Support for the Far Right: The Desire for Cultural Preservation in an Increasingly Globalized and Multicultural Europe

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Abstract:

In this study I set out to explain support for far right parties in countries of Western Europe that have been democratic since the end of World War II. Using individual level analysis of survey data from the European Social Survey 2004/2005 and country level analysis of aggregate and survey data from the Eurobarometer 59.2, I am able to offer an explanation of support for the far right. The results show that cross-national differences in support for far right parties are particularly the result of public opinion on cultural preservation as a reaction against increased immigration of foreign peoples.
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Introduction:

In an age that has seen European states become increasingly multicultural or diverse due to integration and increased migration from Africa and South East Asia, far right political parties throughout Western Europe have emerged, gotten stronger, and consolidated enough electoral successes to become viable political alternatives to mainstream parties of the center left and center right. Far right parties are no longer considered ‘flash’ political parties, but part of a durable movement that will continue to be competitive in national elections, with the potential to shape government policies and legislation. To gain a fuller understanding of politics in Western Europe, it is essential to study this important phenomenon. If support for the far right continues to grow, it will become increasingly more important, serving as a serious challenge to the continued integration of Europe. Political scientists need to examine, empirically, the sources and origins of the appeal of the far right as well as likely consequences of their success.

With every new election in Western Europe, at the national or European level, the influence of the far right is evident. During the late 1990s and continuing to this day, the far right has successfully campaigned in many countries on a cultural preservation platform that includes support for legislation restricting immigration, tougher penalties for crime, and encouragement of traditional moral values. The political status of the far right before this period is substantially different from the current time. Important, but early studies by Herbert Kitschelt (1997), and Hans-Georg Betz (1994) among others were instrumental in explaining the emergence of the far right in the past, but their works need to be reexamined in light of more recent experience. It is important therefore to extend and continue their work to avoid overly simplistic assessments of these parties and their durability, and to analyze them within the current political environment, which saw the European Union enlarge to ten new members in 2004.

It is my goal to review the past literature on far right political parties in Europe to understand the dynamics of the movement and the extent to which perceptions of cultural threat, stemming from recent immigration waves, explains the success of far right parties in some Western European states and not in others. To review past theories on the far right, and to possibly formulate my own new or modified conclusions, empirical evidence will be required. Empirical evidence that can be utilized for such an endeavor includes electoral results, public opinion surveys, and party affiliation analyses. By comparing those Western European states with successful far right parties, and those without, as well as individuals who claim to support far right parties from those who have yet to, one can test, refine, and refute existing explanations for far right popular support and the public’s evaluations of the anti-immigration and cultural preservation movements most of these parties claim to represent.

The far right is an interesting political ideology to research because of its relatively recent emergence. For decades after World War II, Western European governments have been controlled by either the moderate left or right in what historians often refer to as the ‘post-war settlement’. This left a portion of the population underrepresented. Many stood by and voted for other parties or did not vote at all, while others became so critical of the state of politics in their respective countries that they organized together to offer a semi-reactionary alternative. As many in this world embrace globalization and multiculturalism, there is a sizable portion of Western European society that is strongly opposed to the trend. Healthy democratic competition has emerged to address the problems and possible solutions to the changing world, and it is important to understand the fears and hopes of those supporting the far right and what they ideologically offer to direct their societies into this unknown future.
Recent Success of the Far Right in Western Europe

The far right has emerged as a regular force in many of the states in Western Europe. These parties represent a strong electoral force, and some have participated as official or unofficial members of coalition governments, vocal opposition parties, and in some countries, the plurality party in national legislatures. Far right parities have become substantial political forces in not just one geographical region of Western Europe, but in the Alpine, Scandinavian, Mediterranean, and Low Land states. The enormity of their success and influence has been observed by the mass media throughout the world. Hours of coverage have been dedicated to characterizing them and explaining their success in translating a portion of the population that may be economically unstable, politically dissatisfied, or xenophobic into a viable political class.

The Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP or Swiss People’s Party) has been the most popular party in Switzerland for the last six years, and in 2005 earned a second seat in the seven member executive Swiss federal Council for their charismatic leader Christoph Blocher (“Right Wing Leader,” 2005). Using their power, the SVP has successfully campaigned to pass referendums, particularly in September of 2006, to limit immigration for citizens from outside of the European Union and make it difficult to qualify for asylum status; both referendums have made Switzerland the most restrictive state in Europe with regard to immigration and asylum policies (Waddington 2006). Under the leadership of Jörg Haider, in 2000 the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ or the Austrian Freedom Party) of Austria garnered more votes than the conservative Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP or Austrian People’s Party) and participated in a coalition government (“Austrian Far Right,” 2000). Despite electoral defeats as a result of topping the Austrian government in 2002 (“Far right Row,” 2002) and Haider’s formation of the breakaway Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ or Alliance for Austria’s Future) in 2005 (“Haider Party,” 2005), the FPÖ remains a strong force in Austria. Despite diminished support for the FPÖ a year earlier, new leader Hans-Christian Strache successfully increased his party’s support in the 2006 national elections on the basis of “a virulent anti-foreigner platform” (Landler 2006).

In Germany, no far right party has been nationally successful, but the Republikaner (REP or Republicans) were successful in a few southern German Länder and European elections throughout the late 1980s and 1990s. More recently, the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD or National Democratic Party) gained solid representation in the state parliaments of Saarland in 2004 (“German Far Right,” 2004) and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in September of 2006 (Ferreira 2006). The Deutsche Volks Union (DVU or German People’s Union) has also recently been successful in gaining representation in the state parliament of Brandenburg in 2004 (“German Far Right,” 2004). With their National Socialist past, any success for the far right that may appear marginal is greeted with great dismay by the media and mainstream political parties, and increasing racist violence has further contributed toward a wary view of the future.

Like the SVP, the Fremskrittspartiet (FrP or Progress Party) of Norway has become the most popular party (Berglund 2006) and has slowly been losing their ungovernable stigma. Høyre (H or Conservative Party) has recently considered the FrP a future coalition partner in a government following the next national elections (Magnus and Tisdall 2006). Even though there has not been a substantially successful far right party nationally in Sweden, the far right Sveirgedemokraterna (SD or Swedish Democrats) is represented throughout many municipal councils, and is predicted to gain nationally in the near future (Ekman 2006). In Denmark, the Dansk Folkeparti (DF or Danish People’s Party), headed by Pia Kjaersgaard, has been a very important political party since its formation in 1996. Even though it has not been included in any coalition governments, the DF has become a significant partner for Det Konservative Folkeparti...
(KF or Conservative People’s Party) and Venstre (V or Liberal Party) government. The coalition
government relies on the support of the DF for a parliamentary majority (“Denmark’s Immigration,” 2005). This has allowed the DF to exert significant influence in Danish politics, particularly on its biggest issue of immigration and asylum. The DF influenced the Danish government in 2002 to enact legislation that, before Switzerland in 2006, made it one of Europe’s strictest (“Denmark’s Immigration,” 2005). The far right in Finland has remained on the fringe of politics, though the Suomen Kansan Sinivalkoiset (SKS or the Finnish People’s Blue-Whites) is a far right nationalist party that has struggled to gain electoral success in tolerant Finland.

The Allenaza Nazionale (AN) and the Lega Norda (LN) have long been apart of Italian
politics, and were members of coalition governments under Silvio Berlusconi in 1994 and 2001 (“Berlusconi Takes,” 2001). For most of its political existence, the AN has made no qualms of its succession of Mussolini and fascism. When Gianfranco Fini, the leader of the AN and deputy Prime Minister under Berlusconi, repudiated fascism on a trip to Israel in 2003 (Holmes 2006), Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of Benito Mussolini, formed her own party in protest. Mussolini formed the Alternativa Sociale (AS or Social Alternative), and with another neo-fascist party the Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore (FT or Tricolor Flame), joined the Berlusconi coalition for the elections in April of 2006 (“Berlusconi Courts,” 2006).

