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It's Not About Success. It's About the Message. Elite Messaging and Xenophobic Hate Crimes in the EU

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Abstract

Through the past decade, far-right political parties have skyrocketed in popularity and electoral success across the globe, with an especially pronounced effect seen in Europe. One critical component of far-right political movements is nationalist sentiment, often expressed via racist or xenophobic policies and rhetoric. This paper seeks to investigate how electoral success of far-right political parties and elite messaging via policy stances of these parties impacts rates of xenophobic violence in a country. Using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and hate crime statistics from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), it is shown that electoral success of a far-right political party does not impact rates of ethnically motivated violence, but elite messaging from far-right political parties on immigration policy is associated with an increase in xenophobic hate crimes.

Keywords

far-right politics, hate crimes, group threat theory

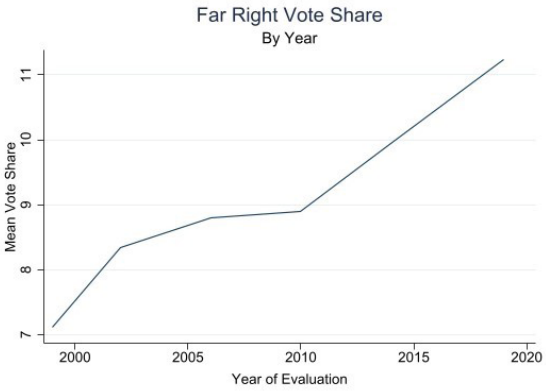
1. Introduction

In July of 2011, Norwegian native Anders Behring Breivik sent a document titled *2083—A European Declaration of Independence* to over one thousand email addresses. Shortly after dispersing his manifesto, Breivik ignited a van-bomb on Oslo Street, on which stood the office of the Norwegian Prime Minister. He then traveled to the island of Utoya with a .233 caliber rifle and over three hundred rounds of ammunition on his person. Upon his arrival, he opened fire on a summer youth camp hosted by the Norwegian Labor Party. Seventy-seven people laid dead as a result of his rampage that day.

Over the course of a series of trials, Breivik made clear the expressly Islamophobic motivation of this act of terror. Approximately seven hundred pages of his original manifesto contained attacks on the Muslim religion, often comparing modern Muslim immigrants to the expanding Ottoman Empire. In letters sent from prison, in his manifesto, and in trial and parole hearings, Breivik has attempted to paint himself as Europe's defender against a growing Islamic attack from within (Richards, 2014). Though few of his victims were Muslim, the attacks were targeted against the Norwegian Labor Party, which is a social-democratic party supporting immigration and multiculturalism. This appears to exemplify Breivik's notion that "traitors," or the rising generation of the Norwegian Labor Party, must be executed, showing the intensity and scope of Breivik's Islamophobic tendencies. Brevik would often begin trial or parole hearings with a Nazi salute and has spent the majority of the last decade in prison reaching out to radical right activists via letter. Most importantly, while Breivik claimed to be acting as a "lone wolf," his manifesto included approximately thirty references to Geert Wilders, leader of the radical right Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV).

Though unaffiliated with a specific political party, Breivik was not acting in a political vacuum. The average vote share for radical right political parties such as the PVV has skyrocketed in recent decades, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Average radical right party vote share in EU member states, 1999-2019 (data from CHES)



These parties often market themselves as heroes in an anti-multicultural revolution, often favoring radical immigration policies, upholding prejudiced rhetoric, and opposing the expansion of rights for minorities. While both the number and political salience of these parties have expanded rapidly in recent decades (mirroring a global expansion of radical

right parties), little work has been done to connect the growing power and prominence of these parties and their platforms to rates of racially or xenophobically motivated hate crimes. Breivik's citation of Geert Wilders in his manifesto is just one example of how the growing political power of the radical right has the ability to influence hate crimes in Europe.

It is this phenomenon that this paper wishes to investigate: how does the political power and policy messaging of radical-right parties influence rates of xenophobically-motivated hate crimes? We will begin by offering background on the growth of the far right in Europe using the prototypic example of the Netherlands. We will then engage with the current literature on the topic, discuss key theories connecting far-right political power and policy messaging to hate crimes, present a quantitative analysis linking the two together, and finally, discuss its results and offer suggestions for further action and investigation.

2. Background

We begin by discussing the political context of Breivik's citations of Geert Wilders and the PVV, which is prototypical of far-right growth in Europe. Over the last decade, Europe has seen a wave of right-wing nationalist parties rise to power. By 2022, right-wing populist parties had increased their overall vote share in at least 11 European democracies, including the Netherlands.

