilization are the three basic elements of any theory of participation, regardless of whether it concerns voting for a party associated with a movement or taking part in a demonstration.⁹

He stipulates that in both countries, support for the extreme right is mainly based in the "demand", or negative attitude toward immigrants and to a lesser extent feelings of political dissatisfaction. He concludes that greater proportional support for the Vlaams Blok in Belgium is principally due to more intense negative attitudes towards immigrants and therefore, attitudinal factors are the most important affecters to support for the extreme right.⁹

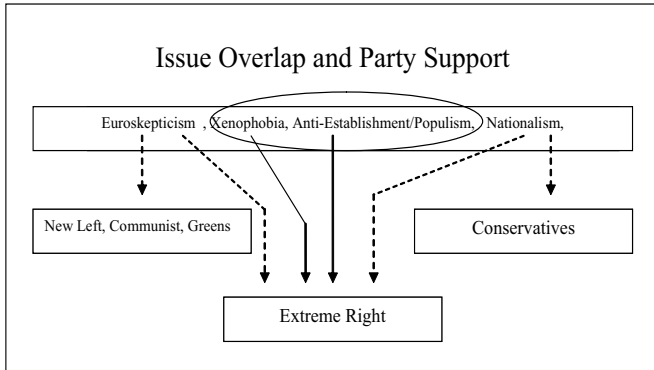
Although researchers have modeled voter support for the extreme right, and many have considered attitudinal variables in their arguments, the present work fails to analyze the effects of outright, expressed xenophobia on support for the extreme right in a quantitative, macro-level fashion. By considering xenophobia and its impact on voter support across Europe, we will shed light on much of the previous work considered here. In particular, we will refine the connections between attitudes, political realities and voter support for the extreme right, and will further define the concept of "attitude" in the scope of extreme right support.

Theory: Xenophobia Causes Support for the Extreme Right

Our analysis hinges on the relative importance of economic and/or political variables as opposed to attitudinal variables in the minds of voters on polling day. Although economic and/or political variables may be important, we hypothesize that attitudinal variables carry greater weight in the minds of voters; voters support parties of the extreme right mainly because these parties express outright opinions that are in line with voter attitudes.

The onset of post-material values in Europe has led to a steady dealignment in party identification across the continent. Because this dealignment has diminished the prominence of the political party in voter decisions, it has allowed smaller, more ideologically acute parties, such as parties of the extreme right, to gain in overall vote share.¹⁰ The dealignment has increased

Figure 1: The first line accounts for predispositions that could contribute to voter support for the extreme right. The circled dispositions are those that do not contribute to voter support for other parties and therefore are most salient in voter support for the extreme right.



the importance of party viewpoints on singular issues: voters today vote on independent issues more than ever before.¹⁰ Today’s voters are most likely to vote for the party that articulates their viewpoints on the issues most important to them. It follows that as party viewpoints on singular issues have increased in importance, attitudinal factors affecting voter viewpoints on such issues have become superbly important because voters select parties that share their viewpoints on key issues. Therefore, attitudinal factors have become more important than individual political and/or economic variables since post-material sentiments have pushed dealignment.¹⁰

Another important outcome of the dealignment is the ability of smaller parties to manipulate the electorate. As Dalton states, “the lack of longstanding partisan loyalties may also make electorates more vulnerable to manipulation and demagogic appeals.”¹⁰ (p. 193) Schain’s discussion of the Front National in France exemplifies the ability of smaller parties to manipulate the electorate; parties of the extreme right pressure their more mainstream counterparts by forcing them to articulate their stances on issues of immigration and multiculturalism

thereby making these factors more salient in voter decision-making processes.

Identifying the particular attitudinal factors that cause voter support for parties of the extreme right is another implicit objective of our analysis. We hypothesize that xenophobia is the most important attitude delineating support of the extreme right. To rationalize this hypothesis, one must consider the stances of the party family itself. Parties of the extreme right can be characterized as anti-immigrant, anti-multiculturalism, Euroskeptic, populist or anti-establishment and extremely nationalistic. Which predispositions on the part of a voter coinciding with these party stances most influence that voter to support an extreme right party? To consider whether a disposition of xenophobia, Euroskepticism, anti-establishmentism/populism or nationalism is most salient in voter choice, one must question where the policy stances of parties of the extreme right overlap with those of other, more mainstream party families. Logically, where party stances overlap, a voter is likely to have several parties to choose from, and is therefore less likely to vote for a party of the extreme right based solely that singular policy stance. It is those stances with fewest overlaps that must then correspond with attitudes that have the greatest effect on extreme right vote share.

