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The Rise of the Far Right: Explaining Popularity and Potential Influence

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THE RISE OF THE FAR RIGHT: EXPLAINING POPULARITY AND POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

by

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Introduction

The 2016 election cycle has shown a dramatic radicalization of the right, featuring elements such as out-group demonization, law and order rhetoric, and populist strategies that have not been so prevalent in the US since the rise of Nixon's Silent Majority in the 1970s. President Donald Trump campaigned on a platform of keeping the morally corrupt out of government, insisting that the "swamp" of Washington had been taken over by elitist voices disconnected from middle class interests. He aligned himself wholeheartedly with a familiar American identity constructed by early populist traditions in the conservative party. Donald Trump, according to his campaign, was an ally of the working class masses seeking to make their fortune in the American tradition of hard work, self-discipline, and righteousness. He condemned the lawless foreigners, coming into America and stealing away jobs, driving down the minimum wage, and "shaking down" tax-paying Americans with "outrageously mismanaged" welfare programs. He stood on the side of righteous cops, "the most mistreated people in America," praising the role they play in upholding law and order because they know who the "illegal immigrant gang members are."[1]

The UK has experienced a similar ideological shift, though its emergence has perhaps not been so notoriously outspoken. All the same, the fervent anti-statist and anti-elitist narrative employed by the Leave Campaign is starkly similar to language historically associated with the populist rhetoric of the Far Right. Groups such as the UK Independence Party have been quietly gaining political influence, promoting

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[1] Taken from a speech given to the Major Cities Chiefs Police Association, transcript provided by The Hill staff.

ideals such as immigration crackdowns, zealous patriotism and a refusal to institutionalize multiculturalism.[2]

Traditionally, these sentiments have been most prevalent among extremist parties, operating on the fringes of society and failing to capture majority support. In fact, the median voter theorem would suggest that it is their extremism that prevents them from ever gaining political salience, given that campaigns appealing to voters at the center have the greatest chance of attracting a winning majority. However, moderate conservatives have historically been drawn into support of radicalized political agendas through the use of the very language and political strategies we are seeing in both the UK and the US. These strategies are familiar to the conservative party, as the right has utilized narratives fraught with paranoia and leveled against the ruling elite to promote agendas of increased nationalism, state control, and social conservatism in the past, particularly in times of racial unrest and economic decline.[3] The implementation of these strategies has historically been carefully orchestrated, raising questions about what ideological shifts in the electorate they are meant to capture, and what prompted a return to such strategies in what is undoubtedly, on the part of the US President, a much more blatant form.

One answer to this perplexing question may be the considerable success of the Far Right in elections over the last decade. In 2013, the Sweden Democrats, Far Right party founded in 1988 to promote nationalism and social conservatism, secured two seats in the European Parliament for the first time since their founding,

[2] Taken from the UKIP manifesto, available on ukip.org
[3] See Matthew Lassiter's *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* and Richard Hofstadter's essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" for historical examples of these strategies.

winning 13% of the popular vote and tripling their vote-share since the last election

(Renman 2014). In Italy, the Northern League party has been steadily growing its

base of support, clinching 16-17 percent support in nationwide polls with its anti-

government, anti-cosmopolitan campaign.[4] Although progress toward electoral

representation has been slow for parties in Hungary, the Netherlands, and Denmark,

Shuster (2016) argues that pressure exerted by right-wing party supporters has

shifted central party policy rightward, demanding tighter refugee policies, stronger

borders, and stronger protection in international markets in all three states.

Furthermore, parties such as Alternative for Germany (AfD) and France's National

Front (FN), have gained tangible positions in their respective governments, with AfD

holding seats in 10 of Germany's 16 state parliaments and FN winning 6.8 million

votes out of 25 million in regional elections last year (Shuster 2016). In fact, in 2016

Austria was nearly the first European country to elect a far right party president

since World War II, with Freedom Party candidate Norbert Hofer winning 46.7% of

votes.[5]

Political scientists have attempted to make sense of this rising popularity

through analyses of economic decline, domestic security, and national sovereignty,

each of which will be explored in this account. However, I contend that popularity of

these parties is fundamentally based on the rhetorical strategies that we have seen

employed timelessly by the right. Racial tensions fomented by foreigner

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[4] For further reading on Italy's Nothern League see Paravicini, Guilia. "Italy's far right jolts back from dead." *Politico,* February 3, 2016.

