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ILLIBERAL INFLUENCES:  
EXTREME RIGHT-WING SUPPORT AND ITS  
CONSEQUENCES

A dissertation presented for a  
PhD degree  
The University of Mississippi

Jeff Borland

AUGUST 2021

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**Abstract:**

This dissertation studies the recent rise of extreme right-wing parties in the European context and explores their origins of support and consequences of their presence. This project follows the three-paper method, studying the movement from three distinct perspectives: immigration, globalization, and party influence. Using a variety of data, I employ hierarchical modeling to test hypotheses concerning these three areas in which extreme parties have an impact. My hypotheses focus on the relationship changes in the local population and economic conditions have on the support these parties receive, and how these parties modify the behavior of other right-wing parties. My results indicate extreme right-wing party support is influenced by the size of immigrant populations and the level of globalization in a region. I also find extreme right-wing parties are capable of changing the preferences of center-right parties relative to their strength. These results are important to our understanding of extreme right-wing parties, as they demonstrate how they are able to achieve electoral success and their potential to alter the status quo within party systems.

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# INTRODUCTION

This research project studies the recent rise of extreme right-wing parties in the European context. For this project, I chose to follow the three-paper method, studying the movement from three distinct perspectives: immigration, globalization, and party influence. To accomplish this, I have taken an approach to studying each aspect from a perspective which is uncommon in extant literature. I will begin with an introduction that discusses the setting of the papers and my logic for their design. This will be followed by the three papers, and I will tie together my findings in a brief conclusion chapter at the end of the project.

## **Background**

Recently, radical right-wing parties (RRWP) have dramatically increased their presence and influence within democratic nations, especially in the European context. From the success the National Front (FN) had in the 2017 French Presidential elections, to the arrival of the Alternative for Germany party in the Bundestag, to the takeover of the Polish government by the Law-and-Order party, Europe is undergoing an illiberal shift which poses a significant threat to the highly institutionalized democracies that have been established there for decades. The source of these changes, and their impacts, are multifaceted. In this work I explore these aspects of RRWPs and add to the literature concerning RRWPs, authoritarianism, globalization, and party behavior.

Societies are in a constant state of change. People are moving in and out, businesses come and go, political influences are ever changing. Consequently, new challenges emerge that can alter the political landscape of a country, or even a continent. In the immediate aftermath of WWII and the Nazi party, most European publics were rather opposed to any sort of nationalist politics. In an attempt to understand how a people can be captured by such an extremist ideology, many social scientists began to turn their research towards this phenomenon. The first to attempt to explain public support for this authoritarian take over was Adorno et al. (1950). This work established the modern study of authoritarianism and developed the F-scale, a tool for detecting authoritarianism by studying personality traits.

As time progressed, fear of authoritarian political parties waned and public sentiment against immigrants strengthened, opening the door for some fringe right-wing groups to gain some electoral support. Modern RRWPs <sup>1</sup> began to gain electoral support in the late 1970s and early 80s. The first RRWP to gain electoral seats in the national legislature after WWII, was the FN in France, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen (Berenzin, *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times*, 2009). Though, only successful for a short time until the 2000s, the FN confirmed the small, but important, support of RRWPs and opened the door for their own and others' success in the future.

The global economic crisis of 2008 and the anti-government protests in the Middle East and North Africa created a second wave of mass immigration. This wave created a humanitarian

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<sup>1</sup> Modern RRWPs are defined as those which gained electoral support post WWII. Support for RRWPs never truly went away, as much as it was hidden more or less effectively. Many former Nazi's were able to hide out in minor parties such as the FPO of Austria, however they were careful to keep their right-wing agendas fairly close to the vest (Lothar, H, 2003).

crisis within European countries. As millions from neighboring regions poured into Europe, politicians and publics were forced to decide how to react to such a large influx of new immigrants and refugees.

These new arrivals elicited a variety of responses from the people, parties, and rulers of Europe. Some, like Merkel of Germany, met them with open arms. Others, such as Hungary, Macedonia, and Norway, placed walls on their borders to prevent illegal immigration. Austria went as far to erect barriers on its borders with other members of the European Union, a direct violation of the Schengen Area and international asylum law. The impact of these new arrivals, and the impetus for adopting such policies, was a strong rise in support of RRWPs.

As publics began to push back against Centrist government positions, leaders were faced with the choice of supporting liberal institutions, such as asylum laws, or curtailing the influence of extremist parties and enacting policies limiting the rights of migrants. Other examples of illiberal policy choices will be discussed further in Chapter 3. These policy choices continue into the 2020s with immigrants and refugees paying the cost of xenophobic publics and politicians willing to provide them a voice.

At the same time Europe was being hit with waves of immigrants and refugees, another force, economic globalization, was establishing itself on the continent. As the breakup of the Soviet Union created an opportunity for the movement of people in the 1990s, it also created business opportunities for foreign firms. From the perspective of American and European political leaders, this was also an opportunity to expand international trade agreements, providing

better and cheaper goods for their constituents. This shift towards neoliberal economic policies allowed American corporations to increase their presence in European countries, bringing its culture with them.

The appearance of some of these American firms was not always met with as much of a welcoming attitude as many would expect. The arrival of these businesses, such as fast food in France, was, instead, met with quite a bit of hostility. The French even created a word for fast food, *malbouffe*. Though fast food initially arrived in Europe in 1972, it blossomed in the early 1990's, with a bevy of multi-national corporations (MNCs) attempting to enter the market. However, despite the efforts of these firms, many only saw marginal success. Several of these MNCs have made a second attempt to break into the European food market, which will be discussed in the second chapter.

