

All in the party family? Comparing far right voters in Western and Post-Communist Europe

Party Politics

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Trevor J Allen

Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine, USA

Abstract

Scholarship on far right parties in Post-Communist Europe has borrowed findings and analytical frameworks from studies on the Western European far right. Similarly, studies on Western European far right parties have increasingly referenced instances of far right success in post-communist states. These parties are similar in their Euroskepticism and exclusionary populism. However, little work has compared voters for the far right between regions. Different political opportunity structures have consequences for far right voter profiles in four important respects. First, the linkage between anti-immigrant attitudes and far right support is stronger in Western Europe. Second, far right voters in Western Europe are less religious than their post-communist counter-parts. Third, post-communist far right voters are economic leftists, whereas rightist attitudes toward income redistribution slightly predict a far right vote in Western Europe. Finally, far right voters in Western Europe are less satisfied with democracy as a regime type.

Keywords

conceptual definition, populism, post-communism, social cleavages, Western Europe

The rise of the populist far right is an important and well-studied phenomenon in comparative politics. Perhaps because of their centrality in the debate about European integration, and the importance of Euroskepticism in their platforms, scholarship has begun to consider far right parties in post-communist states alongside the comparatively longstanding Western European far right (Bustikova, 2014; Mudde, 2007). In so doing, researchers generalize findings and analytical frameworks from Western Europe to far right parties in post-communist systems. However, there are valid reasons to exercise caution when extending characteristics of the Western European far right to post-communist parties. Although these parties share a xenophobic populism, I argue such an approach overlooks the disparate histories of party systems that lead Central and Eastern European far right parties to court voters with fundamentally different interests. My research builds on previous work by explicitly examining whether the characteristics and attitudes of far right voters are regionally bounded, or if it is appropriate to make generalizations about populist far right support (and supporters).

Whereas a large amount of research has examined the motivations of voters for the Western European far right (Arzheimer, 2009), the far right in post-communist states

has only recently received considerable scholarly attention (Bustikova, 2014, 2009). The research that has included parties from both regions generally focuses on features of the parties themselves, like exclusionary populism (e.g. Mudde, 2007). Seemingly little research has compared far right electorates across regions. Because Western European far right parties developed alongside postindustrial political opportunity structures (Kitschelt, 2004; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995), and the salience of quality of life issues (Bornschieer, 2010), their voters will reflect this environment. In contrast, the socio-demographic profiles and motivating concerns of far right voters in post-communist states will reflect the stresses of the simultaneous transitions to markets and democracy, and the sudden openness of party systems in the region (cf. Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009; Marks et al., 2006). Thus, an analysis of voters' attitudes within these political opportunity structures may impede

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Corresponding author:

Trevor J Allen, Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine, CA 92627, USA.

Email: trevorja@uci.edu

the generally unproblematized inclusion of both post-communist and Western European far right parties within a single party family.

In what follows, I discuss regional differences in party systems and why far right constituencies are expected to reflect those differences. I then assess the characteristics of far right voters with a logistic regression model of voters in 14 countries. I use individual level data from the European Social Survey (ESS) data from elections 2001–2008.¹ The results suggest that attitudes and characteristics of far right voters in Western Europe differ from those in post-communist states in terms of Christian religiosity, attitudes toward immigrants and income redistribution, and satisfaction with democracy.

Voter cleavages and far right support

Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) analysis of voter alignments and political cleavages emphasizes the link between societal development and the formation of party systems. Similarly, changes in 'the distribution of voters' are thought to be among the most important predictors of new party success (Downs, 1957). Such societal developments transpired in the latter half of the 20th century with the rise of postmaterialism in Western Europe (Inglehart, 1977). The increased salience of postmaterial issues altered the framework of party competition, such that those who embraced the values of self-expression and autonomy formed a left-libertarian pole, and those threatened by modernization coalesced in a right-authoritarianism niche (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). The left's capitulation to market liberalism further rotated the axis such that the dominant dimension of party competition for the far right became mostly defined by positions on sociocultural questions (Bornschieer, 2010; Kitschelt, 2004). This dimension is often depicted as orthogonal to the traditional 'left-right' dimension (Bornschieer, 2010; De Lange, 2007; Kitschelt, 2004).

Thus, circumstances of advanced capitalism created an available constituency of socioculturally authoritarian voters whose value profile was unrequited by centripetal mainstream parties (Inglehart, 1984; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). There is evidence to suggest that far right parties have occupied this ethnocentric, socioculturally authoritarian electoral niche in Western Europe since the watershed European elections of 1984 and the breakthrough of the French *Front National* (Rydgren, 2010). Because of their mobilization of the sociocultural aggrieved, Western European far left benefit when quality of life concerns are salient (Bale, 2003; Bornschieer, 2010; Rydgren, 2006). The Western far right has not been advantaged by the salience of economic grievances, nor do they typically emphasize their economic platforms (Ivarsflaten, 2005, 2008).

In post-communist systems, both extreme and mainstream parties gained competitive access to the political space in 1989, whereas mainstream parties consolidated

long before the 'new' far right in Western democracies (Hanley, 2004). The relative openness of party systems in post-communist states corresponded to considerable electoral volatility after regime change (Tavits, 2005, 2008). This was especially true on the 'right' side of the spectrum, given the historical prominence of the Left (Bakke and Sitter, 2005; Kaminski, 2001; Tavits and Letki, 2009). Hence, the distinction between center and far right appears less obvious than in the west and electoral niches are less entrenched (Hanley, 2004). This has afforded parties in Post-Communist Europe more room to maneuver, underscoring the importance of party strategy (Bakke and Sitter, 2005; Tavits, 2008). I argue such systemic features enable the far right in post-communist states to mobilize a variety of groups unavailable to far right parties in Western Europe, such as religious and economically leftist voters, detailed below.

