
Original Article

Scapegoating: Unemployment, far-right parties and anti-immigrant sentiment

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Abstract Far-right parties blame immigrants for unemployment. We test the effects of the unemployment rate on public receptivity to this rhetoric. The dependent variable is anti-immigrant sentiment. The key independent variables are the presence of a far-right party and the level of unemployment. Building from influential elite-centered theories of public opinion, the central hypothesis is that a high unemployment rate predisposes citizens to accept the anti-immigrant rhetoric of far-right parties, and a low unemployment rate predisposes citizens to reject this rhetoric. The findings from cross-sectional, cross-time and cross-level analyses are consistent with this hypothesis. It is neither the unemployment rate nor the presence of a far-right party that appears to drive anti-immigrant sentiment; rather, it is the interaction between the two.

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Introduction

Economic misery is oft implicated in explanations for the rise of xenophobic sentiments among majority populations. This argument has a long history (Hamilton, 1982, pp. 9–14), and it has re-emerged more recently to help explain the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment among native-born populations in Western European and other countries (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Wilson, 2001; Golder, 2003; Semyonov *et al.*, 2006). Certainly, there are substantively important variations on this theme. Some analysts treat the connection between economic insecurity and anti-immigrant sentiment as an individual-level



phenomenon. According to the ‘ethnic competition’ hypothesis, vulnerable segments of native-born populations turn against immigrants because they are seen as competitors for scarce resources (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000, pp. 65–67; Lubbers *et al*, 2002, p. 349; Scheepers *et al*, 2002, pp. 19–20; McLaren, 2003, pp. 915–916). Other analysts see the connection between economic misery and anti-immigrant sentiment as a group-level phenomenon. The ‘group-threat’ hypothesis, for example, argues that native-born populations turn against immigrants in bad economic times because they perceive immigrants as a threat to the well-being of the members in their group (Blumer, 1958, p. 3; Quillian, 1995, pp. 588–589; Wilson, 2001, pp. 485–487). Where the ethnic competition hypothesis posits a connection between personal economic misery and anti-immigrant sentiment, the group-threat hypothesis posits a connection between aggregate economic misery and anti-immigrant sentiment (Golder, 2003, p. 428; Semyonov *et al*, 2006, pp. 428–429). To be sure, most scholars now posit an interaction between individual and group-level factors (Lubbers *et al*, 2002, pp. 352–354; Scheepers *et al*, 2002, p. 18; Semyonov *et al*, 2006, p. 427; Rink *et al*, 2009, p. 414). The significant point, though, is that both perspectives view economic misery as an important driver of anti-immigrant sentiment.

The proposed connection between economic misery and anti-immigrant sentiment is intriguing not least of all because there seems to be no clear negative empirical connection between economic performance, on the one hand, and immigration levels on the other. Indeed, there are generally more immigrants in economically prosperous regions than in economically depressed ones; these immigrants are more likely to arrive during economic upturns rather than during economic downswings (c.f., Golder, 2003, p. 438; Semyonov *et al*, 2006, p. 436). Le Pen’s rhetoric to the contrary, two million immigrants does not equal ‘two million French people out of work’ (quoted in Jackman and Volpert, 1996, p. 507). Yet, reality is one thing, perception quite another. As Golder (2003, p. 439) observes, ‘[i]t is hard to see why people would vote for extreme right parties if they think that unemployment is caused by tight monetary policy or rigidities in the labor market. However, it is less difficult to see why they might do this if they think that immigration is the cause of unemployment’. Whether immigrants threaten native-born populations tells us very little about whether or why native-born populations perceive immigrants to be a threat. There is a missing link, in other words, in the causal chain that ties economic misery to anti-immigrant sentiment.

Far-right anti-immigration political parties, we argue, play a pivotal role in forging the connection between economic misery and anti-immigrant sentiment. Political parties do not ride passively atop a sea of public opinion. Rather, they actively work to shape public opinion (Converse, 1964, p. 211; Zaller, 1992, pp. 13–14; Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000). One of the ways in which



far-right parties try to shape public opinion about immigration is by linking immigrants to a host of domestic social and economic problems, including, particularly, unemployment (Hamilton, 1982; Jackman and Volpert, 1996, p. 507; Immerfall, 1998, p. 250; Johnson, 1998, p. 213; Knigge, 1998, p. 260; Riedlsperger, 1998, p. 36; Swyngedouw, 1998, p. 68; Golder, 2003, p. 438; Carter, 2005, p. 31; Hainsworth, 2008, p. 88). Far-right parties invariably do prime citizens to blame immigrants for unemployment, but these frames do not go unchallenged by other elites and by other parties. As a result, we conjecture that far-right economic frames are more likely to resonate, they are more likely to ‘win-out’, in effect, when the unemployment rate is high than when it is low. From this standpoint, it is not just the unemployment rate that drives anti-immigrant sentiment. Citizens do not automatically blame immigrants for unemployment. And it is not just exposure to far-right rhetoric that drives anti-immigrant sentiment. The minds of citizens are not blank gray screens that can be shaken and erased at the whims of politicians. The missing link, we contend, comes from an interaction between economic misery and far-right rhetoric that turns citizens against immigrants. A poor economy predisposes citizens to accept the framing, by far-right elites, of the immigration issue. A strong economy predisposes citizens to ignore these frames. Thus, the economy matters, but its effects are conditioned by politics. And politics matters, but its effects are conditioned by the economy.

The Impact of Far-Right Parties

The important question of whether economic misery increases the electoral appeal of far-right parties has received considerable attention (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998; Lubbers *et al*, 2002; Golder, 2003; McLaren, 2003; Ivarsflaten, 2005; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2005; Rydgren, 2008; Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012). Far-right parties blame immigrants for unemployment. Thus, Lubbers and Scheepers (2000, p. 66) reason that ‘... in circumstances of scarcity an extreme right-wing party may become a more attractive voting option’. Similarly, Jackman and Volpert (1996, p. 507) expect ‘... political scapegoating of this sort to find a much more fertile ground when jobs are scarce than when they are plentiful’. And Golder (2003, p. 439) hypothesizes that during economic downturns in countries with high numbers of immigrants, ‘the claims of extreme right politicians and the media linking unemployment and immigration may be more compelling...’. These hypotheses share in common the view that the persuasiveness of far-right rhetoric is conditioned, to a large extent, by economic circumstances (but see Rydgren, 2008, p. 754). But the focus of these studies is on the electoral success of far-right parties. And that dependent variable does



not gauge directly whether structural conditions predispose citizens to accept or reject the anti-immigrant rhetoric of these parties.

There are important reasons to question the extent to which the electoral success of far-right parties reflects a heightened perception of immigrant threat by the voters in a given country. First, as Kitschelt and McGann (1995) found, the electoral prospects of far-right parties are influenced by institutional, contextual and strategic factors that have little to do with the distribution of issue preferences in the population. Indeed, despite the centrality of the immigration issue to far-right agendas (Thränhardt, 1995; Rydgren, 2005; Ivarsflaten, 2008), many voters support these parties for reasons other than immigration (Golder, 2003, p. 440). Consequently, the electoral success of far-right parties is not necessarily a direct reflection of high anti-immigrant animosity in the population as a whole. Nor is it the case, conversely, that weaker electoral support for these parties reflects a low level of anti-immigrant animosity in the electorate.

Second, there are reasons other than ‘ethnic competition’, ‘group threat’ and, indeed, anti-immigrant sentiment, that could plausibly explain a possible empirical relationship between economic misery and far-right electoral support. As Anderson (1996, p. 499) has argued, ‘if the classic reward-punishment theory of government popularity holds for opposition parties ... [t]he opposition is rewarded when the government is punished’. Far-right parties, by and large, are opposition parties. Thus, economically dissatisfied segments of the population might gravitate to these parties because of their ‘outsider’ or opposition status, rather than just their anti-immigration positions (Anderson, 1996, p. 499; Van Der Brug and Fennema, 2003, pp. 56–57; Ivarsflaten, 2008, pp. 6–7).

