



Support for Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Western Europe: Individual Attributes, Political Attitudes, and National Context

Alan E. Kessler and Gary P. Freeman

Department of Government, University of Texas at Austin, 1 University Station A1800, Austin, TX 78712-0119, USA. E-mails: akessler@mail.utexas.edu and gfreeman@mail.la.utexas.edu

We explain support for extreme right parties (ERPs) in Western Europe through the analysis of individual-level characteristics and national-level contextual variables. Using Eurobarometer Surveys for 1988, 1994, 1997, and 2000 and standard aggregate indicators, we employ appropriate regression models to analyze the probability of voting for an ERP over time and across the seven EU countries with significant ERPs as well as the EU 15. Confirming studies using different or less comprehensive data sets, we find that the bulk of support for ERPs comes from young, less-educated males who harbor anti-immigrant attitudes and are dissatisfied with the political system. However, our findings diverge from previous literature in several instances. We find that individual attitudes, specifically anti-immigrant sentiment and political disaffection, are better predictors of intentions of voting for ERPs than are more traditional socioeconomic characteristics such as manual occupational status, personal unemployment, or national unemployment levels.

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Introduction

Moving from the margins to the mainstream in the past two decades, new extreme right parties (ERPs) have garnered significant support across Europe, casting, in the words of one authoritative account, lurid ‘shadows over Europe’ (Schain *et al.*, 2002). Indeed, the electoral appeal of the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) in Austria, the *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN) and *Legha Nord* (LN) in Italy, the *Front National* (FN) in France, the *Vlaams Blok* (VIB) in Belgium, the *Fremskrittspartiet* (FrP) in Norway, and the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (SVP) in Switzerland — all averaging roughly 10% of the vote in national parliamentary elections during the 1990s (Ignazi, 2003, 200) — has prompted a burgeoning literature on the breakthrough and electoral success of extreme right parties (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt, 1995; Betz and Immerfall, 1998; Hainsworth, 2000; Ignazi, 2003; Merkl and Weinberg, 2003).¹



Scholarship on ERPs, nevertheless, conveys only a partial understanding of the electoral appeal of the extreme right in comparative context. Cross-national studies based upon aggregate data explicitly address variation in the success of extreme parties, but often yield conflicting results. Jackman and Volpert (1996), for example, find low electoral thresholds and high unemployment conducive to the success of the extreme right in European parliamentary elections. Swank and Betz (2003) report, to the contrary, that unemployment is inconsequential and that limited welfare state coverage, proportional representation, and insecurity accompanying globalization underlie extreme right parties' share of the vote. Knigge (1998) offers yet another view, finding that extreme right support declines as unemployment increases and that rising immigration and political dissatisfaction explain success of extreme parties. Golder (2003) argues that the effects of unemployment and immigration are conditional: only when immigrants exceed a particular share of national population does unemployment spur support for the (populist) extreme right.

Aggregate studies capture the impact of the national context and offer several compelling hypotheses on the relationship between economic conditions, immigration, and political institutions and support for the extreme right, but they abstract from individual characteristics emphasized in election studies. If the sources of extreme right support differ among segments of the electorate, as individual-level voting analyses suggest (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt, 1995; but see Van der Brug *et al.*, 2000; Ignazi, 2003; Givens, 2006), it is critical to examine how both national context and individual characteristics shape extreme right party support (Husbands, 1991; Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2002).

We employ a micro- and macro-perspective on extreme right voting in Western Europe (cf. Lubbers *et al.*, 2002). We draw on internationally comparable surveys of vote intentions and standard national economic, demographic, and political data sources to construct a data set suitable for examining variation in the success of extreme right parties, and model support as a function both of individual-level socioeconomic, demographic, and attitudinal considerations and the national-level economic and political context. Our results echo many recent studies in rooting extreme right support in societal groups aggrieved by economic and political change. Young males of low education constitute the bulk of the extreme right electoral base. Yet we find that attitudinal factors, namely political dissatisfaction and anti-immigrant sentiment, rather than socioeconomic characteristics, drive extreme right support at the individual level. Furthermore, the societal distribution and prevalence of such attitudes, not national economic conditions, underlies the demand for extremist parties in particular Western European political systems. In particular, we find that personal unemployment and national-level unemployment are negatively related to support for ERPs.



Literature Review

The emergence of extreme right parties in Western Europe is often cast as a 'silent counter-revolution' (Ignazi, 1992; but see Veugelers, 2000) in which dislocation and uncertainty accompanying post-industrial development challenge traditional party systems and give rise to a radicalization of political discourse and new, value-based conflicts. Where political entrepreneurs exploit gaps in long-standing cleavage structures and capitalize on pressing non-material demands — in the case of extreme right parties, these include concerns over immigration, national identity, and security — the stage is set for the emergence or possible breakthrough of new, radical parties. Although the process varies, socioeconomic, demographic, and attitudinal considerations at the individual level and immigration, national economic conditions, and political institutions at the national level are typically cited among factors critical to extreme right parties' electoral success (Veugelers, 1999; Schain *et al.*, 2002, 9–13; Eatwell, 2003; Ignazi, 2003, 201–204).

Individual characteristics

Many analysts locate the sources of extreme right support at least partially in material interests. While economic integration and the expansion of supranational authority have clearly benefited individuals with requisite education, mobility, and skill, workers with less education and skill face diminished economic prospects amidst declining social benefits and protections (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Swank and Betz, 2003). The failure of traditional left or center-left parties to respond effectively to discontent among aggrieved societal groups creates opportunities for extreme right politicians to capitalize on the politics of resentment. Betz (1994) contends that groups disadvantaged by economic change, predominantly manual workers, the unemployed, and the low and moderately educated, are most inclined to blame foreigners and ethnic minorities for adverse conditions and turn toward the extreme right.

Empirical work largely supports this view. Lubbers *et al.* (2002), in an extensive study of extreme right support in 16 European countries, find manual workers, the self-employed, the unemployed, and the less educated inclined to favor the extreme right. Evans and Ivaldi (2002, <http://www.politik.uni-mainz.de/ereps/papers.htm#latest-update>), in a multi-country study of extreme right support based on national election studies, detect rising sympathies among the working class as well. Country-specific studies reveal similar social profiles of the extreme right electorate, which Ignazi (2003) labels a process of 'radicalization and proletarianization', and collectively suggest that societal groups experiencing greater risk from post-industrialism are likely to favor the extreme right.



Demographic distinctions also figure prominently in cross-national, individual-level voting research. A notable gender gap, with men more inclined than women to favor parties of the extreme right, is well established, though the explanation for this gap remains under-developed (Betz, 1994, 142–149; Givens, 2004). Younger voters, perhaps less attached to traditional parties and less secure in their labor market position, have also been found to exhibit support for the extreme right and young men appear to constitute the majority of extreme right supporters across much of Europe (Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; Ignazi 2003).