[5] McKenzie, Sheena. "Austria presidential election: Who is Norbert Hofer?" *CNN,* December 4, 2016. http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/02/politics/austrian-election-norbert-hofer-profile/ (accessed April 11, 2017).

demonization, economic frustrations pinned on immigrant workers, and perceived threats to national security posed by increasing globalization and liberalization each induce fear and urgency in frustrated voters. The backlash represented by Far Right popularity can be reduced to carefully manipulated anxieties over loss of power as well as economic and international insecurity. Furthermore, the adoption of this rhetoric by center right parties represents the acknowledgement of these rising tensions and the desire to coopt their influence on a national stage. Rather than the radical right codifying their language to attract moderate conservative voters as we saw in the US during the years of Goldwater and Nixon, what we are seeing now in the ideological shift of the center right is the radicalization of language to appeal to an increasingly anxious electorate.

In order to explore the influence that the Far Right has had on traditional centrist parties, we must first explore their own ideologies and the language they have used to popularize them. This study will draw upon the ideologies of four parties from four separate states at various stages in their organization. The first is Golden Dawn, which has prompted a considerable amount of critical attention in recent years due to its popularity despite a starkly fascist agenda. Next we will analyze Alternative for Germany, a traditionally conservative party that is rapidly becoming more radical as social anxieties increase. Next will be France's National Front, a party that despite becoming ostensibly more centrist since its change in leadership from Jean-Marie Le Pen to daughter Marine Le Pen, has maintained much of its party platform and political agenda. Finally we shall analyze the UK Independence Party, a coalition that has gained considerable influence since its

leadership during the EU referendum. It is useful to understand the various platforms of the Far Right, and their considerable differences, to understand the way the narratives of these parties have been crafted to promote their political agendas.

Drawing on analyses of economic, socio-cultural, and geopolitical trends that have changed the status quo of each of these countries in the post-crisis era, I attempt to elucidate potential factors that have made Far Right narratives of fear, paranoia, and insecurity particularly salient. I connect the consistencies of their respective narratives with prevalent sentiments in the electorate through the analysis of studies relating to out-group hostility and perceived economic and political insecurity. Finally, I analyze the presence of similar rhetorical devices within centrist parties both in the UK and US. These states have been chosen not purely because of the relevance of this analysis given recent political events, but also because they represent hegemonic political actors in the international arena. Both have held positions of military and economic dominance in recent history, and both have taken leadership roles in the development of the modern political order.

The Ideology of the Far Right

The ideology of the far right has eluded clear categorization in the past. Paul Hockenos contends that right wing ideology is based in "simplistic programs and impassioned rhetoric" rather than a consistent shared platform (Hockenos 2010). Furthermore, David Art (2013) emphasizes the "different forms" of far right representation in "various national contexts," contrasting the way different

European parties that claim to be far right represent themselves to the populace. Platforms held by far right parties can and often do vary from one another drastically. For example, although FN and UKIP have been linked repeatedly in the past decade, their economic policies are starkly different, with the UKIP supporting pro-business liberalization reforms and the FN calling for nationalization of French banks and certain industrial sectors. Yet, despite these differences, they share a resolute stance on a few controversial issues that are quickly gaining salience in a globalizing Europe.

Firstly, far right parties typically align themselves with an adherence to traditional Judeo-Christian social norms, such as the importance of upholding morality, industriousness, and social hierarchy. Although submission to authorities imposing discipline is considered a virtue in conservative political theory, the involvement of the state in the private sphere is abhorred and resisted dutifully (Robin 2011). Much like traditional center-right parties, the far right prizes the natural hierarchy of social order and seeks to conserve its course of careful construction against the tide of radical leftism. Because of this, a crucial factor of far right ideology reminiscent of conservatism is an aversion to social deviance, especially in the form of what is perceived as social and religious immorality (Mudde 2014).

Immigration is perhaps the single most centrally discussed issue among emerging far right parties, especially given the influx of immigrants in northern Europe since destabilization in the Middle East brought about by the Arab Spring. Far right parties share varying degrees of nativistism, a term Mudde defines as a

"combination of nationalism and xenophobia, holding that a country should be exclusively inhabited by members of the native group and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation state" (Mudde 2014).

Beyond immigration, the platforms of far right parties begin to vary more dramatically. However, an emphasis on sovereignty and reduced economic interdependence can also be consistently found across far right parties, especially in the months following the succession of Britain from the European Union. UKIP established itself in its own manifesto as being the only party "united in backing a Leave vote in the EU referendum" from the early stages of the campaign. Its ideological and financial contributions to the campaign undoubtedly contributed to the UK's exit from the Union, as well as its vocal condemnation of "endless Brussels-imposed red tape" and policies promoting "amnesty for illegal immigrants."[6] The importance of overturning this last policy is listed in UKIP's 2016 manifesto as being the same priority level as increasing the strictness of laws banning statutory rape and illegal drug use.