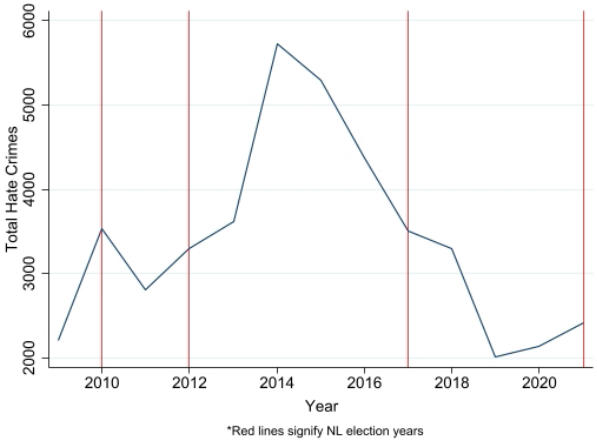
Such a rise in nationalist populism stands in stark contrast to the multicultural and accepting Netherlands of the late 1900s. Waves of migration from Northern Africa and Turkey began in the 1960s, with strong post-war economic revitalization bringing low-wage migrant workers to blossoming manual labor industries (van Amersfoort & Surie, 1987). With such an increase in multiculturalism due to strong economic incentives, the Netherlands quickly became a model of a multicultural nation via the recognition and institutionalization of cultural pluralism. During this era, the Netherlands was internationally recognized as a model of successful integration of immigrants into a traditionally homogenous society. However, the cultural pluralism model quickly became hotly contested with the rise of populist parties in 2002, who blamed the benevolent multiculturalism of the past for the failure of immigrant integration and the supposed collapse of Dutch national identity.

Right-wing populist parties in the Netherlands began their rise to power in the early 2000s with the ascent of the Pim Fortuyn List Party (LPF) to the national stage under the direction of Pim Fortuyn (Koopmans & Muis, 2009). With the specific platform of anti-multiculturalism and pro-nationalist policies, Fortuyn defected from the mainstream Livable Netherlands (LN) party to form the LPF in early 2002. After the shocking and highly publicized assassination of Fortuyn nine days before the 2002 election, LPF won an astounding 17% of the overall electoral seats in the Dutch Parliament. Though the LPF collapsed in 2006 due to lack of sufficient leadership without Fortuyn, the gap in populist party representation was quickly filled by the pre-existing right-wing Forum for Democracy party (FvD) and the newly established Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders.

Though support for populist parties peaked in the 2010 elections, PVV and FvD have maintained elevated levels of support in both national and municipal elections. PVV garnered 16% of the overall vote in the national 2021 elections, a high not seen for a decade of elections. In 2017, the PVV came in second overall in the national elections, holding twenty seats in the 150 seat House of Representatives. Wilders played an essential role in redirecting PVV campaign focus towards nationalistic sentiments, specifically targeting the Dutch national identity via "anti-outsider" rhetoric (Banulescu-Bogdan, 2017), which will be discussed later in this paper.

Hate crimes recorded in the Netherlands skyrocketed between 2009 and 2014, which overlapped with PVV's increase in popularity and the peak in electoral vote share in 2010 (see Figure 2). As PVV's political power declined in the latter part of the decade, hate crimes also declined even as Europe was dealing with a huge influx of migrants. In 2021, when the Netherlands saw another surge in PVV vote share, hate crimes had also increased to nearly 150% of the amount seen in 2019. As seen in Figure 2 below, hate crimes increased immediately before 3 of the 4 most recent national election years in the Netherlands. Though these trends are simply observational, they point to a potential relationship between far-right campaigning in the pre-election years and hate crimes which will be analyzed in this paper.

Figure 2: Total hate crimes in the Netherlands by year (data from OSCE)



3. Literature review: Group Threat Theory

Before we examine the impact of anti-immigrant rhetoric on hate crime rates, it is important to discuss the key concepts that underlie the messaging employed by the far right. These are social idenitity, social categorization, and group threat.

According to the social identity theory developed by Tajfel et al. (1971), people achieve and maintain identities in which they feel a part of a distinctive group. The experiments conducted by Tajfel et al. attempted to explain patterns of social categorization between created in-groups and out-groups when personal hostility towards the out-group was eliminated. They found that in simulated interactions between created in-groups and out-groups, individuals within their own in-groups tended to distribute gains to heighten the power of their own groups. Despite the opportunity for maximum joint profit independent of group affiliation, individuals tended to favor group power over maximum personal profit. Further, as shown by Turner (2010) and corroborated by multiple subsequent studies, humans have a natural tendency to categorize themselves and others as part of a group. This self-categorization as part of an in-group or out-group becomes the basis for various types of social identity.

Both the social identity theory and the social categorization theory build on an earlier theory of group threat. According to the group threat theory, in-group members engage in violent actions in order to protect their community against the growing presence, political power, and proximity of an out-group. Blumer (1958) and Blalock (1967), who published

some of the first works discussing group threat theory, assert that racial prejudices do not stem from preexisting hostility towards a specific racial group, but rather grow because of proximity, size, and power of a racial out-group. The interracial prejudice that results from the power dynamics of racial in-groups and out-groups can in turn lead to hostile actions perpetrated by the racial in-group in an attempt to preserve in-group power and curb out-group power and influence.