Beyond socioeconomic and demographic considerations, attitudinal measures appear to provide considerable insight into individual-level support for the extreme right (Ignazi, 1992; Betz, 1994; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2002). Lubbers *et al.* (2002) find anti-immigrant sentiment and political dissatisfaction the most important attitudinal factors underlying extreme party support (also see Knigge, 1998). Political dissatisfaction, in this account, manifests itself in ‘protest politics’ where voters select anti-establishment parties as a rebuke to ineffective traditional parties. Findings are even starker in the case of anti-immigrant sentiment that, while no longer the single issue feeding extreme parties (Kitschelt, 1995; Mudde, 1999), resonates strongly among the extreme right’s electoral base. Political disaffection and anti-immigrant sentiment are key determinants of individual vote intentions and the distribution of these attitudes should inform variation in the cross-country electoral success of the extreme right.²

National conditions

Studies based upon individual-level voting data reveal, at a broad level of generality, key characteristics of an extreme right electoral base in Western Europe. National-level economic and demographic conditions are, however, also central to accounts of cross-national variation in extreme right political support and presumably shape the context in which individuals evaluate the programs and rhetoric of radical parties. Empirical work routinely seeks to link measures of unemployment and foreign population to variation in success of the extreme right in parliamentary elections (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998; Golder, 2003).³ While findings vary, as noted above, the animus toward foreigners in extreme party programs and the coincidence of large-scale immigration with economic downturn provide clear opportunities for political entrepreneurs to mobilize ‘pre-existing xenophobic sentiments for political gain’ (Betz, 1994, 81; Kitschelt, 1995). Indeed, Golder (2003) reports on the basis of 165 national elections in 19 West European countries that extreme right supporters behave instrumentally, favoring populist parties when



unemployment increases but only in the presence of a (relatively) large foreign population.⁴

In addition to economic conditions and immigration, analysts of national parliamentary elections depict political institutions as important constraints on the prospects for extreme party success. Institutions that reward minor parties, namely electoral systems characterized by low disproportionality, are posited to facilitate the emergence or breakthrough of extreme right parties (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; but see Carter, 2002; Golder, 2003). Such institutions are, furthermore, critical to parties' efforts to position themselves to co-opt political space typically occupied by moderate conservative parties and thereby establish an electoral niche (Kitschelt, 1995).

While economic conditions and political institutions reflect or channel a demand for extreme right parties in diverse national contexts, analysts caution against neglecting actual party organizations and messages to voters — what Eatwell (2003) terms the 'supply' side of the story (Veugelers, 1999; Schain *et al.*, 2002, 13–14). In such accounts, the size, organizational capacity, and quality of leadership of particular parties are central and the success of the extreme right contingent upon such characteristics.

Hypotheses

On the basis of the scholarship just reviewed, we expect individual-level socioeconomic, demographic, and attitudinal characteristics to underlie support for extreme right parties. Societal groups plausibly disadvantaged by the anxiety and insecurity of post-industrial development are likely to provide the wellspring of extreme right support. We expect manual workers, the unemployed, the less educated, and males to favor the extreme right, as well as individuals who voice political dissatisfaction and anti-immigrant sentiment.

With respect to the impact of national contexts and political institutions on individual support for the extreme right, we anticipate that adverse economic conditions and relatively large foreign populations will be associated with greater support for extreme right parties in particular countries. We are able to address the likelihood of support for the extreme right given individual-level characteristics and national-level constraints and opportunities. While not wholly bridging the gap between 'micro' and 'macro' studies, our approach permits us to gauge how immigration, unemployment, and political institutions contribute to the context of individual choice and shape variation in support for the extreme right across countries. We anticipate that support for the extreme right will be greater in countries where anti-immigrant attitudes and political dissatisfaction interact with a facilitative national context marked by relatively high levels of unemployment and a large foreign presence.



Data and methods

These hypotheses are tested using data from Eurobarometer surveys. Conducted biennially on behalf of the European Commission since the early 1970s, the Eurobarometer (EB) is a primary data source for monitoring and assessing trends in European political and social attitudes.⁵ Since identical questions are asked of representative samples in EU countries, the EB permits analysis of a consistent set of political, socioeconomic, attitudinal, and demographic questions across EU member states and over time.

We analyze EB surveys conducted in 1988, 1994, 1997, and 2000 (Reif and Melich, 1992; Reif and Marlier, 1998; Melich, 2000; Hartung, 2002), each of which includes a detailed battery of questions assessing attitudes toward immigration, as well as information about individual vote intentions and standard socioeconomic and demographic items.⁶ The time frame omits the emergence of the extreme right in the early and mid-1980s but allows comparison of electoral support before and after the emergence of both immigration and economic crises in the early 1990s. Furthermore, detailed and comparable immigration questions, discussed at greater length below, facilitate a careful examination of the links between anti-immigrant attitudes and support for the extreme right over the course of the 1990s.⁷

The primary countries and parties included in our analysis are: Austria (FPÖ), Belgium (VIB, FN), Denmark (FRPd, DFP), France (FN), Germany (REP), Italy (MSI/AN, LN), and the Netherlands (CD). The presence of an organized, nationally relevant extreme right party — that is, one that runs candidates in multiple electoral districts and achieves more than a marginal presence in national parliamentary elections — underlies our selection of cases.⁸ Nonetheless, we also conduct a broader analysis of the determinants of extreme right support in the EU, like Lubbers *et al.* (2002), by equating the absence of a national extreme right party in other member countries of the EU with a decision of individuals in those countries not to support the extreme right.⁹

Dependent variable

The EB standard vote intention question serves as our dependent variable. This question prompts respondents for their prospective party vote if a ‘general election were held tomorrow.’¹⁰ Although EB surveys are not necessarily timed to coincide with national elections, the prospective vote measure nonetheless serves as an appropriate gauge of a respondent’s likely vote at a particular point in time. We construct a dichotomous variable, coded 1 for extreme right wing parties and 0 for other parties.



In identifying parties as extreme right, we adopt a liberal categorization based largely on Lubbers *et al.* (2002), Mudde (1999), and Ignazi (2003).¹¹ We include the Italian *AN* as an extreme right party though analysts often consider the party a borderline case. Parties included in the analysis with their pooled number and share of extreme right party voters in EU member countries in the sample are depicted in Table 1.

Note that, even after combining the four cross-national surveys, the number of extreme right voters in the sample is small, particularly in the cases of the Netherlands and Sweden. The share of extreme right vote in the national samples approximates average election returns over the period in several cases though is widely below the mark in the cases of France, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

Independent variables: individual characteristics

We use standard demographic questions included in the EB surveys to assess the impact of individual characteristics on the likelihood that voters will select extreme right parties. Age is operationalized as a continuous variable ranging

Table 1 Extreme right voters in eurobarometer surveys, 1988–2000

Country	Extreme right party	Number of ERP voters	Total voters	ERP vote as % of total	Average election vote
Austria	FPÖ	256	1464	17.49	19.52
Belgium	VIB, FN	219	2745	7.98	7.78
Denmark	FKP,DF	197	3256	6.05	7.90
Finland	IKL	0	1470	0	<0.5
France	FN	149	2864	5.20	12.35
Germany	REP, DVU, NPD	101	5186	1.95	2.45
Greece	EK, EPEN	0	2660	0	<0.5
Ireland	NPI	0	2826	0	<0.5
Italy	LN, MSI/ AN, MS-FT	369	2455	15.03	14.56
Luxembourg	NB	0	1378	0	<0.5
Netherlands	CD	21	3389	0.62	1.23
Portugal	MAN	0	2554	0	<0.5
Spain	DN	0	2585	0	<0.5
Sweden	ND, SD	2	1361	0.15	2.70
United Kingdom	BNP	0	4190	0	<0.5
Total		1314	40383	3.25	