However, UKIP is not the only far right party that has protested increasing European integration. The AfD has come out strongly against German involvement in the Eurozone and has repeatedly promised a referendum to reinstate an independent German currency.[7] In fact, the AfD was originally formed in opposition to bailouts of Southern European countries, specifically Greece. As AfD became increasingly radicalized, economist leaders have stepped aside and power has

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[6] Taken from the UKIP manifesto.
[7] "What does Alternative for Germany (AfD) want?" *BBC,* September 5, 2016.

shifted within the party, but economic interests focused on decentralization of European power remain an important draw for AfD's electorate. The FN has also repeatedly claimed to be in favor of leaving the EU and forming a pan-European union that includes Switzerland and Russia.[8] Their highly protectionist economic policy calls for the reinstatement of the Franc as France's currency, as well as the unilateral rejection of the TTIP, a trade partnership between the EU and US.[9] The FN's manifesto also calls for the dissolution of the Schengen Area, a zone instituted by the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 that allows for the free movement of citizens of the European Union throughout its 26 member states. These and other policies laid out in the FN manifesto have been proposed in order to "claw back national sovereignty" in the face of rising European integration.

Although they do not align themselves publicly with the parties mentioned above, there are a number of political parties exhibiting ideological similarities with the far right that have made waves in international headlines in recent years. Although members of the Leave Campaign typically belong to Britain's conservative party, when prompted to speak on issues such as immigration, national sovereignty, and economic interdependence, their views are strikingly similar to those of the UKIP. In the months before the referendum, the party implored voters to "take back control" of British immigration law, as well as empower their country to "dictate trade agreements that put Britain first" and prevent the "independence of Britain"

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[8] "Marine Le Pen vots to put France first at National Front party conference." *DW,* February 5, 2017.
[9] Ibid.

from being "severely compromised," showing stark ideological alignment with the

nationalistic views of the UKIP (Johnson, 2016).

<center>Explanations of the Popularity of the Far Right</center>

The recent success of these parties has been attributed to a number of

different factors. The vast majority of literature on the topic discusses the impact of

economic crisis and socioeconomic insecurity on out-group hostility. Van Assche

agues that economic scarcity tends to worsen the social divide between native

resident and immigrant, prompting conflicts "related to control over economic

resources, superiority, and power" (Van Assche 2016). This is especially true among

the less educated, with research consistently showing anti-immigration sentiment

most prominent among those with the fewest years of formal education (Creighton

2014). A popular means of explaining this phenomenon has been Realistic Group

Conflict Theory, which finds that "intergroup hostility is produced by the existence

of conflicting goals" such as competition in an environment of economic scarcity

(Jackson 1993). O'Connell, as well as other researchers, extend this theory to show

that "racism… as well as discriminatory actions, even 'hate crimes' and ultimately

genocide, are at least partially explicable by dire economic conditions or a collapse

in the material well-being of large sections of society" (O'Connell 2005). During

times of economic scarcity, society is often divided along in-group/out-group

identifications, with the in-group claiming rightful ownership of national resources,

especially in the form of welfare spending by the government. However, the

conceptualization of this theory has had to be dramatically adjusted in the post-

crisis period due to inconsistent findings. For example, some research has found that European far right parties have had the most electoral success in regions enjoying periods of economic stability and growth, particularly in the years following economic recovery (Mudde 2014; Halikiopoulou 2016). Some contend that this is largely attributable to common topics of debate during crisis-period elections. Voters faced with the threat of massive economic losses may be more inclined to elect a party with tangible experience in passing effective economic policy, a characteristic far right parties often do not possess. Research has found political debates dominated by socioeconomic issues tend to garner less support for far right parties than speeches or rallies, given that their narratives tend to focus on "gaining publicity rather than participating in policy-making activities" (Mudde 2014). As economic stability is regained, fears about crime and immigration "crowd out concerns over the economic situation, inflation, and unemployment," prompting a shift of popular opinion to the far right (Mudde 2014).