Party competition takes place on a different dimension in post-communist systems in ways that matter for the far right. In post-communist systems the 'losers of modernization' favor left-economic policies and sociocultural authoritarianism, appealing to those pained by the simultaneous transition to markets and democracy (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009; Marks et al., 2006). Indeed, the post-communist far right is thought to most successfully capitalize on economic grievances surrounding welfare retrenchment if mainstream parties are perceived as complicit (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009). Moreover, when economic grievances are not salient, the center right in Post-Communist Europe has been adept at incorporating the nativist exclusion of minorities—a keystone of extreme right rhetoric (Mudde, 2007)—into their platforms, limiting the possibility for radicals. Thus, a polarized sociocultural dimension does not necessarily benefit the far right in Post-Communist Europe to the extent it benefits the Western far right (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009: 463).

Finally, that the Western European far right participates in the 'new politics' cleavage is relevant beyond their presumed mobilization on sociocultural issues (Bornschieer, 2010; Ivarsflaten, 2008). The emergence of postmaterialism was predicated on relative peace and security during the formative years of the post-war generation, indicating the importance of social context for the development of political attitudes. Even if circumstances converge somewhat after accession (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009), that Western voters were afforded greater 'peace and security' during their formative years should be reflected in voter values and preferences.

The foregoing discussion yields several hypotheses, which I enumerate below. Some are conceptually interrelated. For instance, Western far right parties' rhetoric against Muslim immigrants has led them to affirm certain liberal democratic values, at least rhetorically. In contrast, post-communist far right parties might retain anti-democratic leanings (Minkenberg, 2002). Thereby, it is

possible that attitudes toward immigrants are linked to ostensibly democratic attitudes. The concomitant increase of Christian imagery in Western far right platforms (Betz and Meret, 2009), which corresponds to increased Islamophobia (Zúquete, 2008), further entangles religiosity and attitudes toward immigrants in Western Europe. As such, there is a variety of issue positions and characteristics on which post-communist and Western European far right voters are expected to differ.

Immigration

For far right parties in Western Europe, immigration has been singularly dominant (Ivarsflaten, 2008), such that some scholars refer to the Western European far right simply as 'anti-immigrant parties' (Van der Brug et al., 2000). The far right's successful mobilization of anti-immigrant sentiments corresponded with a 'conspiracy of silence' on the issue by mainstream parties (Bale, 2003; Ignazi, 2003; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; cf. Mudde, 2007). I therefore hypothesize anti-immigrant sentiment to be consistently stronger among Western European far right voters, and the linkage among those harboring anti-immigrant attitudes and far right parties to be much more pronounced.

Post-Communist far right parties do not have the same sizeable immigrant population against which they can mobilize. Immigration is neither as salient in Eastern Europe nor as relevant in the formation of out-groups (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009). *Internal minorities, rather than immigrants, bear the brunt of the post-communist far right's xenophobia, including Roma, Jews, Turks in Bulgaria, and Hungarians in Slovakia (Bustikova, 2014; Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009; Mudde, 2007).*² As such, the link between anti-immigrant attitudes and a far right vote is hypothesized to be considerably weaker. However, Europeans in both regions tend to overestimate the number of immigrants in their country (Citrin and Sides, 2007), and out of all Europeans, those in the East appear most hostile to foreigners (Wallace, 2002; cf. Bail, 2008: 46), so some link is expected.³ A weak link between anti-immigrant attitudes and a far right vote does not indicate greater tolerance among Eastern Europeans, only greater association between anti-immigrant attitudes and a far right vote in Western Europe.

H₁: Anti-immigrant sentiment will be stronger among Western European far right voters than Eastern European far right voters.

Religion

The non-religious or those with only moderate church attendance (Lubbers et al., 2002; cf. Arzheimer and Carter, 2009) are over represented among far right voters in Western Europe. This is a corollary of the comparatively closed

party systems in the West. Religious voters in Western Europe have been 'vaccinated' against voting for the far right by allegiance to center right Christian Democratic or conservative parties (Arzheimer and Carter, 2009; cf. Norris and Inglehart, 2004). Christian religiosity is an important predictor of rightist attitudes on a sociocultural dimension and without that inoculation one might expect increased religiosity among Western European far right voters and parties. *Although some Western far right parties have begun to incorporate Christian imagery (Ignazi, 2003: 222), particularly in targeting Muslim immigrants (Zúquete, 2008),⁴ regular church attendance remains negatively correlated with a far right vote (Arzheimer and Carter, 2009).* Christian religiosity should therefore be negatively predictive of far right support in Western Europe.

Christianity seems to occupy a much more prominent role for the far right in post-communist states. This is unsurprising given the sudden and sizeable increase in religious affiliation among the electorate (Froese, 2004). That, coupled with the historic relationship between the church and communist regimes in Post-Communist Europe, indicates that far right voters in post-communist states should be more religious than their Western counterparts. *In Post-Communist Europe the far right is a principle actor in politicizing religious ties, with far right electoral parties espousing radicalized Orthodox Christianity, or Catholicism in Poland (Hockenos, 2013; Minkenburg, 2002).* Politicized religion and the lack of historical allegiance to a Christian or conservative party indicates that Christian religiosity should positively predict extreme right support in Post-Communist Europe.