Note: Average vote in national parliamentary elections, 1990–1999; <0.5 indicates less than 0.5%.
Source: Ignazi (2003, 200), Lubbers *et al.* (2002, 357); <http://www.electionworld.org>.



from 18 to 99. Gender is a dichotomous variable coded 1 for women and 0 for men. A measure of educational attainment, based on the age at which a respondent completes his or her formal education, is coded 1 for respondents with a primary education; 2 for respondents completing secondary education; and 3 for those acquiring a tertiary education. We also consider the effect of income on extreme right support, adopting a harmonized income measure coded from 1 for incomes in the bottom quartile through 4 for incomes in the highest quartile.¹²

Socioeconomic measures of labor market position are derived from EB current and past occupation questions.¹³ We construct categorical occupational measures (coded 1 or 0) to denote whether respondents work in manual occupations (supervisors, skilled manual workers, unskilled manual workers), professional occupations (professionals, business proprietors, general, and middle management), and service occupations (employed position mainly at a desk, traveling, or in a service job), categories roughly corresponding to blue, white, and pink-collar positions, respectively. We also examine whether or not self-employed (farmers, fishermen, and craftsmen) or unemployed respondents differ in their support for the extreme right.

We measure one important dimension of political dissatisfaction by coding respondents as 1 if they express dissatisfaction with democracy and 0 otherwise.¹⁴ Anti-immigrant sentiment is based on respondents' assessments of the quantity of immigrants in their host country and coded 1 for 'not many,' 2 for 'a lot, but not too many,' and 3 for 'too many.'¹⁵ In addition to this measure, we examine how other commonly voiced immigration concerns affect likely support for the extreme right. Drawing upon roughly comparable questions about respondents' assessments of the link between immigrants and school quality, welfare abuse, unemployment, and crime, we construct a series of dummy variables (coded 1 for negative opinion toward immigrants and 0 otherwise) for this range of contentious issues.¹⁶ In this manner we are able to determine whether particular immigration issues or a more general antipathy toward immigrants drives support for the extreme right.

Independent variables: national contexts

To examine the influence of national context on the likelihood of extreme right support, we supplement the individual-level data derived from the pooled EB surveys with aggregate data on economic, demographic, and political conditions. To assess the independent and interactive effects of immigration and unemployment on individual votes for the extreme right, we merge national-level data from OECD sources with the individual-level data by country and year. We use foreign population as a percent of national population to measure immigration's salience or pressure, as is the norm in



aggregate studies, reasoning that higher numbers create a context conducive to public ire and extreme right opportunism.¹⁷ Similarly, the unemployment rate serves as a proxy for economic adversity. Finally, we include a measure of extreme right vote share in the last parliamentary election as a proxy for party organizational effectiveness and permissiveness of national political institutions. Space constraints prohibit exploration of other interesting institutional hypotheses (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Golder, 2003; Swank and Betz, 2003; Givens, 2005).

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the individual and national-level variables employed in the analysis. Roughly 6% of respondents in the EB surveys are prospective extreme right voters in the seven countries central to our analysis. (This figure falls to 3.2% of EU voters in the 15-country analysis; see Table A1 in the Appendix) Socio-economic characteristics of respondents in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands

Table 2 Descriptive statistics, seven-country analysis

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of observations</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
ERP voter	21359	0.06	0.24	0	1
Age	28551	44.77	17.03	18	97
Gender	29595	0.52	0.50	0	1
Education	26556	2.03	0.75	1	3
Income	22792	2.55	1.12	1	4
Manual worker	26100	0.32	0.47	0	1
Professional worker	26100	0.28	0.45	0	1
Service worker	25019	0.35	0.48	0	1
Unemployed	29558	0.07	0.25	0	1
Self-employed	29558	0.08	0.27	0	1
Political dissatisfaction	28766	0.46	0.50	0	1
Too many immigrants	27932	2.35	0.65	1	3
Reduce education	26851	0.46	0.50	0	1
Exploit welfare	26356	0.54	0.50	0	1
Increase unemployment	26917	0.56	0.50	0	1
Increase crime/delinquency	27615	0.49	0.50	0	1
Unemployment rate (%)	29603	8.59	2.39	3.60	12.10
Foreign population (%)	29603	6.13	2.66	1.00	9.20
Δ Unemployment rate	29603	0.75	18.04	-34.55	41.07
Δ Foreign population	25594	6.36	11.18	-13.64	42.86
ERP national vote (%)	29603	6.79	6.68	0.00	26.90

Source: Authors' calculations from Eurobarometer surveys; SOPEMI (1992, 2001) and OECD (2003).



are similar to respondents in the EU writ large. The seven former countries are, however, characterized by more negative assessments of immigrants and a slightly higher level of political dissatisfaction. Unemployment rates vary from a low of approximately 3.6% in the Netherlands (1999) to 12% in France (1996). Foreign population as a share of national population also varies significantly from 1% in Italy (1987) to over 9% in Austria (1999).¹⁸

Statistical models

In order to assess the impact of diverse individual and national characteristics on the probability of support for the extreme right, we estimate a series of fixed-effects generalized linear models. This approach, which includes country-specific dummy variables to control for national context, offers a convenient way to address variation in individual-level determinants of the extreme right vote across countries. It does so, however, at the expense of information about national-level variation, which we address by incorporating country-level, contextual variables in joint individual and national-level models.¹⁹ Accordingly, we first estimate simple socioeconomic models of right party vote using pooled individual-level EB data. We then add attitudinal measures to gain a greater understanding of the individual-level determinants of the extreme right vote. A second set of models, which incorporates national-level data, is then estimated to examine how aggregate-level economic and political conditions affect voting for the extreme right.

Since our dependent variable is dichotomous, we employ probit analysis, an appropriate maximum likelihood technique.²⁰ We present coefficient estimates for models estimating the effect of various independent variables on the probability of supporting a party of the extreme right. Positive coefficients indicate an increase in the probability of support for the extreme right while negative figures denote a decreased probability.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents our analysis of the impact of individual-level characteristics on the probability of support for extreme right parties. Model 1 includes demographic and socioeconomic variables; Model 2 adds attitudinal measures; and Model 3 examines attitudes toward immigration in greater detail, for the seven countries with established extreme right parties and the EU 15, respectively. Findings largely affirm expectations with a few significant exceptions. Age, gender, and education are associated with the extreme right vote as expected. Negative signs on these coefficients indicate that older, female, and highly educated voters are less inclined to favor the extreme right. In other words, the electoral base of the extreme right, in the aggregate, is



Table 3 Effects of individual-level variables on extreme right vote: pooled analysis

