**Social and Economic Drivers of Radical Party Support**

**Abstract:** Support for far-left and far-right political parties has been on the rise across advanced democracies in recent years. This political polarization originates from a series of crises facing countries that have led to considerable social and economic instability. While several studies identify commonalities in the voting bases of radical parties, this article analyzes differences in the demand-side preferences of far-left and far-right voters. Although radical party voters share a distrust and dissatisfaction with mainstream political institutions, the motivations underpinning voter support for far-left and far-right parties are markedly dissimilar. Analysis of data from eight successive European Social Survey rounds (2002-2016) across fifteen countries, demonstrates that while far-left voters are more attentive to socio-economic issues, centered around redistributive and egalitarian concerns, far-right voters are more focused on socio-cultural issues, related to national identity, culture, and immigration. Understanding which issues motivate support for far-left and far-right parties is important as shifts in public opinion over the perceived significance of key issues are likely to have different effects on the political fortunes of radical parties.

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**Introduction**

Much attention has been given to the rise in voter support for radical political parties[[1]](#footnote-1) across advanced democracies in recent years. Far-right parties have achieved electoral success in countries such as Austria, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden. At the same time, far-left parties, including Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, have become important political forces. A great deal of scholarly research has been dedicated to explaining this phenomenon and identifying the common factors behind the shift in voter preference away from mainstream parties. Beyond explaining the overall radicalization of national electorates, further analysis is needed to understand what influences voters to embrace far-left versus far-right parties. By identifying the issues that motivate radical left and radical right supporters, we can better understand how shifts in public opinion and exogenous phenomena influence the success of these parties.

This article makes an important contribution to two distinct literatures: Demand-side explanations of radical party support and research on voter preferences and issue salience. Radical party success can be accounted for by an interaction of supply-side and demand-side factors (see Golder, 2016). Supply-side explanations focus on the mobilizing strategies and issue positions that radical parties adopt to attract supporters. Demand-side explanations focus on the preferences and concerns of voters. Vote choice is influenced by the interplay of these factors. While supply-side factors for radical party support have been widely studied, demand-side considerations of radical party voters have been given less attention. This article contributes to the field by examining the demand-side factors of radical party support to identify areas of overlap and difference between radical left and radical right party supporters. These demand-side factors are conceptualized using a two-dimensional model that maps policy issues along socioeconomic and sociocultural axes.

In addition to painting a more complete picture of the demand-side of radical party electoral success, identifying voter preferences is important to understand how nascent support for radical parties may be shaped by changes in the salience of key issues. From this perspective, a voter’s decision calculus of whether to support a radical party is shaped by a combination of preexisting attitudes and the salience of issues that they deem important (Dennison and Geddes, 2019). This article contributes to this discussion by analyzing the underlying beliefs and preferences of radical left and radical right party supporters.

Although literature on the distinction between far-left and far-right party support is beginning to emerge (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Rooduijn et al. 2017), research on the diverse drivers of radical party support remains limited. Some research on this topic has been conducted at the national level (Akkerman et al., 2017; March, 2017) but cross-country examinations are less common. Such comparative national analysis is necessary especially as states are confronted with challenges and crises that transcend national borders. Public opinion, for example, has been profoundly shaped by events such as the Great Recession and the European Migrant Crisis leading to changes in the perceived importance of certain economic and cultural issues over time. With this in mind, this article not only includes economic measures to account for the effects of the Great Recession but is one of the first to analyze data from after the 2015 European immigration crisis a watershed moment for far-right party success. By increasing the salience of immigration as an issue, the migrant crisis was a key event that acted as a catalyst for far-right party gains in several countries.

This article argues that there are substantial differences in the factors that influence voters’ decisions to embrace far-left versus far-right political parties. Despite common anti-establishment sentiments, radical parties are heterogeneous actors, and the foundations of far-left and far-right support are expected to differ. While both radical left and radical right voters may be affected by sociocultural and socioeconomic concerns, certain issues are more prominent amongst the voters of each party family. Far-left voters are theorized to be more attentive to socio-economic issues, centered around redistributive and egalitarian issues, whereas far-right voters are focused on socio-cultural issues such as preserving national culture and fears over immigration. This distinction is important as the prominence of certain issues over time is likely to affect the success of radical parties differently. Immigration, for example, is framed more prominently in socio-cultural terms (Green-Pedersen, 2019; Krause and Giebler, 2019). As immigration rises in perceived significance amongst the public, far-right parties may see higher levels of support. As concerns over immigration are replaced by other issues such as economic conditions and unemployment, radical right party support is likely to decline as these parties have little perceived competence in socio-economic areas (Mudde, 2007). By contrast, radical left parties may see a boon to their fortunes as socio-economic issues gain traction as they can emphasize their support for redistribution and state intervention as means to address these concerns.

While public opinion may vary over time, it is also likely to be shaped by exogenous events and macro-level conditions. Along with the challenges of globalization and post-industrialization, many democracies have faced two major crises in recent years. First, the negative consequences of the Great Recession on social and economic conditions up to that point were unparalleled in the modern age. Many countries continue to struggle post-crisis with slow growth and high levels of unemployment, public debt and deficits, and poverty and inequality. Second, instability, civil war, humanitarian crises, and deteriorating economic circumstances in parts of the Middle East and North Africa have resulted in an influx of immigrants and refugees into Europe and North America. This mass immigration has placed a further burden on already economically strained states. In response to these crises, there has been considerable social, economic, and political upheaval and a sharp increase in voter support for radical parties (Kriesi, 2014a).

While these challenges may help to explain growing polarization, they do not account for what motivates some voters to shift their allegiance to far-left versus far-right parties. It is, therefore, important to look beyond the general shift in voter-party alignment toward the political extremes and analyze differences in far-left and far-right party voting bases. Understanding these differences is important as radical parties have become major actors in contemporary democratic politics.

Far-right parties have achieved electoral success in countries including the Rassemblement National in France, Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Freedom Party in Austria, Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, Jobbik in Hungary, the Law and Justice Party in Poland, the Finns Party in Finland, and Sweden Democrats in Sweden. Even in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK), which are dominated by two-party systems, far-right ideas, policies, and candidates have gained ground within mainstream conservative parties. The election of Donald Trump as US President and the UK’s decision to exit the European Union (EU) attest to this radicalization. Far-left support has also grown especially in peripheral EU states hard-hit by the Eurozone crisis. In Greece, the far-left Syriza party held power in government from 2015 until 2019. Podemos in Spain has also become a powerful actor in national politics.

Radical parties also achieved considerable success in the 2014 and 2019 European Parliamentary elections. This represents a challenge to the political status quo in Europe as radical parties, many harboring Eurosceptic attitudes, made gains at the expense of centrist parties. These results threaten to disrupt how the legislative body functions as anti-EU parties gain more influence in the decision-making process. Radical party success in domestic and EU politics demonstrates that these actors have become a significant political force.

The article begins by examining academic literature on the rise of radical party support. It then analyzes theorized similarities and differences in the characteristics, ideologies, and policy positions of far-left and far-right voters. The next section outlines the hypotheses, informed by the literature, tested in this article. The next section presents the statistical model and findings. This is followed by an analysis of the results. The last section offers a final discussion and conclusion.