Several recent papers provide ample evidence for the application of group threat theory in the context of immigration. Qin-Liang (2020) examines the impact of electoral success of populist parties on the views of immigrants. By pairing European Social Survey data against the populist radical right party (PRRP) index, which is a measure for electoral success of populist parties, Qin-Liang finds that the political rise of PRRPs worsened public opinion towards immigrants and had an indirect effect on migratory policy making. This effect was particularly strong in countries with high levels of political trust, as citizens were more inclined to believe rhetoric of political leaders. Oztig (2022) uses a qualitative method of deconstructing far-right populist speeches to highlight important factors in Islamaphobic rhetoric of populist political parties. They find that rhetoric often includes the categories of "victim, villain, and hero," where Europeans are the victims, Muslims are villains, and populist parties themselves are the heroes. This often includes a simplified version of the world where populist parties paint themselves as protectors. This "protector" concept highlights how right-wing parties employ a sense of threat posed by minority outgroups to maximize voter support. Finally, Rees et al. (2019) attempt to statistically link the increase in hate crimes against refugees to the rise of far-right parties in the 2017 German elections. The authors find the following: "intergroup contact correlated positively with proportion of foreigners, collective deprivation correlated positively with unemployment rates, and both predicted extreme right-wing attitudes" . They find that right-wing electoral support and anti-immigrant hate crimes are both correlated to socio-economic factors in similar ways, and are thus two different forms of expression of right-wing attitudes, showing that people will engage in risky behavior to defend their socio-economic positions. Though this provides an alternative explanation to the findings in this paper, the authors do support the belief that hate crimes and right-wing electoral support are inextricably linked to perception of migrants.

Other applications of group threat theory include works that connect far-right preferences to immigration. Luccassen and Lubbers (2012), for example, sought to explain whether far-right support could be explained by perceived cultural and economic threats posed by immigrants in Europe. Using the first wave of the European Social Survey, the authors find that perceived cultural threats are a stronger predictor or far-right preferences than are perceived economic threats, though findings can vary by country. The authors additionally find that sociocultural specialists are less likely to support the far right than technocrats. The authors cite group threat theory to explain their findings, noting that perceived cultural threat consists largely of the perception that multiple languages, traditions, or religions would increase tensions within the border of their country. Interestingly, the authors find the proportion of Muslims in the country to be unrelated to support for the far right; in fact, countries with smaller proportions of Muslims in the country had higher rates of far-right support than countries with higher proportions of Muslims. Davis and Deole (2017), in turn, find that the immigrant proportion of the population in a country is positively and significantly correlated with the probability that any given individual would vote for a far-right

party in an upcoming election, especially for individuals living in collectivist cultures. Using seven waves of the European Social Survey, Davis and Deole theorize that rapid immigration increases far-right party support and, therefore, the political power of the far-right.

Finally, Cochrane and Nevitte (2014) draw the unique conclusion that feelings of group threat can be activated by scapegoating, specifically by far-right rhetorical shifting of blame for harsh economic conditions to immigrant populations. Using cross-sectional, cross-time, and cross-level analytical models, the authors find that higher unemployment levels predict higher acceptance of anti-immigrant rhetoric of the far right; therefore, economic threats and the presence of the far right appear to interact to promote anti-immigrant sentiment.

It is important to note that the existing literature is, by and large, a literature of perception and not action. Nearly all of the cited studies connect far-right political movements, socioeconomic factors, and anti-immigrant rhetoric to perceptions of immigration or perceived levels of threat. In this way, this paper will deviate from the current literature, as our key dependent variable is xenophobically motivated hate crimes rather than perception of immigrants. Secondly, while some studies do focus on hate crimes as a dependent variable, none of them consider the growing influence of the far-right as a contributing factor. For example, using a multivariate state-level model of quantitative analysis, Stacy et al. (2011) note that demographic changes in the Hispanic population in the United States are positively correlated to hate crimes against members of the Hispanic community, yet they do not discuss the impact of a changing political landscape in the United States during that period. In contrast to past studies, this paper seeks to examine the direct link between interethnic violence and far-right power and platforms instead of connecting such violence to perceptions.

Because many of the aforementioned studies link hate crimes to growing numbers of immigrants, the quantitative analysis in the following section controls for year-to-year changes in immigrant population size, showing that the impact of the far right on hate crime rates remains substantive and significant. Similarly, studies often correlate changes in the unemployment rate with hate crimes against immigrants due to the popular sentiment that immigrants are the cause of the shifting economic landscape. Again, the fixed effects model used in the analysis below controls against annual shifts in the unemployment rate, though general economic concerns could still potentially contribute to hate crime occurrence. The overall findings confirm the prediction that follows from the group threat theory that far-right political activity increases xenophobic violence.

4. Study Design

4.1. Independent Variables

The impact of xenophobic elite messaging and the increasing popularity of far-right political parties are best explained by the group threat theory discussed in the previous section. On that theory, members of an ethnic or racial in-group are expected to protect their relative political power or group power against a growing out-group. In order for that to happen, however, members of the in-group need to have a sense of growing power of and/or threat posed by the out-group, and the far-right rhetoric containing xenophobic messages serves to activate a sense of threat due to a growing out group.

Our first independent variable is the growing political power of far-right parties, which we operationalize in further analysis as vote share. Melzer and Serafin (2013) define

far-right extremism as an ideology revolving around the idea of the mythical homogenous nation. This ideology tends to emphasize populist ultra-nationalist tendencies that reject multiculturalism in favor of universalism. Due to these ideological sentiments, far-right parties often define criteria for exclusion from the homogenous nation, often on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, or nationality. As a result, far-right parties often favor radically restrictive immigration platforms that oppose nearly all immigration, especially of religiously or ethnically heterogeneous individuals.