	<i>Seven-country models</i>			<i>15-country models</i>		
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Age	-0.005*** [0.001]	-0.006*** [0.001]	-0.007*** [0.001]	-0.003*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]
Gender	-0.223*** [0.038]	-0.256*** [0.041]	-0.266*** [0.045]	-0.166*** [0.033]	-0.192*** [0.035]	-0.201*** [0.039]
Education	-0.106*** [0.029]	-0.060* [0.031]	-0.100*** [0.033]	-0.004 [0.023]	0.052** [0.025]	0.02 [0.027]
Income	-0.029 [0.018]	-0.01 [0.020]	-0.011 [0.021]	-0.037** [0.016]	-0.021 [0.017]	-0.023 [0.018]
Manual	0.032 [0.045]	-0.038 [0.048]	-0.057 [0.052]	0.058 [0.038]	0.013 [0.041]	-0.002 [0.044]
Professional	-0.144*** [0.053]	-0.155*** [0.057]	-0.163*** [0.062]	-0.085* [0.044]	-0.096** [0.048]	-0.087* [0.052]
Unemployed	0.178** [0.073]	0.092 [0.080]	0.068 [0.087]	0.09 [0.063]	0.002 [0.070]	-0.008 [0.076]
Self-employed	0.174*** [0.067]	0.131* [0.072]	0.131* [0.078]	0.101* [0.054]	0.088 [0.058]	0.066 [0.063]
Dissatisfied		0.551*** [0.042]	0.572*** [0.045]		0.476*** [0.034]	0.511*** [0.037]
Too many		0.495*** [0.034]			0.440*** [0.028]	
Reduce education			0.287*** [0.049]			0.231*** [0.040]
Abuse welfare			0.310*** [0.055]			0.266*** [0.045]
↑ Unemployment			0.200*** [0.051]			0.149*** [0.043]
↑ Crime/delinquency			0.216*** [0.049]			0.230*** [0.041]
Belgium	0.216*** [0.069]	0.184** [0.074]	0.194** [0.078]			
Denmark	0.229*** [0.063]	0.424*** [0.070]	0.429*** [0.073]			
Germany	-0.353*** [0.066]	-0.372*** [0.073]	-0.291*** [0.077]			
Italy	0.613*** [0.063]	0.653*** [0.068]	0.749*** [0.075]			
Netherlands	-0.778*** [0.100]	-0.681*** [0.110]	-0.680*** [0.122]			
Austria	0.715*** [0.068]	0.947*** [0.076]	0.885*** [0.084]			
Constant	-1.078*** [0.118]	-2.723*** [0.160]	-1.952*** [0.147]	-1.580*** [0.092]	-2.978*** [0.125]	-2.296*** [0.116]



Table 3 (continued)

	Seven-country models			15-country models		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Observations	15113	14285	11819	26607	24930	20470
Log-Lik (Intercept)	-3187.3	-3037.38	-2629.1	-3617.67	-3442.61	-2981
Log-Lik (Full Model)	-2826.61	-2471.17	-2127.88	-3584.61	-3140.89	-2697.79
McFadden's R^2 :	0.113	0.186	0.191	0.009	0.088	0.095

Standard errors in brackets.

*Significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 1%.

composed largely of the young, males, and the less educated in the seven countries having politically relevant parties. The effects of education are less clear in the broader context of the EU for reasons we are unable to identify. Perhaps the purported link between education and tolerance is less prevalent in the absence of an explicit anti-system party.

Voters employed in professional or relatively skilled occupations are disinclined to support the extreme right as predicted. Although less significant in the broader EU context, the negative sign on the professional variable indicates a notable decline in the probability that workers employed in professional or managerial occupations prefer parties of the extreme right. Self-employed workers, for their part, are more inclined to favor the extreme right as has been shown elsewhere (Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; see Ignazi, 2003 for a review of country-specific analyses).

The effects of personal unemployment or temporary job loss, on the other hand, have the expected sign but are not related to support for the extreme right in a systematic way. Nor are manual workers inclined to favor the far right. These results are inconsistent with most narratives about the social groups providing the lions' share of ERP voters. Manual workers, a prominent right wing constituency in other studies (Betz, 1994; Mayer, 1999; Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; Ignazi, 2003), appear no more inclined than non-manual workers to favor the extreme right in our analysis. While surprising, this finding is consistent with the (admittedly *post hoc*) notion that manual workers are less willing to abandon the left or center left than typical accounts suggest.²¹ While we cannot satisfactorily explain this with our data, there are a number of plausible lines of interpretation that invite additional analysis. Manual workers may find the programs and rhetoric of the extreme right appealing but not view these parties as electorally viable or credible as governing parties. Manual workers may trust traditional left parties to address questions of unemployment and economic performance more effectively than the extreme right. In



this view, voting for the extreme right may be a luxury that can be enjoyed during good times, but is too risky in bad times. Further evidence on these matters is presented below when we look at national unemployment levels (see Table 5).

The effects of political dissatisfaction and anti-immigrant attitudes are in line with extant work and expectations (Knigge, 1998; Lubbers *et al.*, 2002). Both are strongly associated with support for the extreme right. Moreover, our more extensive examination of anti-immigrant sentiment in Model 3 suggests that support for the extreme right is not simply the result of a blanket reaction to immigrant numbers, but reflects concern over the social and policy consequences of immigration. These prospective extreme right voters express a host of imagined or real grievances, blaming migrants for perceived reductions in the quality of children's education, abuse of the welfare system, increases in unemployment, and rises in crime, violence, and delinquency. That attitudes toward immigrants are rooted in substantive policy concerns, however colored by more general anti-immigrant prejudice, suggests possible strategies that governments or mainstream parties might pursue to undercut support for the extreme right. How malleable perceptions of connections between immigration and particular social problems are remains to be shown.

To convey a more intuitive overview of the probit coefficients in Table 3, we calculate the predicted probability of an extreme right vote in the seven-country analysis across varying levels of significant independent variables.²² The exercise entails modifying the levels of variables of interest and assessing how these changes affect the predicted probability of voting for the extreme right. We present predicted probabilities for Model 2 under a number of relevant scenarios in Table 4 below. The 'baseline' scenario summarizes the predicted probability of voting for the extreme right with variables in Model 2 set at their means.²³ Looking across the table, columns summarize the impact of the given attributes with other variables in the model held at their means. 'Female', for example, presents the predicted probability that women in the seven-country model vote extreme right. Moving down the column presents the result by country. For example, while men (on average) in Germany are likely to vote *Republikaner* with a predicted probability of 1.4, highly educated Germans are likely to do so with a probability of only 0.9. The corresponding seven-country 'average' suggests that, collectively, men are likely to support extreme right parties with a probability of roughly 5% while women are less likely to do so, with a predicted probability of only ~3%.

Political dissatisfaction and anti-immigrant sentiment offer greater substantive insight into support for the extreme right than strictly demographic or socioeconomic characteristics. An Austrian voter dissatisfied with the political system is much more inclined to vote for the FPÖ (predicted probability of 25%) than an 'average' Austrian voter (corresponding figure ~16%).

Table 4 Predicted probabilities of extreme right party vote: individual characteristics

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Low education</i>	<i>High education</i>	<i>Self-employed</i>	<i>Too many immigrants</i>	<i>Not many immigrants</i>	<i>Politically dissatisfied</i>	<i>Anti-immigrant</i>	
										<i>Scenario 1</i>	<i>Scenario 2</i>
Base	4.09	3.13	5.15	4.55	3.73	6.82	6.70	1.26	7.97	9.03	15.71
Austria	15.8	12.7	18.9	17.4	14.5	18.8	24.8	4.7	25.2	31.0	43.6
Belgium	3.9	2.9	5.0	4.4	3.4	5.0	7.4	0.7	7.6	10.4	17.8
Denmark	6.3	4.8	8.0	7.2	5.7	8.0	11.4	1.4	11.6	15.4	24.7
France	2.5	1.8	3.4	3.0	2.2	3.4	5.2	0.4	5.3	7.5	13.4
Germany	1	0.7	1.4	1.2	0.9	1.4	2.3	0.1	2.3	3.5	6.9
Italy	9.7	7.6	12.0	10.9	8.8	11.9	16.5	2.5	16.8	21.5	32.5
Netherlands	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.6	1.0	0.0	1.1	1.7	3.7

Note: Figures are in percentages. Probabilities are calculated for Model 2 in Table 3 above. Base scenario is weighted average for seven countries included in the analysis. Columns vary specified variable with other variables at their means.