**Crises and the rise of radicalism**

There is a long-established literature on the relationship between crises and radical party support (see Mudde, 2007). Radical party success is attributed to a collapse of social order and a loss of confidence in political systems to restore stability after extreme crises (Panizza, 2005; Taggart, 2000; 2002). Under normal conditions, radical party support is expected to be marginal, but it can increase sharply in response to a crisis. Crises can be real or constructed and may include an array of phenomena tied to social, economic, and cultural changes such as globalization, economic crises, and mass immigration.

To understand why crises can bolster radical party support, it is useful to examine models of voter behavior. If elections act as a mechanism for political accountability, voters are expected to reward or punish incumbent parties based on their performance (Powell, 2000; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Economic voting models suggest that citizens penalize and reward incumbent parties based on economic outcomes (Duch and Stevenson, 2008; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2000; Van der Brug et al., 2007). Ruling governments are, therefore, more likely to be voted out of office after an economic crisis (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Cross-national analysis of elections after the Great Recession provides some confirmation of this hypothesis (Bartels, 2014; Kriesi, 2014b).

Increased radical party support after the Great Recession, however, suggests that voters not only punished incumbent parties but also displayed a broader dissatisfaction with centrist policies and parties (Kriesi, 2014b). Individuals negatively affected by the crisis were more likely to punish mainstream parties, whether or not they were in power, by voting for radical parties (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). This corresponds with evidence that both far-left and far-right voters are dissatisfied with the functioning and stewardship of the economy and government and distrust political parties and institutions (Rydgren, 2007). Eurobarometer data shows that trust in national parliaments and the EU declined after the Great Recession (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). This lack of trust helps to explain the appeal of radical parties who are highly critical of mainstream political institutions and policies and offer a drastic alternative.

**Figure 1: Net Trust in National Parliament (2001-2018)**

Source: Eurobarometer, 2019

**Figure 2: Net Trust in the European Union (2003-2018)**

Source: Eurobarometer, 2019

Although radical party support increased after the Great Recession, there are key differences that account for the gains of far-left and far-right parties. A body of research suggests that far-right voters are motivated by economic concerns and are more likely to support a radical right party as economic conditions deteriorate. This is based on the assumption that radical right parties can mobilize voters who are the economic “losers” of globalization and modernization (Betz, 1993; Kriesi et al., 2006; Swank and Betz, 2003). Cas Mudde, however, takes issue with arguments that economic conditions are the catalyst for far-right gains. Mudde points out that far-right parties achieved their best results in countries less affected by the Great Recession such as Austria, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden (2014). He argues that far-right parties are post-materialist actors focused on socio-cultural issues such as national identity and immigration (Mudde, 2007; 2014). Economic issues are secondary for far-right parties and their supporters. This is not to suggest that the Great Recession did not affect far-right success. Rather than focusing on economic conditions, far-right parties reframed the crisis in socio-cultural terms, for instance, arguing that EU policymaking represented a threat to national sovereignty. EU bailout funds, for example, were framed in nationalist terms as policies endorsed by wasteful European elites that forced lending countries to support “lazy” and corrupt” borrowing members (Mudde, 2014).

The 2015 European Migrant Crisis also allowed far-right parties to rally voters by claiming that the influx of refugees represented an existential threat to national identity and culture. Far-right parties were able to emphasize the socio-cultural dimensions of the immigration crisis playing upon nativist and xenophobic fears about the negative consequences of refugee inflows. The EU was portrayed as a promoter of pro-immigration policies which constrained national autonomy. Far-right Euroscepticism, therefore, focuses on the threat that the EU poses to national sovereignty and cultural homogeneity (van Elsas et al., 2016).

Whereas far-right support is theorized to focus on socio-cultural concerns, far-left support is tied more closely to socio-economic issues (Rooduijn et al., 2017; van Elsas et al., 2016). As such, it is unsurprising that far-right support is higher in Northern European countries, less affected by the Great Recession, and far-left party support is higher in Southern European countries whose economies were severely affected by the recession and sovereign debt crisis (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Many Southern European countries struggled post-crisis with high unemployment, slow growth, high debt and deficits, and rising inequality and poverty. Under these conditions, socio-economic issues, such as unemployment, became more salient and crowded out socio-cultural issues. Given their lack of attention to socio-economic issues, far-right parties offer little to voters in these circumstances (Mudde, 2014). This helps to explain the lack of success of the far-right in Southern Europe as voters looked to parties with stronger economic and social policy agendas, including far-left parties who offered radical alternatives (Mudde, 2014).

Unlike far-right Euroscepticism, far-left anti-EU sentiment is driven by socio-economic issues (van Elsas et al., 2016). Many far-left voters identify the EU as the originator and enforcer of unpopular austerity measures (Della Porta et al., 2017). They blame EU-imposed austerity for economic instability and deteriorating social conditions. Concerns about democratic accountability and national sovereignty were also raised as fiscal limits, such as debt and deficit requirements of EU bailout funds, were enforced against the will of many citizens.

In sum, the recent crises faced by advanced democracies created ‘windows of opportunity’ for the rise of radical party support (Caiani and Graziano, 2019). Although radical party voters exhibit a distrust and dissatisfaction with national and EU political institutions (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2007; van Elsas and van der Brug, 2015; Visser et al., 2014), the reasons for this discontentment are dissimilar on the left and right. To understand the motivations of far-left versus far-right voters, a more nuanced analysis of their beliefs, characteristics, and preferences is needed.

**Differences in radical party support**

The political landscape in advanced democracies has been dramatically altered by a series of crises, resulting in rising radical party support. What is less clear are why some voters embrace specific radical parties. Just like mainstream voters, radical party supporters are informed by specific ideologies (see Van der Brug et al., 2000) and, informed by these beliefs, focus on particular issues that they deem important (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Rooduijn et al. 2017).

**Socio-cultural foundations of far-right support**

Although far-right parties may vary in their positions, the party family is more homogenous than many other groups such as conservative or liberal party families (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2012). A common element of far-right parties is a distrust of elites and a belief that national identity and culture are under threat from global forces that correspond with anti-immigration positions (Judis, 2016; Mudde, 2007; Schain, 2018). Far-right voters are more likely to believe in the importance of maintaining traditions and customs in the face of globalization (Mudde, 2007). Individuals holding right-wing beliefs were not only found to harbor more negative views towards immigrants but were more likely to say it’s necessary that immigrants adopt the customs and traditions of their new countries (Simmons et al., 2018). Whereas far-left voters are mindful of the socio-economic costs of globalization, far-right voters are attentive to the cultural impact of globalization resulting in a cultural backlash against foreign individuals and customs (Roouduijn et al., 2017).

Driven by a desire to protect national customs and traditions from multicultural influences, far-right voters are often opposed to immigration. This is informed by nativist beliefs that countries should be inhabited solely by members of the “native group” and that “non-natives” represent a threat to the homogenous nation-state (Mudde, 2007, 19). Negative attitudes about immigrants, even if few live in a country, are a strong predictor of far-right support (Aichholzer and Zandonella, 2016). Fears about immigrants and cultural displacement, for example, were powerful predictors of Trump’s support among white working-class voters (Cox et al., 2017). Trump voters were also driven by fears of losing their status in society and not by economic anxiety (Mutz, 2018). These findings challenge the literature which suggests that economic considerations matter for far-right voters and further analysis is needed to test this hypothesis.

**Socio-economic foundations of far-left support**

Far-left parties are often unified in opposition to the perceived inequalities in capitalist democratic societies. These parties advocate for widespread redistribution to reduce inequalities and for major changes to social, economic, and political power structures that will enhance well-being and representation (March, 2012). Far-left voters often support government interventions in the pursuit of egalitarian and humanitarian principles (Rooduijn et al., 2017). Voters who heavily favor redistribution are more likely to defect from mainstream parties to far-left challengers (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016).