When giving speeches and campaigning, a party stance favoring restrictions on immigration is often conveyed to constituents via xenophobic rhetoric in efforts to demonstrate the need for restrictive immigration. Ellemers et al. (1997) note that this rhetoric is a style of political communication that simultaneously raises the salience of ethnicity while devaluing the worth of ethnicity to society, in alignment with ideals of the "ideal homogenous nation." The Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands, led by Geert Wilders and classified as a far-right party, exemplifies the use of anti-immigrant rhetoric in conveying the party platform. The PVV touts an anti-immigrant, full assimilation platform and often utilizes fear-inducing rhetoric which devalues the worth of ethnicity to garner voter support. Showing a pattern of anti-immigrant, fear-inducing rhetoric of the PVV, Geert Wilders has stated the following in various contexts across key years of his campaigning and rise to power:

> I am in favor of closing the borders for family reunion of non-Western, Islamic immigrants. Ninety-nine percent of those people do not add anything. They only bring us misery. (Geert Wilders, Business Magazine 'Zoete', June/July 2006)

> Are you aware of the fact that the enormous growth of the Islamisation and the Muslim population in Europe will have enormous consequences for our education, housing, social security and welfare state, labor market and foreign policy? (Press release PVV on Parliamentarian questions from PVV MPs Geert Wilders and Sietse Fritsma, 10 August 2009)

> The first Islamic invasion was, after the conquest of Spain, Portugal, and the south of France, stopped at Poitiers in the year 732. The second invasion attempt by Ottoman Turks was defeated at the gates of Vienna, where they thankfully were slaughtered in 1683… the number of Muslims in every European country is getting more than worrisome. The PVV will resist with all its might against this third Islamic invasion attempt. (Geert Wilders on GeenStijl website, 6 February 2007)

This rhetoric confirms the findings of Oztig (2022) that far-right elites paint minorities or immigrants as "villains" while describing themselves as prototypic in-group "heroes," thus appealing to the sense of in-group membership among primary constituents. Additionally, each of these quotes displays one of two key elements of far-right policy platforms that ignite a feeling of threat: a sense of the growing presence of immigrants and a sense of fear of the growth of the presence of immigrants. This fearful rhetoric and sense of growing proximity of immigrants or ethnic minorities sparks a feeling of danger on the part of the in-group and triggers a sense of loss of group power of the in-group.

Here, it is key to note how different kinds of party platforms and associated elite messaging may impact violence. Far-right parties may simultaneously message for restrictive immigration policies and assimilatory polities. Rather than preserving in-group power via violent acts against out-group members, assimilation-positive messaging preserves in-group

power by incorporating out-group members into the in-group. While the same party may hold both immigration-restrictive and assimilation-positive policy platforms, and may message both simultaneously, the reception of the message has opposite effects. Immigration-restrictive platforms ignite the sense of threat by signaling the growth of an out-group. Assimilation-positive messaging rectifies the growth of the out-group by promoting assimilation into the in-group, thus avoiding the need for violence. We have selected immigration-restrictive policy platforms as a second independent variable instead of assimilation-promoting policy, as it will likely ignite sentiments of threat while assimilation promoting policies may mitigate them.

Lastly, we also note the alternative explanation of vote share as a potential moderating mechanism rather than a measure of electoral success. Rather than its own independent variable, the elite messaging inciting feelings of group threat may result in further far-right support as an indicator of public agreement with xenophobic ideology. Under this explanation, as far-right parties increase their xenophobic messaging via xenophobic platforms, displayed to the public by rhetoric, people may express their risk-taking behavior by voting for far-right parties. In this manner, people respond to feelings of threat via voting for far-right parties, which then increases the propensity to commit race-based violence due to further support for xenophobic mentalities. In this study, we recognize that race-based motivation is not the only reason for electoral support of far-right parties. Economic factors, sentiments of nationalism at large, and anti-establishment mentalities also promote far-right vote share. Because it was difficult to identify the vote share of far-right parties expressly motivated by xenophobic mentalities, we have elected to use vote share as an independent variable rather than a moderating variable.

4.2. Dependent variable

As noted in the literature, there are several ways in which group threat theory may manifest itself. According to the prospect theory, for example, people will engage in riskier behavior to avoid losses than to protect potential gains (Quick et al., 2015). These "risky actions" may take a variety of forms, including online hate speech, protests, as violent action towards out-group members. In this paper, we have selected hate crimes as the dependent variable due to the express nature of the bias motivation.

Hate crimes differ from other potential dependent variables, such as hate speech and protests against minority groups, because, by definition, they must involve an express bias motivation in conjunction with a criminal offense. Hate speech and protests are not legally defined in this manner, and as such, the bias motivation of these actions may not always be clear. However, due to the legal definition of hate crimes, they are a clearly measured extreme manifestation of biased action against out-groups. In this way, hate crimes can be described as feelings of threat manifesting themselves as bias-motivated criminal action. By including the key characteristic of bias motivated criminal action, we can further differentiate hate crimes with a xenophobic motivation from hate crimes with other biased motivations. For these reasons, we have elected to use hate crimes as a measure of the real-world violent implications of group threat and prospect theories ignited by party platform messaging.