To be sure, anti-immigrant sentiment matters in these cases, but it is not the only thing that matters. High levels of anti-immigrant sentiment, for example, may not translate as clearly into support for outsider opposition far-right parties during periods of economic prosperity when incumbent political parties tend to do well and opposition parties tend to do poorly. Incumbent success, in this instance, could mask in election results lingering anti-immigrant sentiment in the population. Even so, anti-immigrant sentiment may help voters choose between rival opposition parties during periods of economic decline, when voters turn in greater numbers against incumbent parties and toward the opposition. In this scenario, one would observe a connection between bad economic times and heightened far-right support, but that association would capture something substantively different than an association between bad economic times and heightened anti-immigrant sentiment. In short, there are few reasons to expect a direct connection between levels of anti-immigrant sentiment, on the one hand, and levels of support for far-right parties on the other. As a result, establishing a connection between poor economic conditions and far-right support is not necessarily the same as establishing a connection between poor economic conditions and anti-immigrant sentiment.



Taken together, the level of electoral support for far-right parties is not necessarily a proxy for the level of anti-immigrant sentiment in the electorate. The vast majority of social science studies of far-right support therefore do not examine directly the connection between economic misery and anti-immigrant sentiment, nor the connection between economic misery and the public's receptivity to the anti-immigrant arguments that far-right parties advance. To be sure, some analysts do treat anti-immigrant sentiment as a dependent variable (Quillian, 1995; Thränhardt, 1995, p. 337; Pettigrew, 1998; Wilson, 2001; Scheepers *et al*, 2002; Semyonov *et al*, 2006; Wilkes *et al*, 2007). All of these studies examine the effects of economic conditions on anti-immigrant sentiment, and some include as an independent variable the presence, or absence, of far-right parties (Thränhardt, 1995, p. 337; Semyonov *et al*, 2006; Wilkes *et al*, 2007). But that body of research does not examine the joint effects of far-right rhetoric and poor economic conditions. This analysis aims to advance that line of investigation by examining whether, and how, the effects of far-right mobilization and economic performance operate together.

Theory and Hypotheses

The influence of elites on public opinion is the subject of an extensive body of research (McCloskey and Zaller, 1984; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Zaller, 1992; Jacoby, 2000; Druckman, 2001, 2004; Druckman and Nelson, 2003). One of the ways in which elites shape public opinion is through issue framing, constructing an issue in such a way that people are primed to consider that issue from one vantage point rather than another (Entman, 1993, p. 52). *How* people think about an issue, how that issue is defined for them, affects in important ways *what* they think about that issue. As a result, issue framing represents a direct form of elite influence. Issue framing is at the core of the symbolic politics literature (Tarrow, 1998), and its effects are well-documented in experimental and non-experimental settings (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981; Jacoby, 2000; Druckman, 2001).

Elite influence, however, does not occur in a vacuum. People who are exposed to one and only one frame may well be influenced by it, but, in the real world, people are typically exposed to multiple and sometimes competing frames about each issue (Sniderman *et al*, 2004). Under these circumstances, the extent of elite influence is less straightforward. Druckman, for example, finds in experimental settings that direct or vicarious exposure to rival frames tends to undo the original framing effect (Druckman, 2001, 2004; Druckman and Nelson, 2003). Zaller (1992, p. 138), similarly, notes the presence of rival elite frames on issues, and he argues that individual-level differences in 'predispositions' and 'awareness' explain variations in citizens' susceptibility to



these influences. According to Zaller (1992, p. 6): '[e]very opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of a given issue, and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it'. The analytical challenge, from this perspective, is to explain public opinion under conditions of multiple competitive framings of key issues.

Taken together, these theories of public opinion generate a number of specific hypotheses about the influence of far-right rhetoric. As already noted, far-right parties tend to frame the immigration issue by linking immigrants to a host of social and economic problems, including unemployment. But these frames do not go unchallenged by other elites. From this perspective, the expectation is that the unemployment rate will increase levels of anti-immigrant sentiment among people who are exposed to political contexts with far-right parties to a greater extent than it does among people who are exposed to political contexts without far-right parties. In political contexts that have far-right parties, the unemployment rate helps citizens adjudicate between rival positions on the immigration issue. A high unemployment rate predisposes citizens to accept the anti-immigrant rhetoric of far-right parties; a low unemployment rate predisposes citizens to reject this rhetoric. As a result, exposure to the political rhetoric of far-right parties has the effect of linking in the minds of citizens the issues of unemployment and immigration.

This line of reasoning has at least three observable implications. The first hypothesis, Hypothesis 1, is that the unemployment rate will increase anti-immigrant sentiment in countries with far-right parties to a greater extent than it does in countries without far-right parties. This is a cross-sectional implication. The second hypothesis, Hypothesis 2, is that the unemployment rate will increase anti-immigrant sentiment in countries with far-right parties, but it will do so only after those far-right parties have emerged. This is a cross-time implication. And the third hypothesis, Hypothesis 3, is that the unemployment rate will increase anti-immigrant sentiment in countries and time-periods with far-right parties, but the most powerful effects will be principally among the politically interested, people who pay attention to elite political discourse. This is a cross-level implication.

This triangulation of cross-sectional, cross-time and cross-level research designs makes it possible to test systematically our key argument that far-right rhetoric animates the link between immigration and unemployment. Hypothesis 1 is a direct and straightforward test of the argument, but Hypotheses 2 and 3 are no less critical. It is conceivable, for example, that immigrants may have long been blamed for unemployment in a certain subset of countries, and that these countries were subsequently more likely to give rise to a far-right political movement. In this scenario, Hypothesis 1 would be supported: there would be a cross-sectional relationship between, on the one hand, the presence of a far-right party, and, on the other, the extent to which the level of



unemployment predicts anti-immigrant sentiment. However, in this scenario, exposure to the rhetoric of a far-right party would not have been, as we claim, a principal cause of the connection between unemployment and anti-immigrant sentiment. Rather, the reverse would hold. Thus, Hypotheses 2 and 3 are also necessary for testing the proposed core argument. Thus, if the unemployment rate increases anti-immigrant sentiment in countries that eventually acquired far-right parties, but did so just as strongly before far-right parties emerged, then Hypothesis 2 would be falsified. If Hypothesis 3 is not supported – if the unemployment rate increases anti-immigrant sentiment in countries with far-right parties, but if it does so just as much among those who are hardly at all exposed to political rhetoric (no political interest) as among those who are heavily exposed to political rhetoric (highly engaged) – then our key argument would again be very likely incorrect. To be sure, Hypotheses 1-3 do not prove that our argument is correct. But they are all logically consistent with our argument, they are unlikely to be true by random chance alone, and any one of them has the potential to falsify the main argument.

We do not claim that far-right political parties are necessary for the emergence of far-right political rhetoric (Cutts *et al.*, 2011, p. 429) – indeed, other political parties may co-opt these messages for strategic reasons to prevent the emergence of a far-right competitor. The point, rather, is that the presence of a notable far-right party virtually guarantees the presence of far-right rhetoric. Thus, in using the presence of a far-right party as a measure for the presence of far-right political rhetoric, the prospect that far-right rhetoric may persist where a far-right party is absent is likely to bias our results against our hypotheses. To the extent that far-right rhetoric is present in the absence of a far-right party, then contexts with and without far-right parties are likely to appear less different from one another than contexts with and without far-right rhetoric.

Data and Method

Many studies of far-right parties focus only on countries that have far-right parties (for an exception and discussion, see Golder, 2003, pp. 434–435). But to adopt that same approach in this particular case would be limiting because it would make it impossible to test the main observable implication of the proposed theory. The central expectation is that the unemployment rate fuels anti-immigrant sentiment in countries that have far-right parties. But the corollary expectation is that the unemployment rate does not fuel anti-immigrant sentiment in countries that do not have far-right parties. The strategy followed here casts a broader net by turning to an analysis of the full-range of European and Anglo-American OECD countries for which there is cross-time data coverage in the World Values Survey, the longest running and most widely

comparable public opinion survey of which we are aware. Specifically, we rely on data from 20 different countries, 11 of which can be tracked across a 25-year timeframe, and all but one, the case of New Zealand, can be tracked for nearly a decade (see Appendix A).