Similarly, a French voter expressing concern over the number of immigrants in France is more than twice as inclined to vote for the FN as an ‘average’ French voter.²⁴

The last two columns of Table 4 present estimates of the combined effects of demographic and attitudinal variables and summarize scenarios most favorable to the extreme right. Scenario 1 examines the predicted probability of supporting the extreme right for male voters with only a primary education who hold anti-immigrant attitudes. Scenario 2 adds political dissatisfaction to the mix. In both situations, the probability of voting for the extreme right increases notably, as we anticipate. While the figures for Austria and Italy are striking, the increase in the probability of extreme right voting under scenario 2 is actually dramatic across the sample. Politically dissatisfied anti-immigrant male voters in the Netherlands are more than nine times as likely to support the CD — or perhaps by extension the *Lijst Pim Fortyn* — than ‘average’ Dutch voters. In the case of Germany, results are almost as pronounced, with support for the REP increasing roughly seven-fold among disaffected, anti-immigrant men.

While these figures should be viewed warily, they illustrate the appeal of the extreme right for various sub-groups of the European electorate. Results, in large part, mirror previous work that roots extreme right support among the marginalized and disaffected. At the same time, even after elements of the extreme right wing electoral base are isolated and considered (or ‘controlled’ for), the success of extreme parties varies dramatically across countries (and over time). Statistically significant coefficients on the country dummy variables in Table 3 reveal that demographic, socioeconomic, and attitudinal characteristics only partially explain the appeal of the extreme right across countries, as well as its apparent increasing support over time.²⁵

To move beyond individual characteristics in gauging the appeal of the extreme right across countries, we turn to national conditions and political context. Our second set of models replaces country dummy variables with measures of national context. We follow standard work on variation in extreme right success by including measures of national unemployment and immigration, reasoning that support for the extreme right is likely to be higher in countries where — real or perceived — labor market competition is salient. We also cursorily address political context by including a measure of past electoral performance. While an indirect measure, the presence and past performance of extreme parties, gauged by vote share in the last national parliamentary election, serves as a proxy for both party characteristics and potential electoral viability.

Table 5a summarizes results for the combined individual and contextual-level models. The first three columns present national-level variables with individual-level socioeconomic (Model 1), attitudinal (Model 2), and immigra-

Table 5 Effects of individual and contextual variables on extreme right vote: (a) Levels and (b) changes

	<i>Seven-country analysis</i>				<i>15-country analysis</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>(a) Levels</i>								
Unemployment (%)	-0.095*** [0.015]	-0.090*** [0.017]	-0.092*** [0.018]	-0.154*** [0.042]	-0.032*** [0.005]	-0.046*** [0.006]	-0.049*** [0.007]	-0.044*** [0.011]
Foreign population (%)	0.093*** [0.035]	0.102*** [0.037]	0.05 [0.041]	-0.302*** [0.104]	-0.047*** [0.007]	-0.069*** [0.008]	-0.066*** [0.009]	-0.052*** [0.019]
Unemployment × foreign population ERP vote share	0.046*** [0.008]	0.044*** [0.009]	0.030*** [0.010]	0.016* [0.008] 0.001 [0.015]	0.063*** [0.002]	0.069*** [0.003]	0.065*** [0.003]	-0.001 [0.002] 0.068*** [0.003]
Age	-0.006*** [0.001]	-0.007*** [0.001]	-0.007*** [0.001]	-0.008*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]	-0.005*** [0.001]	-0.005*** [0.001]
Gender	-0.227*** [0.039]	-0.262*** [0.042]	-0.272*** [0.045]	-0.276*** [0.045]	-0.223*** [0.036]	-0.253*** [0.039]	-0.258*** [0.042]	-0.263*** [0.042]
Education	-0.126*** [0.029]	-0.080** [0.031]	-0.104*** [0.034]	-0.109*** [0.034]	-0.042* [0.025]	0.023 [0.028]	-0.015 [0.030]	-0.012 [0.030]
Income	-0.02 [0.018]	-0.001 [0.020]	-0.005 [0.022]	-0.008 [0.022]	-0.019 [0.017]	-0.002 [0.019]	-0.005 [0.020]	-0.004 [0.020]
Manual	0.041 [0.045]	-0.034 [0.049]	-0.058 [0.052]	-0.057 [0.052]	0.019 [0.041]	-0.038 [0.045]	-0.047 [0.048]	-0.056 [0.048]
Professional	-0.152*** [0.054]	-0.168*** [0.058]	-0.184*** [0.062]	-0.176*** [0.063]	-0.151*** [0.049]	-0.167*** [0.053]	-0.171*** [0.057]	-0.178*** [0.057]
Unemployed	0.189** [0.074]	0.101 [0.081]	0.087 [0.087]	0.084 [0.088]	0.190*** [0.067]	0.111 [0.075]	0.097 [0.081]	0.102 [0.081]
Self-employed	0.184*** [0.068]	0.144** [0.073]	0.142* [0.078]	0.141* [0.078]	0.175*** [0.060]	0.144** [0.066]	0.135* [0.070]	0.145** [0.070]
Dissatisfied		0.564***	0.572***	0.584***		0.543***	0.571***	0.570***



Table 5 (continued)

	<i>Seven-country analysis</i>				<i>15-country analysis</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Too many		[0.042] 0.478*** [0.035]	[0.046]	[0.046]		[0.039] 0.489*** [0.032]	[0.041]	[0.042]
Reduce education			0.268*** [0.050]	0.264*** [0.052]			0.176*** [0.045]	0.211*** [0.046]
Abuse welfare			0.314*** [0.057]	0.303*** [0.057]			0.177*** [0.050]	0.206*** [0.052]
↑ Unemployment			0.205*** [0.052]	0.215*** [0.052]			0.208*** [0.048]	0.219*** [0.048]
↑ Crime/delinquency			0.187*** [0.051]	0.155*** [0.052]			0.228*** [0.045]	0.241*** [0.048]
Constant	-1.110*** [0.301]	-2.802*** [0.342]	-0.970*** [0.348]	0.64 [0.747]	-1.280*** [0.122]	-2.670*** [0.157]	-1.753*** [0.149]	-1.828*** [0.177]
Observations	15113	14285	11819	11819	24997	23411	19121	19121
Log-Lik (Intercept):	-3187.3	-3037.38	-2629.1	-2629.1	-3567.51	-3393.61	-2933.76	-2933.76
Log-Lik (full model):	-2781.4	-2435.5	-2108.99	-2100.84	-3104.94	-2690.49	-2352.1	-2341.98
McFadden's R ² :	0.127	0.198	0.198	0.201	0.13	0.207	0.198	0.202
<i>(b) Changes</i>								
Δ Unemployment (%)	-0.002 [0.001]	-0.003 [0.002]	0.000 [0.002]	0.018*** [0.003]	0.000 [0.001]	-0.001 [0.001]	0.000 [0.001]	0.005** [0.002]
Δ Foreign population	0.013*** [0.002]	0.015*** [0.002]	0.022*** [0.003]	0.032*** [0.003]	0.008*** [0.002]	0.012*** [0.002]	0.016*** [0.002]	0.015*** [0.002]
Δ Unemployment x Δ Foreign population				-0.001*** [0.000]				0.000 [0.000]
ERP vote share	0.044*** [0.002]	0.050*** [0.003]	0.041*** [0.003]	0.027*** [0.004]	0.061*** [0.002]	0.065*** [0.003]	0.063*** [0.003]	0.061*** [0.003]