4.3. Predictions

We theorize that increasing political influence of far-right parties draws greater awareness to xenophobic immigration policies. Restrictive immigration policies often invoke rhetoric that claims growing power, proximity, or threat of an out-group, which incites

a feeling of fear or threat in the in-group constituents. Acting to avert political losses, in-group members then act violently against out-group members with express bias motivated by the aforementioned fear or threat. Therefore, growing far-right power and prominence of xenophobic immigration platforms increase the levels of hate crime in a country. In more specific term, we expect the following to be true:

> *Hypothesis 1:* ***Higher levels of electoral success of far-right political parties increase rates of ethnically motivated violence.***
>
> *Hypothesis 2a:* ***More exclusionary policy stances on immigration increase levels of ethnically motivated violence.***
>
> *Hypothesis 2b:* ***Higher salience of immigration policy in party platforms increases levels of ethnically motivated violence.***

4.4. Data and methods

Our data is drawn from two primary sources: the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the hate crime database from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). An overview of CHES survey design and OSCE methodology is outlined below, but the descriptions of the specific variables used in analysis can be found in Table 1a in the Appendix.

CHES provides information on individual parties throughout the EU with respect to party ideology and stances on key policy issues, including EU integration, immigration, and multiculturalism. The survey also allows for party classification on a general left-right scale, economic left-right scale, and social left-right scale, as well as includes a specific measure for classification of each party into one of eleven general party families (as listed in the left column of Appendix, Table 1a). Classification of party family was derived from the Hix and Lord (1997) classification of parties in Europe, which defined the general policy positions of each of the eleven family types and outlined examples of categorizing parties into the general families. The survey was launched in six waves: 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2019. Over the two decades of survey administration, several variables were added, including measures for anti-elite and anti-Islam rhetoric. Additionally, the overall number of recognized national parties grew throughout the EU in that time frame from 143 to 277. Due to the nature of survey data collection, information was retrieved about parties during the waves of launch pertaining to the last election in which the party participated. Therefore, units of analysis are party-country-year units.

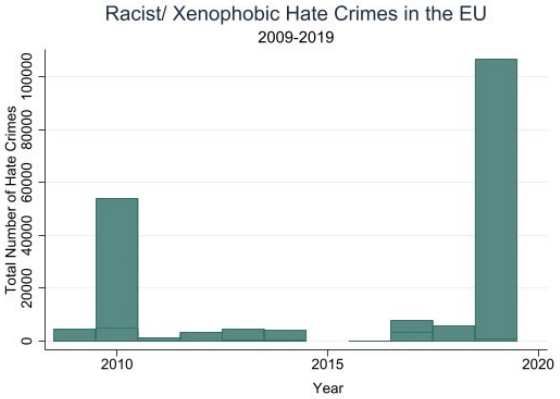
The OSCE office mission statement is outlined as follows: "[d]ata collection is the first step in efforts to address hate crime and allows for targeted policies and customized support for victims." OSCE largely accomplishes this mission by compiling statistics on hate crime across the EU and by encouraging member states to increase data collection efforts, as well as asking for further legislative efforts to combat hate crimes. OSCE thus has compiled a database in which one can view a country's statistics on hate crimes in a given year from 2009-2019. OSCE also identifies the motivation of the hate crime and organizes hate crimes by motivation.

We began by using the six-wave data set from CHES. Using STATA, we inserted a variable measuring the total number of hate crimes motivated by xenophobia or racism as categorized by OSCE. We then proceeded by using the information from OSCE to insert the total number of hate crimes by country and year. While the CHES survey was adminis-

tered in six waves over six years, the survey included a variable for the most recent election year prior to the year in which the survey was launched. As such, we used the variable for the most recent election year as the year of reference for inputting total hate crimes by year and country rather than the year of survey wave.

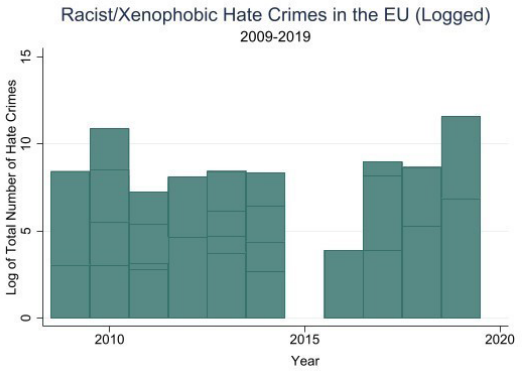
Visualization of total hate crimes across the EU showed that there were several significant outliers due to varying comprehensiveness of data collection across countries.