Using the World Values Survey data means that we can focus both on countries that have, and those that do not have, far-right parties. Second, the WVS data provide cross-time coverage that extends backwards to encompass the period preceding the emergence of even the earliest among the recent wave of far-right parties in Europe. Together, these features make it possible to undertake both cross-national comparisons at any given point in time, as well as cross-time comparisons within any given country. The spatial and longitudinal breadth of these data deliberately introduce analytical opportunities that allow us to pinpoint systematically the differences that arise between those publics that are, and those that are not, exposed to the political rhetoric of far-right parties.

Variables

Anti-immigrant sentiment is the key dependent variable. It is operationalized in this analysis as respondents indicating that they do not want to have immigrants as neighbors. Not wanting immigrants as neighbors is, in our view, a direct and straightforward expression of intense anti-immigrant sentiment. Figure 1 summarizes the aggregate levels of anti-immigrant sentiment in cross-time and cross-national perspective. The first finding in Figure 1 is that there are notable cross-time variations within countries. In some countries, the cross-time trend was downward. Along with the Portuguese and the Dutch, for example, Canadians, Germans, Norwegians, Icelanders, Swedes, Finns and Austrians all became less likely to say that they did not want immigrants as neighbors. In other countries, including France, Italy and Switzerland, the trajectory of cross-time change moved in the opposite direction. But these diverging trends balance each other out. Thus the aggregate levels of anti-immigrant sentiment across the entire set of countries turn out to be relatively stable across-time; they hover between 8 and 11 percentage points for each of the five time-points in the World Values Survey. On the whole, the slope of the cross-time trend is modest: anti-immigrant sentiment increased in these countries by about 2 percentage points between 1981 and 2006.

The presence, or absence, of far-right parties is a key independent variable. The strategy for identifying far-right anti-immigration parties proceeds in two stages. The first stage entails a review of the general literature, the goal of which is to identify, and record, those parties that have taken explicit anti-immigration positions (for example, Ignazi, 1992; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Golder, 2003). The second stage checked these initial screenings against

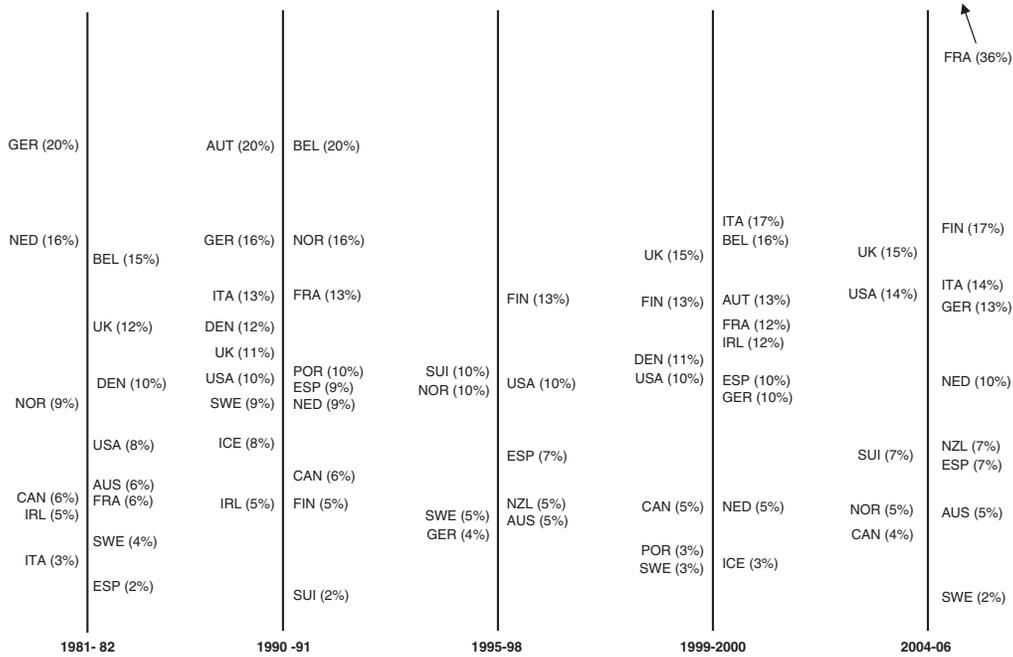


Figure 1: Percentages of populations in Anglo-American and Western European OECD countries that do want immigrants as neighbors, 1981–2006.

Notes: (1) Missing observations imputed via multiple imputation.

Source: World Values Survey, 1981–2006.

two other sources – the expert survey data gathered by Lubbers (2004) and Benoit and Laver (2006). We include anti-immigration parties that scored 8.5 or higher on Lubbers’ (2004) immigration restriction scale, and 17.0 or higher on Benoit and Laver’s (2006) scale. These approaches yield quite consistent results and produce a reasonably comprehensive list of far-right parties in 20 countries. The selected cases, and their electoral results in national legislative elections between 1980 and 2008, are summarized in Table 1.

It is problematic to equate directly the level of popular support for a far-right party, on the one hand, and the level of that party’s influence over anti-immigrant rhetoric on the other. First, the anti-immigrant message of a far-right party may be usurped by other parties, thus diluting the level of electoral support for the far-right party while magnifying its influence over political rhetoric in the country. Second, far-right parties typically campaign on more than one issue. It is conceivable, then, that these parties may attract electoral support on these other issues rather than exclusively on their capacity to drum up anti-immigrant sentiment. Furthermore, the electoral success of far-right parties may have as much to do with the electoral opportunities opened by the strategic positions of other parties (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Meguid, 2008), including anti-incumbent sentiment (Anderson, 1996), as it does with the influence of anti-immigrant

Table 1: Electoral performance of far-right parties in 20 OECD countries, 1980–2008

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Electoral performance</i>												<i>Immigration policy</i>		
													<i>Lubbers B & L</i>		
	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>/10</i>	<i>/20</i>
<i>Australia</i>	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007						
One Nation (ON)	—	—	—	—	—	8.4%	4.3%	1.2%	<0.5%				—	17	
<i>Austria</i>	1983	1986	1990	1994	1995	1999	2002	2006	2008						
Freedom Party (FPÖ)	5.0%	9.7%	16.6%	22.5%	21.9%	26.9%	10.0%	11.0%	17.5				9.1	18.5	
Alliance for the Future (BZÖ)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10.7				—	—	
<i>Belgium</i>	1981	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007							
Flemish Bloc (VB)	1.1%	1.4%	1.9%	6.6%	7.8%	9.9%	11.7%	12.0%	—				9.8	19.8	
Front Nationale (FN)	—	—	—	1.0%	2.3%	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	—				9.8	19.2	
<i>Canada</i>	1980	1984	1988	1993	1997	2000	2004	2006							
None	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				—	—	
<i>Denmark</i>	1981	1984	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005	2007						
Progress Party (FRP)	8.9%	3.6%	4.8%	6.4%	6.4%	2.4%	0.5%	—	—				9.2	19.3	
Danish People's Party (DF)	—	—	—	—	—	7.4%	12.4%	13.3%	13.9%				9.7	19.4	
<i>Finland</i>	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007								
True Finns (PS)	—	—	—	1.3%	1.0%	1.6%	4.1%	—	—				7.3	18.8	
<i>France</i>	1981	1986	1988	1993	1997	2002	2007								
Front Nationale (FN)	0.0%	9.7%	9.6%	12.3%	14.9%	11.1%	4.3%	—	—				9.6	19.3	