In France, success for the far right Front National (FN or National Front) has remained
strong since its initial break through in the European Elections of 1984 (Mayer and Perrineau 1992). Headed by Jean Marie Le Pen, the FN has maintained electoral success despite French majoritarian electoral rules that tend to limit parliamentary seats that they win. Le Pen even stunned the world and French politics with his surprise success in the 2002 presidential election. Le Pen beat out Lionel Jospin of the Parti Socialiste (PS or Socialist Party) and finished second to Jacques Chirac by only three percentage points in the first round to make it to a second round run-off that he ultimately lost, but not before adding to his vote from the first round (“Chirac Wins,” 2002). In contrast, with the legacy of their right wing dictatorships, far right parties in Spain and Portugal have yet to free themselves from the popular stigmas of Francisco Franco and António de Oliveira Salazar, and thus have not gained representation nationally.

The far right party Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF or Pim Fortuyn List) had stunning success in
the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2002, registering the second most votes among numerous parties. Campaigning on an anti-immigrant platform, the LPF tapped into an important political belief system and discontent among the people (“Fortuyn Party,” 2002). Even though the LPF has subsequently drifted into political oblivion as a result of the assassination of their founder and leader Fortuyn, and infighting among his would-be successors, their anti-immigrant and other far right positions have remained a feature of Dutch politics (“Dutch Government,” 2002). With the assassination of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, and a popular realization of the failure of immigrant integration by the Dutch public, Rita Verdonk of the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD or Party for Freedom and Democracy) has continued the anti-immigrant movement (“Anger Over,” 2005; Coughlan 2003; Quartly 2004). New parties, like the Partij voor de Vrijeheid (PVV or Party for Freedom) headed by Geert Wilders, and Eén Nederland (EN or One Netherlands) headed by Marco Pastors, sought to fill the void left by LPF in November elections of 2006 (Zoonevylle 2006). The surprise success of PVV this November illustrates that support for the far right remains strong among the Dutch electorate (Clark 2006).

The Vlaams Belang (VB or Flemish Interest), formally Vlaams Blok (VB or Flemish Block), remains one of the most extreme and successful of the far right parties in Western Europe. After seizing control over of the Antwerp city council in 2000, the VB lost its status as

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the top seat holder, but slightly added to its percentage of the vote in the latest election in October of 2006 (“Poll Gain,” 2006). Running on an anti-immigrant party platform, the VB extended its support into smaller cities and rural areas (Siubersk 2006). The far right in Britain has been and remains fringe. The British National Party (BNP) has yet to emerge successfully on the national political scene. The BNP has though, like the Swedish Democrats, increased their representation in local councils, most recently doubling its number of seats (Wheeler 2006). Less extreme than the BNP, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) has been very successful in European elections, surpassing the votes for the traditional third party, the Liberal Party, for about sixteen percent of the vote (“UKIP Takes,” 2004).

Support for the Far Right - Previous Research

Given these electoral successes across the continent, scholars have developed a substantial body of empirical and theoretical work on the rise of far right parties. According to Ignazi (1992: 6), the far right is the reactionary “silent counter-revolution” to the far left Green parties. Kitschelt (1995) identifies the far right as the ‘New Radical Right’, or a political movement that combines free-market capitalism and political authoritarianism. Betz (1991: 113) also identifies the far right in terms of economics, or “very much like the authoritarian materialist counterpart to left-libertarian post-materialism on the new politics axis defined by a new political conflict over the question which values will ultimately prevail in the postindustrial age.” Far right parties place an “increased emphasis on respect for authority, discipline and dutifulness, patriotism and intolerance for minorities, conformity to customs, and support for traditional and moral values” (Flanagan 1987: 1303). Far right parties commonly “favor law and order, tax cuts, and limits on immigration and oppose policies favored by parties on the left and far left of the political spectrum. They oppose the social equality and economic regulation of social democratic parties, and the multicultural society, women’s equality, and environmental protection of the left-libertarian and ecological parties” (Karapin 1998: 213). Despite some country level differences, however, what all of the far right parties have in common is their position on the restriction of immigration. Far right parties throughout Western Europe have framed immigrants as problems in four different ways: “as a threat to the ethno-national identity; as a reason for unemployment; as a major cause of crime and other kinds of social insecurity; and as abusers of the generosity of the welfare states” (Rydgren 2003: 57).

The literature attempting to explain the emergence of far right parties in Western Europe substantially varies in emphasis. Scholars remain divided over the emergence of the far right since it became a political force in the 1970s. According to the literature, the emergence of the far right has been attributed to all of the following: “a post-industrial economy; dissolution of established identities, fragmentation of the culture, multiculturalism; the emergence of growing salience of the socio-cultural cleavage dimension; widespread political discontent and disenchantment; convergence between the established parties in political space; popular xenophobia and racism; economic crisis and unemployment; reaction against the emergence of the New Left and/or Green parties and movements; a proportional voting system; and experience of a referendum that cuts across the old party cleavages” (Rydgren 2002: 32) Pippa Norris (2005) provides an excellent overview of past theoretical conclusions of the emergence and continued support for the far right in her book Radical Right. Herbert Kitschelt's The Radical Right of Western Europe is considered by many to be the most ground breaking study on the emergence of the far right. It has however stimulated considerably more criticism than praise, and an extensive assortment of other theories have emerged within the field.
Political Economy Research on the Support for the Far Right

Kitschelt and most early studies adopted a political economy approach to explain the rise of the far right as a result of their policies in favor of market allocation rather than social welfare redistribution (Kitschelt 1995: 1). The demands of the people differ in a post industrial society; as advocates of free-market economics, authoritarian policies, and cultural protections, far right parties have addressed the needs of the people who have ‘missed’ out in the changed society (Kitschelt 1995: 2). According to Kitschelt (1995), the mainstream parties of the left and the right failed to meet the changing demands of some of the people because they have each gravitated ideologically to the center. Thus alternative parties are classified by Kitschelt and subsequent scholars as members of the ‘new radical right’, or the NRR, because they are on the far right of the political spectrum, but not opposed to democracy and free-market capitalism (Kitschelt 1995: 47; Schain, Zolberg, and Hossay 2003: 8; Rydgren 2002; Rydgren 2004). This contrasts with the old radical right which advocated “a blend of authoritarianism with corporatist or anti-capitalist visions of economic organization” (Kitschelt 1995: 47). Those far right parties included in Kitschelt’s study were identified by two plausible indicators: “whether a party’s competitors perceive it to be located “on the right” and not a viable coalition partner, and when the party appeared on the political scene” at the same time their polar counterparts of the libertarian left did (Kitschelt 1995: 49). As parties hypothesized to be primarily motivated by economics, Kitschelt and others advocate the new social cleavage.

The transformation of Western European capitalism into service oriented post-industrial economies has led scholars to develop the new social cleavage thesis. The thesis assumes that in affluent societies, populist rhetoric is directed “among a low-skilled blue-collar underclass with minimal job security and among those populations most vulnerable to new social risks who have tumbled through the cracks” (Norris 2005: 129). It is therefore assumed that those with little job security and the unemployed are more likely to vote for the far right. This theory also complements the idea of partisan dealignment, or how far an erosion of social structure and partisan loyalties is related to voting behavior (Bjørklund and Andersen 2003: 119; Rydgren 2005: 420; Norris 2005: 130). It is believed that the far right recognizes the insecurities of the people and target those who “lost out to industrialization”; it is hypothesized that these people are predominately male, lower income, blue-collar, less religious and have an authoritarian personality (Kitschelt 1995:10; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002: 347; Lubbers and Scheepers 2000: 77; Norris 2005: 131; Dülmer and Klein 2005: 244; Scheepers, Schmeets, and Felling 1997: 145). Lubbers et al. (2002: 371) concluded that the individual-level effects of education varied between countries. Others have linked low levels of education with higher support for the far right (Norris 2005; Kitschelt 1995; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders 2002). Rather than regarding voters of the far right as ‘losers of modernity’, van der Brug and Fennema (2003: 66) believe that “in terms of the way they attract their electoral support, parties of the radical right are more modern than various traditional parties.” Modern voters no longer vote based on social class, but on their own ideological and policy preferences; the far right is identified as garnering support across class, so they benefit from modern voting. The dealignment and realignment processes do not guarantee far right electoral success, but only provides them with favorable political opportunities (Rydgren 2005: 420). Despite criticism, the intensification of globalization has led some scholars to continue to support the new social cleavage thesis.