Figure 3. Distribution of hate crimes in the EU by year, 2009-2019 (Pre-Normalization)



To normalize outliers and create a manageable distribution, the main outcome variable in analysis is comprised of the natural log of hate crimes. Normalizing via logging the variable created a more normalized distribution, as shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Normalization of hate crimes distribution in the EU, 2009-2019



We proceeded with analysis by first limiting the sample parameters to include only radical right parties. Power analysis of preliminary models exclusively considering radical right parties showed that the N-size was too small for our initial models to hold statistical power. We discovered that including parties that (more moderately) mirrored party stances of far-right parties increased our N-size enough for the inclusion of our key variables to

hold statistical power. This step seemed justified as conservative parties may also employ similar rhetoric as far-right parties, thus activating the same mechanisms of fear and group threat that trigger hate crimes against out-group members. Because the inclusion of conservative parties in statistical modeling did not violate our theoretical approach and proved to be critical in increasing the statistical power of our models, we elected to include both radical right and conservative parties in our analysis.

5. Results

Preliminary analyses showed that vote share has no impact on hate crimes in a country (Table 1: Model 1). Meanwhile, initial analysis of immigration policy stances showed that as the immigration policy stance becomes more restrictive, hate crimes committed against minority groups are predicted to increase (Table 1: Model 2). When considering both factors in the same model, accounting for a party's vote share increased both the substantive and statistical significance of immigration policy stance (Table 1: Model 3).

Model Four intends to investigate a key potential confounder in our analysis: stance on multiculturalism. Though stance on multiculturalism and stance on immigration tend to be correlated in a positive direction, they have opposite effects on predicting the rate of hate crimes, as demonstrated in Model Four (Table 1). Far right and conservative parties may employ both types of messaging, so it was therefore critical to control the potential effects of this secondary type of messaging. When controlling for the effects of party support for assimilation, we find that stance on immigration retains its strong significance but increases somewhat in terms of substantive effects. This likely accounts for the possibility that some elite messaging towards assimilation and multiculturalism does not necessarily incite fear of the out-group, as immigration policy often does, but rather invokes a feeling that immigrants should become part of the in-group by cultural, religious, and linguistic immersion.

Table 1: Impact of vote share and immigration policy messaging of radical right and conservative political parties on hate crimes (logged)

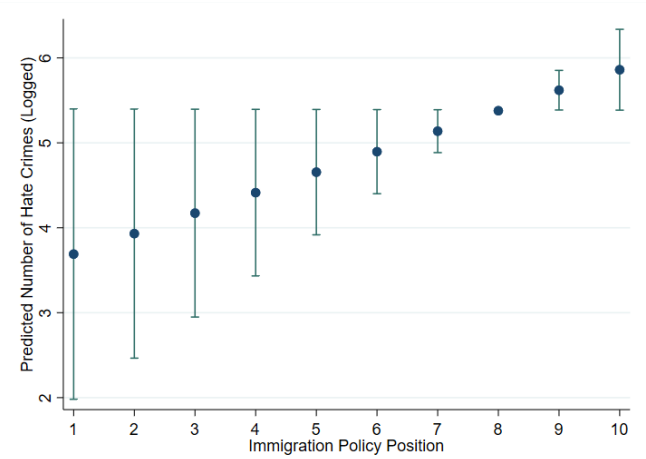
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5+
Stance on immigration		0.330** (0.129)	0.427*** (0.131)	0.821*** (0.268)	0.241* (0.117)
Vote share	0.0114 (0.0245)		0.0220 (0.0236)	0.0188 (0.0229)	0.00204 (0.0035)
Stance on multiculturalism				-0.427* (0.49)	-0.231* (0.117)
Constant	5.241*** (0.390)	2.708*** (1.029)	1.673 (1.041)	1.955* (1.072)	4.663*** (0.511)
Observations	119	127	119	119	119
R-squared	0.002	0.051	0.079	0.093	0.968

Robust standard errors in parentheses (Models 1-4) | *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
+Model 5 includes fixed effects for time and location. Standard errors are clustered by country.

In Models 1 through 4, our analysis was faced with the possibility for spurious correlation of findings due to lack of controls for country and time specific factors. More specifically, international changes in immigration rate and composition across the EU had the potential to influence rates of hate crimes, vote share of radical right and conservative

parties, and strength of immigration policy stances. Keeping this potential confounding of results in mind, in Model 5 we controlled for potential confounders across countries and time to address issues of spurious correlation. We found that stance on immigration retained its statistical significance when accounting for stance on multiculturalism within the party, vote share of the party, country, and time, though the effects of immigration policy decreased somewhat in terms of substantive effects. Vote share of the party remained insignificant across all models. The effects of immigration policy on hate crimes with the factors included in Model 5 (Table 1) are displayed in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Predictive effects of immigration policy stance on hate crimes



The effects of immigration policy position on inciting hate crimes are most pronounced for the most restrictive of policy platforms. As seen in Figure 4, for parties that hold the most restrictive policy views (approximately 8-10 where 10 is most restrictive), we can observe a significant increase in the predicted number of hate crimes in the country. For far-right and conservative parties that hold more lenient or moderate policy views, we cannot observe a significant difference in terms of hate crimes, largely due to low N-size at these levels, as far-right and conservative parties rarely encourage free immigration. Therefore, the higher the support for immigration restriction is in a far-right or conservative party, the more likely it is that the country in which the party is located will experience higher levels of hate crimes, with effects especially pronounced for the most restrictive party platforms.