As white, middle class voters feel increasingly insecure economically, panic about their perceived political dominance increases as well. Studies throughout Europe, and in Greece especially, have found that frustrations with everything from the perceived dominant interests of the political elite to progressive ideologies espoused by liberal media and vocal demands for minority rights have prompted "disillusioned voters who see themselves as the 'losers' of the system" to shift to the far right (Angouri 2014; Mudde 2014). Reynie contends that insecurity over the "loss of economic and cultural influence as globalization prompts a worldwide redistribution of power" is to blame (Reynie 2016). However, uncertainty over their

place in the domestic power structure contribute to this insecurity much more tangibly, creating a particularly ripe environment for populist leaders to manipulate party identification and ideology. It is for this reason that the rhetorical strategies of the right are crucial to understand. Although these fears may have easily discernable origins in society, being content with the understanding that recent increases in xenophobia, fears over national sovereignty, and moral panic are entirely organic or stemming from the reasons listed above misunderstands their emergence and disregards the way these anxieties are manipulated by Far Right rhetoric.

Rhetoric of the Right: analysis and comparison

A close analysis of the speeches and platforms of the parties explored earlier in this study reveals striking similarities in the rhetorical tools used to promote their agenda. Narratives such as populism, nativism, in-group/out-group definition, winner/loser framing, blame of external factors, and condemnation of the political elite all serve to foment and harness the anxieties of what Nixon so saliently called the Silent Majority in the 1970s. In his work, *From the New Deal to the New Right* (2008), Joseph Lowndes describes the makeup of this social group as "middle class racially and economically anxious whites." This formation is striking in modern times as well as a description of the portion of the electorate that feels threatened by the growing demand for minority rights and institutional change. The intention of this study is to analyze the way these issues are framed so that I can isolate the strategies they use. Furthermore, the prevalence of these same rhetorical strategies

among centrist parties in the US and UK suggest the discontent and unrest fomented

by such narratives have been utilized by the Center Right to gain power.

Two particularly prevalent examples of this are Boris Johnson, the UK

conservative politician credited as responsible for the success of the Vote Leave

campaign, and Donald Trump, the US Republican president. The presence of these

rhetorical themes in the speeches of these two actors is particularly significant

because of the roles their nations have historically played in the leadership of global

politics. The presence of xenophobic, nativist, populist, and nationalist rhetoric in

their campaigns suggests that the impact of far right success goes beyond their

relatively negligible electoral representation. Far Right parties are changing the way

issues of sovereignty, nationhood, and globalization are conceptualized by the

electorate even in countries that have traditionally been vocal advocates of

international cooperation and interdependence.

The first of the rhetorical themes I found among these parties is constructed

through the narrative of economic crisis and fears of resource scarcity. Out-group

hostility has distinctly increased in the post-crisis period, as evidenced through the

political prominence of campaigns focused on building walls and cracking down on

immigration policy. However, as we have seen, economic explanations of this

phenomenon fail to explain the timing of this ideological shift, as out-group hostility

has grown in post-crisis recovery and previous economic downturns have not seen

the same racialized backlash in previous administrations. Research has found that

the effect of economic scarcity on far right success cannot be deemed "direct,

unproblematic, and unidirectional" (O'Connell 2005).

Although it is true that economic insecurity and resource scarcity certainly

play a role in increased hostility toward minorities and immigrants, much analysis

has shown these sentiments to be intentionally fostered rather than naturally

occurring. In *Five Views on Multi-Racial Britain,* Stuart Hall demonstrates how racial

tension has been politically constructed in times of deepening economic crisis by the

political elite. He posits that blacks, in the case of Britain in the 1970s and 80s, were

"called upon to bear the brunt" of social unrest during economic scarcity as a way

for the ruling elite to "concentrate the popular mind" against a tangible and

physically distinguishable group that was not those in power (Hall 36). Hall

contends that the method used for this refocusing of underclass discontentment was

the rhetoric of "moral panic," something he describes as when a group is "defined as

a threat to societal values and interests" as a way of "crystallizing popular fears and

anxieties which have a real basis and by providing them with a simple, concrete,

identifiable, simple, social object, seeks to resolve them" (Hall 28).

Significant trends have been observed in the popularity of far right parties in

the aftermath of economic crisis (Halikiopoulou 2015, Englehart 2013, Angouri

2014). This is attributable to the way economic issues are framed within the

narrative of far right parties. Phenomena that bring about major socioeconomic

shifts, such as economic crises or the "effect of globalization or de-industrialization,"

are considered "triggers" for societal unrest (Halikiopoulou 2015). These events

allow the electorate to be divided into winners and losers, the latter being "those

most affected and most likely to express their discontent" by supporting radical

changes proposed by a far right organization (Halikiopoulou 2015). By giving those

who feel they are being wrongfully neglected by the system a clear set of political

competitors, whether they be the ideological elite of the liberal party, immigrant

workers, or racialized out-groups, the Far Right can successfully mobilize political

passions without having to present a clear policy aimed at suturing economic crisis.