H₂: Christian religiosity will positively predict support for the far right in post-communist states. In Western Europe, Christian religiosity will negatively predict far right support.

The welfare state

The economic platforms of Western European have been ambiguous (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Kitschelt, 2007; cf. McGann and Kitschelt, 2005). Kitschelt and McGann's (1995) seminal account of the far right identified sociocultural authoritarianism and market liberalism as the 'winning formula' for successful far right parties. However, this impression has been widely panned in the literature (De Lange, 2007; Ivarsflaten, 2005), and far right parties have also advocated protectionism (Bale, 2003; Betz, 1994; Oesch, 2008). Recent scholarship has omitted economic positions from their definition of the far right (Art, 2010; Mudde, 2007). However, distrust of the complex and opaque welfare state may mimic right economic attitudes (Derks, 2006), even absent principled opposition to state intervention in the economy. Additionally, right coalitions containing a far

right party have remained conservative economically (Bale, 2003). As such, far right voters in Western Europe should be economic centrists, although slight right economic preferences would not be surprising.

Conversely, post-communist right parties have been conspicuously non-‘rightist’ in their economic platforms (Bakke and Sitter, 2005; Tavits and Letki, 2009). The fragmented right makes it difficult to support or implement welfare reforms because reforms are unpopular and the hold of a particular right party on its electorate is tenuous. Successful far right parties in Post-Communist Europe are generally anti-market. Where it has been to the Western far right’s benefit to avoid economic issues, the post-communist far right has successfully mobilized on economic grievances (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009). It appears unlikely that any pan-European far right family will be cohesive in terms of its economic platforms or the economic motivations of voters, and scholarship that examines the far right across regions does not include a unifying economic dimension (Mudde, 2007). Hence I hypothesize that far right voters in post-communist states are more likely to favor income redistribution.

H₃: Conservative economic preferences will be at most weakly predictive of far right support in Western Europe, whereas post-communist far right voters will definitively be economic leftists.

Anti-democratic attitudes

The far right parties in Post-Communist Europe tend to be more anti-democratic (Minkenberg, 2002, 2009), whereas the resolution of many ‘important questions’ about democracy in Western Europe has shrunk the electorate available at the extremes (Mair, 1997; cf. Kitschelt, 2004). Thus, post-communist far right parties compete in a more open field ideologically, as well as electorally. The difficulty of the simultaneous transitions to competitive markets and democracy has also tried popular support for new democratic regimes. Evaluations of communist and post-communist systems of government by Central and Eastern Europeans do not obviously favor the latter, and evaluations of democracy are negatively correlated with extreme right support (Bustikova, 2009). To the extent that experiences with different regime types might stimulate nostalgia among those for whom the transition to democracy has been traumatic, attitudes toward democracy and democratic institutions are expected to be less favorable in post-communist states. Indeed, as hardline communist parties moderated, some of their support moved to the far right (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009), in keeping with the logic of H₃ above. The socialization experiences of voters in Post-Communist Europe differ

from their counterparts in the West, and thus enable a broader array of programmatic appeals.

In Western Europe, the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid, and London; the Danish cartoon affair, and the assassination of Theo van Gogh stimulated an increase of Islamophobic attitudes, and a concomitant evolution of far right parties’ sociocultural attitudes (Betz and Meret, 2009; Williams, 2010; Zúquete, 2008). In mobilizing against Islam, the Western European far right portrays itself, perhaps disingenuously, as defenders of liberal democracy (Betz and Meret, 2009). The result of this rhetorical shift is that the classification of the Western European far right parties as anti-system, or illiberal, can no longer be accepted uncritically, despite previous characterizations of them as such.

For instance, the FPÖ’s Jörg Haider has criticized Islam as being at odds with Austrian values towards women (Betz, 2003), and during the French headscarf affair feminists and the FN were reasonably similar in their treatment of Muslims as a monolithic anti-modern foil (Scott, 2009). Filip Dewinter’s claim of his *Vlaams Belang* (VB) that ‘we are the defenders of Western civilization, with its two pillars: Judeo-Christianity and the heritage of the ancient Greece’ (Zúquete, 2008, p. 328) represents a noteworthy rhetorical development for a party identified with Flemish nationalism and historically anti-Semitism.⁵ The Dutch *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF), which coalesced with the Christian Democrats and conservative liberals in the Netherlands in 2002, was also manifestly ‘liberal’ in a variety of ways (Akkerman, 2005; Rydgren and Van Holsteyn, 2004). Even the most radical parties like the VB champion liberalism while castigating Islam as incompatible with European values (Betz and Meret, 2009). Akkerman (2005) suggests that the pervasiveness of liberal values in Western Europe requires any remotely successful party to endorse at least some version of democracy. Rydgren and Van Holsteyn (2004) speculate that the quasi-liberal frame defining the LPF might proliferate across Western Europe, as other far right frames have done previously (Rydgren, 2005). Additionally, Western European voters are more likely to only ever have known democratic regimes.

H₄: Dissatisfaction with democracy will be more predictive of far right support in Post-Communist Europe than in Western Europe.