Table 1 continued

Parties	Electoral performance										Immigration policy		
	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Lubbers	B & L	/20
<i>Sweden</i>	1982	1985	1988	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	—	—	—	—	—
New Democracy (NyD)	—	—	—	6.7%	1.2%	—	—	—	—	—	9.3	—	—
Sweden Democrats (SD)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.4%	2.9%	—	—	9.7	—	—
<i>Switzerland</i>	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007	—	—	—	—	—	—
Swiss People's Party (SVP)	11.1%	11.0%	11.9%	14.9%	22.5%	26.7%	28.9	—	—	—	9.1	18.8	—
Swiss Democrats (SD)	3.4%	3.0%	3.3%	3.1%	1.8%	0.9%	0.5%	—	—	—	9.7	—	—
Motorists' /Freedom Party (FPS)	—	2.6%	5.1%	4.0%	0.9%	0.2%	—	—	—	—	9.5	19.7	—
<i>United Kingdom</i>	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
British National Party (BNP)	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	—	—	—	—	9.9	—	—
<i>United States</i>	1980	1984	1988	2002	2004	2008	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
None	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Notes:

- (1) The coverage of legislative elections in the United States is for presidential election years only.
 - (2) The data from 1980 to 1990 are derived from 'General Elections in Western Nations', an annual summary of election statistics compiled for the *European Journal of Political Research* by Thomas T. Mackie and Richard Rose from 1980 to 1983, and by Thomas T. Mackie from 1984 to 1990. The data from 1991 to 2007 are derived from the *European Journal of Political Research's* annual 'Political Data Yearbook'. These sources are hereinafter referred to as the 'Political Data Yearbooks'.
- Source: Political Data Yearbooks & National Election Reports.



sentiment *per se*. Even so, the level of electoral support is very likely to have something to do with the amount of influence that a far-right party is able to wield over political discourse in a country.

One option, for example, might be to use the natural log of far-right electoral support, thus taking account of the theoretical expectation that there are rapidly decreasing marginal returns associated with increased electoral support in terms of a party's ability to get its message out to the public – the 'oxygen of publicity', as Cutts *et al* (2011, p. 435) call it, which '... provides the party with an opportunity to set out its stall to a wider electorate...'. In this regard, the difference between a far-right party with 0 per cent of the vote and a party that has managed to attain 5 per cent of the vote is likely to be much larger, we surmise, than the difference between a far-right party that has attained 17 per cent of the vote and a party with 22 per cent of the vote. Even so, a problem with using the log of far-right support as a proxy for far-right influence, in our case, is that even an ordinal measure, let alone a ratio-level measure exaggerates the precision with which we are able to measure across time and across countries the electoral support of a far-right party. Some parties were not far-right parties when they initially contested elections, but gradually became far-right parties over time. It is difficult to identify a precise point at which this transition occurred, and therefore which electoral results should be counted for that party as a 'far-right electoral result'. Indeed, our samples do not correspond in most cases to election years, and so measuring the success of a far-right party by using the result of the previous election would mean, in some cases, relying on measures that may be many years out of date. There are also degrees of freedom issues to consider. In choosing to include for theoretical reasons variables measured at the country-level, rather than simply the individual-level, it becomes very difficult to break our sample into the smaller and more refined categories that a precise measure of far-right support would entail. Finally, political parties that receive less than a few per cent of the vote are often classified in the reporting of election results as among a long list of minor 'other parties'. Certainly, it is important that we do not categorize our cases so as to generate a particular outcome, but it is also important, in our view, that we do not give an impression of precision that we simply cannot meet with our data.

For these reasons, a country is considered in the following analyses to have a notable far-right party if a far-right party received at least 4 per cent of the popular vote two or more national legislative elections since 1980. This threshold of 4 per cent corresponds to the minimum threshold that political parties typically have to meet in order to achieve legislative representation in countries with proportional representation electoral systems. The criterion of success in two national legislative elections is designed to separate cases, such as Sweden, where far-right parties have enjoyed fleeting success from those



where they have an enduring presence. To be sure, this threshold is arbitrary, but it has the effect of reducing more than other thresholds the number of marginal cases. The countries coded as having a notable far-right party at the national level, over the time period studied here, are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland. The countries without a notable national far-right party are: Britain, Canada, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United States. To our knowledge, this categorization would not be controversial for country-experts in these countries. In the countries coded as having far-right parties, one or more far-right parties received at least 6 per cent of the popular vote in a national election between 1980 and 2008. And in the countries coded as not having far-right parties, only one far-right party, the Sweden Democrats, received more than 2 per cent of the popular vote in any two elections since 1980. Moreover, this electoral threshold overlaps with the levels of legislative representation for these parties. Far-right parties have had representatives in each of the national legislatures of the countries coded as having a notable far-right presence. And, with the exception of Sweden for one term after the 1991 election, and Finland, where the True Finns held between one and five seats in the 200-seat Parliament since 1999, no far-right representatives have held a seat in the national legislative assemblies of the countries that we code as not having a prominent national-level far-right party. We also experimented with widely different thresholds, ranging, where it was possible to measure, from 1 per cent of the popular vote in any election to 15 per cent in any election. These very different thresholds do not affect the interpretation of the results, with the exception of the very lowest thresholds where most of the hypothesized effects cease to achieve levels of statistical significance. In any case, the list of countries in each category remains substantively similar, even when very different assumptions are made about what constitutes a notable far-right presence at the national level. As the summary data reported in Table 1 show, significant far-right parties emerged on the electoral landscape in 10 of 20 countries included in this analysis; these parties attracted at least a 4 per cent share of the vote in 56 of the 155 legislative elections held in these countries between 1980 and 2008.¹

Finally, the models include two other contextual variables: the unemployment rate and the percentage of foreign-born populations from non-European and non-Anglo-American source countries. Our measure of the unemployment rate is straightforward: we use for each time-point the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s standardized unemployment rate for each country. This measure standardizes the level of unemployment as the percentage of the civilian labor force in each country and at each time-period. The measure of foreign-born populations, however, is more problematic. One option is to follow other studies and include as our measure the



'stocks of foreigners' in each country (Golder, 2003, p. 440; Semyonov *et al*, 2006, p. 431). The problem with this approach is that different countries have different citizenship requirements, and so the ease with which a 'foreigner' becomes a 'citizen' varies from country to country (Lemaitre, 2005, p. 3). As a result, the size of the foreign population in a country is not simply a reflection of the number of immigrants in that country, but also a reflection of the stringency of that country's citizenship requirements. All things being equal, there will be fewer foreigners in countries with liberal citizenship regimes and more foreigners in countries with strict citizenship regimes. To the extent that the restrictiveness of a citizenship regime is connected to factors such as the level of anti-immigrant sentiment in the population or to the presence of a prominent far-right party, then it is reasonable to suppose that measures of foreign populations are not exogenous to other variables in our analysis, including, especially, our key dependent variable: anti-immigrant sentiment.

For these reasons, we rely on the OECD's database of foreign-born populations, the first widely cross-national and directly comparable measure of immigrant populations (Lemaitre and Thoreau, 2006).² The advantages that accrue from adopting this standardized measure, however, are accompanied by an important limitation. Most countries did not adopt this standard OECD indicator until the year 2000. Thus the measure for foreign-born populations is static while all other measures used in the analysis vary across time. This is a limitation. Indeed, the percentage of foreigners is frequently used as a proxy for the level of immigration in a country, we suspect, to avoid precisely this problem: the stock of foreigners is the closest thing that social scientists have to a cross-time measure of immigrant populations in the European case. Given the scope of the cross-time and cross-national coverage of this analysis, however, even the imperfect 'stocks of foreigners' measure does not cover the full range of countries and time-points in our analysis. Moreover, the goal is not to test the effects of immigrant populations *per se* (for this test, see Scheepers *et al*, 2002, p. 17; Semyonov *et al*, 2006, p. 441). Instead, the goal is to control for any effects that immigration may have as we test hypotheses about the observed connections between other variables. Thus, although there are certainly reasons to suppose that cross-time change in levels of foreign-born populations may have an influence on levels of anti-immigrant sentiment, we are nonetheless confident, and will show, that the findings uncovered here operate independently of any effects of immigration levels.