This rhetoric has been a consistent feature of Far Right campaigns

throughout Europe. Albrecht Glaser, a leader of AfD, has contended that the "cultural

essence of Islam is irreconcilable with the Western world," echoing his party's

condemnation of the rapid Islamisation of Germany and the cultural threat it

poses.[10] Peter Whittle, a candidate from the UKIP, has contended that the rapid

influx of Middle Eastern immigrants has been the direct cause of "rising house prices

and dropping standards of living" in London.[11] Whatever form this sentiment takes,

studies have shown that these examples of nativism breed "negative outgroup

attitudes and prejudice" as well as a "preference for intergroup dominance, social

hierarchy, and societal inequality" (Van Assche 2016). Xenophobic stances such as

these often take the form of "ethnic scapegoating," blaming national problems on the

presence of foreign inhabitants and culture. This is especially true in Germany,

where one socialist reporter claims that this rhetorical framework is reminiscent of

NAZI Germany, which "served to divert social dissatisfaction against a minority-

then the Jews, now the Muslims- encourage racism and nationalism, and promote

arch-conservative and militarist goals." Lubbers, along with many academics, claims

these "ethnic out-group exclusionistic" tendencies are increasingly the primary

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[10] Schwarz, Peter. "Far Right Alternative for Germany adopts party programme." *World Socialist Web Site,* May 4, 2016.
[11] Quoted in UKIP London Manifesto, 2016.

means of characterizing far right parties despite their political variations according to nationalist priorities (Lubbers 2002).

These themes are woven through the campaign speeches and rhetoric of Donald Trump as well. Trump ran his campaign on an "America First" platform, promising to "secure and defend" the country's borders, "stop the crisis" of immigration, end government corruption, and bring down a political class "that is owned outright by the special interests and lobbyists" (Trump, 2016). Shuster goes so far as to call far right parties Trump's "doppelgangers along the Danube," stating that they are aligned with him "in what they encourage voters to fear," specifically migrants stealing jobs, Muslims threatening culture and security, political correctness threatening freedom of expression, and elite special interests (Shuster 2016). Reynie suggests that "Trumpism" appears to be "an early US manifestation of populism influenced by globalization-era Europe" emphasizing evidence of its "unbridled demagoguery, xenophobia, condemnation of the elite, and stigmatizing rhetoric" as evidence that Trumpism is the "US take on heritage populism" (Reynie 2016). Although these candidates and their respective campaigns do not specifically identify as far right activists, they represent the kind of ideological shift that the emergence of the far right has inspired, perhaps even initiated.

Far right actors often tie the importance of economic stabilization to the larger necessity of reestablishing national sovereignty and showing state strength in international dealings. This can be attributed to the influence that economic stability and prosperity have on the relative geopolitical power of nations. Far right rhetoric expands on the fear of massive economic losses, connecting the precarious

geopolitical position of economically dependent countries in an insecure and competitive international environment. As far right ideologies are ultimately grounded in the politics of right wing conservatism, realism and zero-sum competition are assumed conceptualizations of international power dynamics. Realism is the belief that political actors are constantly conflicting in their efforts to secure power in relation to each other. According to this ideology, because all states exist in an anarchical international system, they protect their own assets and sovereignty by gaining power. Far Right parties operate according to a zero-sum understanding of international cooperation, meaning that the gains of another country directly detract from the potential gains of their own, both in terms of resources and power. These two attributes deeply affect the way concepts of international security are framed by far right parties.

This ideological framework is important because, in an extension of blaming rhetoric, the far right position the current party elite as culpable for the relative loss of power their respective countries have suffered. The first aspect of this rhetorical strategy is the heavy criticism of current party elite, not only problematizing their decision making but also delegitimizing their effectiveness. Most importantly, this strategy does not place the blame on the nation but rather attempts to isolate the current leadership as solely responsible for the loss of international security and rising perception of weakness. In the case of Greece's Golden Dawn, the party used their platform to "express disagreement with the government's decisions" and "project blame onto the political system as a whole" (9). Vasilopoulou argues that Golden Dawn framed the state as "unable to limit the socioeconomic impact of the

crisis on individual citizens," thereby calling into question the legitimacy of their leadership and their agency as government actors (2015). Furthermore, Golden Dawn has labeled the actions of the state as corrupt, deceptive, self-interested, and decadent; engaged in a level of kleptocracy that shames the nation while benefitting the delegitimized state. By positioning the nation as a separate entity from the state, a bloated and corrupt appendage, Golden Dawn is capable of problematizing the leadership without placing any blame their own party or alienating their voters. Petter Whittle of the UKIP shares many of these strategies, such as condemning the "biased media" and the "corrupt political elite."[12]