Although some far-right parties support stronger social protection, the impetus is often to preserve the social benefits of ‘nationals’ while restricting welfare access to ‘outsiders’ (Oesch, 2008). These measures reflect a welfare chauvinism driven by anti-immigrant perspectives on social policies (Fenger, 2018; Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016), rather than concerns about redistribution and inequality. This corresponds with findings that social spending and welfare state support has been higher among left-wing parties after the Great Recession (Bremer, 2018; McManus, 2019).

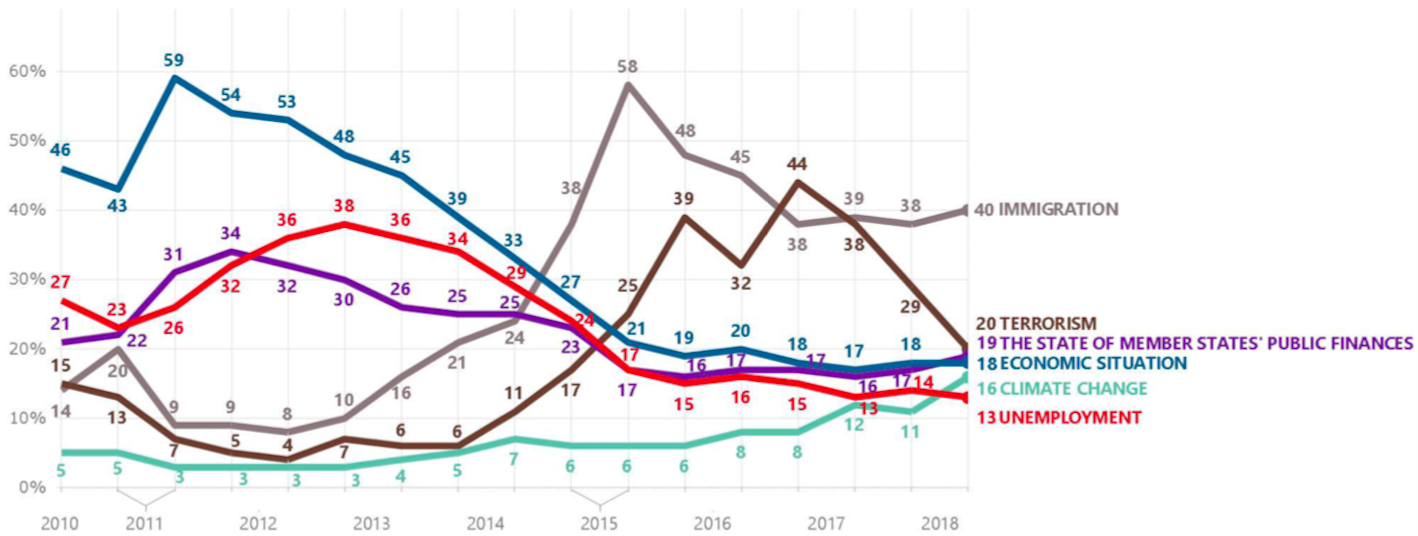
Along with supporting economic redistribution, far-left voters often embrace ideals of egalitarianism, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism (van Elsas et al., 2016). Informed by these values, far-left voters are expected to hold favorable views of immigration (Rooduijn et al., 2017). Far-left voters, for example, are likely to believe that migrants deserve equal treatment and support as victims of social and economic inequality (Pantoja, 2006). Research from the US found that egalitarian and humanitarian social values influenced support for immigration (Pantoja, 2006). A survey of eight European countries found that left-wing respondents held more positive views about immigrants than right-wing respondents (Simmons et al., 2018). While focused on socioeconomic concerns, the egalitarian beliefs of far-left voters are expected to be reflected in sociocultural issues as well for example seeing immigrants as a net positive economically as well as culturally.

**Two-Dimensional Politics and Issue Salience**

Rather than conceptualizing policies along a single left-right dimension, it is valuable to apply a two-dimensional model that incorporates a traditional left-right dimension centered around economic issues, such as redistribution, with a second nationalist-international dimension (Häusermann, Picot, and Geering, 2013; Kriesi et al., 2008; 2012; Manow, Palier and Schwander, 2018). These two dimensions can be thought of as representing socio-economic and socio-cultural axes. Applying this model, various issues can be mapped along each dimension with some more closely fitting to one axis or another while others reflect an interaction of these two axes. Immigration, for instance, falls more prominently along a national-international socio-cultural dimension, whereas welfare policies fit more closely with a traditional left-right socio-economic axis (Green-Pedersen, 2019; Krause and Giebler, 2019). Although far-right parties may embrace social policies it is often along welfare chauvinist lines that reflects a socio-cultural dimension. While framed as a pro-welfare position, the focus tends to be on restricting benefits to perceived “outsiders” such as immigrants rather than welfare expansion. Analysis of World Values Survey data finds that attitudes about income inequality and support for the welfare state are correlated almost exclusively with a left-right political dimension (Dalton et al., 2011). By comparison, issues such as support for democracy and tolerance of outsiders are more closely aligned with the socio-cultural dimension (Dalton et al., 2011).

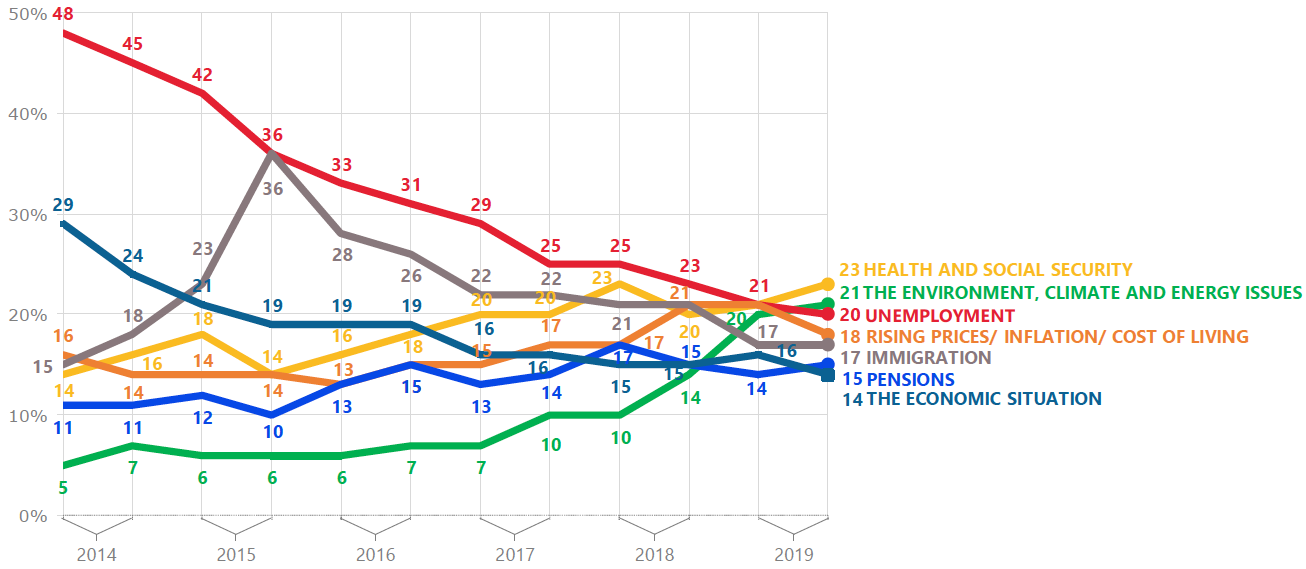
In recent years, the salience of economic and cultural issues amongst the European public has fluctuated over time corresponding with distinct crises. Eurobarometer data reveals that during the Great Recession socioeconomic issues including the economic situation and unemployment in the EU and domestically were the top public concerns (see Figures 3 & 4). However, these issues declined in perceived significance as economic conditions improved. During the European Migrant Crisis public attention to immigration rose considerably. Immigration went from a low concern to the predominant issue domestically and across the EU in 2015 (see Figures 3 & 4). Public concern over this topic also diminished as the migrant crisis receded. Given that the salience of specific issues waxes and wanes, it is important to analyze how certain socioeconomic or sociocultural concerns resonate with different radical party supporters. In doing so, we can gain better insight into how demand-side factors and changes in issue salience may affect radical party backing.