In recent times as globalization has further affected Western European economies, the emergence and growth of the far right has been reassessed. Swank and Betz (2003: 215) hy-
pothesized “that a comprehensive, generous and employment-oriented system of social protection lessens the economic insecurities attendant to internationalization and, in turn, weakens support for far right parties.” Using individual-level survey data, they coalesced the traditional middle class and semi- and unskilled workers who face the most risks from changes in the economic system, with voters of the far right (Swank and Betz 2003: 216). Swank and Betz (2003: 218) argue that far right “parties typically embrace neo-liberal economic programs, xenophobia and strident anti-establishment positions.” Since support for the far right increases as international economic integration broadens, policies to lessen the effects are believed to be a remedy to prevent their emergence and continued electoral growth (Swank and Betz 2003: 239). For Schain et al. (2003: 6), socioeconomic conditions are “more important in the earlier stages of party formation and electoral breakthrough, as these conditions provide an environment within which party organizations are able to define political issues around which militants, voters, and sympathizers may be mobilized.” The conditions are therefore necessary for the emergence of some far right parties, but not sufficient to explain the entire movement cross-nationally.

Several studies utilizing individual level survey data suggest that voting support among the unemployed and among low-income households is not as strong as suggested by many aggregate level accounts in political economy (Norris 2005: 147; Lubbers et al 2002: 364). For Lubbers et al. (2002: 364), Bjørklund and Andersen (2003: 118), Dülmer and Klein (2005: 252), Givens (2003: 144), and Swank and Betz (2003: 233), the relationship between levels of unemployment and support for the far right is actually negative. Therefore the emergence of the far right is not uniformly the result of the politics of resentment or the new social cleavage theory. The social profile of the far right “is more complex than popular stereotypes suggest” (Mudde 1999: 5; Norris 2005: 147; Schain et al. 2003: 10). Previous studies demonstrate that “the negative motivations of radical right voters remain scarce, and some research throws serious doubt on this thesis” (Norris 2005: 150). Bjørklund and Andersen (2003: 125) concluded that far right parties cannot “be explained as a reaction from any genuinely marginalized segments of the population”, but rather representative of “sentiments that are widespread in rather broad segments of the population.” Most scholars agree that, like the new social cleavage, the protest politics thesis cannot explain the support for the far right.

The protest politics thesis assumes that those dissatisfied with current economic, social, and political policies, vote for the far right to protest polices of mainstream parties they believe are responsible. Using evidence from the ESS of 2002, Norris (2005: 158) concluded that contrary to general beliefs, “the measure of government satisfaction proved significant and positive, indicating that radical right voters had higher than average evaluations of government performance, not lower.” Many other scholars have argued against the protest voting theory because they believe voters are ideologically supportive of far right parties because of their defined party platforms (Lubbers and Scheepers 2000: 82; Mudde 1999; Rydgren 2005; Rydgren 2004). Kitschelt (1995: 78) recognizes that the perception of the far right as “an issueless protest vote of those who generally feel cynical about democratic systems in which all the parties appear to say the same thing is groundless in light of the preliminary data.” Van der Brug and Fennema (2003: 58) support claims made by Kitschelt (1995: 276) that “protest voting only occurs when political attitudes are of minor importance.” In contrast to idealistic voters, “since the prime motive of the a protest voter is to scare the elite, not to affect public policies, ideological proximity and issue-stands will be poor predictors of votes” for far right parties (van der Brug 2003: 60). Since far right parties are considered by voters to be more attractive once they are larger and ideologically closer, survey data indicates “that votes for these parties are generally not protest votes” (van der
In conclusion, “the motivations underlying a choice for a radical right-wing party is generally the same as the motivations for choosing other parties” (van der Brug 2003: 68). Related to the protest theory is also the single-issue party thesis.

The single-issue party thesis for far right parties suggests that immigration is their single and only issue. Mudde (1999: 2) defines a single-issue party as “having an electorate with no particular social structure, being supported predominantly on the basis of one single issue, lacking an ideological programme, and addressing only one all encompassing issue.” Immigration is an extremely important issue, but support for the far right arises as a result of their platform and ideas on security and crime, social welfare, and anti-party and anti-politics sentiments (Bjørklund and Andersen 2003: 122; Mudde 1999: 5; Hossay 2003: 176; Rydgren 2002; Rydgren 2004).

Each far right party has an ‘ideological core’ based on nationalism, or “the belief that the state (the political unit) and the nation (the cultural unit) should be congruent”; their ultimate goal is a return to a mono-cultural nation state (Mudde 1999: 6). Far right parties are not just fearful of foreigners, but “anything alien to their way of life and values” (Mudde 1999: 6). Far right parties, and in particular the FN, remain dedicated to their ideology. As opposed to a single-issue or protest party, in the process of integration of support for the far right, “new voters seem to incorporate the core-anti-immigrant, racist, and authoritarian values of the party rather than to dilute these values”, and “the party itself appears to be an effective mechanism not only for mobilizing a growing electorate, but also for encadrement” (Schain 2003: 234). Immigration is not their single issue, but one that “works as a catalyst for a more encompassing uneasiness about recent social and economic changes in Western Europe” (Mudde 1999: 8).

Political Institution Research on Support for the Far Right

Many scholars have assessed the role of political institutions in explaining the support for the far right. The supply-side claim that far right parties are not ideological parties is refuted by cross-national comparative studies of far right ideology. Norris (2005: 219) defined and analyzed the process of far right electoral consolidation through “maintaining alignments, secular realignments, deviating realignments, secular realignments, and critical realignments.” Critical elections are “abrupt, significant, and durable realignments in the electorate with major consequences for the long-term party order” (Norris 2005: 224). Critical elections are necessary for the consolidation of the far right electoral successes. According to Norris (2005: 230), electoral realignments that led to critical elections can benefit any far right party. This realignment is supported by “evidence of declining party membership, growing electoral volatility, the greater fragmentation of party systems, more split-ticket voting, the later timing of electoral decision, and increasingly leader-centered campaigns” (Norris 2005: 224). The most important factor contributing to the emergence of the far right is the extent of the “existence of widespread political disaffection, processes of partisan realignment, which weaken the anchors of habitual voting choices, coupled with the rising salience of the values of cultural protectionism and anti-globalization” (Norris 2005: 271). The rise of the far right also “depends heavily upon how far their own strategic ideological appeals works within the constraints set by the electoral system and the distribution of public opinion” (Norris 2005: 271). The enduring success of the far right is dependent on “the process of building, institutionalizing, and consolidating party organizations” (Norris 2005: 271). Rydgren (2003: 51) acknowledges that the rise of the far right involves a number of circumstances that facilitate a successful mobilization, but he disagrees with the conclusion Norris provides. Rydgren (2003: 51) believes that the far right still requires suffi-
cient organizational order, party order, and strategic skill to maintain their electoral successes. The political dealignment and realignment is also hypothesized to lead to far right success.

Norris (2005: 83) determined whether electoral laws and regulations provided “formidable constitutional, legal, and administrative barriers for smaller parties,” particularly the far right, that prevented them from emerging in one country and not in another. To determine whether formal rules affected the success of far right parties, Norris examined the nomination, campaign, and electoral stages of a political system and the national share of votes and seats attained by a far right party in legislative elections. She hypothesized that “minor parties seeking to break into office (and thus many radical right parties) are generally expected to perform well in political systems which facilitate more egalitarian conditions of party competition” (Norris 2005:83). Minor far right parties face an extremely competitive environment that is “biased toward established parties already in the legislature” (Norris 2005: 83).

To determine the validity of political institutional arguments for explaining the success of the far right, Norris (2005) evaluated the role of electoral regulations. Norris (2005) determined that the type of electoral regulations had little effect on the emergence of the far right; a combination of egalitarian and cartel regulations defines Western Europe, as autocratic regulations do not. In countries defined by egalitarian regulations, there is equal access to public resources and minimal legal restrictions on parties and ballot access. Cartel regulations are defined by limited party competition through restrictive practices that benefit the established parties and set requirements for ballot access, public funding, and access to free campaign services. The regulations have both mechanical and psychological effects (Norris 2005: 86). There is no mention of public funding, but Rydgren (2005: 430) believes that the attention the mass media gives to emerging far right parties “play an important role not only by facilitating indirect cross-national diffusion, but also by turning electoral successes of foreign far right parties into expanding political opportunities for domestic far right parties.” Despite the difference between more favorable egalitarian and less favorable cartel regulations, far right “parties did better where there was less regulation of party funding and access to public resources, not more” (Norris 2005: 101). The far right has enjoyed the most electoral success in Austria and Switzerland despite having little access to public resources. Throughout Western Europe, the “share of the votes and seats for radical right parties was higher under cartel allocation criteria” (Norris 2005: 101).