Johnson similarly places the blame for the vulnerability of Britain (and Europe as a whole) on Brussels without implicating Britain itself. He labels Brussels as distant and ineffectual in addressing the problems of external threats, pointing to their inability to address recent violence as evidence of their illegitimacy. He claims that the "failure" of the European experiment necessitates that Britain "control its own borders" or else face the consequences of an attack similar to that in Paris in November of 2015 (Johnson 2016). Trump, in turn, refers to Washington literally as a "swamp" of corruption and greed that he must drain with the help of the American people, condemning the "cynicism" and "elitism" of America's "failed political establishment" as ineffectual (2016). These anti-statist talking points show tangible alignment of the ideological agenda of center-right mainstream parties and the steadily growing influence of the far right.

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[12] Quoted in UKIP London Manifesto, 2016.

Strath and Wodak (2009) capture the effects of this rhetorical strategy well, asserting that the framing of "major societal crises" like revolutions, wars, and depressions as "condensed events with iconic value... provide discursive foundations for building new (national) identities." By placing blame on a backwards system, the party is able to frame their own potential as leaders in a revolutionary moment, the beginning of a new period unencumbered by the political mistakes of the previous leadership. An example of this is Golden Dawn, who claim to have the "unique mission to lead the nation into a phoenix-like transformation in which it will rise from the ashes of the old degenerate social order" (Vasilopoulou 2015).

Donald Trump in many ways echoes this narrative. Each of his depictions of economic crisis are strategically followed by a structural flaw that could account for it, such as poor trade deals, a stifling tax plan, and government incompetence. The important consistency within this narrative, both among far right leaders and the US republican party president elect, is that of "blaming" rhetoric, a simplistic but carefully constructed use of language that positions the voter as a sympathetic and "righteous victim" that has been wrongfully subjected to distress. Angouri (2014) describes the construction of this narrative as involving "something... seen as being worse for some person or group than it could have been if matters had been handled differently." He tells the American people that the future for the current political structure is dismal, claiming, "it's [going to] get worse and worse" and "you're going to have more World Trade Centers." Here he suggests that the future is not only more economically unstable but also more vulnerable to international

threats under the current political regime. He goes on to claim that "on November 8th" under his own presidency, "America's comeback begins." The similarity of his language and that of Golden Dawn is striking, with Trump also using the same imagery of a betrayed nation "rising up… better and stronger than ever before."

Part of the effectiveness of this disseminated perception of international insecurity is the parallel construction of a narrative that frames the world outside the nation state as dangerous, violent, and terrifying. As Michael Haupl of the Social Democrats party of Austria states, the far right "lives off the emotion of fear, and it's a lot harder to take these fears away than to create them" (Shuster 2015). Many political scientists find that growing fear over terrorism, war, and the breakdown of the current international order already exist (Mudde 2014; Shuster 2015; Ghitis 2015). Shuster argues that in times of political uncertainty, anger and fear for the future are natural and broadly felt emotions as people attempt to "make sense of a crisis that has deeply changed the status quo." However, such fears have undoubtedly been exacerbated as far right parties capitalize on the mobilizing effect of insecurity and fear. Ghitis claims that rising tension and uncertainty over these topics have "given fodder to anti-immigrant politicians" from the far right "eager to talk about an 'Islamic invasion'" (2015). Political Islam is certainly the central mobilizing fear of far right parties in Europe, referred to by the leader of Sweden's Freedom Party as "the fascism of today" (Heinz-Christian Strache 2014).

ISIS has also been a central concern to the campaign of Donald Trump, who has repeatedly made claims to "pursue aggressive joint and coalition military operations to crush and destroy ISIS" (2016). However, Trump has fomented fear

with regards to a number of different issues, including loss of international

hegemony, immigration of dangerous people, and rampant corruption within the

government. On the day Trump launched his campaign he labeled Mexican

immigrants as "people with lots of problems" who are bringing dangers into the

country such as drugs, crime, and rape (2015). Trump's inflated rhetoric here and

elsewhere in his campaign are typical of the fear mongering of the far right, an

accusation left wing parties leveled against the Leave Campaign as well.