Data and methods

To analyze far right parties’ voter profiles cross-regionally, I use data gathered in the second, third, and fourth waves of the European Social Survey (ESS). This covers elections occurring between 2001 and 2008. This is a period where far right parties in Western Europe

were uniformly mobilizing against Muslim immigrants (Eatwell, 2003; Williams, 2010), which impacts several of the above hypotheses.⁶ Additionally, these data come entirely from after the period of ‘proletarianization’ of Western far right parties (Betz, 1994), which has implications for far right voters’ economic preferences. During this time, parties in post-communist states were largely consumed with the politics of accession, which emboldened far right actors (Bustikova, 2009). More recent waves occur after financial and Eurozone crises, the implications of which for far right parties are several (Cramme et al., 2013, cf. Kitschelt and McGann, 1995: 11).⁷ While certainly warranting study, the waves from after the crises prompt questions beyond the purview of this project. For my purposes, it is more fruitful to examine parties prior to the exogenous shock of the economic crises and the punitive quality of subsequent elections (Kriesi, 2012; cf. Cramme et al., 2013). This analysis can then be meaningfully extended to more recent waves to examine how motivating attitudes and characteristics of voters have shifted in post-crisis elections when the dust settles.

The countries considered are those with far right parties receiving 3.5% of the vote or greater in any national election between 2001 and 2008.⁸ This leaves a sample of 14 countries included in the ESS, six of which are post-communist and eight of which are Western. The list of far right parties is presented in Table 1.⁹

All of the selected parties are considered to be far right in previous literature. Most of the selected parties are also included in Mudde (2007: 44, although other parties appear in his analysis). The post-communist far right parties are also included in Bustikova (2014). Betz and Meret (2009) and Arter (2010) account for the Norwegian FrP and Finnish True Finns, respectively. The Dutch LPF is not universally considered to be far right (Kitschelt, 2007), however Rydgren and Van Holsteyn (2004) find that the profile of LPF voters was similar to the profile of other more accepted far right parties and because this study is concerned with voters, the LPF is included. Pooling the data into a single avoids problems associated with rare outcomes in logistic regression (Allison, 2012). Because the pooled model is less susceptible to small sample bias it can reveal effects that might otherwise be underestimated if the model is presented separately for each country in the sample (cf. King and Zeng, 2001). Moreover, these parties are often treated together in comparative literature, so it is a reasonable extension of that literature to analyze them in the same model.

For H_1 I perform a factor analysis of three highly correlated (0–10 scale) questions intended to gauge attitudes toward immigrants (Cronbach’s $\alpha > 0.82$). The questions ask the respondent to assess whether immigrants are bad (0) or good (10) for the economy, undermine (0) or enrich (10) culture, or in general make the respondent’s country ‘worse’ (0) or ‘better’ (10).¹⁰ These immigration

measures have been used as predictors of far right support in other literature (e.g. Ivarsflaten, 2008; Oesch, 2008).

To test the second hypothesis I use self-reported church attendance. Because the hypothesis concerns Christian religiosity in particular, I account for attendance at non-Christian services by interacting the variable for church attendance with a dummy variable for Christianity (including Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and ‘other Christian’). The attendance variable is useful vis a vis other self-reported measures of religiosity because church affiliation is part of the mechanism by which right-of-center voters are ‘vaccinated’ against far right support in Western Europe (Arzheimer and Carter, 2009). Additionally, individualized spirituality masquerading as respondent religiosity is not under scrutiny (cf. Inglehart and Norris, 2004). Moreover, church attendance may also capture deference to hierarchical patterns of authority, part of Kitschelt’s (1995) original formula. Regardless, church attendance is highly correlated with other religious variables in these data.¹¹ The coding is reversed from the original, so higher values indicate greater attendance.

To gauge attitudes toward the welfare state (H_3), the ESS employs a Likert scale asking the extent to which voters agree or disagree with the statement ‘government should reduce differences in income.’ I also include a dichotomous predictor for long-term (three months or greater) unemployment experience. Unemployment status has historically been suggested as a material indicator of far right support (e.g. Lubbers et al., 2002), and is used as a proxy to identify victims of post-industrial occupational upheaval (cf. Kitschelt and McGann, 1995).

The most difficult predictor to operationalize is satisfaction with democracy. Dissatisfaction with particular governments or mainstream parties provides especially fertile ground for extreme right populists in Western Europe (Arzheimer, 2009), whereas quality of democracy itself is strongly associated with extreme right support in Post-Communist states (Bustikova, 2009). As such, questions probing the relationship between democratic attitudes must be sure to access attitudes toward democracy as a regime type, not the performance of particular governments, parties, or politicians. Ultimately, though necessarily controversially, this covariate is best constructed using a single question asking for the respondent’s satisfaction with democracy (in the respondent’s country). To control for the effect of dissatisfaction with mainstream parties, I include a two-item factor measuring trust in parties and politicians (Cronbach’s $\alpha > 0.92$). The factor is correlated with satisfaction with democracy at nearly the same level ($r = 0.5$) in both regions.

I also include a measure of Euroskepticism. I use an 11-point scale asking whether European integration has gone too far (0) or should go further (10). Euroskepticism is correlated with far right support in both Western and

Table 1. Far right parties in Europe, November 2001–September 2008.