Nationalism and Euroskepticism are both characteristics shared with other party families; nationalism is an ideal to which the conservative party family holds, while Euroskepticism is held by parties of the new left, communist parties, and, to an extent, the green party family. By default, then, the most salient predispositions of voters for the extreme right are xenophobia and anti-establishment/ populism because no other European party families adhere to these stances.

Although being anti-establishment/ populist is an important predisposition, it does not represent an attitude. Such a disposition is largely a product of the political and/or economic climate in a given country and therefore variable based on a

Table 1: Extreme Right Vote Share and Xenophobia by Country. Shows vote share of the Extreme Right, proportions of respondents answering “disturbed” by people of other races (question 47) and religions (question 48) as tabulated on “Eurobarometer 53”, and Average Xenophobic Index by country analyzed. * Average xenophobic Index varies between 0 and 2; 0 indicates no xenophobia, 2 indicates complete xenophobia.

Country	Voteshare(%)	Proportion Disturbed by Other Nationalities	Proportion Disturbed by Other Religions	Average Xenophobic Index*
Belgium	13.7	0.27	0.26	0.5
Denmark	12.9	0.23	0.32	0.5
Germany	0.6	0.17	0.18	0.3
Greece	1.1	0.23	0.20	0.4
Italy	16.3	0.14	0.12	0.3
Netherlands	0	0.05	0.06	0.1
Spain	11.1	0.20	0.17	0.4
France	11.4	0.10	0.10	0.2
Portugal	0	0.12	0.10	0.2
United Kingdom	0	0.16	0.13	0.3
Sweden	1.4	0.12	0.17	0.3
Austria	13.7	0.14	0.12	0.3
Aggregate	6.9	0.20	0.20	0.3
St. Deviation	6.5	0.10	0.20	0.1

Table 2: Vote Share and Control Variables by Country. Vote share of the Extreme Right, immigration (percentage of foreign citizens), percent unemployed, an interaction term between immigration and percent unemployed, log of the average district magnitude and seats allocated at the upper tier by country.

Country	Voteshare(%)	Immigration	Unemployment* Immigration	Log(Avg. District Magnitude)	Upper Tier Seats	Unemployment Rate
Belgium	13.7	8.7	79.17	0.88	0	9.1
Denmark	12.9	4.7	24.44	0.9	40	5.2
Germany	0.6	9.8	92.12	0	328	9.4
Greece	1.1	0	0	0.72	68	11.2
Italy	16.3	2	23.4	0	155	11.7
Netherlands	0	2	28.4	0.83	0	14.2
Spain	11.1	6.3	77.49	0	0	12.3
France	11.4	4.3	17.2	2.18	0	4
Portugal	0	0	0	1.05	0	4.5
United Kingdom	0	3.6	25.2	0	0	7
Sweden	1.4	6	49.8	1.03	39	8.3
Austria	13.7	9.2	34.96	1.31	28	18
Aggregate	6.9	4.7	37.7	0.7	54.8	9.6
St. Deviations	6.5	3.2	29.3	0.6	93.1	4.2

country’s economic and/or political status quo. Therefore, xenophobia remains as the fundamental attitude delineating support for the extreme right (Figure 1).

In formulating our hypothesis we also consider De Witte’s supply and demand model of support for parties of the extreme right. Comparing strong support for the Vlaams Blok in Belgium and relatively weak support for the extreme right in the Netherlands, he argues that the quintessential factor behind support for parties of the extreme right is demand.

The demand-side of participation covers the grievances, the perceptions of deprivation and injustice, the group identification and ideologies that spur people on to take part in the activities of an organized movement.⁹ (p. 2)

He therefore argues that negative attitudes toward immigrants and not institutional variables of party strength and potential for success are what drive individual voters to parties of the extreme right in Belgium and the Netherlands. He concludes that a proportionally more intense sentiment of distrust and disdain for immigrants is the causal variable accounting for increased support for the Vlaams Blok over its counterpart in the Netherlands. De Witte illustrates that the attitudinal variable of xenophobia on the part of the unitary voter is fundamentally important to predicting vote share for the extreme right. Because xenophobia is here shown to be the most important micro-level affecter of vote share for the extreme right, it follows that this variable should prove most important in macro-level analyses as well.

Because we conclude that xenophobia is the attitude most salient in extreme right voter identity, and that attitudinal factors are most important in predicting voter choice, we hypothesize that as xenophobic sentiments within a population increase, support for parties of the extreme right within that population

also increase. This implies that European countries in which greater percentages of the population are xenophobic should garner greater electoral support for parties of the extreme right, and countries in which lower percentages of the population are xenophobic should garner lower electoral support for such parties. Our theory has several important implications when considering the recent rise in support for parties of the extreme right.