**Figure 3: Two Most Important Issues Facing the EU at the Moment (EU Average)**

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Source: Eurobarometer, 2019

**Figure 4: Two Most Important Issues Facing (Our Country) at the Moment (EU Average)**

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Source: Eurobarometer, 2019

There is a rich literature that examines the relationship between issue salience and voter preferences (see Dennison, 2019a; 2019b). As certain issues rise in perceived significance, parties who have perceived ownership over these issues are likely to gain support. Radical right parties, for example, are argued to benefit from the increased attention to immigration (Dennison and Geddes, 2019). The increased salience of immigration during the European Migrant Crisis was, therefore, a key factor to explain the electoral success of radical right anti-immigrant parties at this time (Dennison, 2019b).

Although there is evidence to suggest a relationship between issue salience and party support (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006; Arzheimer, 2009; Bélanger and Meguid, 2008;  Dennison and Geddes, 2019; Fournier et al., 2003; Visser et al., 2003), further analysis is needed to test assumptions about what issues resonate with radical left and radical right voters. This will provide insight into how shifts in public opinion on key socioeconomic and sociocultural issues are likely to affect support for different radical parties. As issues that matter to radical right or radical left supporters become more relevant, the vote share for these respective parties should increase (Budge, 2015). For example, while the increased salience of immigration was positively correlated with far-right vote share, an increase in the salience of economic conditions and unemployment had no positive effect (Dennison, 2019b).

While some studies confirm the relationship between issue salience and party support, a more systematic analysis is needed to identify the issues that motivate radical right and radical left voters. This will allow us to identify how changes in issue salience intersect with radical left and radical right voter preferences.

**Hypotheses**

Informed by the literature, three hypotheses are tested in this article:

***H1: Common distrust of political institutions*** - Dissatisfaction and distrust of national politics, EU institutions, and democratic functioning should be associated with both far-left and far-right support. Although the nature of this dissatisfaction differs, radical party voters should exhibit a common rejection of mainstream politics, policies, and institutions.

***H2: Socio-cultural foundations of far-right support*** - Far-right voters should be concerned with protecting national identity and cultural homogeneity. Individuals who emphasize the importance of traditions and customs are more likely to support far-right parties. Reflecting nativist ideas, individuals who hold negative views about immigrants are likely to vote for far-right parties. Given the post-materialist nature of these parties (Mudde, 2014), socio-economic issues should not be as significant for these voters.

***H3: Socio-economic foundations of far-left support*** - Far-left voters should be influenced by socio-economic issues. Individuals who are dissatisfied with the economy are likely to vote for far-left parties. Individuals who believe the government should redistribute more are likely to support far-left parties. Far-left voters are expected to hold progressive values and should be more likely to support immigration economically and culturally.

**Model and Variables**

To measure the effects of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors on voter support for far-left and far-right parties a two-level mixed-effects logistic regression model is utilized. The dataset includes respondent data for 86,441 European residents for eight successive rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS) conducted biannually from 2002 until 2016. This includes respondents from 15 European countries for which there was complete data for all years: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. A multi-level logistic regression is an appropriate model as ESS data has a hierarchical structure based on multistage random sampling. The models utilize a two-level structure to account for country-level and individual-level differences in voter support.

**Dependent Variables**

To measure voter support for radical parties, the following ESS survey question was used: “Which party did you vote for in the most recent national election?” Radical parties in each country were identified[[2]](#footnote-2) and two new variables were created.[[3]](#footnote-3) First, a dichotomous variable for far-left party vote (far\_left\_vote) was created where a vote for an identified far-left party = 1 and a vote for any other party = 0. Second, a dichotomous variable for far-right party vote (far\_right\_vote) was created where a vote for an identified far-right party = 1 and a vote for any other party = 0.

**Independent Variables[[4]](#footnote-4)**

***Political and institutional variables***

Radical party support should be correlated with distrust and dissatisfaction with political institutions (H1). A variable (euftf) has been included which asks whether EU unification should go further = 1 or whether it has gone too far = 0. A variable for trust in a country's national parliament (trstprl) is included which measures trust = 1 and no trust = 0. A variable for trust in the European Parliament (trstep) is included which measures trust = 1 and no trust = 0. A variable for respondent satisfaction with their government is included (stfgov) where 1 = satisfied and 0 = dissatisfied. Another variable measures satisfaction with how democracy functions in their country (stfdem) with 1 = satisfied and 0 = dissatisfied.

***Socio-economic variables***

Several independent variables are included for socio-economic influences on radical party support. This includes a variable (gincdif) for whether the government should do more to reduce differences in income = 1 or not = 0. A variable for **life satisfaction as a whole (stflife) has been included with 1 = satisfied and 0 = dissatisfied.** A variable for **satisfaction with the** national economy **(stfeco) has been included with 1 = satisfied and 0 = dissatisfied.**

A variable for whether immigration is bad or good for a country's economy (imbgeco) has been included with 1 = good and 0 = bad. A variable for whether immigrants make a country a worse or better place to live (imwbcnt) with 1 = better and 0 = worse has been included. Variables have also been included about the composition of immigrant populations which ask whether the country should: Allow many immigrants of the same race/ethnic group as the majority (imsmetn) 1 = Yes 0 = No; Allow many immigrants of a different race/ethnic group from the majority (imdfetn) 1 = Yes 0 = No; or Allow many immigrants from poorer countries outside of Europe (impcntr) 1 = Yes 0 = No.

***Socio-cultural variables***

Another set of variables tests the influence of socio-cultural factors. A variable has been included which asks whether it is important to follow traditions and customs (imptrad) with 1 = Yes and 0 = No. Positive responses should be correlated with far-right support. A variable has been included which asks whether gays and lesbians should be free to live life as they wish (freehms) with 1 = Yes and 0 = No. Finally, a variable is included which asks whether a country's cultural life is undermined or enriched by immigrants (imueclt) with 1 = Enriched and 0 = Undermined.

**Control Variables**

***Demographic variables***

Demographic control variables for gender, age, and education-level are included. Gender (gndr) is coded 1 for females and 0 for males. Age (age) is a continuous variable ranging from 15 to 99 years old. Education level (edulvl) is coded as 0 = Less than lower secondary education, 1 = Lower secondary education completed, 2 = Upper secondary education completed, 3 = Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed, 4 = Tertiary education completed.