Many scholars have concluded in the past that the electoral laws of Western European states determine the success of the far right. It is hypothesized that proportional electoral systems with lower thresholds allow for more far right electoral success than majoritarian electoral systems with higher thresholds (Givens 2003: 145; Jackman and Volpert 1994: 508; Abedi 2002; Norris 2005: 106; Carter 2002: 125; Schain, Zolberg, and Hossay 2003: 6). Carter (2002: 125) determined that proportional representation systems make it easier for far right parties to gain representation, but “there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that they promote extremism” and that the share of the vote going to them is unrelated to the electoral system. Schain et al (2003: 6) believes that “variations in the dynamics of the party system, electoral systems, and institutional constraints appear to be more important in explaining breakthrough and subsequent electoral growth.” Kitschelt (1995: 60) concluded that the electoral support for far right parties did not significantly vary under majoritarian or proportional representation electoral systems. Norris (2005: 113) provided empirical evidence suggesting that in recent national legislative elections, the share of the vote won by the far right was similar under majoritarian systems (7.2%) and proportional electoral systems (7.1%). Far right parties achieve substantially larger quantities of legislative seats under PR systems, but this exclusion from national legislatures has done little to
weaken their electoral support (Norris 2005: 114). The level of threshold also did not have an affect on the share of the vote gained by far right parties at the national level (Norris 2005: 121).

Cultural Values Research on Support of the Far Right

Scholars, including Rydgren (2004: 475) have in several studies concluded that the emergence of the new far right party family can be explained by combining a model of “innovation and successful cross-national diffusion of a new, potent master frame, and a group of mechanisms falling within the composite notion of expanding and contracting political opportunities.” Rather than trying to find one universal cause for the emergence of the far right, Rydgren (2005: 415) believes that there may be varying causes among different countries. The new far right is successful only when it can distance itself from the old right (Rydgren 2003: 51). The new far right achieved success when it became “flexible enough to fit in different political and cultural contexts”, resonated “with the lived experiences, attitudes and preconceptions of many people, and being sufficiently freed from stigma (Rydgren 2004: 478). The far right that is successful has been able to free itself from the stigma of the old right. The old right master frame emphasized “biological racism, anti-Semitism, and anti-democratic critiques of the political system”, as the master frame of the new far right has combined “ethno-nationalist, cultural racism, and anti-political establishment populism” (Rydgren 2004: 478; Rydgren 2005: 413). Rather than advocating the superiority or inferiority of races, the far right of today “stresses the insurmountable difference between culturally defined ethnicities” (Rydgren 2003: 47). When distinguishing differences in their respective culture, far right parties, like the VB, use ‘devil terms’ to identify people or ideas that they view negatively (Breuning and Ishiyama 1998: 7). Such terms, like foreigner as opposed to immigrant, indicate that a “person is less apt to be perceived as someone who can be part of ‘us’” (Breuning and Ishiyama 1998: 20).

In explaining the emergence of the far right, Rydgren concludes that since the FN had an electoral breakthrough in 1984, far right parties throughout Western Europe learned from the experience and replicated it to achieve their own success (Rydgren 2005: 413; Rydgren 2004: 480). The main goal of a far right “party is to maximize its influence on policy outcomes in accordance with the core ideas and values embedded in its party ideology, and the duty of its party leaders is to use strategies that are judged to arrive at that goal as effectively as possible” (Rydgren 2005: 416). No matter the conditions or a satisfaction of the master frame, a far right party cannot successfully sustain electoral gains unless there are sufficiently large niches (Rydgren 2005: 418). For the emergence of the DF, Rydgren (2004: 488) concludes that it filled a new niche that emphasized the socio-cultural cleavage dimension as opposed to the socio-economic cleavage dimension. Rydgren (2005: 420) believes “socio-cultural authoritarianism and, more specifically, ethnonationalism and xenophobia have been the most important niches presenting far right parties with expanding political opportunities.” As new niches are opened up in the electoral area, it has allowed far right parties to “take advantage of the opportunities for ethnic mobilization” (Rydgren 2003: 50).

Scholars largely remain skeptical of explaining the emergence of the far right as a response to increased aggregate levels of immigration and exposure to multiculturalism. Norris (2005: 167) concluded “that the share of the vote won by the radical right at national level cannot be explained satisfactorily by a wide range of aggregate indicators of ethnic diversity, including both objective measures, exemplified by the official rate of immigration and asylum seeks entering each nation, and subjective measures, notably anti-immigrant attitudes found in public opinion within each country.” For Western Germany, Karapin (2003: 193) used data on the percent-
age of foreign population to conclude that there is “a weak relationship between immigrant shares and far right success” and for asylum seekers there is “even less of a relationship.” Despite the less than satisfactorily explained connection, “attitudes toward cultural protectionism prove far more significant predictors of radical right voting then economic attitudes” (Norris 2005: 167). Schain et al. (2003: 11) supports a similar claim that even though opposition to immigration is related to the support of the far right, there was no simple correlation, with some electoral support strong among populations with relatively little immigration. Kitschelt included in his study the proportion of foreign born peoples in a country, the change in rates of immigration, and the percentage of political refugees in a population. He concluded that there was no significant correlation between these measures and the voting strength of right-wing parties during the 1980s in Western Europe (Kitschelt 1995).

The inconsistent results concerning immigration levels, attitudes towards immigrants, concerns about cultural protection, and support for the far right might be the result of the extremely limited amount of national-level evidence and inadequate measures. Different countries collect data on asylum and immigrant populations, different ways, and have varying classifications of what constitutes an immigrant and asylum seeker. Evidence also focuses on the amount of immigration to a country for a particular year, as opposed to the overall increase in the ethnic heterogeneity of the national population (Norris 2005: 170). Norris found that while “individual attitudes hostile toward cultural protectionism (toward foreigners, refugees, and ethnic diversity) do indeed predict whether a particular person will cast a ballot for a radical right party, this does not mean that electoral success of these parties can be predicted at national level by public opinion in any country” (Norris 2005: 180). In their study of Flanders and the Netherlands, De Witte and Klandermans (2000: 699) found that the far right is only successful when there is a ‘fertile soil’, or a demand where a “large enough number of citizens must hold attitudes” that are represented by far right parties. For Rydgren (2003: 49), xenophobia has always existed among individuals in states, and “under conditions it may be lifted to a higher level of manifestation as a result of the intrusion of the far right parties into the political space.” Therefore “voters only act on their xenophobic attitudes under certain conditions”, and “it is only when they perceive of the immigration issue or any other issue concerning ethnic minorities as politically more salient than other issues that xenophobic attitudes are likely to result in electoral support” for far right parties (Rydgren 2003: 49). Since these attitudes translate into electoral support for the far right, far right parties can reduce fear and anxiety of the people, reframe unsolved political and social problems, and relieve personal frustrations; all three options for the far right to make xenophobia a politically salient issue is connected to an increase of immigrants (Rydgren 2003: 53).

Far right parties have achieved electoral success through their appeals to nationalism and ethnic and cultural distinction (Williams 2006: 1; Rydgren 2004; Rydgren 2005; Bjørklund and Andersen 2003) Far right parties identify their respective nations in terms of “us verses them” to portray immigrant communities as a threat to their national community. They identify themselves as defenders of “the order and traditional ways of life” in opposition to immigrants “who corrupt the purity of local ways” (Williams 2006: 3). The head of the Danish Fremskridtspartiet (FrP or Progress Party) stated that all good Danes are racists; the DF’s manifesto warns of the threat to Danish national culture posed by multiethnicity (Rydgren 2004: 484); the FN seeks to preserve the French nation that is a “historic, traditional, ethnically-inspired entity that can easily be undermined by alien values, groups, culture and influences”; the NPD in Germany claims that “German virtues have been undermined by American cultural imperialism and non-European immigrants”; the LPF party expressed concern that immigrants threatened Dutch culture; the
Austrian FPÖ, the German Republikaner, and the Italian AN all expressed nostalgia for their countries’ fascist and National Socialist pasts (Williams 2006: 3-4). The far right in Western Europe thus stands out in terms of their preoccupation with immigration and their marked intolerance toward racial and ethnic minorities (Betz 1994; Ignazi 1992; Inglehart and Rabier 1986; Kitschelt 1995; Veuglers and Chiarini 2003: 83).