Country	Parties	Election years	N (total)	N (far right)
Austria	<i>Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ); Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)</i>	2002, 2006	1990	141
Belgium	<i>Vlaams Blok/Belang (VB); Front National (B-FN)</i>	2003, 2007	2368	250
Bulgaria	<i>ATAKA</i>	2005	986	103
Denmark	<i>Dansk Folkeparti (DF)</i>	2001, 2005, 2007	2920	265
Croatia	<i>Hrvatska stranka prava (HSP)</i>	2003, 2007	541	19
Finland	<i>True Finns (PS)</i>	2003, 2007	3707	72
France	<i>Front National (FN)</i>	2002, 2007	3224	186
Hungary	<i>Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (MIÉP)</i>	2002, 2006	1811	17
Netherlands	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV); Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF)^a</i>	2002, 2003, 2006	3735	147
Norway	<i>Progress Party (FrP)</i>	2005	3245	500
Poland	<i>Liga Polskich Rodzin (LPR); Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej (SRP)</i>	2005; 2007	1823	181
Slovakia	<i>Slovenská národná strana (SKNS)</i>	2002; 2006	1607	153
Slovenia	<i>Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka (SNNS)</i>	2004; 2007	1724	93
Switzerland	<i>Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)</i>	2003; 2007	248	574
			29674	2701
<i>Total:</i>				32375

^aThe LPF gained 1.5% of the vote in the 2006 survey, but only polled at 0.2% in the 2006 parliamentary election. Voters who said they voted for the LPF in the last election are included in the analysis, but I suspect that they mistakenly identified a successor party (like PVV) as the LPF, or misidentified the election to which the question referred.

Eastern Europe (Marks et al., 2006; Mudde, 2007), though the motivations for Euroscepticism may vary by region (Rohrscheider and Whitefield, 2006). Nevertheless, I do not expect the interaction of post-communist with the Euroscepticism variable to be significantly predictive, but rather that negative attitudes toward European integration should increase the odds of a far right vote in both regions.

I also include control variables for age, years of education, and gender. Younger, less educated voters are thought to be more likely to vote for the far right. Younger voters are less committed to traditional political parties, and more education correlates with the occupations and values courted by other parties, particularly of the New Left (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995), as well as acceptance of universal values anathema to far right programs (Bornschieer, 2010). Likewise, males are thought to be more available than females to extreme right machinations, due in part to greater subjective political efficacy (Mudde, 2007). The effect of all three controls however may not be significant when other correlated predictors are included (Mudde, 2007). Age is also presented in five-year intervals so that the coefficients show up once rounding has taken place. All variables that are not dichotomous are mean-centered so that interpretations are more realistic.

The outcome of interest is a vote for a far right party. A vote for a far right party is coded as a 1, and a vote for another party is coded as 0. Because I am concerned with the potentially different bases of support for far right parties in each region, non-voters are not included. Each main effect is interacted with a dummy variable indicating post-communist status, so that coefficients can be meaningfully compared, and slopes estimated for each region. Status as a post-communist state is also dichotomous where

status as a post-communist state is coded as a 1, and so-called 'western' states are coded as a 0.

Because the outcome is dichotomous, data are evaluated in a logistic regression model with clustered standard errors around country. I also use dummy variables for each country in the sample. Because countries in this study are not sampled from a population, but rather represent the population of available countries with far right parties, the potential alternative random effects model is inappropriate (Arzheimer, 2009: 266). Each individual-level predictor is presented both as a main effect (for Western Europe) and as an interaction with the dummy variable for status as a post-communist state. The main effect for post-communist state is excluded because it is redundant with the inclusion of the country dummies. Croatia is used as the reference case. All states included had polity scores of at least eight, beyond the threshold for democratic (six), at the time of the relevant elections.¹²

Results and analysis

The results from the logistic models generally confirm the hypothesized differences between post-communist and Western European far right voters. They are presented in Table 2 below. Model 1 does not contain the indicator of post-communist status, i.e. nothing distinguishes the characteristics of Western European far right voters from far right voters in post-communist states. If the first model performs well, there is justification for studying the far right as a pan-European phenomenon at the level of voters, in addition to the level of parties already present in the literature. Model 2 includes the dummy variable for post-communist interacted with the predictors from the first model. This

Table 2. Logistic regression models.^b

Predictors	Model 1		Model 2	
	β	(s.e.)	β	(s.e.)
Immigrant attitudes	-0.65***	(0.13)	-0.85***	(0.03)
Christian religiosity	-0.02	(0.10)	-0.17***	(0.05)
“Government should reduce differences in income levels”	0.03	(0.05)	0.09***	(0.03)
Satisfaction with democracy	-0.08*	(0.02)	-0.05	(0.04)
Trust in parties and politicians	-0.18***	(0.04)	-0.19***	(0.05)
Euroscepticism	-0.09***	(0.02)	-0.09***	(0.03)
Unemployed	0.29**	(0.08)	0.33**	(0.10)
Male	0.33***	(0.06)	0.30***	(0.07)
Age	-0.01***	(0.02)	-0.01***	(0.00)
Education	-0.10***	(0.03)	-0.07***	(0.01)
<i>Post-Communist*Immigrant attitudes</i>			0.67***	(0.04)
<i>Post-Communist*Christian religiosity</i>			0.37***	(0.09)
<i>Post-Communist*“Government should reduce differences in income levels”</i>			-0.24***	(0.03)
<i>Post-Communist*Satisfaction with democracy</i>			-0.11**	(0.04)
<i>Post-Communist*Euroscepticism</i>			0.02	(0.03)
<i>Post-Communist*Unemployed</i>			-0.10	(0.14)
<i>Post-Communist*Male</i>			0.10	(0.16)
<i>Post-Communist*Age</i>			0.00	(0.00)
<i>Post-Communist*Education</i>			-0.10	(0.07)
Austria	0.57***	(0.10)	0.76**	(0.22)
Belgium	1.17***	(0.10)	1.36***	(0.22)
Bulgaria	1.25***	(0.05)	1.18***	(0.10)
Denmark	1.44***	(0.15)	1.56***	(0.25)
Finland	-0.19	(0.10)	-0.05	(0.25)
France	0.45***	(0.03)	0.60**	(0.22)
Hungary	-2.01***	(0.11)	-1.71***	(0.11)
Netherlands	0.58***	(0.09)	0.80**	(0.23)
Norway	2.07***	(0.12)	2.26***	(0.22)
Poland	1.37***	(0.15)	0.96***	(0.03)
Slovakia	1.28***	(0.02)	1.24***	(0.1)
Slovenia	0.45***	(0.03)	0.50***	(0.06)
Switzerland	2.86***	(0.08)	3.21***	(0.23)
<i>Intercept</i>	-3.45***	(0.14)	-3.63***	(0.25)
<i>R²</i>	0.1497		0.1641	
<i>C-Statistic</i>	0.80		0.81	
<i>LR test with Full Model</i>	162.24***		—	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ $N = 32375$. Weighted using probability and design weights from ESS, standard errors clustered by country.