***Macro-economic variables***

Several macro-economic control variables have been added. This includes total government social spending as a percentage of GDP (ss\_total). This variable is included to test the hypothesis that social spending affects radical party support (see Swank and Betz, 2003; Ennser-Jedenastik and Köppl-Turyna, 2019). On the one hand, high levels of social spending may protect vulnerable populations making them less likely to support radical parties. On the other hand, higher social spending may reduce socioeconomic concerns allowing voters to focus on sociocultural issues such as immigration that could increase support for radical right parties. The unemployment rate (unemp) controls for the percentage of out-of-work citizens in a country. Gross domestic product (gdp) controls for variations in economic growth. Foreign direct investment as a percentage of GDP (fdi) measures exposure to global finance. Exports as a percentage of GDP (trade) measures exposure to global trade. Variables for (debt) and (deficit) account for fiscal variation between countries.

**Table 1. Support for Far-Left and Far-Right Parties (2002-2016)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | | | | | | (1) | | (2) | (3) | | (4) | | |
| Variable code | Variable description | | | | | | Far-Right Vote  Log odds | | Far-Right Vote  Odds ratio | Far-Left Vote  Log Odds | | Far-Left Vote  Odds ratio | | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | |  | | |
| gndr | Gender | | | | | | –0.3355215\*\*\* | | 0.7149652\*\*\* | | –0.1449965\*\*\* | | | 0.8650253\*\*\* |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0271695) | | (0.0194252) | | (0.0349312) | | | (0.0302163) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
| age | Age | | | | | | –0.0102424\*\*\* | | 0.9898099\*\*\* | –0.0060678\*\*\* | | | | 0.9939506\*\*\* |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.000867) | | (0.0008582) | (0.0011783) | | | | (0.0011711) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
| edulv | Education level | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
|  | lower secondary completed | | | | | | 0.1234696\* | | 1.1314116\* | –0.0333784 | | | | 0.9671725 |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0619964) | | (0.0701437) | (0.0715707) | | | | (0.0692212) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
|  | upper secondary completed | | | | | | –0.0143606 | | 0.985742 | –0.0479154 | | | | 0.9532144 |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0587072) | | (0.0578702) | (0.067452) | | | | (0.0642962) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
|  | post-secondary completed | | | | | | –0.1354272 | | 0.8733428 | 0.0802364 | | | | 1.083542 |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0822821) | | (0.0717605) | (0.094731) | | | | (0.1026451) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
|  | tertiary education completed | | | | | | –0.5856764\*\*\* | | 0.5567292\*\*\* | 0.1199079 | | | | 1.127393 |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0632581) | | (0.0352176) | (0.0676279) | | | | (0.0762432) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
| ss\_total | Social spending as % GDP | | | | | | 0.2826479\*\*\* | | 1.326638\*\*\* | –0.1870262\*\*\* | | | | 0.829422\*\*\* |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0169185) | | (0.0224447) | (0.0256879) | | | | (0.0213061) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
| unemp | Unemployment rate | | | | | | –0.0427196\*\*\* | | 0.95818\*\*\* | –0.0378351\*\*\* | | | | 0.9628717\*\*\* |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0075895) | | (0.0072721) | (0.0110563) | | | | (0.0106458) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
| trade | Trade | | | | | | –0.0025089 | | 0.9974942 | –0.0050099 | | | | 0.9950026 |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0037093) | | (0.0037) | (0.0068465) | | | | (0.0068123) |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  |
| gdp | GDP | | | | | | 0.00000757\* | | 1.000008\* | –0.00000103 | | | | 0.999999 |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.00000329) | | (0.00000329) | (0.00000526) | | | | (0.00000526) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | |
| fdi | Foreign Direct Investment | | | | | | –0.0041825\*\* | | 0.9958263\*\* | –0.0081848\* | | | | 0.9918486\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0015858) | | (0.0015792) | (0.003162) | | | | (0.0031362) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| debt | Government debt as % GDP | | | | | | –0.0009407 | | 0.9990597 | 0.0186337\*\*\* | | | | 1.018808\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0013334) | | (0.0013321) | (0.0022135) | | | | (0.0022552) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| deficit | Deficit spending as % GDP | | | | | | –0.1433365\*\*\* | | 1.154118\*\*\* | –0.0569542\*\*\* | | | | 0.9446374\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0098493) | | (0.0113672) | (0.0149511) | | | | (0.0141234) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| euftf | EU: European unification | | | | | | –0.3053126\*\*\* | | 0.736893\*\*\* | –0.207122\*\*\* | | | | 0.8129204\*\*\* | |
|  | should go further | | | | | | (0.0307789) | | (0.0226808) | (0.0385191) | | | | (0.031313) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| trstprl | Trust the national parliament | | | | | | –0.3522136\*\*\* | | 0.7031299\*\*\* | –0.1188033\*\* | | | | 0.8879825\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0354883) | | (0.0249529) | (0.0449255) | | | | (0.039893) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| trstep | Trust the European Parliament | | | | | | –0.0789406\* | | 0.9240948\* | –0.2430317\*\*\* | | | | 0.7842467\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0330695) | | (0.0305593) | (0.0449875) | | | | (0.0352813) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| stflife | Satisfied with life | | | | | | 0.0182411 | | 1.018408 | –0.3698285\*\*\* | | | | 0.6908528\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.035227) | | (0.0358755) | (0.0445775) | | | | (0.0307965) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| stfeco | Satisfied with the economy | | | | | | –0.0026721 | | 0.9973315 | –0.2276535\*\*\* | | | | 0.7964002\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0351696) | | (0.0350758) | (0.0446111) | | | | (0.0355283) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| stfgov | Satisfied with the government | | | | | | –0.1091697\*\* | | 0.8965782\*\* | –0.5437275\*\*\* | | | | 0.5805801\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.037447) | | (0.0335741) | (0.0492277) | | | | (0.0285806) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| stfdem | Satisfied with democracy | | | | | | –0.2903502\*\*\* | | 0.7480016\*\*\* | –0.4093994\*\*\* | | | | 0.664049\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.0345477) | | (0.0258418) | (0.0428862) | | | | (0.0284785) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| gincdif | Government should reduce | | | | | | –0.0312996 | | 0.9691852 | 1.0055482\*\*\* | | | | 2.873361\*\*\* | |
|  | differences in income levels | | | | | | (0.0312882) | | (0.0303241) | (0.0519495) | | | | (0.1492696) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| imbgeco | Immigration is good for economy | | | | | | –0.2294331\*\*\* | | 0.7949841\*\*\* | 0.1501617\*\*\* | | | | 1.162022\*\*\* | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.035313) | | (0.0280733) | (0.0423757) | | | | (0.0492415) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| imptrad | Important to follow traditions | | | | | | 0.1046503\*\* | | 1.110322\*\* | –0.4106525\*\*\* | | | | 0.6632174\*\*\* | |
|  | and customs | | | | | | (0.0331289) | | (0.0367837) | (0.036336) | | | | (0.0240987) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| freehms | Gays and lesbians free to live | | | | | | –0.1717075\*\*\* | | 0.8422255\*\*\* | 0.4345825\*\*\* | | | | 1.544318\*\*\* | |
|  | life as they wish | | | | | | (0.0310491) | | (0.0261504) | (0.0591725) | | | | (0.0913812) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| imsmetn | Allow immigrants of same | | | | | | 0.0481915 | | 1.049372 | –0.0982499 | | | | 0.9064224 | |
|  | race/ethnic group as majority | | | | | | (0.0348326) | | (0.0365524) | (0.0619019) | | | | (0.0561092) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| imdfetn | Allow immigrants of different | | | | | | –0.3024745\*\*\* | | 0.7389873\*\*\* | 0.1961195\*\* | | | | 1.216672\*\* | |
|  | race/ethnic group as majority | | | | | | (0.0407452) | | (0.0301102) | (0.064877) | | | | (0.078934) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| impcntr | Allow immigrants from poorer | | | | | | –0.4057784\*\*\* | | 0.6664578\*\*\* | 0.1721971\*\* | | | | 1.187912\*\* | |
|  | countries outside of Europe | | | | | | (0.0390432) | | (0.0260207) | (0.0547867) | | | | (0.0650818) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| imueclt | Country’s cultural life is enriched | | | | | | –0.3553081\*\*\* | | 0.7009574\*\*\* | 0.1813086\*\*\* | | | | 1.198785\*\*\* | |
|  | by immigrants | | | | | | (0.032766) | | (0.0229676) | (0.0460046) | | | | (0.0551496) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
| imwbcnt | Immigrants make a country a | | | | | | –0.1807153\*\*\* | | 0.834673\*\*\* | 0.223413\*\*\* | | | | 1.250337\*\*\* | |
|  | better place to live | | | | | | (0.0361658) | | (0.0301866) | (0.042877) | | | | (0.0536107) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
|  | constant | | | | | | –7.818065\*\*\* | | 0.0004024\*\*\* | –1.410536 | | | | 0.2440126 | |
|  |  | | | | | | (0.9903402) | | (0.0003985) | (1.081554) | | | | (0.2639128) | |
|  |  | | | | | |  | |  |  | | | |  | |
|  | N | | | | | | 86,441 | | 86,441 | 86,441 | | | | 86,441 | |
| t statistics in parentheses, \* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001  Countries included in the analysis: BE, CH, DE, ES, FI, FR, GB, HU, IE, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Findings and Analysis**