**Data and Methodology**

As the previous review of the literature demonstrates, there is little scholarly consensus on the emergence and durability of far right parties in Western Europe. Past research on the success of the far right has variously emphasized the role of postindustrial factors, political institutions, protest voting, single-issue voting, and racism and xenophobia. While scholars have differed greatly over the source of far right success, there has been little cross-national comparative work to date attempting to establish a connection between citizens’ concern for cultural preservation as a cause for far right success. The most recent work has found that aggregate economic factors have largely not been found to (Norris 2005; Lubbers et. al 2002) be systematically as important as people’s beliefs that increased immigration represents a cultural threat to the nation (Rydgren 2005). After an extensive review of the literature, I hypothesized that cultural preservation is more important in explaining the success of the far right than any of the factors highlighted in past research. Cultural preservation represents the desire of citizens to preserve their traditional national culture and identity from foreign influences that are viewed to ultimately lead to multiculturalism. Those who feel ideologically closer to and/or are members of far right parties lend their support as a result of their desire to preserve national culture and identify. Support for cultural preservation has increased since the conclusion of World War II because Europe became the destination for immigrants. Immigrants are viewed as a threat to a country’s national culture, and far right parties have gained support for advocating an end to or a halt of immigration for cultural preservation. This hypothesis will be tested at two different levels of analysis, and using a variety of data sources. For the first section, individual level analysis and survey data from the European Social Survey will be employed to test the hypothesis. The second section will be based on cross-national analysis derived from aggregate level data of national elections and aggregated data from the Eurobarometer.

A distinction between xenophobia/racism and cultural preservation needs to be established. Much of the literature and the focus of the media are on the xenophobic side of the far right. With all of the attention focused on the negative aspects of the far right, the positive sides of cultural preservation are ignored. Of course many of the supporters of the far right are racists and employ stereotypes to target immigrants and foreign ideas, but there is also an essential will to preserve national cultural innate throughout all of the parties in Western Europe. The success of the far right cannot be reduced to simply fear and hate of foreigners because widespread success has been achieved in nations that are largely characterized as tolerant. The widespread support of the far right in tolerant Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands serves as examples of far right parties receiving support for their positive party programs. Even though far right parties seek to preserve their national culture by limiting further immigration into the country, it does not automatically mean that they are simply fueled by hatred. Supporters may in fact vacation to foreign lands and appreciate different cultures, but limit their exposure when it comes at the expense of their own national culture. It is easier to dismiss the far right movement as a form of hatred rather than a widely supported cross-national movement. As multiculturalism and globalization continue to have adverse affects on the homogeneity of national cultures, supporters of
the far right will view their respective national cultures as under-siege. They thus find no reason why they should not appropriately protect what previous and current generations have cherished.

Since the desire to preserve national culture and identify is not directly observable, survey data is required. As has been clear in the literature, survey data can be used to measure the values and beliefs of respondents when good questions are asked. To establish a causal relationship between support for the far right and desire to promote cultural preservation, one needs to identify the personal values of the respondents. To establish that values make a contribution independent of the economic considerations so prominent in the literature, appropriate controls are introduced in the multivariate analysis. The countries included in this study are Western European nations that have been democratic since the end of World War II. It is important that the states included in this study have been democratic for a longer period because it eliminates those parties and ideological movements that have arisen as a result of recent instability and in protest to the collapse of old authoritarian regimes. In more established democratic states, far right parties that have emerged represent important and persistent forces in national politics not well represented by traditional parties; they thus have established party ideology, a dedicated electorate, and are not flash protest movements.

**Data and Methodology: The European Social Survey**

The data for the first half of this study is derived from the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS is a biennial multi-country study covering over twenty nations. The central aim of the ESS is to gather data about changing values, attitudes, attributes, and behavior patterns within European polities. The ESS measures how people’s social values, cultural norms, and behavior patterns are distributed. The ESS is divided into a first round that was conducted in 2002/2003, a second round from 2004/2005, and an ongoing third round. The ESS is jointly funded by the European Commission, the European Science Foundation, and academic funding bodies in each participating countries. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections consisting of approximately one-hundred and twenty items; there is a ‘core’ that remains relatively constant from round to round, and two or more ‘rotating’ modules repeating at intervals. The core module aims to monitor change and continuity in a wide range of social variables, including media use, social and public trust; political interest and participation; sociopolitical orientations, governance and efficacy; moral, political and social values; social exclusion, national, ethnic and religious allegiances; well-being, health and security; demographics and socio-economics.\(^1\)

The ESS is an effective survey to use because it provides both measures of opinion on national and ethnic culture, and identifies which particular party respondents voted for in their nation’s most recent national election, those parties respondents ideologically feel close to, and the parties that respondents may belong to. Utilized by Pippa Norris (2005), the ESS is a highly respectable, professional, and reliable survey. For the purpose of this study, the ESS second round of 2004/2005 will be used. By using the latest ESS, one can seek to explain variation in support for the far right and reassess past conclusions made by scholars working with ESS or alternatively, the World Values Survey. Other studies like the International Social Survey Programme’s 2003 National Identity II ask a wide variety of questions relating to national identify and immigration, but fail to ask about the respondents’ party affiliations. It is beneficial to study cross-national opinion on a wide variety of national identity and immigration issues, but without data on support for far right parties, it would be difficult to test the hypothesis. The World Val-

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\(^1\) European Social Survey  www.europesocialsurvey.org
ues Survey is also an extensive source of data but is not related to this research because it includes minimal questions relating to national identity and immigration.

Countries used in the research all include a far right party or parties, some of which are politically relevant, some only on the fringe. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland have far right parties that have nationally been very successful. Finland, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom contain far right parties that have had little national success and remain fringe. This study must exclude Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom because in the ESS they have remained far too electorally insignificant to be given anything but the label ‘other’. Italy was not included in this study because it did not participate in the ESS 2005/2005. To test the hypothesis, data from the above mentioned countries were pooled because they have all been stable democracies in the postwar period.

The following ESS question was chosen to capture cultural preservation and not economic insecurity or xenophobia: “Would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?”

The best indicator of cultural preservation is dependent on whether the respondent believes that their country’s culture is undermined or enriched by immigrants. The question was originally coded as an eleven-point scale - with zero coded “cultural life undermined” and eleven coded “cultural life enriched”. I hypothesize that those respondents who believe their country’s culture is strongly undermined by people coming to live there from other countries will lead to an increase in identification with or membership in far right parties.

For the dependent variable, I sought to separate out those respondents who articulated support the far right. The ESS questions the respondents on their political affiliations, or which party they voted for in their country’s last national election, which party they feel ideologically close to, and which party are they a member of. This study cumulated both those who felt ideologically close to or were members of a far right party. In the countries considered here, this gave me a sample of 822 respondents, 805 who answered the ‘cultural life’ question, compared to a sample of 15160 respondents, 14793 who answered the ‘cultural life’ question, who were not members or close to the far right in the eight countries considered.

Since this study is focused on explaining support for the far right, it is only concerned with those who ideologically feel close to or are members of a far right party. A variable was created to delineate far right support. For each country included in the first section of this study, a new syntax was created so that the number for the far right party would equal a one, or “sup-
port for the far right”. All respondents for each country in the study were recoded zero, or “support for non-far right parties”. Depending on the country, the number of far right parties varied. A new syntax was created for both the ‘ideologically close to’ and ‘member of’ variables.