Data

We use linear regressions to analyze the relationship between xenophobic attitudes in European populations and support for the extreme right. Such a model is optimal because it allows for a uniformed analysis and is most suitable for hypothesis testing.⁴ Our analysis includes 12 Western European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Table 1).

Information on xenophobic attitudes was obtained from “Eurobarometer 53”, a multi-question survey administered to 12,127 respondents in the spring of 2000, which asks questions to measure respondents’ attitudes toward people of other nationalities, races and religions.¹¹ For the purposes of our analysis we created a xenophobic index for each respondent from the questions below:¹¹

46. And do you find the presence of people of other nationalities disturbing?
47. And do you find the presence of people of another race disturbing?
48. And do you find the presence of people of another religion disturbing?

Table 3: Regression Coefficients of Variables Analyzed in Micro-Level Analysis. The dependant variable is the vote share of the extreme right. Model 1 shows regression with Xenophobic index only. Model 2 shows regression with all variables. B coefficients are not standardized. Standard deviation listed in parentheses. N = 12,127 * indicates P = 0.034 ** indicates P = 0.000

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Xenophobic Index	0.648** (0.086)	0.526** (0.081)
Immigration	*****	1.175** (0.049)
Unemployment* Immigration	*****	-0.067** (0.006)
Log(Avg. District Magnitude)	*****	0.256* (0.121)
Upper Tier Seats	*****	-0.0012** (0.001)
Unemployment Rate	*****	0.255** (0.027)
CONSTANT	6.320** (0.063)	1.581** (0.289)
R2	0.005	0.12

Question 46 was omitted because it showed a negative correlation with the other two questions and because being disturbed by the presence of other nationalities in one's own country is not necessarily a function of xenophobia, but nationalism. Therefore, inclusion of question 46 might have skewed our index meant only to gauge xenophobia. Using the other two questions, answers of "disturbing" were converted to one and answers of "not disturbing" were converted to zero. Respondents answering "don't know" for either question were omitted. To formulate the xenophobic index, the values recorded for both questions 47 and 48 for each respondent were added. Vote shares for parties of the extreme right in each country were obtained from national election results closest to the administration date of "Eurobarometer 53" (Table 2).¹¹

To assure that our data was unbiased, it was necessary to establish controls. Golder's work described above provides an efficient basis for controlling our data with economic and/or political variables.⁴ We therefore include variables that account for all three of Golder's hypotheses in our analysis: we include an immigration variable (percent foreign citizens in each country) to address the Ideational hypothesis; two variables of electoral permissiveness to address the Instrumental hypothesis (the log of the average district magnitude of each country and the number of seats allocated at the upper tier for each country); and an interaction variable between unemployment (EUROSTAT standardized unemployment rate) and immigration to address the Materialist hypothesis. Unemployment data was included in the regression to assure that no statistical errors were encountered in using the interaction variable. The data used for control variables was obtained from Golder.

Because Golder's controls each address economic and/or political factors, xenophobia can reasonably be deduced as the most salient attitudinal factor contributing to vote share for the extreme right. Regressing the xenophobic index next to Golder's variables will not only identify whether or not xenophobic trends in voter support for parties of the extreme right are important, it will also allow for a quantitative assessment of

the relative importance of attitudinal factors vis-à-vis economic and political factors in voter support for extreme right parties.

Results

Micro-level Linear regression analysis shows xenophobia as a significant affecter to support for the extreme right in the Western European democracies we analyzed ($p = 0.000$). The data also supports immigration and unemployment ($p = 0.000$) as well as the log of the average district magnitude ($p = 0.034$) as affecters to support for the extreme right. Finally, the interaction term between immigration and unemployment, as well as the number of seats allocated at the upper tier both showed negative, yet significant coefficients (Table 3).

Aggregate-level Pearson correlation coefficients show that all variables significantly correlate with the vote share of parties of the extreme right. Immigration is strongest correlated with vote share (0.261). The number of seats allocated at the upper tier and unemployment both show negative significant correlations with vote share (Table 4).

Discussion and Implications on Future Research

The attitudinal variable xenophobia is in fact an affecter to voter support for the extreme right: as the tendency of xenophobia within a European population increases, voter support for the extreme right in that population also increases, and as the tendency of xenophobia decreases, voter support decreases. In this manner, there is a causal relationship between xenophobia in a population and voter support for parties of the extreme right.