***Political distrust and support for radical parties***

Although far-left and far-right voters are motivated by different issues, they share a distrust and dissatisfaction with domestic and EU political institutions (H1) (see Table 1). Respondents who agreed that EU unification should go further (euftf) were 26.3% less likely to vote for far-right parties and 18.7% less likely to vote for far-left parties. Individuals who trusted the European Parliament (trstep) were 7.6% less likely to support far-right parties and 21.6% less likely to support far-left parties. Respondents who trusted their national parliament (trstprl) were 29.7% less likely to vote for far-right parties and 11.2% less likely to vote for far-left parties. Respondents who were satisfied with their government (stfgov) were 10.3% less likely to vote far-right and 41.9% less likely to vote far-left. Finally, individuals who were satisfied with democracy (stfdem) were 25.2% less likely to vote for far-right parties and 33.6% less likely to vote for far-left parties.

***Support for far-right parties***

As models 1 and 2 indicate (see Table 1), several socio-cultural variables were correlated with far-right support (H2). Respondents who agreed that it is important to follow traditions and customs (imptrad) were 11% more likely to vote for far-right parties. Respondents who believed that gays and lesbians should be free to live life as they wish (freehms) were 15.8% less likely to vote for far-right parties.

Unsurprisingly, individuals who viewed immigration positively were less likely to support far-right parties. Respondents who agreed that immigrants of a different race/ethnic group should be allowed into the country (imdfetn) were 26.1% less likely to vote for far-right parties. Respondents who said that the country should allow immigrants from poorer countries outside of Europe (impcntr) were 33.4% less likely to vote for far-right parties. Individuals who believed that a country’s cultural life is enriched by immigrants (imueclt) were 29.9% less likely to support far-right parties. Respondents who believed that immigrants make a country a better place to live (imwbcnt) were 16.5% less likely to vote for far-right parties. Interestingly, the question of whether more immigrants of the same race/ethnic group as the majority (imsmetn) was not significant. Even along more socio-economic lines, respondents who said that immigration is good for the economy (imbgeco) were 20.5% less likely to vote for far-right parties. This reinforces the idea that far-right voters are concerned about the cultural threat posed by immigrants of different backgrounds than the native population, while accepting of immigrants of a similar group who are not perceived to undermine the ethnic and cultural fabric of the “nation”.

Although socio-cultural issues were significant for far-right party support, socio-economic variables were less influential. Neither satisfaction with the economy (stfeco) nor the belief that the government should do more to reduce differences in income (gincdif) was significant. This provides some evidence to suggest that the welfare chauvinism of radical right parties is motivated more by nativist rather than redistributive ones. Far-right party support appears to be stronger in countries with higher levels of economic and social well-being. This corresponds with far-right success in Northern European countries, such as Austria, France, Sweden, and the Netherlands, despite these states being less affected by the Great Recession and offering strong social support and material well-being (Mudde 2014). For example, social spending as a percentage of GDP (ss\_total), GDP growth (gdp), deficit spending (deficit), and foreign direct investment (fdi) are all positively correlated with far-right party vote.

A one percent increase in unemployment (unemp) is associated with a 4.2% decrease in far-right support. While this might seem surprising, it makes sense that as unemployment worsens far-right parties, who offer little by way of economic policies, see weaker support. During times of high unemployment, socio-economic issues gain greater salience thereby pushing socio-cultural issues to the sideline and decreasing the electoral appeal of far-right parties (Mudde, 2007). This suggests as unemployment worsens in a country and it becomes a more salient issue amongst the public support for radical right parties is likely to decrease.

Women were 28.5% less likely to vote for far-right parties than men. Several studies find that men are more likely to support far-right parties than women (Gidengil et al., 2005; Givens, 2004). A one-year increase in age was associated with a 1% decrease in the likelihood of voting for a far-right party. This corresponds with findings that older people, who have developed stronger partisan loyalties over time, are less likely to shift their votes from mainstream parties towards radical ones (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). While respondents whose highest level of education (edulvl) was lower secondary were 13% more likely to vote for far-right parties, those who finished tertiary education were 44.3% less likely to vote for a far-right party. This corresponds with findings that far-right support is stronger among lower educated voters and weaker among highly educated voters (Rooduijn et al., 2017; Visser et al., 2014).

***Support for far-left parties***

Models 3 and 4 (see Table 1) underscore the importance of socio-economic issues for far-left voters (H2). Highlighting redistributive concerns, respondents who agreed that the government should do more to reduce income differences (gincdif) were 187% more likely to vote for far-left parties. Those who expressed satisfaction with their lives (stflife) were 31% less likely to support far-left parties. Similarly, those who expressed satisfaction with the economy (stfecon) were 20.4% less likely to support far-left parties. A one percent increase in social spending (ss\_total) is associated with a 17.1% decrease in the odds of voting for a far-left party. As social spending protects citizens against economic shocks, lower social spending may create greater economic insecurity. For example in Southern Europe, where welfare spending is low, socio-economic issues should be more salient, especially during a crisis, which should increase the appeal of far-left parties (Mudde, 2007; 2014). A one percent increase in national debt (debt) is associated with an 18.8% increase far-left support. This corresponds with far-left success in heavily debt-burdened Southern European countries. A one percent increase in deficit spending (deficit) is associated with a 5.5% decrease in far-left party support. This corresponds with expectations that as austerity lessens and deficits are allowed to rise far-left support may weaken. A one percent increase in foreign direct investment (fdi) is associated with a 0.8% decrease in far-left support.