Table 5 (continued)

	<i>Seven-country analysis</i>				<i>15-country analysis</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Age	-0.005*** [0.001]	-0.005*** [0.001]	-0.006*** [0.001]	-0.007*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]	-0.004*** [0.001]	-0.005*** [0.001]	-0.005*** [0.001]
Gender	-0.231*** [0.037]	-0.252*** [0.040]	-0.276*** [0.044]	-0.282*** [0.044]	-0.219*** [0.036]	-0.244*** [0.039]	-0.251*** [0.042]	-0.258*** [0.042]
Education	-0.099*** [0.027]	-0.031 [0.029]	-0.060* [0.031]	-0.108*** [0.032]	-0.034 [0.026]	0.026 [0.028]	-0.006 [0.030]	0.001 [0.030]
Income	-0.023 [0.018]	-0.005 [0.019]	-0.007 [0.021]	-0.005 [0.021]	-0.022 [0.017]	-0.005 [0.019]	-0.01 [0.020]	-0.009 [0.020]
Manual	0.025 [0.043]	-0.037 [0.047]	-0.061 [0.050]	-0.072 [0.051]	0.001 [0.041]	-0.057 [0.045]	-0.073 [0.048]	-0.076 [0.048]
Professional	-0.161*** [0.051]	-0.170*** [0.055]	-0.165*** [0.060]	-0.142** [0.060]	-0.152*** [0.049]	-0.164*** [0.053]	-0.168*** [0.057]	-0.161*** [0.057]
Unemployed	0.191*** [0.071]	0.095 [0.079]	0.069 [0.085]	0.064 [0.086]	0.165** [0.067]	0.079 [0.075]	0.06 [0.081]	0.063 [0.081]
Self-employed	0.263*** [0.065]	0.208*** [0.069]	0.201*** [0.074]	0.189** [0.075]	0.187*** [0.060]	0.160** [0.065]	0.144** [0.070]	0.154** [0.069]
Dissatisfied		0.540*** [0.039]	0.588*** [0.043]	0.609*** [0.043]		0.515*** [0.038]	0.543*** [0.041]	0.553*** [0.041]
Too many		0.437*** [0.033]				0.483*** [0.032]		
Reduce education			0.208*** [0.048]	0.196*** [0.049]			0.217*** [0.045]	0.224*** [0.046]
Abuse welfare			0.237*** [0.055]	0.231*** [0.055]			0.188*** [0.051]	0.215*** [0.052]
↑ Unemployment			0.209*** [0.050]	0.209*** [0.050]			0.192*** [0.047]	0.208*** [0.048]
↑ Crime/delinquency			0.149***	0.151***			0.254***	0.240***

Table 5 (continued)

	<i>Seven-country analysis</i>				<i>15-country analysis</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Constant	-1.448*** [0.109]	-2.988*** [0.151]	[0.050] -2.318*** [0.150]	[0.051] -2.233*** [0.152]	-1.876*** [0.104]	-3.485*** [0.145]	[0.045] -2.653*** [0.132]	[0.047] -2.768*** [0.144]
Observations	15113	14285	11819	11819	24521	22942	18735	18735
Log-Lik Intercept Only:	-3187.3	-3037.38	-2629.1	-2629.1	-3553.43	-3379.14	-2921.89	-2921.89
Log-Lik Full Model:	-2953.49	-2598.6	-2222.04	-2191.33	-3127.49	-2720.97	-2369.17	-2354.83
McFadden's R2:	0.073	0.144	0.155	0.167	0.12	0.195	0.189	0.194

Standard errors in brackets.

*Significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 1%.



tion measures (Model 3), respectively, for the seven-country analysis; the next three columns present similar estimates for all 15 EU member states. A fourth model includes an interaction term to assess whether the effects of immigration and unemployment are conditional. In both country groups, the substantive effects of individual-level variables remain similar to those discussed above. Contextual variables are, in most cases, statistically significant, but in several instances of unexpected sign.

Surprisingly, the effect of national unemployment on prospective support for the extreme right is negative. These results imply that lower levels of national unemployment foster a favorable electoral context for the far right — the opposite of what one might expect. Knigge (1998) reports a similar finding and suggests that voters may prefer established parties in situations of economic uncertainty. This is indeed a plausible argument, particularly when voters have little basis against which to evaluate populist slogans or promises from the extreme right and may opt for mainstream, anti-incumbent parties instead. At the same time, institutions of social protection may mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment. Swank and Betz (2003), in fact, argue that welfare universalism cushions workers from economic dislocation and thus diminishes the expected link between unemployment and protest politics. Golder (2003) similarly cautions against a straightforward association of unemployment with support for the extreme right, arguing that some minimum immigration threshold in combination with unemployment underlies extreme right support. While our data do not permit us to discriminate among these arguments, they do resonate in light of the strong negative finding reported below.

Higher national levels of foreign population are, in contrast, positively associated with individual support for the extreme right. In the countries where extreme parties are politically viable, a larger share of foreign population appears to spur anti-immigrant sentiment central to extreme right support. In the broader EU context, however, we find the opposite, with the absence of a credible extreme right movement in part at play.

The impact of extreme parties' national political fortunes is less ambiguous. A relatively strong showing at the polls (in the election prior to the survey year), is tied to subsequent prospective support for the extreme right. While hardly surprising, this finding is consistent with arguments emphasizing political opportunity structures and party characteristics. Where extreme parties effectively carve out niches in the political issue space (Kitschelt, 1995) or establish a credible organizational presence (Van der Brug *et al.*, 2000), prospective voters are likely to see such parties as a viable electoral choice.

Table 5b shifts from levels of national unemployment and foreign population to changes. Since individuals may respond to sudden or recent changes rather than fixed levels of unemployment or immigration we examine



these notions as well. Here findings for unemployment, though, for the most part, not statistically significant, are less counter-intuitive. In the interactive model (Model 4), a rise in unemployment and an increase in the number of foreigners are, as one might expect, associated with support for the far right. An increase in the number of foreigners (over the preceding three year period) is also positively associated with support for the far right. Other variables lend themselves to substantive interpretation similar to that noted above.

We gain greater insight into the substantive importance of national and individual level variables by examining the predicted probabilities associated with the estimated models. Table 6a depicts predicted probabilities of support for the extreme right vote under varying assumptions of the level of unemployment and foreign population. Upon inclusion of contextual considerations, effects of individual level characteristics remain similar to those discussed though of distinct magnitude. On balance, including national level context reduces the likelihood of individual support for the extreme right in several countries included in the analysis. While the potential for ecological inference is rife — and indeed figures should be interpreted with care — the data suggest that unemployment dampens individual support for extreme parties, particularly in Austria and Belgium. An increase of 2% in the national unemployment rate (or one s.d. above the mean) results in declines in support for the far right while a slight decrease yields greater support (as noted above). This captures the effect of Austrian unemployment, which is generally lower than other countries in the sample, with significantly greater far right presence. On the other hand, national context appears to contribute strongly to support for the extreme right in Italy, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Further examination of these results is required, yet they do pose an intriguing puzzle regarding the interaction of individual and contextual considerations. Is far right support in Austria, for example, driven primarily by economic and political conditions in comparison to Italy, where perhaps context works in tandem with individual disaffection and general support for the right?