For the cultural life independent variable, it was recoded as a three-point scale. The three recoded values were determined by the natural break in the data. To compare the independent variable with the dependent variable according to the hypothesis, “cultural life undermined” was recoded three. Also using the original eleven-point scale, answers of one, two, and three classified as answers of “cultural life undermined” and were thus recoded three. Answers four, five, six and seven represent a neutral selection, so they were recoded two, or “cultural life neither enriched nor undermined.” Answers nine and eight were recoded one, or “cultural life enriched”.

Before the analysis was conducted, serious reservations arose concerning the influence of the large samples from Switzerland and Norway. With around 35% of the respondents coming from Switzerland, and 25% from Norway, the results of the analysis of the data would be proportionally influenced by just two cases. Since both the SVP and FrP are extremely recent popular parties, and this study wants to avoid overrepresentation of any single far right movement, only those respondents who identify themselves as members will be included in a second dependent variable. To accomplish this, another far right support variable was created based on a syntax that only includes the member variable for Norway and Switzerland. Therefore the percentage of people from Switzerland and Norway in this study will be reduced, and thus minimize any irregular and disproportionate influence of the results. The sample size is thus also decreased, leaving 366 respondents. To stay within the original parameters of this study, both dependent variables are included; one with all respondents who feel ideologically close to or are members of a far right, and the other with all respondents except those from Norway and Switzerland who identify themselves as ideologically close to a far right party.

To control for alternate, dominant political-economic explanations, a control variable for individual unemployment is included. The ESS question asks whether a respondent had “any period of unemployment and work seeking lasted 12 months or more.” This variable will determine the strength of the hypothesis or cultural arguments for explaining support among citizens for the far right. The question was coded on a two-point scale, with “yes” coded one and “no” coded two.

**Results: Far Right Support Using the European Social Survey 2004/2005**

The first half of this analysis using the European Social Survey of 2004/2005 indicates support for the hypothesis. Table 2 shows the positive relationship between support for the far right and opinions on cultural diversity. It is clear from the results that supporters of the far right overwhelmingly believe that the culture of their respective countries is undermined by the presence of immigrants. Among supporters of the far right, around 38% believe that their nation’s cultural life is undermined by immigrants. Supporters of the far right are almost four times more likely to believe that their nation’s cultural life is undermined rather than enriched. A majority of around 52% of supporters of far right voters believe that their country's cultural life is neither enriched nor undermined. To determine the significance of such findings, Gamma and Chi-Square were calculated.

Gamma and Chi-square were calculated to assess the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship. With a Gamma of .454, the results indicate a positive and strong relationship. A Pearson Chi-Square value of 238.85 indicates that the probability of mistakenly rejecting the null hypothesis based on the relationship found in this study is less than one-percent.
Table 2
Opinion on Whether Immigrants Enrich or Undermine a Country’s Cultural Life by Supporters of the Far Right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for far right parties</th>
<th>Cultural life enriched</th>
<th>Cultural life neutral</th>
<th>Cultural life undermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for a non-far right party</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3842)</td>
<td>(8264)</td>
<td>(2687)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for a far right party</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(80)</td>
<td>(418)</td>
<td>(307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3922)</td>
<td>(8682)</td>
<td>(2994)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma = .454
$\chi^2 = 238.85, p < .000$

Source: European Social Survey, 2004/2005

The relationship between cultural preservation and the recoded far right support variable is represented in Table 3. The relationship remains positive, indicating that those respondents, who believe that immigrants undermine their respective country’s culture, will more likely support the far right. Among supporters of the far right, respondents overwhelming believe that their nation’s cultural life is undermined rather than enriched by immigrants. Around 46% believe cultural life is undermined, compared to roughly 10% who believe it is enriched. Those supporters of the far right who believe their nation’s cultural life is neither enriched or undermined is below those indicating it is exclusively undermined; around 45% take a neutral position. For the recoded far right support variable, Gamma and Chi-Square were also calculated to determine the significance of the hypothesis.

Table 3
Opinion on Whether Immigrants Enrich or Undermine a Country’s Cultural Life by Supporters of the Far Right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for the far right without Norway and Switzerland 'close to'</th>
<th>Cultural life enriched</th>
<th>Cultural life neutral</th>
<th>Cultural life undermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for a non-far right party</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3887)</td>
<td>(8519)</td>
<td>(2826)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for a far right party</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35)</td>
<td>(163)</td>
<td>(168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3992)</td>
<td>(8682)</td>
<td>(2994)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma = .520
$\chi^2 = 183.79, p < .000$

Source: European Social Survey, 2004/2005

The calculated Gamma of .520 implies that a very strong relationship between the desire to promote cultural preservation and support for the far right exists. A Pearson Chi-Square value of 183.79 was calculated, indicating that the probability of mistakenly rejecting the null hypothesis based on the relationship found in this study is very low.

An economic control variable was also added to rule out alternative explanations for the identified relationship. For the original dependent variable, the results are included in Table 4. Whether supports of the far right were unemployed or not did not affect the hypothesis.
Those who were not unemployed were more likely to believe that immigrants undermine cultural life than those who were unemployed. A Gamma of .492 for those who have been unemployed and a Gamma of .443 for those who have not indicate only slightly stronger support for the hypothesis when a respondent has been unemployed and slightly weaker support when the respondent had not been unemployed. The calculated Gammas were so close to the original hypothesis that the original relationship between cultural preservation and far right support only changed marginally with the addition of the economic control variable.

Table 4
Percentage Who Support the Far Right by Opinion on Whether Immigrants Enrich or Undermine a Country's Cultural Life and Unemployment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ever unemployed</th>
<th>EFFECT OF IMMIGRANTS ON CULTURAL LIFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural life enriched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Social Survey, 2004/2005

Again, examining the relationship without respondents from Switzerland and Norway, the results were also the same. Table 5 shows that those who had been unemployed were slightly more likely to believe immigrants undermine a country’s cultural life. A Gamma of .584 for those who have been unemployed and a Gamma of .493 for those who have not been unemployed were calculated. Such calculated Gammas show that those who have been unemployed are only slightly more likely to support the far right than those who have not been unemployed and the relationship for those who were not unemployed remained positive and significant. As with Table 4, the difference is so small that the relationship between cultural preservation and far right support remains very strong.

Table 5
Percentage Who Support the Far Right by Opinion on Whether Immigrants Enrich or Undermine a Country's Cultural Life and Unemployment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ever unemployed</th>
<th>EFFECT OF IMMIGRANTS ON CULTURAL LIFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural life enriched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Social Survey, 2004/2005

Even though the ESS is a valuable and testable survey, its limitations require this study to include a second analysis. It is best to determine support for the far right using both individual level analysis and country level analysis. For the country level analysis section of this paper, the Eurobarometer and aggregate level data is utilized.
Data and Methodology: The Eurobarometer 59.2

The Eurobarometer Survey series is a program of cross-national and cross-temporal comparative social science research. Representative national samples are conducted in all European Union member states. The aim of every Eurobarometer survey is to provide regular monitoring of the social and political attitudes in the European Union through specific trend questions. For this study, Eurobarometer 59.2: The Common Agricultural Policy, Issues of Immigration, Rail Transport, Consumer Protection, and Information Society of May-June 2003 is employed. Eurobarometer 59.2 was sponsored by the Commission of the European Communities, and various organizations operating in the European Union conducted interviewing and sampling. For the interest of this study, the social attitudes and behavior category concerning society and culture will be used. Such a category can be used to compare electoral support for far right parties and attitudes towards immigrants and people from different races, religions, and cultures. Only those states that have been democratic since the conclusion of World War II, and have a far right party, will be included in this study. This multination analysis will include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, and Sweden. All respondents in the study were citizens and residents of the included countries and aged fifteen and older. The method of data collection was face-to-face interview, and the sampling designs were either multistage national probability samples or national stratified quota samples.

The Eurobarometer is an effective and in-depth study capable of contributing to our understanding of the relationship between opinions on the place of people belonging to minority groups within the respective countries and support for far right parties. Even though one cannot exactly determine which party a respondent voted for, feels close to ideologically, or is a member of, the mean level of support for cultural preservation as a goal in a country can be aggregated. Though one can only on the basis of this test, assert that countries with high levels of reported values on cultural preservation are correlated with high levels of voting for the far right when combined with findings from the individual level analysis, the results would suggest broad support for the thesis. The Eurobarometer lacks questions related to a respondent’s political affiliations that the ESS does, but has more in-depth questions related to the hypothesis. Also utilized by Norris, Scheepers, Lubbers, and Coenders, the Eurobarometer is an effective data source. Using the Eurobarometer will exclude Norway and Switzerland from the second half of this study, but it will include Finland, Italy, Great Britain, and Sweden; these four nations could not be used using the ESS data. With aggregate level data, or the percentage of votes cast for a far right party in a country’s first national election following 2003, one can gather votes for these minor far right parties to use in an analysis.