Model specification

The dependent variable is an individual-level dichotomous variable. Respondents who indicated that they did not want immigrants as neighbors were coded as 1;



all others were coded as 0. Two of the key independent variables, the unemployment rate and the presence of a far-right party, are measured at the country-level. The other key independent variable, political interest, is measured at the individual level. Controls are introduced for two additional country-level variables and three additional individual-level variables. The first country-level control is the level of immigration, measured as the percentage of the population in each country who were born in non-Anglo American and non-European source countries.³ The second country-level control is the year of the interview (1981 = 0). Individual-level controls are introduced for three variables which are often associated with anti-immigrant sentiment and far-right support (for example, Nunn *et al.*, 1978; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000): gender (female = 1), education (age completed) and age (years).⁴ Missing values for all individual-level variables are imputed using multiple imputations.⁵ Clearly, an optimal strategy would be to include additional individual-level controls, such as for the country of birth, income and employment status of respondents, but these variables are not available for the majority of the countries and time periods in the analysis.

By way of background analysis, we estimated models that treated all of these variables as aggregate-level variables – for example, by using national averages of variables measured at the individual level – and we used bootstrapping and jackknifing techniques appropriate for regression analyses with a small number of cases. We also estimated models that treated all of these variables as individual-level variables, but which used clustered standard errors and included country dummy variables to control for residual country effects. Finally, we estimated these models with and without the control variables. In each case, the findings are robust to differences in model specification and construction. Indeed, the findings turn out to be considerably stronger and more statistically significant in these other models than in the model that we use here. Given our data and hypotheses, however, a more appropriate model is the random intercept logistic regression model, a general linear mixed model geared to dichotomous dependent variables and cross-level covariates.⁶ The empirical analysis examines how cross-time and cross-national contextual differences affect the opinions of citizens about immigrants. This approach taps multiple levels of analysis simultaneously. Some elements vary only between countries. Others vary across time within countries. And yet others vary between individuals. The effects of these variables, clearly, cannot be estimated in the same model as if they are all derived from an equal number of independent observations (Snijders and Bosker, 1999, pp. 7–14). Consequently, we use a mixed effects model with random intercepts specified at the country-level. The random-intercepts account for country-level differences in anti-immigrant sentiment that stem from variables which are not included in the regression models (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2008, p. 247). The full regression results

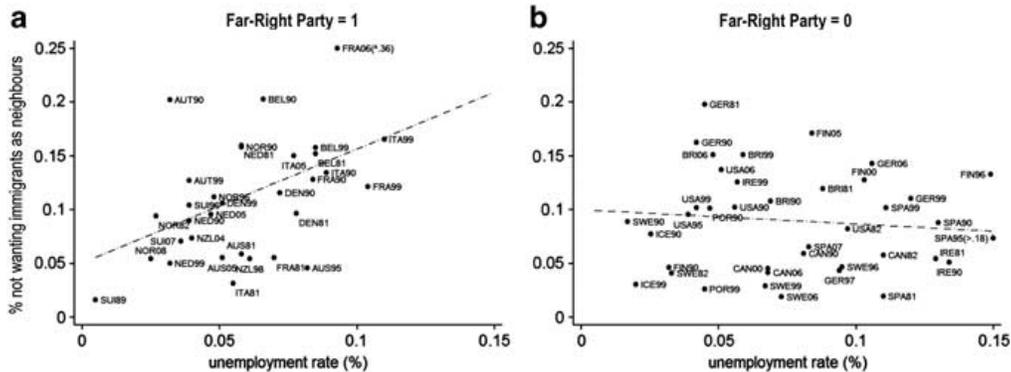


Figure 2: Aggregate levels of anti-immigrant sentiment and levels of unemployment for countries with and without far-right parties, 1981–2006: (a) Far-right party = 1; (b) Far-right party = 0.

Sources: World Values Survey, stats.oecd.org, and Political Data Yearbook.

are presented in appendices, but the discussion of the results is focused on a more substantive and intuitive presentation of these results.

Findings

The place to begin is with a raw snapshot of the aggregate-level WVS data. Figure 2 illustrates the connection between the unemployment rate and aggregate levels of anti-immigrant sentiment for countries that have, or eventually acquired a far-right party, and, on the other hand, for those that did not. The y-axis represents the percentage of the respondents in each country and at each time point that indicated that they did not want immigrants as a neighbor. The x-axis corresponds to the unemployment rate. The points in the graph correspond to the position of different countries at different periods of time. The figure also includes lines of best fit for these two subsets of countries. This basic evidence suggests that the unemployment rate predicts anti-immigrant sentiment more effectively in countries that have or eventually acquired far-right parties than it does in countries that do not have, and did not acquire, a far-right party. Indeed, a higher level of unemployment appears to be associated with higher levels of anti-immigrant sentiment for the countries in Figure 2(a) and not at all for the countries in Figure 2(b). Does this finding hold up, however, when the patterns of missing data are taken into account, and when the additional control variables, outlined above, are introduced into the analysis?

Figure 3 directly compares the effects of the unemployment rate on the probability of expressing anti-immigrant sentiment for respondents in countries with (dark bars) and without (light bars) far-right parties. The height of the

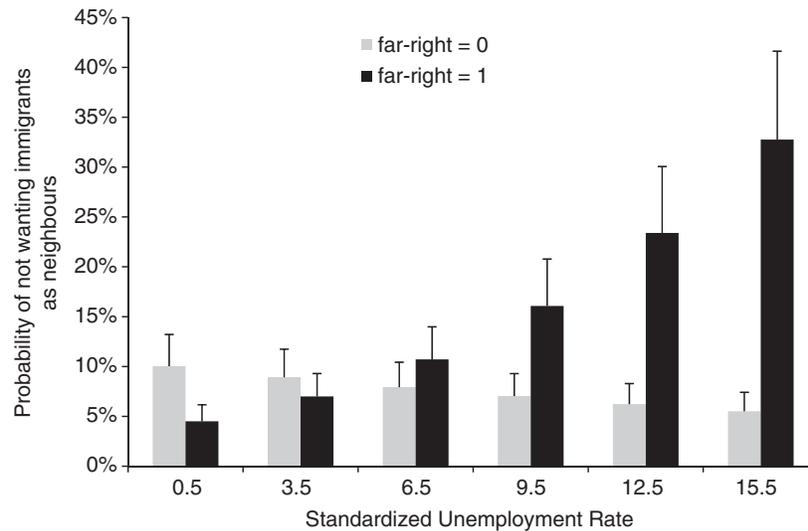


Figure 3: The effect of the standardized unemployment rate on the probability of not wanting immigrants as neighbors, for countries with and without far-right parties.

Notes: (1) Values are predicted probabilities from the regression results in the interaction model in Appendix B. (2) All other variables constant at mean level; (3) Confidence bars at 95 per cent confidence.

Sources: World Values Survey, stats.oecd.org, and Political Data Yearbooks.

bars represents the predicted probability of not wanting immigrants as neighbors. These results are generated from the regression results outlined in the interaction model in Appendix B. The unemployment rate is plotted along the horizontal axis.

Two key findings emerge from Figure 3. First, levels of anti-immigrant sentiment *do not* increase alongside the unemployment rate in countries without far-right parties. Notice that the heights of the light bars are more or less constant, and they certainly do not get higher, as the level of unemployment rises. The second finding, however, is that anti-immigrant sentiment does increase alongside the unemployment rate in those countries that do have far-right parties. In countries with far-right parties, the probability that a citizen does not want an immigrant as a neighbor increases more than six-fold, from just under 5 per cent to more than 30 per cent, as the level of unemployment moves from among the lowest (0.5 per cent) to among the highest (15.5 per cent) values observed in these data. This finding corresponds to the image generated by a basic bivariate comparison, and it is consistent with Hypothesis 1: the unemployment rate predicts anti-immigrant sentiment in countries that have far-right parties more effectively than it does in countries that do not have far-right parties.