A one percent increase in unemployment (unemp) was associated with a 3.7% decrease in the odds of voting for a far-left party. This is surprising given that worsening economic conditions should prove favorable for far-left party support (March and Rommerskirchen, 2015; Gomez and Ramiro, 2018). One possible explanation is that the effects of rising unemployment on far-left support may be conditional on factors such as government composition. If a right-wing party is in power, strategic voting considerations might lead left-leaning voters to support mainstream left-wing parties over far-left alternatives to increase the likelihood of ejecting the conservative-led government (Gomez and Ramiro, 2018).

Whereas far-right voters had negative views about immigration, far-left voters had positive views. Individuals who agreed immigration was good for the economy (imbgeco) were 16.2% more likely to vote for far-left parties. Individuals who believed immigrants of a different race/ethnic group should be allowed into the country (imdfetn) were 21.7% more likely to vote for far-left parties. Respondents who said the country should allow immigrants from poorer countries outside of Europe (impcntr) were 18.8% more likely to vote for far-left parties. Individuals who said a country’s cultural life is enriched by immigrants (imueclt) were 19.9% more likely to vote for far-left parties. Respondents who said immigrants make a country a better place to live (imwbcnt) were 25% more likely to vote for far-left parties. These positions indicate that far-left voters are attentive to certain socio-cultural issues. This position is informed by similar underlying egalitarian and multicultural beliefs that inform radical left voter socioeconomic preferences (van Elsas et al., 2016).

Unlike far-right voters, conservative social values were not positively correlated with far-left support. For instance, respondents who said it is important to follow traditions and customs were 33.7% less likely to vote for far-left parties. Respondents who believed gays and lesbians should be free to live life as they wish were 54.4% more likely to vote for far-left parties. Again this indicates that some socio-cultural issues matter to radical left voters and that these positions tend to reflect progressive notions of social and economic justice.

Women were 13.5% less likely to vote for far-left parties than men. This is similar to far-right results, suggesting that women are less likely to support radical parties in general. A one-year increase in age was associated with a 0.6% decrease in far-left support. Again this implies that older voters may have more entrenched partisan loyalties and are less likely to vote for radical parties (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). While education was significant for far-right support it was not for far-left support.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

The rise of radical parties across advanced democracies in recent years constitutes a major political sea change. The Great Recession and the European Migrant Crisis created ‘windows of opportunity’ for radical parties to tap into voter frustrations with mainstream policies, parties, and institutions. Although there is extensive literature on the relationship between crises and radical party support (see Mudde, 2007; Panizza, 2005; Taggart, 2000; 2002) and on shared anti-establishment sentiments (see Kriesi, 2014b; Rydgren, 2007), scholarship on the factors that drive voters to embrace far-left versus far-right parties is limited. As this article demonstrates, far-left and far-right voters are motivated by very different beliefs. These ideological differences shape how voters view key policies and whether they back far-left or far-right parties. This finding is important because much of the existing literature focuses on common factors that lead to voter radicalization across the political spectrum, not on differences among far-left and far-right voters.

This research expands upon the limited cross-national (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Rooduijn et al. 2017) and country case studies (Akkerman et al., 2017; March, 2017) on variations in radical party support. The findings of this article demonstrate that not only do far-left and far-right voters view issues, such as immigration, differently, but that these voting groups are fundamentally motivated by dissimilar concerns. These divergent motivations reflect differences in the degree to which each voting base is focused on socio-economic versus socio-cultural concerns. This distinction is important as it suggests that socioeconomic issues play a smaller role than often assumed (Betz, 1993; Kriesi et al., 2006; Swank and Betz, 2003) in far-right party support. Understanding far-left and far-right voter differences is vital to identifying what gives radical parties their appeal and power. Such analysis provides insight about the potential impact of radical parties on democracies going forward. By identifying how radical party support is tied to voters’ attitudes toward key socioeconomic and sociocultural issues, we can get a better understanding of how shifts in issue salience are likely to affect the fortunes of parties on the far-left and far-right.

By disaggregating the demand-side factors that shape far-left and far-right, we can get a better understanding of the disruptive impact of these parties across democracies. On the one hand, increased voter support for radical parties represents a threat to the existing political order. On the other hand, differences between far-left and far-right voters may make it difficult for these parties to find common ground. Although most voters remain loyal to mainstream parties, support for radical parties has grown. After the Great Recession, mainstream party vote shares decreased by approximately 12% (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). In 2010, votes for anti-establishment parties in national and European Parliamentary elections was about 13% (Norris, 2017). Though these parties have been primarily in opposition, they represent a challenge to centrist governing parties. The hostility of radical parties to mainstream policies has made it difficult for governments to reach an agreement on a number of political issues. Anti-establishment parties have also increased pressure for centrist parties to respond to radical policy demands by either opposing or co-opting aspects of far-left and far-right party platforms. Overall, the rising influence of radical parties has made the formation and maintenance of stable governing coalitions more difficult (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016).

Despite the electoral turmoil caused by radical parties, the foundations of support for these parties are strikingly dissimilar which may make unified opposition difficult to achieve. For instance, although far-left and far-right parties express Eurosceptic attitudes, the reasons for this anti-EU sentiment differ. Left-wing Euroscepticism is concerned with socio-economic issues, such as austerity and inequality. As such, far-left voters may be dissatisfied with the functioning of the EU but are not necessarily opposed to it in principle (van Elsas et al., 2016). By contrast, far-right voters reject the EU outright as it is seen as a threat to national sovereignty (van Elsas et al., 2016). This attitude represents a cultural backlash against the cosmopolitan and multicultural values that the EU embodies. The supposed similarities of far-left and far-right Euroscepticism are superficial. Such differences are clearly on display when it comes to policy issues, such as immigration. Whereas far-left voters hold positive views of immigration, far-right voters have negative ones. This reflects the contrasts between left-wing cosmopolitan attitudes and right-wing nativism. This may make it difficult for radical parties across the political spectrum to find common causes and form coalitions that will seriously challenge centrist party control of government.

Moving forward, further analysis of how the interaction of demand-side preferences and issue salience affect voter decision-making will help shed light on radical party gains. The poor success of far-right parties in Southern Europe, for example, may be explained by the low salience of immigration as a public concern compared to socioeconomic issues such as unemployment. Recent gains of the far-right Vox party in Spain, from this perspective, can be understood as the product of increased salience of immigration as a public concern and a nascent far-right voting base attentive to this issue (Dennison and Geddes, 2019). This interaction of voter preferences and issue salience is a useful avenue for future research to understand how exogenous events, such as economic crisis, affect which issues gain public prominence and shape radical party support. The COVID-19 crisis, for example, is likely to have a profound impact on far-left and far-right parties as certain issues that resonate with different voter groups gain prominence over others.