Although xenophobia is an affecter to vote share for parties of the extreme right, it is not the strongest affecter, as we originally hypothesized. The immigration control variable shows a higher beta coefficient in our analysis, and is therefore more important in determining support for the extreme right. This affirms Golder's Ideational hypothesis, which maintains that as the proportion of immigrants living within a given population increases, support for parties of the extreme right increases regardless of other factors.

Interestingly, our data is inconclusive concerning Golder's Institutional hypothesis, which is found by the analyst to be significant. The hypothesis stipulates that more permissive electoral systems favor parties of the extreme right. We analyze both average district magnitude and the number of parliamentary seats allocated at the upper tier as variables of permissiveness. The affect of the log of the average district magnitude on vote share of the extreme right is significant and positive while upper tier seats shows a significant negative affect; although both measures of permissiveness are significant, one is a positive affecter and the other a negative affecter. The discrepancy likely occurs because Golder's analysis accommodates several years worth of data, whereas our analysis uses only one data point per variable per country in years closest to the year 2000 in which the "Eurobarometer 53" survey was administered.^{4,11}

Immigration, the variable found to be the strongest affecter to extreme right vote share, is most often considered a political rather than an attitudinal variable because it describes a current

condition of the population in question. In the classic conception of the variable, it acts through economic means by stressing the low-skilled job market, and therefore pushing low-skilled labor to vote for extreme right parties.² The fact that immigration is a stronger affecter to extreme right vote share than xenophobia would seem to disprove the proposed theory that attitudinal variables are most important in determining voter support for parties of the extreme right. However, although a political variable, immigration affects vote share in this context by means of an attitudinal pathway, as explained by the Allport-Pettigrew hypothesis.⁸

As discussed, the Allport-Pettigrew Contact hypothesis stipulates that contact can improve relationships between “in group” and “out group” when such contact is made in the context of sharing in a particular effort, friendship, or other such cooperative circumstances. However, when contact is casual, it tends to increase xenophobia in natives and further isolate immigrants.

In general, Western European “out group” immigrants are relegated to specific boroughs of the largest cities, having little to no cooperative or friendly contact with “in group” natives; European natives perceive the presence of immigrants, but due to societal barriers, do not interact with these immigrants in a constructive manner. Therefore, primarily casual contact leads to increased distrust and disdain for immigrants by natives. It follows logically that immigration increases the effect of the contact phenomenon. This attitudinal influence of immigration likely accounts for its large affect on support for parties of the extreme right.

If immigration was to modulate extreme right vote share due to economic effects rather than through our proposed pathway, then the effect of immigration on vote share should multiply in poor economic times. Golder’s Materialist hypothesis addresses the question of immigration and its correlation with economic self-interest in voter motivations. This hypothesis, which models immigration as a modifier to the effects of unemployment on voter support for parties of the extreme right is rejected by both Golder’s analysis and our own. Therefore, data indicate that immigration acting through economic self-interest is at best a poor affecter to voter support for parties of the extreme right and that immigration should be considered an attitudinal variable modulating support for parties of the extreme right in Europe.

Multivariate trend analysis is an important avenue for future research. While dealignment, increased immigration, and support for the extreme right have all corresponded, the mechanisms connecting them are only hypothetical. Researchers must continue to consider the institutional and attitudinal fall-out of the dealignment, as well as analyze the connection between immigration and support for parties of the extreme right. It is likely that the answer to the perplexing rise in voter support for the extreme right lies in such analysis. In identifying the role that each of these trends plays in propping the others, analysts of Europe can gain a greater understanding of the social and political forces at work.

Another important consideration for future research is the mechanism by which xenophobia leads to increased support for parties of the extreme right. Although we assume the relation

Table 4: Aggregate-Level Pearson Correlations with Vote Share by Variable. Pearson correlation coefficients with vote share by variable. **indicates P = .000

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Xenophobic Index	0.069**
Immigration	0.261**
Unemployment* Immigration	0.139**
Log(Avg. District Magnitude)	0.123**
Upper Tier Seats	-0.096**
Unemployment Rate	-0.001**
Average	0.066
St. Deviation	0.141

ship to be direct, there may in fact be a mediating variable between xenophobia and party support. Future analysts should focus on the affect of xenophobia on other factors that might themselves lead to voter support for the extreme right. Such factors could act as intermediating variables between xenophobia and voter support.

Understanding the factors that compel voters to support parties with such intense standpoints on so many issues has extremely broad implications on the future of Europe’s political climate. By analyzing the affects of xenophobia on voter support for such parties, we have effectively identified its relative importance as a partial determinant to voter support for parties of the extreme right. However, our work only clarifies one portion of a very murky enigma that will likely require the cooperation of multiple social scientific perspectives to completely understand.

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