^bLog-odds rather than odds ratios are presented. The coefficient for a variable interacted with the post-communist dummy can be added to the coefficient of the main effect, and then exponentiated to obtain the odds ratio for a post-communist state.

reveals the different effects of the predictors in countries with a communist legacy. Each of the four hypotheses finds support in the second model, and some of the effects are quite large.

Model 1 does not perform particularly badly. Anti-immigrant attitudes, dissatisfaction with democracy, lack of trust in parties and politicians, as well as negative attitudes toward European integration are significant predictors of far right party support irrespective of region. The demographic variables—gender, age, years of education—are also significant. However, there is no discernable impact of Christian religiosity or attitudes toward income redistribution on a far right vote in Model 1, when post-communist and Western European voters are considered together. Looking at Model 1 and Model 2 together it appears pooling post-

communist and Western European voters together masks the true effects of all four experimental variables. This lends support to my overall argument. The rows corresponding to the hypotheses above are bolded and italicized in the table. Figure 1 shows predicted probabilities for the variables of interest when other variables are held at their mean and dichotomous variables are set at one.

In Model 1, the effect of attitudes toward immigrants on a far right vote is smaller than it is for Western Europe in Model 2, when post-communist states are considered separately. This is because the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes is much larger in Western states than in Post-Communist Europe. Negative attitudes toward immigrants significantly predict support for the far right in post-communist states, but the effect is reduced. Importantly, this indicates that the

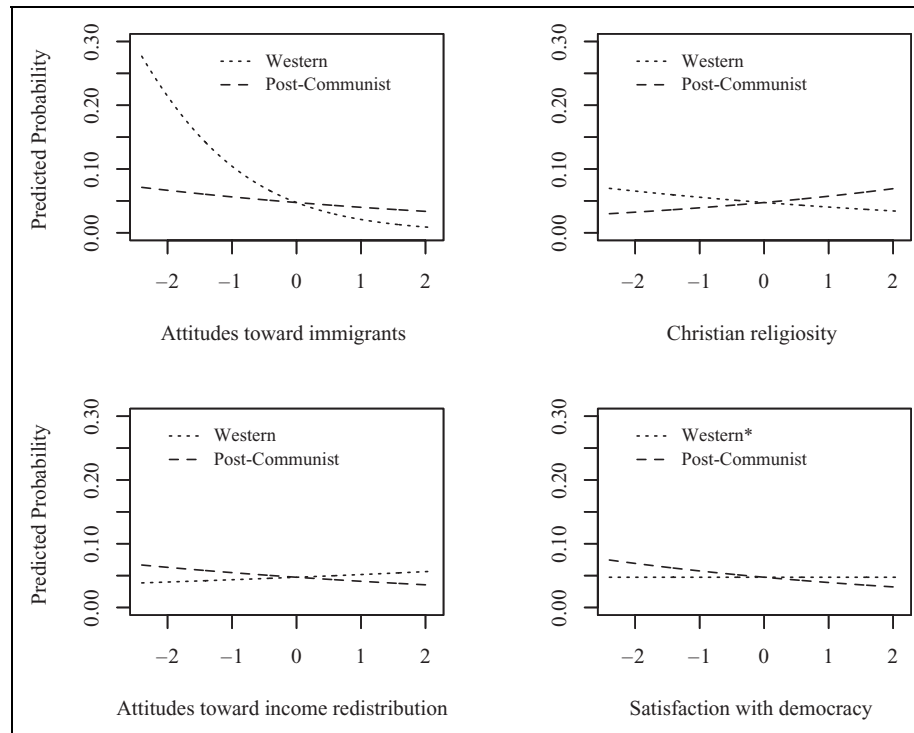


Figure 1. Effect of predictors on far right vote probability.

*Satisfaction with democracy not significant in Western Europe. Predicted probabilities calculated from Table 2.

classification of far right parties as ‘anti-immigrant parties’ (Van der Brug et al., 2000) does not capture the motivations of far right voters in post-communist states. This finding is consistent with the argument of H_1 .

The linkage between anti-immigrant sentiment and far right support in Western Europe clarifies a particular relationship between parties and voters that distinguishes them from the post-communist far right. That far right parties influence immigration policy, even indirectly (Bale, 2003; Schain, 2006), suggests the importance of making this distinction. In this dataset, post-communist voters display, on average, higher anti-immigrant attitudes than Western European voters, but the link between those attitudes and a far right vote is considerably weaker. This does not imply that far right voters in post-communist states are more tolerant of minority groups as such. Far right parties in Post-Communist Europe castigate their internal minorities using rhetoric similar to that with which the Western European far right targets non-European immigrants (Mudde, 2007). Indeed, the post-communist far right might be characterized as more extreme in that regard (Minkenberg, 2002: 336; Mudde, 2005: 165). Unfortunately the ESS does not currently ask questions about minorities independent of immigration status, which is an obvious limitation of this study. As immigration into Eastern Europe increases, it will be interesting to see how the far right in the region responds (cf. Rovny, 2014).