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**Appendix**

**Table A.1: Radical Party Coding**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Far-right parties** | **Party code** |  | **Far-left parties** | **Party code** |
| **Belgium** |  |  |  |  |
| Vlaams Belang Flemish Interest | VB |  | Parti du Travail de Belgique | PTB/PvdA |
| Parti Populaire People's Party | PP |  |  |  |
| National Front | FN |  |  |  |
| **Finland** |  |  |  |  |
| True Finns | PS |  | Left Alliance | VAS |
| **France** |  |  |  |  |
| National Front | FN |  | French Communist Party | FG (PCF) |
| Movement for France | MPF |  | Radical Party of the Left | PRG |
| **Germany** |  |  |  |  |
| Alternative für Deutschland | AFD |  | Die Linke | PDS |
| Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands | NPD |  |  |  |
| **Hungary** |  |  |  |  |
| Movement for a Better Hungary | JOBBIK |  |  |  |
| Hungarian Justice and Life Party | MIEP |  |  |  |
| Hungarian Civic Alliance | FIDESZ |  |  |  |
| **Ireland** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Socialist Party | SP |
|  |  |  | People Before Profit Alliance | PBPA |
| **Netherlands** |  |  |  |  |
| List Pim Fortuyn | LPF |  | Socialist Party | SP |
| Party for Freedom | PVV |  |  |  |
| Forum for Democracy | FvD |  |  |  |
| **Norway** |  |  |  |  |
| Progress Party | FRP |  | Red | R |
| **Poland** |  |  |  |  |
| Law and Justice | PiS |  |  |  |
| Kukiz'15 | K |  |  |  |
| **Portugal** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Left Bloc | BE |
|  |  |  | Unitary Democratic Coalition | CDU |
| **Slovenia** |  |  |  |  |
| Slovenian Democratic Party | SDS |  | Left | LEVICA (ZL) |
| Slovenian National Party | SNS |  |  |  |
| **Spain** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Izquierda Unida | IU |
|  |  |  | Podemos | PODEMOS |
| **Sweden** |  |  |  |  |
| Sweden Democrats | SD |  | Left Party | V |
|  |  |  | Feminist Initiative | FI |
| **Switzerland** |  |  |  |  |
| Swiss People's Party | SVP |  | Labour Party of Switzerland | PDA |
| League of Ticinesians | LEGA |  |  |  |
| Geneva Citizens' Movement | MCR-MCG |  |  |  |
| **United Kingdom** |  |  |  |  |
| United Kingdom Independence Party | UKIP |  |  |  |
| British National Party | BNP |  |  |  |

**Table A.2: Collinearity Diagnostics**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | VIF | SQRT VIF | Tolerance | R-Squared |
| gndr\_recode | 1.03 | 1.01 | 0.9747 | 0.0253 |
| age\_recode | 1.1 | 1.05 | 0.906 | 0.0934 |
| edulv\_recode | 1.17 | 1.08 | 0.8546 | 0.1454 |
| ss\_total | 1.8 | 1.34 | 0.5549 | 0.4451 |
| unemp | 1.66 | 1.29 | 0.6032 | 0.3968 |
| trade | 1.92 | 1.38 | 0.5219 | 0.4781 |
| gdp | 1.89 | 1.38 | 0.5283 | 0.4717 |
| fdi | 1.62 | 1.27 | 0.6162 | 0.3838 |
| debt | 2.09 | 1.45 | 0.4782 | 0.5218 |
| deficit | 1.97 | 1.4 | 0.5081 | 0.4919 |
| euftf\_recode | 1.19 | 1.09 | 0.8369 | 0.1631 |
| trstprl\_rec | 1.58 | 1.26 | 0.632 | 0.368 |
| trstep\_rec | 1.32 | 1.15 | 0.7584 | 0.2416 |
| stflife\_rec | 1.15 | 1.07 | 0.8666 | 0.1334 |
| stfeco\_rec | 1.64 | 1.28 | 0.6102 | 0.3898 |
| stfgov\_rec | 1.66 | 1.29 | 0.603 | 0.397 |
| stfdem\_rec | 1.61 | 1.27 | 0.6216 | 0.3784 |
| gincdif\_recode | 1.06 | 1.03 | 0.9468 | 0.0532 |
| imbgeco\_rec | 1.54 | 1.24 | 0.6498 | 0.3502 |
| imptrad\_rec | 1.07 | 1.03 | 0.935 | 0.065 |
| freehms\_recode | 1.14 | 1.07 | 0.8755 | 0.1245 |
| imsmetn\_rec | 1.91 | 1.38 | 0.5246 | 0.4754 |
| imdfetn\_rec | 2.68 | 1.64 | 0.3734 | 0.6266 |
| impcntr\_rec | 2.15 | 1.47 | 0.4643 | 0.5357 |
| imueclt\_rec | 1.55 | 1.25 | 0.6447 | 0.3553 |
| imwbcnt\_rec | 1.54 | 1.24 | 0.6506 | 0.3494 |
| Mean VIF | 1.58 |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Eigenval | Cond Index |
| 1 | 17.9676 | 1 |
| 2 | 1.747 | 3.207 |
| 3 | 1.0486 | 4.1395 |
| 4 | 0.8077 | 4.7165 |
| 5 | 0.6909 | 5.0997 |
| 6 | 0.5272 | 5.838 |
| 7 | 0.4916 | 6.0455 |
| 8 | 0.4466 | 6.343 |
| 9 | 0.3416 | 7.2523 |
| 10 | 0.307 | 7.6499 |
| 11 | 0.299 | 7.7518 |
| 12 | 0.2838 | 7.9565 |
| 13 | 0.272 | 8.1278 |
| 14 | 0.2453 | 8.5585 |
| 15 | 0.2385 | 8.6805 |
| 16 | 0.1821 | 9.934 |
| 17 | 0.1672 | 10.3658 |
| 18 | 0.1609 | 10.5668 |
| 19 | 0.1554 | 10.7545 |
| 20 | 0.1359 | 11.4981 |
| 21 | 0.1292 | 11.7943 |
| 22 | 0.1043 | 13.1254 |
| 23 | 0.1 | 13.4042 |
| 24 | 0.0714 | 15.8689 |
| 25 | 0.0418 | 20.7311 |
| 26 | 0.0298 | 24.5673 |
| 27 | 0.0078 | 47.9993 |
| Condition Number | 47.9993 |  |
| Eigenvalues & Cond Index computed from scaled raw sscp (w/ intercept) 0.0012 | | |
|  | | |

1. Although there is not an established definition, this article defines radical parties as groups holding extreme ideologies who wish to drastically alter existing policies, political institutions, and/or the social order. Radical therefore refers to the outspoken position at the far end of the political spectrum that these parties take on key issues (Akkerman et al., 2016). Far-right parties can be identified by their shared nativist and authoritarian beliefs (Mudde, 2007). Far-left parties are critical of contemporary capitalism and its effects on economic, political, and social inequality (March, 2012). The focus of this research is on the broader category of radical parties. Although many of these parties may be populist in nature they fall under the wider umbrella of radical party. Populism can be viewed as a thin-centered ideology that can map onto other belief systems (Mudde, 2007). Here even non-populist parties may employ populist strategies or have populist actors for example the Conservative Party in the UK under Boris Johnson or the Republican Party under Donald Trump. For a detailed discussion of definitional debates around radical and populist parties see Muiz and Immerzeel, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For a complete list of radical party coding for each country see Appendix: Table A.1. This coding was informed by Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2019) and Parties and Elections in Europe classifications (Parties and Elections, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Variables were recoded to remove missing responses. These new dichotomous variables conceptualize party support and attitudes in negative or positive terms. Given that specific attitudinal responses are measured by semantic differential scales using dichotomous words at each end of the spectrum, factor analysis of these measures essentially fall into positive and negative categories making dichotomous variables appropriate for analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. To address the potential issue of multicollinearity between the independent variables in the models, a collinearity diagnostics table is included in the appendix. Variance inflation factors for the independent variables are sufficiently low to suggest that multicollinearity is not a problem (see Table A.2) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)