Table 6b presents analogous figures for models employing change in economic conditions and immigration. Again, consideration of both contextual and individual factors reveals a notable decline in support for the extreme right in Austria and Belgium but a pronounced rise in Italy and Denmark.

The inclusion of additional, contextual variables improves the fit of the models but leaves a great deal of cross-country variation unexplained.²⁶ The predicted probabilities offer some insight into support for extreme right parties, affirming that males of low education are the primary support base for the far right. At the same time, the importance of political dissatisfaction and anti-immigrant sentiment should not be minimized, nor should differences in national context be overlooked. National context appears both to ameliorate



Table 6 Predicted probabilities of extreme right vote: individual and contextual variables: (a) Levels and (b) changes

	<i>Base</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>
<i>(a) Levels</i>								
Mean	3.0	0.7	1.9	8.4	2.4	0.8	25.1	0.8
Female	2.7	0.6	1.6	7.3	2.0	0.6	22.8	0.6
Male	3.4	0.9	2.3	9.8	2.9	1.0	27.9	1.0
Low education	2.2	0.5	1.3	6.5	1.7	0.5	20.9	0.5
High education	4.0	1.0	2.6	10.5	3.2	1.1	29.2	1.1
Self-employed	4.5	1.1	2.6	10.6	3.3	1.1	29.5	1.1
Too many immigrants	5.8	1.7	3.9	14.3	4.8	1.7	36.0	1.8
Not many immigrants	0.6	0.1	0.3	2.2	0.4	0.1	9.4	0.1
Politically dissatisfied	6.4	1.8	4.2	15.0	5.1	1.8	37.1	1.9
Anti-immigrant scenario 1	8.1	2.8	6.0	19.6	7.3	2.8	44.1	2.9
Anti-immigrant scenario 2	14.8	5.8	11.3	30.3	13.4	5.9	57.7	6.0
Unemployment: high	2.2	0.4	1.0	5.3	1.4	0.4	18.3	0.4
Unemployment: low	3.9	1.3	3.0	11.8	3.8	1.3	31.7	1.3
Foreign population: high	1.6	1.6	3.6	13.6	4.5	1.6	34.9	1.6
Foreign population: low	5.2	0.3	1.0	5.0	1.3	0.4	17.5	0.4
ERP vote: high	4.5	1.1	2.7	10.8	3.4	1.1	29.9	1.1
ERP vote: low	1.4	0.3	1.0	5.0	1.3	0.3	17.4	0.4
<i>(b) Changes</i>								
Mean	3.3	4.6	2.4	9.7	1.0	1.2	14.0	0.5
Female	3.1	3.9	2.0	8.4	0.8	1.0	12.3	0.4
Male	3.5	5.5	3.0	11.4	1.3	1.6	16.1	0.6
Low education	2.4	3.4	1.7	7.5	0.7	0.9	11.1	0.3
High education	4.2	5.9	3.2	12.1	1.4	1.7	17.0	0.7
Self-employed	4.9	5.9	3.2	12.0	1.4	1.7	16.9	0.7
Too many immigrants	6.0	8.5	4.8	16.3	2.2	2.7	22.2	1.2
Not many immigrants	0.8	1.0	0.4	2.6	0.1	0.2	4.2	0.1
Politically dissatisfied	6.5	9.0	5.2	17.1	2.4	2.9	23.2	1.3
Anti-immigrant scenario 1	8.0	12.4	7.4	22.2	3.7	4.4	29.2	2.0
Anti-immigrant scenario 2	14.1	21.0	13.7	33.9	7.5	8.7	42.1	4.4
Unemployment: high	2.9	5.3	2.8	10.9	1.2	1.5	15.5	0.6
Unemployment: low	3.6	4.0	2.1	8.6	0.8	1.0	12.6	0.4
Foreign population: high	3.3	4.6	2.4	9.7	1.0	1.2	14.0	0.5
Foreign population: low	3.3	4.6	2.4	9.7	1.0	1.2	14.0	0.5
ERP vote: high	4.7	5.6	3.0	11.5	1.3	1.6	16.2	0.6
ERP vote: low	1.6	3.1	1.5	7.0	0.6	0.8	10.4	0.3

Note: Figures are in percentages. Probabilities are calculated for Model 2 in Table 5a and b above. Base scenario is weighted average for 7 countries included in the analysis. Rows vary specified variable with other variables at their means. 'High' and 'low' correspond to one standard deviation above and one below variable mean.



(Austria, Belgium) and exacerbate (Italy, Denmark) incentives for extreme right support, necessitating additional investigation and cross-country study.

Conclusion

The emergence of electorally viable extreme right parties in Western Europe is a striking and dynamic political phenomenon. Our work examines how demographic, socioeconomic, and attitudinal characteristics at the individual level and diverse national contexts channel and shape support for the extreme right. We contribute to a growing body of cross-national empirical work and affirm that young, disaffected men of low education constitute the bulk of extreme right supporters across much of Western Europe. Unlike much previous work, however, we root the key determinants of far right support not in the demographic or socioeconomic characteristics of voters, but rather in political attitudes. Regardless of respondents' gender, education, or standing in the labor market, anti-immigrant sentiment and political disaffection drive support for the extreme right.

At the same time, we find that the prevalence of these attitudes among the electorate only sets the stage for extreme right party success. They are necessary but not sufficient determinants of support for ERPs. Whether or not extreme parties overcome organizational barriers to offer credible voice to voter anxiety depends largely on the confluence of anti-system attitudes and national opportunity structures, which we attempt to capture in our joint individual and national level models. Variation in foreign population appears central to extreme right support across countries, as popular and scholarly accounts often suggest. A relatively large or significantly growing foreign population appears to stimulate support for the extreme right. An effective organizational presence on the part of extreme right parties (as measured by our proxy variable) is also central to the variation and success of the far right. Our results for national economic conditions, gauged by levels and changes in unemployment, are less clear. Far from stirring sentiment for the extreme right, national unemployment is associated with a decline in prospective extreme right support at the individual level. These findings are inconsistent with the dominant analytical and theoretical accounts of the rise of the radical right in Europe and need to be verified and elaborated by additional study. Nevertheless, to retain the idea that economic change, dislocation, and consequent individual economic insecurity are at the heart of extreme right success requires a logically consistent rationale for the peculiar performance of individual and national-level unemployment in our models. Indeed, the ambiguous link between economic adversity and extreme right support affirms the centrality of national political context and party characteristics, as rich and detailed studies by country specialists attest.