If the presence of a far-right party is the catalyst that hitches unemployment to immigration, then there should be no connection between anti-immigrant

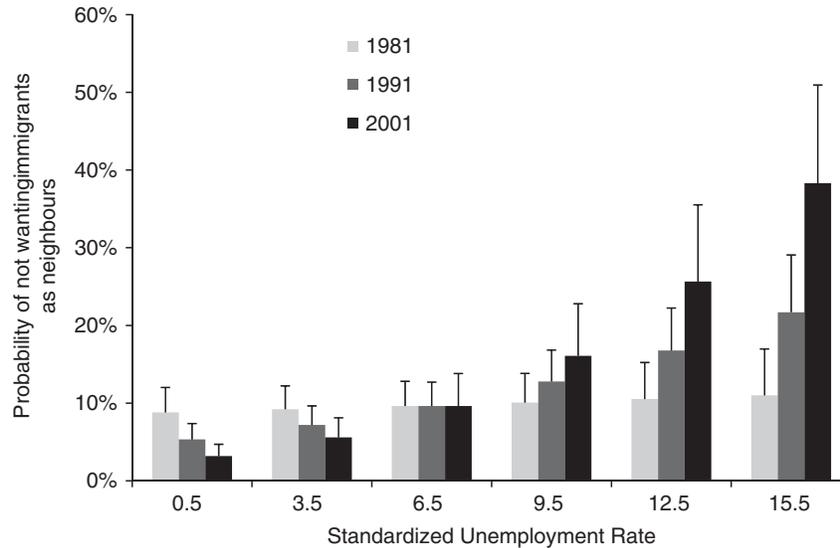


Figure 4: The cross-time effect of the standardized unemployment rate on the probability of not wanting immigrants as neighbors, in countries that acquired far-right parties.

Notes: (1) Values are predicted probabilities, estimated from the regression results in the interaction model in Appendix C; (2) All other variables constant at mean level; (3) Confidence bars at 95 per cent confidence.

Source: World Values Survey, stats.oecd.org, and Political Data Yearbook.

sentiment and the unemployment rate in the countries with far-right parties before the emergence of those far-right parties. The unemployment rate should only predict anti-immigrant sentiment in these countries *after* the emergence of far-right parties. That is the essence of Hypothesis 2. Figure 4 illustrates the results of testing this hypothesis by adding to the regression model a battery of interaction terms that, together, allow us to examine in cross-time perspective the effects of the unemployment rate on levels of anti-immigrant sentiment in countries with far-right parties. The expectation is that the unemployment rate will not predict anti-immigrant sentiment in the early 1980s, before the emergence of far-right parties. But the unemployment rate should become a better predictor of anti-immigrant sentiment as far-right parties become more strongly established in these countries.

The finding summarized in Figure 4 is consistent with Hypothesis 2. The y-axis in Figure 4 represents the probability of not wanting immigrants as neighbors, and the x-axis represents the standardized unemployment rate. In this case, however, the bars in the figure represent different periods of time in countries that eventually acquired a far-right party. Thus, the heights of the bars represent for 1981, 1991 and 2001 the probability that respondents in countries with far-right parties and with varying levels of unemployment do

not want immigrants as neighbors. It is therefore possible to track across time the effects of the unemployment rate on anti-immigrant sentiment in countries with far-right parties.

Tracking the heights of the light gray bars from left to right shows that the level of anti-immigrant sentiment in far-right countries does not appear to follow the unemployment rate in 1981. The unemployment rate does not affect opinions about immigrants in far-right countries before the mid-1980s, a period that predated, for the most part, the rise of far-right parties. This is consistent with expectations. Anti-immigrant sentiment does, however, increase alongside the unemployment rate in 1991 and 2001. Indeed, the magnitude of this effect increases substantially with the passage of time, a finding that is consistent with Hypothesis 2. The link between unemployment and anti-immigrant sentiment in far-right countries became increasingly strong as far-right parties cemented their positions across wider swaths of these countries. It is worth pointing out that a high unemployment rate is not a reliable predictor of heightened anti-immigrant sentiment in countries without far-right parties, regardless of time-period.⁷

Just as the likelihood of exposure to far-right rhetoric varies between countries with and without far-right parties, and just as it varies across-time within far-right countries, so too it is likely to vary between citizens within far-right countries after those far-right parties emerged (Zaller, 1992). Some citizens pay close attention to politics; others pay no attention at all. If political rhetoric animates the linkage between the issues of immigration and unemployment, then we should expect to find, within far-right countries and more recent periods of time, that the unemployment rate predicts anti-immigrant sentiment more effectively among politically interested citizens than among politically disinterested citizens. Conversely, we should expect to find no equivalent difference between politically interested and disinterested citizens in countries without far-right parties. Fortunately, the World Values Survey has asked in each survey since 1989 an identical question about the level of political interest of respondents. Respondents were asked whether they were ‘very interested’, ‘somewhat interest’, ‘not very interested’ or ‘not at all interested’ in politics. With these data it becomes possible to test empirically the cross-level implications of this core argument.

Figure 5(a) and (b) compares the effects of the unemployment rate on anti-immigrant sentiment for respondents with different levels of political interest, in countries with and without far-right parties. In both figures, the unemployment rate is plotted along the x-axis; the y-axis signifies the probability of not wanting immigrants as neighbors. The lighter bars represent the approximately 20 per cent of respondents who indicated that they were not at all interested in politics, and the darker bars represent the approximately 13 per cent of respondents who indicated that they were very interested in politics. Thus, it is

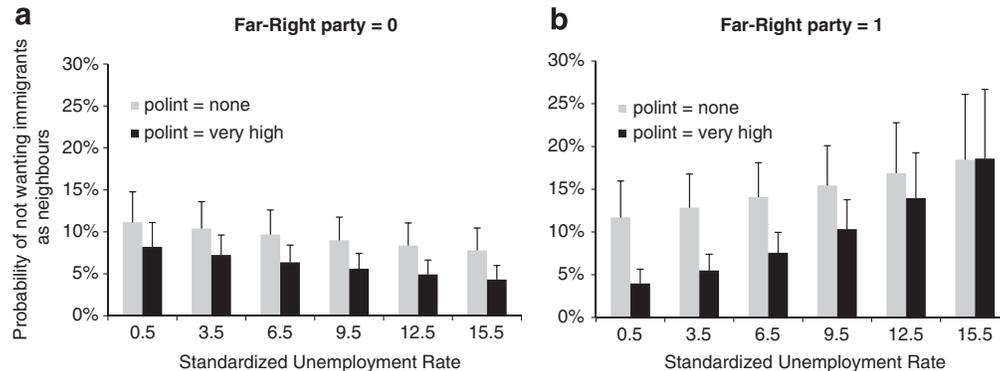


Figure 5: The effect of the standardized unemployment rate on the probability of not wanting immigrants as neighbors, for respondents with high and low levels of political interest, in countries with and without far-right parties, post-1989: **(a)** Far-right party = 0; **(b)** Far-right party = 1.

Notes: (1) Values are predicted probabilities, estimated from the regression results in the interaction model in Appendix D; (2) All other variables constant at mean level (post-1989 means); (3) Confidence bars at 95 per cent confidence.

Source: World Values Survey, stats.oecd.org, and Political Data Yearbook.

possible to gauge for respondents in countries with and without far-right parties how the unemployment rate interacts with level of political interest to affect opinions about immigrants.

Notice in Figure 5(a) that there is no interaction between political interest, on the one hand, and the unemployment rate, on the other, in countries without far-right parties. In these settings, a higher unemployment rate is not at all associated with higher levels of anti-immigrant sentiment. That same pattern persists among respondents regardless of their level of political interest. Political interest does not affect the relationship between the unemployment rate and anti-immigrant sentiment, because there were no far-right parties in the political sphere that were actively working to establish such a connection.

In countries that do have far-right parties, the situation is different. As Figure 5(b) shows, the level of anti-immigrant sentiment increases with the unemployment rate in countries that have far-right parties, but it increases much more quickly among respondents with high levels of political interest (dark bars) than it does among respondents with no political interest (light bars). In countries with far-right parties, and net of the effects of education (Zaller, 1992), the unemployment rate drives anti-immigrant sentiment more clearly among respondents who are more likely to be exposed to political rhetoric than it does among respondents who are less likely to be exposed to political rhetoric. This evidence is consistent with Hypothesis 3: in countries and time-periods with far-right parties, the unemployment rate predicts anti-immigrant sentiment more strongly among citizens with high levels of political interest than among citizens with low levels of political interest.