Eurobarometer 59.2 question seventeen deals with the attitudes towards people belonging to minority groups and whether respondents “tended to agree” or “tended to disagree” for twelve opinions provided. An answer of “tended to agree” was coded one and an answer of “tended to disagree” was coded two. Those respondents who answered “do not know”, coded three, were not included in this study. Of the twelve opinions, numbers one, four, eight, nine, and twelve were included in the study and provided below. These are the best five indicators of cultural preservation.

1) “It is a good thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions or cultures.”

A respondent who feels their national culture is threatened by immigration and foreign influences will disagree with such an opinion. Despite all of the customs and ideas that differ-

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ent cultures bring to Western European states, respondents in favor of cultural preservation will actually view multiculturalism as a negative and not a positive development. Such a development threatens their national culture because respondents in favor of cultural preservation view an addition of foreign culture to their national culture as effectively weakening it. Therefore one can hypothesize that those who believe it is a bad thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions, or culture, will support the far right.

4) “In order to be fully accepted members of (NATIONALITY) society, people belonging to these minority groups must give up their own culture.”

8) “There is a limit to how many people of other races, religions or cultures a society can accept.”

9) “(OUR COUNTRY) has reached its limits; if there were to be more people belonging to these minority groups we would have problems.”

12) “People belonging to these minority groups are so different they can never be fully accepted members of (NATIONALITY) society.”

To prevent multiculturalism, advocates of cultural preservation believe that peoples belonging to minority groups must assimilate to the national culture. The questions do not distinguish between minority groups and immigrants, but suggest that the belief that culture cannot absorb more is consistent with the view of restricting immigration as means of achieving this. When foreign peoples are present in public society, an adherence to the national culture of the country they reside in is a demand necessary for advocates of cultural preservation. Those who agree with opinions eight and nine will seek protection of their culture through the prevention of the further immigration of people from minority groups. As the level of immigration increases or the more people present in a country with a culture that is different from the national culture, multiculturalism further develops. For advocates of cultural preservation, multiculturalism is a problem and a threat. Advocates of cultural preservation emphasize the differences between their national culture and the culture of minority groups. For them, this difference is so great that people of minorities groups can never become fully accepted members of their society.

All of the five opinions included in this study serve as good indicators of support for cultural preservation. It is therefore beneficial to cumulate all five opinions into one variable index of cultural preservation. All of the opinions were recoded in the same direction so that only the answer, ‘tend to agree’ or ‘tend to disagree’, correlated with support for cultural preservation. The new cultural preservation variable contains for each country, the cumulated answers to the presented five opinions. Therefore someone who only agrees with one or two opinions in favor of cultural preservation, likely does not strongly hold the view that the government ought to do more to protect national culture. The new variable ranges from a possible zero to five. Those who scored zero tended to disagree with all of the opinions in favor of cultural preservation. Respondents who scored a five tended to agree with all opinions in favor of cultural preservation.

The newly created data set contains the mode, mean, and percentage of four and fives of the cultural preservation index derived from the Eurobarometer 59.2, and aggregate level data. Within the same data set is aggregate level data of the percentage of vote for the far right in each country in the first election after the 2003 Eurobarometer. Therefore the greater percentage of the national electorate indicating strong support for cultural preservation the higher the likely percentage of voters registering votes for far right parties. The national election results are derived from each country’s electoral commissions. To control for alternate, dominant political-economic explanations, a control variable for the total level of national unemployment in the year of the countries’ particular national election is also included. Such unemployment figures
are derived from the Eurostat Yearbook. In past literature, Betz (1994) concluded that the higher the unemployment, the higher support for the far right. To establish that culture is a better or at least independent explanation for the support of the far right, I control for the influence of unemployment. The relationship between unemployment and far right support should be lower and supporting more recent literature from Lubbers et al. (2002: 364), Bjorklund and Andersen (2003: 118), Dülmer and Klein (2005: 252), and Givens (2003: 144), possibly negative. With the new data, one can hypothesize that the greater the aggregate level of support for cultural preservation, the greater the total votes for the far right. Or in other words, those people who do agree it is not good for a society to be made of different peoples, that minority peoples must give up their culture to become accepted members of their society, that there is a limit to the amount of different peoples a society can accept, and that such a limit has been achieved because minority peoples are too different are likely supporters of the far right.

Results: Far Right Support Using the Eurobarometer 59.2

The results of the second half of the analysis of this study are laid out in Table 5. The results indicate that those states with the most respondents answering five out five questions in favor of cultural protectionism have the most electorally successful far right parties. Belgium had the most respondents in favor of cultural protectionism, or 13.7%, and the most successful far right party; the Vlaams Blok won 13.55% of the vote in the 2003 national elections. The remaining countries with the largest far right vote, or Denmark, France, and Austria, all have the largest percentage of respondents in favor of cultural protectionism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Far Right Parties in Elections</th>
<th>Median of Cultural Preservation Index</th>
<th>Mean of Cultural Preservation Index</th>
<th>Percentage of 4's in Cultural Preservation Index</th>
<th>Percentage of 5's in Cultural Preservation Index</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes Won by the Far Right</th>
<th>Total Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>FPÖ</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>11.04%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>VB, FN</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>19.80%</td>
<td>13.70%</td>
<td>13.55%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>14.90%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>SKS</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>15.90%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>DVU/NPD, Rep</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>18.60%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>AS, FT, LN</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>5.76%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>LPF, EN, PVV</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>2.93%</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>BNP, UKIP</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>15.10%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Election Years: Austria 2005; Belgium 2003; Denmark 2005; Finland 2003; France 2002; Germany 2005; Italy 2005; Netherlands 2003; Sweden 2005; United Kingdom 2005.
Those nations with the lowest percentage of respondents in favor of cultural preservation also had the lowest support for the far right. Finland had both the lowest percentage of respondents in favor of cultural protection and support for the far right. For Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, they had the eighth, seventh, and sixth lowest percentage of respondents in favor of cultural protectionism, and the eighth, seventh, and sixth lowest support for the far right. The only inconsistencies were Italy and Germany. Italy had the second lowest percentage of respondents in favor of cultural protectionism, but the fifth largest support for the far right. The difference in the electoral success of the far right between Italy and the other nations who had respondents less in favor of cultural percentage was so miniscule that it does not greatly affect the results. Germany was the only other inconsistency because it had the fourth largest percentage of respondents in favor of cultural protectionism, but the second lowest electorally successful far right. Due to their National Socialist past and the stigma associated with supporting the far right, it is still taboo for Germans to support such a movement even if they ideologically feel close to it. Therefore Germany should be considered an exception, an outlier that must be excluded from a final analysis of this data. Germany will though be included in the first analysis of the Eurobarometer data, but excluded for the second half.

The level of unemployment in each country during the year of the national election included in this study serves as a control. The relationship between unemployment and support for the far right, as indicated in Table 5, is not as strong as cultural preservation. Both Finland and Germany have the highest unemployment, but the lowest support for the far right. Austria and Denmark have the fourth most and second most electorally successful far right parties, but the seventh and ninth lowest unemployment rates. Support for the Swedish far right is low, but Sweden has the fifth highest unemployment rate. France and Belgium have the third and fourth highest unemployment rates, and the third and most electorally successful far right parties. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom have the two lowest national unemployment levels, but both far right parties were only the sixth and seventh electorally successful. To analyze the relationship of the hypothesis and the control variable, linear regressions were calculated and scatterplots created.