Notes

- 1 We use 'extreme right' and 'right wing' interchangeably to refer to parties that evince nationalism, hostility toward democracy (anti-parliamentarism), antipathy toward foreigners and minorities, and support for a strong state — characteristics central to work on the extreme right party family (see Mudde, 1996, 2000; Ignazi, 2003).
- 2 Analysts also note a strong degree of chauvinism, manifest in opposition to European integration, among supporters of extreme right parties (De Master and Le Roy, 2000; McLaren, 2001; Lahav, 2004). We also find a significant link between opposition to the EU and support for ERPs and explore this relationship at greater length in other work. Results are not reported below but are available upon request.
- 3 There is little agreement over the appropriate measure of foreign population (see Knigge, 1998, 260; Lubbers *et al.*, 2002; Golder, 2003; Swank and Betz, 2003) for different measures). We use foreign population, but when we run the analysis using asylum seekers we get roughly similar results.
- 4 Golder argues that populist parties directly appeal to the people for legitimacy and are anti-system in character (2003, 447). Neofascist parties, in contrast, are defined by ideological and programmatic characteristics and appear to be expressive rather than instrumental in their evaluations of unemployment and immigration. See Kitschelt (1995) and Betz (1994) on the importance of this distinction.
- 5 For details consult: http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm.
- 6 There are tradeoffs involved in analyzing EB data rather than the country-specific national election data sets favored by the EREPS project (2001). National election studies typically include larger sample sizes of the national electorate and they target voters' actual decisions to vote before or after specific national elections, rather than during particular survey periods. On the other hand, the EB surveys include attitudinal questions relevant to assessing determinants of vote choice unavailable in national election studies and are also explicitly designed to permit an analysis of appropriately weighted 'European opinion.'
- 7 Similar data for 2003 (EB 59.2) are not yet available at the time of writing.
- 8 Our intention is to limit analysis to countries where extreme right parties present a programmatic ideology and play a recurring, if minor, role in national elections. We exclude Sweden and the New Democracy Party from our analysis given that only two respondents in the EB surveys under review express an intention to support the NyD. It should be noted that the EB surveys likely understate support for the extreme right (or minor parties in general) given the inclusion of catch-all 'other' categories in relevant vote intention and past vote questions. Furthermore, respondents may be reluctant to reveal honestly a preference for the extreme right in face-to-face or even telephone interviews for fear of social opprobrium.
- 9 Excluding countries without significant right-wing parties introduces possible selection bias 'because those countries that have factors discouraging the extreme right vote are systematically under-represented' (Golder, 2003, 434). On the other hand, including countries with no extreme right parties and coding electoral support for these parties as zero 'assumes that factors such as unemployment and immigration have no effect on extreme right support in these countries' (435; cf. Jackman and Volpert, 1996).
- 10 The EB also includes retrospective questions on a respondent's last vote. These are, however, asked less frequently and are available only in the 1988 and 1994 data sets under review.
- 11 See also EREPS project at <http://www.politik.uni-mainz.de/ereps/analysis.htm> for overviews of European extreme right parties and summaries of recent election returns.
- 12 Inclusion of income exacerbates missing data problems as roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ th of respondents fail to provide a response. A separate analysis excluding the income variable shows little substantive change in the results.



- 13 National samples in EB surveys typically over-sample respondents not actively participating in the labor force (students, retirees, temporarily unemployed or not working, and persons responsible for the household). The upshot is a serious missing data problem (~50% of cases) for work based solely on current occupational responses. To reduce missing data, we follow the standard practice of basing occupational or 'socio-professional status' measures on respondents' current and past work experience. See the codebook for EB 41.1 (Reif and Marlier, 1998, 52) for discussion.
- 14 The precise question is: 'On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (OUR COUNTRY)?' We equate the not at all and not very responses to political dissatisfaction while considering fairly and very satisfied responses as affirmative.
- 15 The question is worded, with slight variation, as follows: 'Generally speaking, how do you feel about people living in (OUR COUNTRY) who are [not nationals of the European Community countries/foreigners/minorities]: are there too many, a lot but not too many or not many?'
- 16 Slight variation in question wording suggests caution in interpreting these results. The 1988 EB refers not to immigrants directly but to 'people of another nationality or race.' The 1997 and 2000 surveys refer to opinions about minority groups rather than directly to immigrants.
- 17 Immigration data are from SOPEMI (1992, 2001). For caveats on comparability of immigration figures see SOPEMI (2001, 269–273) and note 3 *supra*. Unemployment figures (as a percentage of civilian labor force) are from OECD (2003).
- 18 Figures correspond to the year prior to the EB survey to minimize simultaneity concerns. We also conduct analysis using various multi-year averages with little substantive difference in results.
- 19 This approach fails to exploit fully the multi-level structure of the data and may yield incorrect standard errors and inflated statistical confidence in our estimated coefficients for the models including national level data (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). The dummy variable approach is, nonetheless, a useful way to capture cross-national variation in the sources of support for the extreme right at the individual level and is employed for ease of implementation and presentation.
- 20 Models are estimated with Stata 8.2's *probit* and *xtprobit* routines. Note that all analysis is based upon appropriate EB national weights.
- 21 Indeed, in a related multinomial analysis, we find strong support for the hypothesis that manual workers are, on average, more inclined to support left than extreme right parties.
- 22 Since *probit* models are non-linear their coefficients are not easily interpreted. To assess the influence of significant variables, we examine how changes in values of our independent variables affect the predicted probability of voting for the extreme right, a typical tactic for evaluating the implications of non-linear regression models. See, for example, Long (1997).
- 23 Although some might object that calculations based upon means of dummy variables are not substantively meaningful, in unreported analysis we find that working with mean values does little to alter the substantive findings and greatly eases presentation.
- 24 Our model 'under-predicts' support for the FN in France and the far right in Belgium, and the Netherlands, although we have no ready explanation — perhaps sample bias or reluctance to express support for the far right are at play.
- 25 Coefficients on time dummy variables (not reported) indicate that support for the extreme right rises over time, relative to 1994 (the omitted category). Results are available upon request.
- 26 The pseudo R^2 measures fall short of the individual characteristics model with country dummy variables but inclusion of contextual variables, nonetheless, does improve the explanatory power of the models.



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Appendix

Roughly 6% of respondents in the EB surveys are prospective extreme right voters in the seven countries central to our analysis. This figure falls to 3.2% of EU voters in the 15-country analysis; see Table A1.

Table A1 Descriptive statistics, 15-country analysis

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of observations</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
ERP voter	40383	0.03	0.18	0	1
Age	54545	44.56	17.26	18	99
Gender	57096	0.52	0.50	0	1
Education	50933	1.91	0.76	1	3
Income	41854	2.54	1.12	1	4
Manual worker	49287	0.34	0.47	0	1
Professional worker	49287	0.26	0.44	0	1
Service worker	46720	0.32	0.47	0	1
Unemployed	56993	0.07	0.25	0	1
Self-employed	56993	0.09	0.29	0	1
Political dissatisfaction	54915	0.44	0.50	0	1
Too many immigrants	53401	2.20	0.72	1	3
Reduce education	51621	0.42	0.49	0	1
Exploit welfare	49649	0.48	0.50	0	1
Increase unemployment	51632	0.54	0.50	0	1
Increase crime/delinquency	52989	0.43	0.49	0	1
Unemployment rate (%)	57119	9.52	4.19	2.30	22.60
Foreign population (%)	53107	5.83	6.05	0.90	36.00
Δ Unemployment rate	57119	-1.11	19.95	-44.23	530.33
Δ Foreign population	48094	7.42	11.71	-13.64	50.00
ERP national vote (%)	57119	3.55	5.86	0	26.90

Source: Authors' calculations from Eurobarometer surveys; SOPEMI (1992, 2001) and OECD (2003).

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