In sum, the core conjecture that far-right elites animate the link between immigration and unemployment has cross-national, cross-time and cross-level implications. The preceding regression analyses tested these implications directly. The resulting findings suggest that the connection between a high unemployment rate and high levels of anti-immigrant sentiment is confined, in the first case, to countries that have far-right parties. It is confined, in the second case, to the time-periods within these countries after far-right parties emerged. And it is confined, in the third case, to the citizens within these countries and time-periods who are the most likely to be exposed to the rhetoric of politicians. Taken together, these results reveal the presence of a significant interaction between the level of unemployment and the presence of far-right parties as a source of anti-immigrant sentiment in Western European and Anglo-American countries. And this core finding provides convincing support for the political scapegoating hypothesis. A high unemployment rate does not translate on its own into anti-immigrant sentiment. Far-right parties provide the linkage. But the question of whether far-right parties are able to generate anti-immigrant sentiment turns out to be conditional on the unemployment rate. Economic misery gives to far-right parties a thread of widespread concern that is then spun together as an anti-immigrant agenda.

Conclusions

The foregoing analysis draws heavily on a large body of research about far-right parties, notably about the role that these parties play in blaming immigrants for unemployment. But the results uncovered here have implications for that scholarship as well. First and foremost, these findings emphasize the role of far-right parties as active sources, rather than passive beneficiaries, of anti-immigrant sentiment. Over the past two and a half decades, far-right parties have emerged in a good number of countries. Invariably, these parties advocate limiting the future intake of immigrants, particularly immigrants from certain ethnic, racial and religious groups. They also typically advocate restricting the economic and cultural rights of existing immigrants, by such strategies as formalizing preferential hiring practices that discriminate against immigrants. These parties draw attention to issues surrounding immigration and diversity, and try to exploit them for electoral gain. As agents, far-right parties generate controversies by blaming immigrants for unemployment, crime and a host of other social ills. It would be remarkable if this kind of rhetoric were to have no discernible impact on public opinion. Not surprisingly, the evidence uncovered here suggests that it does.

Second, the analysis raises questions about what role other elites play in serving as counterweights against far-right influence. Far-right parties do not exist in a vacuum, nor are the minds of citizens like tabular rasa on which



far-right parties are able to inscribe their rhetoric. The messages of far-right parties are consistently and often vehemently challenged by other elites and by other political parties. Indeed, there is evidence that left-wing parties may politicize immigration, in the presence of far-right anti-immigration parties, when it is in the interests of the left-wing party to do so (Meguid, 2008). As a result, far-right parties are but one element of the clamor of forces that aim to influence public opinion. For their part, citizens face choices between rival positions about the impact that immigration has on the economy and on society. Our findings suggest that economic conditions may play a role in helping citizens to adjudicate between these rival positions. Citizens are predisposed by poor economic conditions to accept the anti-immigrant rhetoric of far-right parties. And they are predisposed by good economic conditions to reject this rhetoric. Far-right parties may well animate the link between immigration and unemployment, but this connection is not as likely to turn citizens against immigrants in periods of low unemployment as it is in periods of high unemployment. The greater availability of reliable comparative measures of economic and other forms of disaffection, especially those implicating culture and crime (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Rydgren, 2008), would open up opportunities to pursue this line of investigation in other domains.

A third implication of the findings calls into question the common practice of using far-right electoral support as an observable implication of the extent of ‘group threat’ or ‘competitive threat’ in a country. To be sure, far-right parties likely benefit from anti-immigrant sentiment. But the electoral prospects of these parties are affected by many other factors as well. For this reason, the level of electoral support for far-right parties is not, in our view, the best dependent variable for mounting a direct empirical test of the influential ‘ethnic competition’ and ‘group-threat’ hypotheses.

Finally, these results almost certainly have practical implications for policy-makers. One policy relevant implication concerns the impact of far-right parties on public opinion. At the height of an historic recession in 2009, for example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) faced the dilemma of deciding whether to grant to the leader of the far-right British National Party, Nick Griffin, a platform on the Network’s popular political television program: *Question Time*. If the success of far-right parties simply reflects anti-immigrant animosity in the population, then these kinds of appearances are likely to be relatively inconsequential. But if, as our results suggest, far-right parties actively generate anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly during periods of economic misery, then that finding should inform the decision-calculus of policy-makers who find themselves facing comparable choices in the future (cf., Cutts *et al*, 2011, p. 435).

A second practical implication flows from the distinction between the electoral performance of far-right parties, on the one hand, and the social



consequences of far-right parties on the other. The core argument presented here suggests that the consequences of far-right parties are likely to extend well beyond election days; they are likely to appear in daily interactions between citizens, in hiring decisions no less than social encounters. Counteracting the electoral success of far-right parties is one thing; mitigating their social influence is another. When mainstream political parties co-opt the anti-immigration positions of far-right parties, for example, it may well reduce, at least for the short term, the share of the electorate available to new far-right parties. Even so, a chorus of co-opting voices may nonetheless magnify the social influence of far-right parties; it may legitimize their arguments even as it undercuts their electoral ambitions. The electoral battle is but one small part of a larger struggle. An important part of this larger struggle, we argue, plays out at the intersection of politics and the economy. More broadly, however, the way that social conditions affect the persuasiveness of elite messaging, and elite messaging affects popular interpretations of social conditions, may have implications that extend beyond economics. Indeed, other recent research points in precisely this direction (Hopkins, 2010).

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Notes

1 Legislative elections are counted only during presidential election years in the United States, they are counted only since 1991 in Portugal, and the two elections in Ireland in 1982 are counted as a single election. Our discussion here, and only here, takes into consideration the observation that many far-right parties did not begin as far-right parties. Thus, the Freedom Party (FPO) in Austria is not counted as a far-right party before the 1990 election (Betz, 1994; Riedlsperger, 1998). Similarly, the Progress Parties (FrP) in Denmark and Norway are not counted as far-right parties until the 1987 and 1989 elections, respectively (Svåsand, 1998; Andersen and Bjørklund, 2002). And the Swiss People's Party (SVP) is not considered a far-right party before the 1995 election (McGann and Kitschelt, 2005; Skenderovic, 2007). These transitions correspond in all cases to the adoption by these parties of an anti-immigration agenda that they had not previously promoted. In the ensuing analyses, however, we treat as far-right parties all political parties that eventually became far-right parties, regardless of the time-period under consideration. And we treat as 'far-right countries' all countries that have, or eventually acquired, a far-right party, regardless of the time-period under consideration. This decision allows us to avoid making



consequential qualitative decisions about the precise moment at which a country acquired a far-right party. We prefer, instead, to assess the consequences of these kinds of cross-time changes as independent variables in our regression models.

- 2 These data nonetheless include stocks of foreigners, rather than proportion of foreign-born, for Germany.
- 3 More specifically, we code the percentage of the non-Anglo American and non-European immigrants as the percentage of the total national population in each country that was born outside of the European Economic Area, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The data are provided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (stats.oecd.org), and were derived from national censuses in and around the year 2000.
- 4 'Level of education' categories are used in lieu of 'age completed education' for New Zealand. These educational categories range from less than high school (1) to completed university (7). For all other countries, education is measured as 'age completed', ranging from less than 12 years of age (1) at the low end, to more than 20 years of age (10) at the high end.
- 5 We impute missing values using STATA's MI IMPUTE command. We estimate the missing values for individual-level variables by using the logit method for the dichotomous variables (anti-immigrant sentiment and gender), the logit method for ordinal variables (political interest and education), and the regress method for age. Each of the imputation models includes all of the individual-level variables in the final regression model, as well as a series of dichotomous country variables. We do not include the contextual variables, which have no missing values, to estimate imputed values for missing individual-level observations. The final models use 10 imputations for each individual-level variable, but the graphics are constructed using only the first set of these imputations. There are 710 imputed values for the dependent variable, anti-immigrant, and there are 576 imputed values for age, 123 for female, 6129 for education, and, since the question was first asked in 1989, 592 imputed observations for political interest.
- 6 We do not have enough observations on our country-level variables to estimate random slopes for our key variables of interest.
- 7 Indeed, a higher unemployment rate is associated with *lower* levels of anti-immigrant sentiment in these countries for much of the past 30 years. More recently, however, this effect has dissipated.