Nevertheless, the ability of far right parties to voice the sentiments of the

population, however unfounded they may be, wins over the trust and sympathy of

voters that are disenchanted by the political system. Shuster makes the point that in

times of uncertainty "perception is reality… it hardly matters that such feelings may

not be grounded in fact." The combination of these two narratives, the first

destroying the legitimacy and efficacy of current government structures and the

second warning of the dangers encroaching on the nation state, serve to mobilize

high numbers of passionate and fearful voters.

Although the threat of dangerous immigrants has been an important aspect

of far right campaign platforms, the majority of anti-immigration rhetoric has been

framed according to two of the principles listed above, namely in-group/out-group

distinction and immigrant demonization. Romanticizing the ideological and cultural

alignment of the native "in-group" allows far right parties to frame immigrants as

"other" and "undesirable." For example, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has

campaigned for "building razor-wire fences on the border of Serbia" in the interest

of protecting "Europe's Christian identity" from the newcomers (van Spanje 2011).

Since his push to build a physical barrier between Hungary and Serbia, Orban's

party, Fidesz, has gained considerable popular support. UK conservative party MP

Enoch Powell expressed this sentiment as early as 1968, identifying immigrants as a

separate collective entity capable of "organiz[ing] to consolidate their members, to

agitate and campaign against their fellow citizens" as well as "overawe and

dominate the rest with the legal weapons which the ignorant and the ill-informed

have provided" (van Spanje 2011). In both of these examples immigrants are

referred to not a part of the collective nation state but rather a separate and

unassimilated entity constantly threatening to overpower the natural social order.

Beyond this native-immigrant distinction, far right parties also seek to

demonize immigrant elements in their nation, culturally and criminally. In an

international congress of far right leaders, parties came together to focus on

methods to "protect the national identity in [their] respective countries and co-

operate to win the battle against globalization" (Englehart 2013). At the conference

party leaders discussed the reality of "opening the flood gates of immigration,"

mentioning that the influx of "undesirables," whose "criminal records are unknown"

present a direct threat to the stability and safety of their respective countries

(Englehart 2013).

Trump perpetuates this narrative as well, claiming that among

undocumented immigrants there are "at least 2 million convicted criminal aliens."

He speaks of Muslim immigration like a disease, describing "generation of

radicalism and terrorism spreading and growing within our shores" (Trump 2016).

Mexican immigration, according to Trumpian rhetoric, is more like a wave of

immoral and bloodthirsty thugs, bringing with them "massive crime, and massive drugs -- including a terrible heroin problem." But the threat of immigrants, the far right asserts, is much more profound than simply rising crime rates and increased exposure to terrorism. "What's at stake," one leader of the Swiss People's Party claims, "is your mortal soul." The leaders of the Future of Nationalist Movements conference go on to discuss the cultural threat of "creeping sharia" and "stealth jihad," language coined by the far right to name the gradual takeover of Islamic values in a Christian-dominated, white Europe. Once again, by blaming "other" groups, in this case immigrants, for the denigration and corruption of society, the far right illustrates the frustrations of the voters without isolating or alienating any possible native support.

Finally, the nationalist rhetoric employed by the Far Right has been used to strengthen sentiments of patriotism and anti-globalization. Nationalism is commonly understood in modern political analysis as the prioritization by the state of domestic needs and identity. Helleiner and Pickel expand on this understanding by arguing that although this ideology usually promotes protectionist and exclusionary state policies, if the best course of action for a state is to engage openly in the political or economic interactions of nation states then nationalist policy will reflect that (Helleiner 2005). Although policies relating to state reformation and reimagining of the status quo are not traditionally nationalistic policies, their prioritization in the context of European integration is a nationalist agenda. The use of this rhetoric serves to make the far right palatable to a wider electorate, promoting ideas such as sovereignty to satisfy concerns over relative geopolitical

strength and nationhood to address out-group hostility and racism. Rhetoric relating to "national pride" and "law and order" and "state sovereignty" has echoed across Europe as well as within Donald Trump's campaign. Poland's Law and Justice party took power in 2005 using the same rhetorical strategies that were successful for Trump in 2016, prioritizing claims such as "Poland first" and "law and order" over concrete policy proposals (Hockenos 2010). Golden Dawn's success has been attributed to their ability to provide "an alternative vision for Greece based on national pride and defiant antagonism against the status quo" as well as their promises to cleanse the nation of "enemies both internal (political dissidents) and external (the EU, the IMF, immigrants, and foreigners"(Vasilopoulou 2015). These concepts and the prioritization of the nation and its interests are all key attributes of nationalistic policy and are consistently present in the far right agenda, calling on the restoration of a white, Christian, sovereign nation state.