Due to the fact that the majority of migrants to Europe are from the Middle East or North Africa, the most applicable anti-immigrant rhetoric is anti-Islam or anti-Muslim rhetoric. Accordingly, CHES provides an additional variable to measure the salience of xenophobic rhetoric in party platforms, and specifically anti-Islamic rhetoric. It should be noted that this variable was launched as a new measure only recenty, in the 2019 iteration of the survey, thus making it difficult to track the impact and/or growth of anti-Islamic rhetoric over time. However, despite this limitation, it is still valuable to consider it given the importance of rhetoric is a key mechanism in conveying party platforms to the general public.

Our initial analysis showed little substantive or statistical significance of effects of anti-Islamic rhetoric on hate crime levels (Table 2: Model 1).

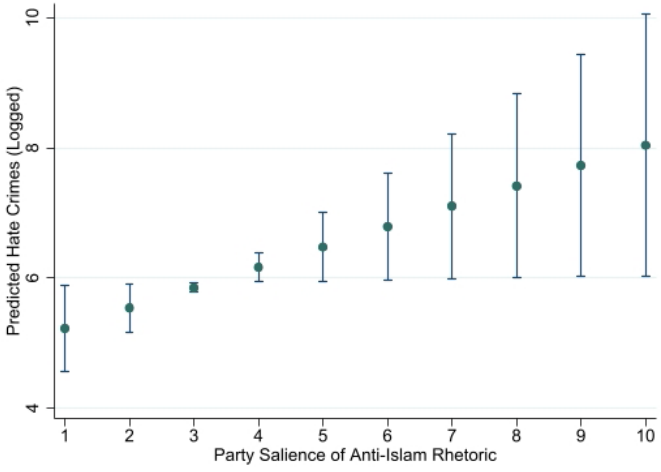
Table 2. Impact of anti-Islamic rhetoric on hate crimes (logged)

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Anti-Islamic rhetoric	0.0133 (0.0625)	0.240* (0.115)	0.313** (0.133)
Immigration policy			-0.932* (0.441)
Stance on multiculturalism		-0.396*** (0.120)	0.438 (0.376)
Constant	5.882*** (0.272)	6.701*** (0.487)	7.136*** (0.558)
Observations **R-squared**	188 0.000	188 0.126	188 0.181

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
+Models Two and Three include fixed effects for family of party classification.

When accounting for a party's stance on multiculturalism and assimilation as well as fixed effects by family classification of the party, anti-Islamic rhetoric begins to show some significant effects in increasing hate crimes in a country (Table 2: Model 2). Specifically controlling for a party's stance on immigration as well as all previous factors shows significant results. Anti-Islamic rhetoric absorbs a large portion of the effects of immigration policy, making the effects of immigration policy only minorly significant, though immigration policy effects appear to change direction of impact. The effects of a party's stance on multiculturalism also become insignificant. With this evidence and hope of further iterations of the survey, we can derive that anti-Islamic rhetoric does indeed function as a means by which immigration policy of a party can increase hate crimes in a country. Effects of these observations (Table 2: Model 3) are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Predictive effects of anti-Islam rhetoric on hate crimes



Analyses included in the appendix (Table 3a and Table 4a) evaluate two additional factors in stance of a party on immigration: salience of immigration topics in party platforms and dissent of the party on immigration topics. Higher salience of immigration topics could potentially activate feelings of threat due to a greater presence of fear-inducing political rhetoric. Initial models showed some significance of salience of immigration policy (Table 3a), but when accounting for country and time fixed effects, the significance of salience of immigration policy dissolves. Dissent of the party on immigration did not impact hate crimes at any level of analysis (Table 4a).

To address the potential for endogeneity due to the observational nature of the survey, we ran several regressions in which we analyzed the impact of hate crime occurrence in a country on key independent variables using fixed effects for year and location as used above. These effects are displayed in Appendix, Table 5a. The primary two independent variables of interest (immigration policy and vote share) were unlinked to hate crime occurrence as dependent variables, though we did observe statistical significance for the impacts of hate crimes on a party's stance on multiculturalism. Seeing as how a party's stance on multiculturalism was a moderator used in the final two models, this generates some concern surrounding the causal nature of our analysis, but we can still determine that there is not endogeneity existing between the first two primary variables of interest (immigration policy and far-right vote share).

6. Discussion

The findings of this analysis proved to be surprising. Our hypotheses and theory would point towards electoral political power and growing voter base for radical parties resulting in higher rates of xenophobically motivated hate crimes. We find that this is not the case. Vote share in the most recent election proved not to influence hate crimes under any model of analysis.

Despite the political power of a party producing insignificant results, the policy stance of the party mattered exceedingly in predicting hate crime rates. This leads to an alarming conclusion: even if a radical right party is not successful at the ballot box, the messages they send and the very fact that their party platform is radical in its approach to immigration are still bound to have an impact on hate crime rates. The more restrictive the immigration policy, the more hate crimes a country is predicted to have, with specific effects highly pronounced for policies that permit few to no immigrants in the country. Additional similar effects can be observed for anti-Islam rhetoric as well, but those effects begin to appear at lower levels of anti-Islam rhetoric than for the ideological scale of immigration policy. Even moderate salience of anti-Islam rhetoric is predicted to increase hate crimes significantly. Therefore, while we observed a significant relationship with immigration policy, we cannot reject the null hypothesis of no relation between the variables for hypotheses 1 or 2b.