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Appendix A

Table A1: Countries, waves and numbers of observations

<i>Country</i>	<i>Wave 1 (Year)</i>	<i>Wave 2 (Year)</i>	<i>Wave 3 (Year)</i>	<i>Wave 4 (Year)</i>	<i>Wave 5 (Year)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Australia	1228 (1981)	—	2048 (1995)	—	1421 (2005)	4697
Austria	—	1460 (1990)	—	1522 (1999)	—	2982
Belgium	1145 (1981)	2792 (1990)	—	1912 (1999)	—	5849
Britain	1231 (1981)	1484 (1990)	—	1000 (1999)	1041 (2006)	4756
Canada	1254 (1982)	1730 (1990)	—	1931 (2000)	2164 (2006)	7079
Denmark	1182 (1981)	1030 (1990)	—	1023 (1999)	—	3235
Finland	—	588 (1990)	987 (1996)	1038 (2000)	1014 (2005)	3627
France	1200 (1981)	1002 (1990)	—	1615 (1999)	1001 (2006)	4818
Germany	1305 (1981)	2101 (1990)	1017 (1997)	2036 (1999)	2064 (2006)	8523
Iceland	—	702 (1990)	—	968 (1999)	—	1670
Ireland	1217 (1981)	1000 (1990)	—	1012 (1999)	—	3229
Italy	1348 (1981)	2018 (1990)	—	2000 (1999)	1012 (2005)	6378
Netherlands	1221 (1981)	1017 (1990)	—	1003 (1999)	1050 (2005)	4291
New Zealand	—	—	1201 (1998)	—	954 (2004)	2155
Norway	1246 (1982)	1239 (1990)	1127 (1996)	—	1025 (2008)	4637
Portugal	—	1185 (1990)	—	1000 (1999)	—	2185
Spain	2303 (1981)	4147 (1990)	1211 (1995)	2409 (1999)	1200 (2007)	11 270
Sweden	954 (1982)	1047 (1990)	1009 (1996)	1015 (1999)	1003 (2006)	5028
Switzerland	—	1400 (1989)	1212 (1996)	—	1241 (2007)	3853
United States	2325 (1982)	1839 (1990)	1542 (1995)	1200 (1999)	1249 (2006)	8155
Total	19 159	27 781	11 354	22 684	17 439	98 417

Source: World Values Survey.

Appendix B

Table B1: The impact of the standardized unemployment rate on anti-immigrant sentiment in countries with and without far-right parties

<i>DV: Anti-immigrant = 1</i>	<i>Main effects model</i>		<i>Interaction model</i>	
	<i>Coef. (SE)</i>	<i>P < z </i>	<i>Coef. (SE)</i>	<i>P < z </i>
<i>Individual-level variables</i>				
Age (years)	0.010 (0.001)	0.000	0.010 (0.001)	0.000
Sex (female = 1)	-0.179 (0.022)	0.000	-0.179 (0.022)	0.000
Education (age completed)	-0.072 (0.005)	0.000	-0.074 (0.005)	0.000
<i>Contextual variables</i>				
Year (1981 = 0)	0.010 (0.002)	0.000	0.007 (0.001)	0.000
Immigrants (% of population)	0.001 (0.041)	0.972	0.023 (0.042)	0.584
Unemployment (% of labor force)	-0.006 (0.006)	0.338	-0.041 (0.008)	0.000
Far-right party (yes = 1, no = 0)	0.267 (0.211)	0.205	-0.947 (0.237)	0.000
<i>Interaction terms</i>				
Far-right × Unemployment			0.197 (0.015)	0.000
Constant	-2.484 (0.162)	0.000	-2.296 (0.295)	0.000
Prob > χ^2	0.00		0.00	
Observations	97 615		97 615	
Groups (country)	20		20	

Notes: (1) Results are from mixed-effects logistic regression (xtmelogit): random intercept estimated for country. (2) Figure 2 based on interaction model. See notes for Figure 2.

Source: World Values Survey & stats.oecd.org & Political Data Yearbooks.



Appendix C

Table C1: The impact of the standardized unemployment rate on anti-immigrant sentiment, by year

<i>DV: Anti-immigrant = 1</i>	<i>Main effects model</i>		<i>Interaction model</i>	
	<i>Coef. (SE)</i>	<i>P < z </i>	<i>Coef. (SE)</i>	<i>P < z </i>
<i>Individual-level variables</i>				
Age (years)	0.010 (0.001)	0.000	0.010 (0.001)	0.000
Sex (female = 1)	-0.179 (0.022)	0.000	-0.180 (0.022)	0.000
Education (age completed)	-0.072 (0.005)	0.000	-0.078 (0.005)	0.000
<i>Contextual variables</i>				
Year (1981 = 0)	0.010 (0.002)	0.000	-0.057 (0.008)	0.000
Immigrants (% of population)	0.001 (0.041)	0.972	0.011 (0.042)	0.799
Unemployment (% of labor force)	-0.006 (0.006)	0.338	-0.136 (0.013)	0.000
Far-right party (yes = 1, no = 0)	0.267 (0.211)	0.205	-0.963 (0.237)	0.000
<i>Interaction terms</i>				
Far-right × Unemployment	—	—	0.152 (0.023)	0.000
Far-right × Year	—	—	0.013 (0.010)	0.194
Year × Unemployment	—	—	0.008 (0.001)	0.000
Far-right × Year × Unemployment	—	—	0.001 (0.001)	0.331
Constant	-2.484 (0.162)	0.000	-1.366 (0.295)	0.000
Prob > χ^2	0.00		0.00	
Observations	97 615		97 615	
Groups (country)	20		20	

Notes: (1) Results are from mixed-effects logistic regression (xtmelogit): random intercept estimated for country. (2) Figure 3 based on interaction model. See notes for Figure 3.

Source: World Values Survey & stats.oecd.org & Political Data Yearbooks.

Appendix D

Table D1: The effect of political interest on the relationship between the standardized unemployment rate and anti-immigrant sentiment, since 1989

<i>DV : Anti-immigrant = 1</i>	<i>Main effects model</i>		<i>Interaction model</i>	
	<i>Coef. (SE)</i>	<i>P < z </i>	<i>Coef. (SE)</i>	<i>P < z </i>
<i>Individual-level variables</i>				
Age (years)	0.012 (0.001)	0.000	0.012 (0.001)	0.000
Sex (female = 1)	-0.236 (0.024)	0.000	-0.235 (0.024)	0.000
Education (age completed)	-0.065 (0.005)	0.000	-0.066 (0.005)	0.000
Interest (1 = low, 4 = high)	-0.194 (0.014)	0.000	-0.102 (0.043)	0.019
<i>Contextual variables</i>				
Year (1981 = 0)	0.004 (0.002)	0.045	0.005 (0.002)	0.035
Immigrants (% of population)	-0.008 (0.043)	0.859	0.003 (0.041)	0.934
Unemployment (% of labor force)	-0.021 (0.007)	0.004	-0.021 (0.014)	0.137
Far-right party (yes = 1, no = 0)	0.260 (0.222)	0.241	0.301 (0.287)	0.294
<i>Interaction terms</i>				
Far-right × Unemployment	—	—	0.032 (0.027)	0.235
Far-right × Interest	—	—	-0.305 (0.066)	0.000
Interest × Unemployment	—	—	-0.007 (0.005)	0.133
Far-right × Interest × Unemployment	—	—	0.034 (0.009)	0.000
Constant	-1.887 (0.300)	0.000	-2.044 (0.305)	0.000
Prob > χ^2	0.00		0.00	
Observations	78 950		78 950	
Groups (country)	20		20	

Notes: (1) Results are from mixed-effects logistic regression (xtmelogit): random intercept estimated for country. (2) Figure 4(a) and (b) based on interaction model. See notes for Figure 4(a) and (b).
Source: World Values Survey & stats.oecd.org & Political Data Yearbooks.