<p style="text-align:center">Conclusions: The Impact of the Far Right Trend</p>

The potential of the far right has been consistently underestimated in elections across Europe and America. This may be in part because should not be considered a collective political movement, but rather separate political parties pursuing various conservative agendas. Although their rhetorical strategies are nearly identical and are constructed through the influence of the same popular sentiments, they often do not align on economic, political, or even social issues. Some, such as Pia Kjærsgaard of Denmark, combine their xenophobic rhetoric with promises of high welfare spending and state planning, flying in the face of

understandings of the American Right.[13] Furthermore, France's National Front advocates for the privatization of banks and major industries, a stark contrast to the corporatism of Trump's campaign. Parties of the Far Right have advocated starkly different strategies, but each has used the same language to do so.

The narrative of the Far Right appeals to the same base desires in the electorate, such as belonging in the dominant social group or being protected from those with different cultural values or social norms. The efficiency of these narratives to provoke social panic about declining morality, racial tension and national sovereignty has created a new responsiveness in voters typically aligned with centrist parties. As these anxieties, worsened by the vocal organization of their opposition, become more prevalent, they invite the adoption of this same rhetoric by Center Right parties seeking to mobilize the same political passions. The influence of the Far Right, therefore, cannot simply be reduced to their limited electoral success. The success of the narrative they have constructed, despite the different ideological agendas it was used to promote, has prompted a shift not only in the rhetorical strategies of traditionally moderate parties but also in the policies and ideologies they promote, as evidenced by the popularity of Trump's wall and Boris's ideal of "London for the Londoners." As this kind of corrosive and divisive language becomes more salient in mainstream political discourse, it will continue to construct ideologies and value systems in the broader electorate that are predicated on misplaced anxieties and discontentment rather than addressing structural inefficiencies or tangible political solutions.

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[13] Farago, Jason. "Comparative Far Right Politics, US and Europe." *The Guardian,* April 26, 2012.

These sentiments have eluded measurement by traditional polls because they are not captured by the ideological alignment of a voter with a party platform or with the policy promoted by a particular candidate. Although the results of the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump may have come as a surprise to pollsters and mainstream media, they may have been more accurately predicted by a rhetorical analysis of chat rooms and facebook profiles, or perhaps the readership of right wing media outlets such as Breitbart News or the Alternative Right. These sources more accurately predict the social sentiments that are stimulated by the campaigns of the Far Right, sentiments that may go unnoticed by polling sites that attempt to measure political opinions.

So what political and economic impacts can we expect from this ideological shift? The first and most pressing shift to come will be along our national borders. Physical barrier building has been a common campaign promise in a number of countries, representing the level of commitment these parties have to nativist ideals. However, immigration law in general stands to undergo a massive shift in the way it is conceptualized and enforced given the UK's rejection of the Schengen zone and Trump's promise to deport thousands of immigrants. Despite indications over the last several decades that we should expect increased economic and political interconnectedness as globalization becomes more pronounced, this research seems to suggest that the opposite is true. As interconnectedness threatens constructed conceptions of declining cultural and racial homogeneity and national security, we may see increased support of these extreme far right parties. This is especially true now that the two nations that have historically sacrificed the most as hegemons in

the interest of international stability and cooperation are controlled by parties and actors that support and disseminate these perceptions.

Additionally, this trend may indicate the possibility of an impending era of economic closure. Whether this is attributable to the fall of America as a stabilizing force in the international arena or simply the increase of nationalistic preferences due to the sacrifices of interconnectedness in the wake of the economic crisis, it may be too soon to tell. It is sobering, however, to look at the steady increase in protectionist language, especially that coming from Britain and the United States.

Finally, this analysis suggests that the more prominent Far Right rhetoric becomes in political discourse, the more effective it will be in influencing centrist voters. This would indicate that unless this discourse can be deconstructed and the work that its doing be neutralized, we may see an increasingly pronounced radicalization of the Right throughout the international system. It is important that the racist, xenophobic, and isolationist sentiments emerging as a result of these strategies are isolated from the true frustrations of middle class voters. Moreover, it is important that the divisive rhetoric of the Far Right be brought under control before the fear, anger, and hatred that its populism promotes continues to breed radicalism, inequality, and violence.

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