The variable for attendance at religious services also performs as expected in both regions once the populations

are treated separately, while it is insignificant in Model 1. Low values correspond to less attendance at religious services; hence religiosity correlates negatively with odds of a far right vote in Western Europe. The opposite is true in post-communist states. This is presumably due in part to religious voters being partisans of the mainstream right and therefore less available to far right parties. Unlike with immigration attitudes, where the effect was in the same direction but much more pronounced in the West, increased church attendance has the opposite effect in Western Europe that it does in Post-Communist Europe.

Attitudes toward income redistribution are also insignificant in Model 1, but Model 2 again reveals a difference between the two groups of voters. Conservative attitudes toward income redistribution are significant in Western Europe in Model 2, although the effect is small. This is consistent with Kitschelt’s winning formula, although it may reflect the inclusion of the market liberal LPF and FrP in the sample (Mudde, 2007), though the data are weighted and clustered errors are used. The FPÖ and SVP also draw support from economic rightists, perhaps reflecting their history as mainstream conservative parties (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005). Far right voters in post-communist states are more likely to favor economic redistribution and the effect is larger, in keeping with H_3 . The unemployment dummy variable is significant, without a significant difference between regions.¹³

Finally, satisfaction with democracy is negatively associated with far right support in Post-Communist Europe,

but insignificant in Western Europe. This is true despite the control for distrust in politicians and political parties, which is significant in both regions. This supports H_4 and suggests that the regime type is more entrenched in the West than the East in the minds of voters, which may also reflect the different socialization experiences of those in post-communist states. This is an important finding regarding democratic consolidation in Post-Communist Europe.

In terms of goodness of fit the model performs well with a C-Statistic of 0.81, where 0.80 is considered strong, and 0.70 is considered reasonable (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2000). Briefly, if a far right voter and a voter for another party are drawn from the sample, the model will correctly identify which is which 81% of the time. A Box-Tidwell test indicates that the model's form is reasonably specified, and a likelihood ratio test indicates the model with interaction terms to be a significant improvement over a main effects model. Hence region, in addition to the individual level variables and country effects, contains important information on the potential for far right party success.

Discussion and conclusion

This study asked whether the characteristics and motivations of far right parties in Post-Communist Europe differ from the more thoroughly studied far right voters in Western Europe. To be sure, there are important similarities among far right voters in both regions. In this study, the effects of several demographic variables, including respondent's gender, education, and age, as well as attitudes toward European integration, and politicians and political parties are consistent for each set of countries. Moreover, literature suggests that the far right's exclusionary, nativist populism is present in both regions (Mudde, 2007). If a far right party family can be established on those criteria, then there is no issue with the construction of a pan-European party family that consists of the parties analyzed above.

However, there are strong a priori reasons to doubt far right voters' uniformity across Europe based on the consolidation of Western Europe's party systems and democratic regimes compared to those in post-communist states. Moreover, the societal changes in the 1980s that contributed to the development of the Western European far right (Bornschiefer, 2010) were absent in Post-Communist Europe. As such the far right's populism was hypothesized to court voters with different attitudes and interests in the latter region. Four hypotheses were tested and found support.

The first hypothesis considered immigration, the flagship issue for far right parties in Western Europe. Although anti-immigrant attitudes are significant the same direction across region, the dose makes the poison. The Western European far right's seemingly monomaniacal focus on immigration is reflected by a strong linkage between anti-immigrant attitudes and a far right vote in the region. The predictive power of anti-immigrant attitudes is relatively

weaker in post-communist states. That a 'conspiracy of silence' on the issue enabled the Western far right to cut its teeth on immigration testifies to the comparatively closed party system of Western Europe (Bale, 2003; Ignazi, 2003). In Post-Communist Europe, out-groups are constructed around settled internal minorities and have long historical roots, compared with contemporary immigration in the West, and—in contrast to the Western far right's mobilization on an issue unaddressed by the mainstream—the politics of sociocultural otherness are more pervasive in post-communist states (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009). In this manner, the far right in Western Europe mobilizes on a particular niche more so than its post-communist counterpart.

The second hypothesis also reflects the history and durability of Western European party systems. In these data, Christian religiosity is a strong and significant predictor of right ideology in both regions, and religion is an important factor in constructing symbolic boundaries against immigrants (Bail, 2008). However in Western Europe historic allegiance to Christian democratic and conservative parties apparently continues to 'inoculate' Christian voters against casting a ballot for the far right (Arzheimer and Carter, 2009). In post-communist states, the fragmented right (Tavits and Letki, 2009), and unavailability of religious voters to the left suggests that mobilizing on religious ties is a more profitable strategy.¹⁴

The third hypothesis reflects a genuine difference in attitudes among far right voters between regions. In regard to economics, the European extreme right party family is neither extreme, nor right, nor a party family. In Western Europe, there is a small positive effect of right economic attitudes, which is somewhat surprising given the far right's mobilization on sociocultural grounds (Bornschiefer, 2010; Ivarsflaten, 2005). This may reflect the far right's participation in center right coalitions, or the relative size of the cases highlighted above, despite weights and corrections for clustered data. The effect of leftist attitudes in post-communist states on a far right vote is larger, and supports the Eastern European far right's ability to mobilize on economic grievances (Bustikova and Kitschelt, 2009). This variable will be of interest for future research examining the comparatively turbulent elections after the financial crisis, such that even some far right parties occasionally champion elements of liberal democracy.