The analysis presented above does come with some limitations. First and foremost, most EU countries fail to gather sufficient data for xenophobic hate crimes, with the lack of data gathering especially pronounced in Central and Eastern Europe. Though data gathering efforts have increased substantially in recent years, there are little to no formally collected statistics reporting hate crimes prior to 2009. Current data collection is incomplete and incongruent across Europe. This results in some complications in statistical analysis and, more importantly, is symptomatic of chronic underrepresentation of the actual effects of xenophobia in a society. Additionally, the nonexperimental nature of this analysis prevents true causal conclusions to some extent. However, longitudinal aggregation as well as analysis intended

to normalize outliers account for statistical gapping in the data. Though this data is observational, statistical relationships were strong enough under multiple sets of modeling that we may assume a strong correlation effect between the considered variables. Future studies may examine the specific relationship between anti-Islam rhetoric and hate crimes using further analysis of party rhetoric and anti-Islam salience. Additionally, future studies may compile intra-year statistics on demographic and economic changes within individual countries to account for these variables, as they are heavily emphasized in the existing literature.

This analysis holds many policy implications for modern European democracies. First and foremost, it provides further support to the claims made in previous literature that far-right rhetoric worsens sentiments towards immigrants and leads to violent action against those immigrants or minorities. Additionally, this paper shows the need for a more standardized collection of hate crime statistics across all European democracies. Finally, it shows that violent crime is not necessarily activated by a party's political power, but rather by the existence and perpetration of xenophobic ideals in a society, such as was the case with the atrocities committed by Anders Breivik.

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Appendix

Table 1a. Overview of variables in analysis

Variable	Operationalization
Hate crimes	The total number of xenophobically or racist motivated hate crimes in a country in the given election year, according to the OSCE hate crime database. Hate crimes with other bias motivations, such as political motivations, were not included.
Immigration policy	Position on immigration policy 0 = Strongly favors a liberal policy on immigration; 10 = Strongly favors a restrictive policy on immigration
Vote share	Vote percentage received by the party in the national election most prior to survey year
Multiculturalism	Position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (multiculturalism vs. assimilation). 0 = Strongly favors multiculturalism; 10 = Strongly favors assimilation
Anti-Islam rhetoric	Salience of anti-Islam rhetoric for the party leadership 0 = Not important at all; 10 = Extremely important

Variable	Operationalization
Party family	Classification was initially based on Hix and Lord (1997), except confessional and agrarian parties are placed in separate categories. Family association for parties in Central/Eastern Europe was based initially on Derksen classification (now incorporated in Wikipedia), triangulated by a) membership or affiliation with international and EU party associations, and b) self-identification. The 11 families are listed in Appendix, Table 2a.
Immigration policy salience	Importance/salience of immigration policy. (Not asked in 2014) 0 = Not important at all; 10 = Extremely important
Immigration policy dissent	Degree of dissent on immigration policy (Only asked in 2019) 0 = Party was completely united; 10 = Party was extremely divided.

Table 2a. Average immigration policy stance by party family classification

Party family classification	Average immigration policy stance
Radical Right	9.418961
Conservative	7.000894
Liberal	4.861186
Christian Democrat	6.097821
Socialist	4.399922
Radical Left	2.934299
Green	2.812459
Regionalist	5.159954
Confessional	5.177561
Agrarian/Center	6.186733
No Family	5.144088

Table 3a. Impact of vote share and salience of immigration policy messaging for radical right and onservative political parties on hate crimes (logged)

Variable	Model One	Model Two	Model Three
Salience of immigration policy	0.451*** (0.129)	0.561*** (0.116)	0.0215 (0.0553)
Vote share		0.0184 (0.0325)	0.000397 (0.00171)
Multiculturalism			-0.0281 (0.0458)
Constant	2.111** (0.972)	1.113 (0.924)	5.148*** (0.434)
Observations **R-squared**	73 0.122	68 0.180	68 0.972

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
+Model 3 includes country and time fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by time.

Table 4a. Impact of party dissent on immigration policy messaging for radical right and conservative political parties on hate crimes (logged)

Variable	Model One	Model Two
Party dissent on immigration policy	-0.222 (0.239)	-0.334 (0.235)
Vote share		0.0410 (0.0460)
Multiculturalism		
Constant	6.011*** (0.530)	5.908*** (0.835)
Observations **R-squared**	48 0.015	44 0.056

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5a. Impact of xenophobic hate crimes (logged) on key independent variables

Variable	Immigration Policy	Vote Share	Multiculturalism
Hate crimes (logged)	-0.0459 (0.171)	1.326 (1.190))	-0.360** (0.129)
Constant	9.221*** (0.929)	1.666 (5.322)	11.01*** (0.709)
Observations **R-squared**	127 0.380	119 0.254	127 0.375

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
All models include fixed effects for time and location, with standard errors clustered by country.