Since the data in this analysis of the Eurobarometer is interval-level, linear regression and scatterplots were utilized to assess the relationship of the hypothesis. The scatterplot between the percentage of fives in the cultural preservation variable and the percentage of votes garnered in the first national legislative elections following 2003 is illustrated in Figure 6. The regression line shows that the relationship is positive, or that an increase in cultural preservation leads to an increase in far right support. With the exception of Germany, the other countries cluster closely around the regression line, indicating that the hypothesis is strong. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of .766, the relationship is once again shown to be strong. For the percent of variance explained, an r² of .587 indicates that 58.7% of the dependent variable is explained by cultural preservation; this attests to a moderately strong relationship.
The results of the linear regression between cultural preservation and far right support are shown in Table 7. With 99% confidence, the unstandardized regression coefficient calculated for the relationship is 1.208. Since this is a fairly large positive unstandardized regression coefficient, a sizable change in the dependent variable was associated with a change in the independent variable, in the expected direction. The adjusted R-Sq of .587 is quite high for a single variable model, and the significance is likewise remarkable given the small number in the sample. This also indicates a strong relationship for the hypothesis, because its shows that the greater the amount of change in the dependent variable associated with the cultural preservation variable.

Table 7
Regression Analysis: Electoral Success of the Far Right and Cultural Preservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes Won by the Far Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 5’s in Cultural Preservation Index</td>
<td>1.208**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>227.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.
For a second analysis of the hypothesis using linear regression and scatter plots, Germany was omitted because of its comprehensible status as an outlier. The relationship between cultural preservation and the recoded dependent variable is recorded in Table 8. A Pearson correlation coefficient of .911 was calculated, and it very strongly supports the hypothesis. An R² of .830 was also calculated, indicating that 83% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the cultural preservation. With 99.9% statistical significance, the unstandardized regression coefficient calculated for the hypothesis is equal to 1.359. This is a large and positive unstandardized coefficient that indicates that a change in the independent variable led to a sizable change in the dependent variable.

Table 8
Regression Analysis: Electoral Success of the Far Right and Cultural Preservation Without Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes Won by the Far Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 5’s in Cultural Preservation Index</td>
<td>1.359***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>196.54***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

A control variable for unemployment was introduced into the analysis, and the results are depicted in both a scatterplot, as Figure 9, and a linear regression, as Table 10.

Figure 9
Scatterplot with Regression Line for Far Right Support: Percentage of Votes in National Election by Level of Unemployment
Due to the limited amount of cases, and the weakness of the control variable in comparison to the independent, statistical significance was not above the empirically important 95% threshold. The scatterplot shows little positive relationship between unemployment levels and aggregate votes for the far right among countries in the study.

### Table 10
Regression Analysis: Electoral Success of the Far Right and Cultural Preservation With Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Votes Won by the Far Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 5’s in Cultural Preservation Index</td>
<td>1.208**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Total National Unemployment</td>
<td>-1.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>13.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>227.372*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurobarometer 59.2

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

The Regression shows that unemployment, when included, does not change significantly or positively contribute to the cultural preservation variable. Unemployment is thus not a significant predictor of far right votes in the countries included in this study.

**Conclusion and Discussion:**

In this article I set out to explain the support of far right parties in Western European states that have been democratic since the conclusion of World War II. After an extensive review of the literature, it seemed clear that past studies had failed to adequately consider a legitimate source of support for those parties most widely recognized as parties that want to halt or severely limit further immigration. I hypothesized citizens who are profoundly concerned with the preservation of their respective countries’ national culture are more likely to support the far right. The failure of traditional parties to treat this as a serious, lasting concern of a significant part of the populations of those states creates the ideological space necessary for far right parties to emerge. Using both individual level analysis of data from the European Social Survey and country level analysis of data from the Eurobarometer, the hypothesis was tested. The results are significant and contribute toward a greater discussion and understanding of the far right.

My expectations for the individual level analysis of support for cultural preservation and the far right were limited by the few questions to choose from concerning immigrants and cultural diversity. Due to the focus of this study on the positive aspects of restricting immigration to protect and preserve cultural identity, I was limited to one question. Analyzing the survey data from the ESS, a strong relationship emerged between support for cultural preservation and support for the far right. After overcoming the potential bias resulting from a large sample from Switzerland and Norway, the pooled results were even stronger and more consistent with the hypothesis. It is clear that supporters of the far right overwhelming believe that their national cultural is undermined rather than enriched by immigrants.

The results of the cross-national analysis of survey data from the Eurobarometer 59.2 also provided support for the hypothesis that cultural values matter in the voting behavior of European publics. The relationship between cultural preservation and the percentage of votes garnered by the far right in each country included in this study was very strong. Exceeding my expectations, the percentage of population expressing the highest and most consistent support for cultural preservation explained much of the variance in the percentage of national vote for far right.
right parties. The relationship was so strong that it overcame the limitations of small number of cases and still produced statistically significant results.

The introduction of the control variable for total national unemployment shed considerable light on the appeals and reasons for supporting the far right. Contrary to past studies reviewed in the literature, the level of unemployment had a negative effect on the votes for the far right, and did not achieve statistical significance. Of course political economy concerns and explanations cannot be dismissed in explaining support for the far right, as no single variable can account for complete variance. Economic arguments should, however, become less of the focus of the study of the far right, and, instead, cultural arguments should garner as much attention or even more as political economy arguments received in the past.

It is imperative that future replications of this study utilize a variety of data sources. Reliance on just one single source, like the ESS, would not have yielded as great of results as the augmentation of data from the Eurobarometer. With any study it is difficult to be satisfied with the questions utilized in surveys, so expectations are often lowered. More appropriate questions would incorporate the love for and importance of national culture, adherence to customs, and opinions on multicultural changes brought to their environment, like Islamic architecture, foreign food items, and foreign popular movements in culture. The far right appeals to those citizens of Western European countries who have a deep love for their national culture, and maintain and celebrate its traditions. The ideology of the far right revolves around a rigid nationalism that advocates a protection of natural culture from immigrants who contribute towards multiculturalism. As more mosques are built, pop-culture personalities ethnically vary, and national and foreign traditions merge, the support for cultural preservation will grow, and the far right seems the only political party system at this point in history to gain benefit.

This situation is positive for the far right in the future because their success is not confined by any boundaries and popularity has often been achieved in once tolerant countries. Drawing from the results of this study, far right support is drawn from advocates of cultural preservation, and they will continue to be supported as long as immigrants and foreign ideas are present. Disappointing for advocates of multiculturalism, support for the far right and cultural preservation has occurred in countries that have already embraced tolerant ideas. It would be a different set of circumstances if a state has yet to embrace multiculturalism and tolerance, and does so for the sake of progression. It is only natural that such a progression would occur, but in Western Europe it has already occurred, and the response of the people has ultimately been to support the vocal opposition to multiculturalism, or the far right. At this current time, the prospects for the future of a multicultural Europe are particularly limited. For advocates of multiculturalism, places like the Netherlands that they emulated, are just as supportive of the far right, in favor of cultural protectionism, and restrictive of immigration as any other Western European nation. As participants in democratic states, supporters of the far right are free to pursue their ideas and protect their national cultures. The far right cannot be dismissed because they are legitimate contenders, like all other political parties, for the control over the destinies of any Western European state. The far right is a consistent and persistent force that will probably never stop until it achieves the protection of its national culture and the fulfillment of its political aims.

If mainstream political parties do not start to take the cultural concerns of the population seriously, then they will continue to lose support. In proportional-representation systems, entrance is easier for the far right, and mainstream parties could find themselves increasingly irrelevant, or occupy a smaller and smaller space. Such has already been the case in Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, and Austria. In all these countries, the far right has at some
point garnered more support than the traditional conservative parties. In Norway, Switzerland, and Belgium, support for the far right is so immense, that the conservative parties are totally eclipsed by the far right, and substantially electorally weaker and irrelevant. It is though rather difficult for the mainstream political parties to gain their support back. A major part of the appeal of the far right is their separation from the political establishment. It was the mainstream parties in the postwar period that allowed increased immigration and failed to restrict it when the public opinion turned especially negative. It is for this reason that many supporters of the far right left the mainstream parties and blamed them for the degradation of the relative homogeneity of their respective countries’ national culture. Even when the conservative parties pander to supporters of the far right as recently occurred in the Netherlands, Austria, and France, they are still relatively unsuccessful. As the far right continues to identify itself and their party platform as the third way in political systems, their appeal will persist, and their influence will surely be even more substantial.

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