The fourth hypothesis is perhaps the most impactful. Democratic values are thoroughly entrenched in Western Europe (Akkerman, 2005). By contrast, in Post-Communist Europe, dissatisfaction with democracy correlates with increased odds of a far right vote even controlling for negative attitudes toward politicians and parties. This supports earlier literature suggesting the far right in Post-Communist Europe is more anti-democratic and extreme than its Western counterpart (Minkenberg, 2002, 2009). Considering that Central and Eastern European voters in

general do not evaluate post-communist economic systems and systems of government much more positively than the communist systems they supplanted (Bustikova, 2009), the persistent success of the far right in national and European elections may portend a political crisis to correspond with the ongoing economic one (cf. Tavits, 2005: 296).

Przeworski and Teune (1970) recommend comparativists replace proper nouns with variables. In this study, the distinction of post-communist states and Western European states stands in for the course of party system development and democratic consolidation. Party programs do not coalesce in a vacuum, independent of history, but rather respond to the availability of electorates and the strategies of political actors. My research has shown that, although populism and nativism are similar across the continent, the preferences of voters susceptible to far right appeals differ. This study therefore cautions against explaining far right party success in Post-Communist Europe by examining the linkages between voters and parties developed for the far right in Western Europe. The Western European far right's hallmark issue of immigration is not so clearly linked to a far right vote in Eastern Europe, although nativism persists. Differences in religiosity and attitudes toward government redistribution suggest that voters in each region are distinguishable on the usual two-dimensional models of party competition. Anti-democratic attitudes among the far right electorate in Post-Communist Europe suggest a qualitative distinction at a very fundamental, if potentially disturbing, level. The rise of the far right is more than a flash in the pan of European politics. To the extent that political parties and social movements gravitate toward and give political presence to salient social divisions, regional differences in far right support are unlikely to dissipate.

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Notes

1. <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>; several studies on the Western European extreme right have used previous waves of this survey (Ivarsflaten, 2008), thus ESS builds upon existing literature.
2. In Post-Communist Europe, anti-Semitism is still associated with far right (and left) support whereas in Western Europe that correlation is waning (Williams, 2010). Mareš (2014)

found instances of Eastern European far right parties considering Islam(ism) as a non-European ally within a broader anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is also linked to anti-capitalism in post-communist states (Hockenos, 2013)

3. In post-communist states, anti-immigrant sentiment among potential far right supporters may also be (or have been) tied to the anti-communist sentiment that is constitutive of the right side of the political spectrum: 'they come here from the third world and get everything they want just because they're communists' (Hockenos, 2013: 17).
4. This is consistent with the extreme right's instrumental populism if the incorporation of Christian imagery is a response to partisan dealignment in an attempt to target previously unavailable (i.e. Christian Democratic) voters.
5. Williams (2010) notes the 'enemy-of-my-enemy' convenience in replacing Jews with Muslims as the out-group of choice for Western European far right parties.
6. Betz and Meret (2009) cite the Danish DF as leading the way in the mobilization against Islam after 9/11 during the November 2001 parliamentary elections in Denmark. This is the first election chronologically in my sample.
7. Indeed, a financial crisis of the sort currently afflicting parts of Europe could be counted among the factors that might change the appeal of the package offered by the far right (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995: 11).
8. The 3.5% is fairly arbitrary, but somewhat corresponds with the 4% electoral threshold Kitschelt (1995) identifies as a potential obstacle for far right parties and avoids some of the problems associated with rare events logits. I include the Belgian *Front Nationale* in the analysis because the voters are similar to those of the more successful *Vlaams Belang* (cf. Coffé, 2005), and because the total amount of votes going to a far right party in Belgium exceeds the threshold for inclusion. I similarly include the French MNR.
9. The Russian LDPR is occasionally included in the study of the post-communist far right (Minkenburg, 2002; Mudde, 2007), although it is also excluded (Bustikova, 2014). Given peculiarities in both Russian elections generally and the LDPR in particular (Hale, 2005), it is excluded from my sample. This has the dual advantage of removing all FSU states, such that no distinction need be made between former Soviet Republics and states in the Eastern Bloc, and only including states that have some formal relationship with the European Union, which is important given Euroskepticism in far right voting. Russia also has the lowest polity score during the period under study, and does not always pass the threshold for democratic.
10. It would be desirable to examine economic and cultural effects separately, given the presumed salience of economic issues in post-communist states and sociocultural issues in Western Europe, but the high correlation makes such an undertaking impossible in regression analysis.
11. It may ultimately be desirable to separate the effects of religiosity from church attendance, if (as above) attendance indicates a potential commitment to a Christian Democratic

or Conservative party better than religiosity proper, or if attendance fosters social capital and thus democratic attitudes (although, see Putnam, 2000 for impact of hierarchical structure).

12. See <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>.
13. In the preliminary analysis, interactions between unemployment, gender, and anti-immigration attitudes were run, but were not significant and were trimmed from the model to avoid three-way interactions once the post-communist dummy was included.
14. It seems that the far right parties in more secular states have not been as successful (e.g. Estonia; Czech Republic (Bustikova, 2009)). Findings related to religiosity may weaken should successful far right parties develop in more secular post-communist societies.

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Author biography

Trevor J Allen is a PhD candidate at University of California, Irvine who studies far right populism and voter attitudes in Europe.