Globalization in general has been met with quite a bit of hostility in recent years. Following the initial wave of expanded trade, many Europeans developed a healthy skepticism of globalization after they discovered many manufacturing jobs were shipped overseas. This, combined with increases in immigration and growing inequality, has led to increased support for anti-globalization and protectionist policies often championed by RRWPs (Burgoon et al., 2017)

## **Focus and Scope**

This project focuses on right-wing attitudes, the foundation of political support, and impact of RRWPs in the European context. It consists of three chapters of interrelated works, each focusing on a different aspect of these concepts. In this work I seek to bring a better

understanding of how changes in European societies have modified the political landscape to favor these parties and the impact these changes have had.

The first chapter in this work centers on the German public and its response to the recent waves of immigrants from outside the European Union. To measure the impact of immigrant population size on nativist attitudes, I use data available from the European Social Survey to construct scales that allow me to gauge changes in public sentiment towards immigrants. This data covers the time period from 2002-2018, which covers the two main waves of immigration Europe has recently experienced.

The German setting of this paper is of particular interest for several reasons. First, Germany is the largest state within the EU, and is often looked to for leadership by other member states (Janning, J. & Moller, A., 2016). Therefore, Germany has the ability to set the tone for the European response to a crisis, humanitarian or otherwise. Second, Germany has a strong history of authoritarian behavior, obviously. In fact, the modern study of authoritarianism began with the works of Adorno et al (1950), as they sought to understand the phenomenon of the Nazi party.

In addition to the role and history of Germany, it also received the most refugees of any European country during the most recent crisis. The combination of these three elements provides an excellent opportunity to study the interaction of authoritarian attitudes and immigrant population size.

The second chapter changes the setting and focus to study the relationship between globalization and the support for RRWPs. This chapter is focused on the population of (mainland) France and the correlation between the arrival of foreign corporations and changes in support for RRWPs. I use the presence of Burger King restaurants as a proxy for the level of globalization and measure for changes in support for RRWPs. I will discuss this choice of an MNC as a marker for globalization later in the work. This study considers the changes of support for RRWPs between the first round of the French presidential elections in 2012 and 2017.

This paper seeks to study the impact international corporations can have on the level of cultural threat felt by local populations. I chose France as the setting for this paper due to the importance of the culinary arts to the French national identity. The encroachment of foreign food MNCs provides a source of threat previously not considered when studying support for RRWPs. The expansion of these MNCs, such as Burger King, with the exception of McDonald's, has been fairly limited until recently. Prior to the last decade, most of the food MNCs have been located primarily in the major French cities such as Paris and Lyon. Only recently have they branched out to smaller markets, and Burger King has led the charge. The goal of this chapter is to determine what, if any, effect this expansion has had on public support for RRWPs.

The third chapter considers the impact the RRWPs have on the party systems in Europe. In this chapter I ask the question, "under what circumstances do RRWPs affect the policy positions of center-right parties?" The data in this set come from the Manifestos Project and are limited to the years since 1994. I chose this date as it was the first year in which a RRWP was elected to a national legislature in Europe following WWII. I also limit the scope by including

only those states which are members of the OECD, as non-OECD states have parties which are highly related to ethnic groups.

Usually, the research perspective when describing the relationship between mainstream and RRWPs focuses on the shortcomings of center-right parties; often asking what the mainstream parties are doing wrong to drive support away from them and to the extreme. This paper counters this perspective by considering the impact of RRWPs, their varying size and strength, and how they can cause mainstream parties to shift their preferences.

### **Relevance, Questions, and Objectives**

The central aim of this research project is to explore the motivations for support and the impact potential of RRWPs in the European setting. The slow burn and then explosion of support for these parties has created a unique opportunity for researchers to understand how these groups have been able to shift consolidated advanced democracies towards the consideration and implementation of illiberal policies. To do this, I have developed a research agenda that focuses on the issues from three distinct perspectives. First, I measure the impact of shifting immigrant population sizes has on native preferences towards this group. Second, I shift the focus from people groups to MNCs, to consider their impact on the support for nationalist parties. Finally, I study the consequences of RRWP success on the preferences of center-right parties towards right-wing policy positions.

## **Chapter 1: Authoritarianism and Germany**

The first chapter in this work analyzes the relationship between authoritarian attitudes, immigrant population size, and native populations preferences towards immigrants. In this chapter I ask the question, how have authoritarianism and contact theory played a role in the attitudes of German citizens when confronted by large scale changes in the population of immigrants? It is undeniable that the multiple waves of immigrants Germany has experienced in the previous three decades has had an impact on the preferences of the people. In this chapter, I am trying to ascertain what exactly those preferential shifts are.

This research question is an important one to ask for several reasons. First, this topic has practical importance. The immigration scenario occurring right now in Europe is a permanent change European citizens are going to have to deal with. The Syrian civil war absolutely devastated the country, its infrastructure left in ruins. The refugees from Syria have little to return home to. Many refugees, seeing themselves as stateless, left with the intention of never returning, their main goal being finding a new country in which to start over (Tucker, 2018). This chapter helps us better understand the way in which interaction, or the lack thereof, contributes towards the development of native preferences and assessments of migrants. This knowledge can lead to more informed choices by those in place to make decisions concerning policy options.

Second, this work builds on the literature surrounding authoritarian attitudes, their development, and the role cross-cultural interaction has on them. More specifically, I focus on submissive authoritarians, an understudied portion of the authoritarian personality. Prior work, such as the F-scale (Adorno et al., 1950) and the RWA scale (Altemeyer, Right-wing

Authoritarianism, 1981), was flawed in that the scales were designed to skew towards the detection of aggressive authoritarian attitudes. The scale I develop for this chapter focuses on submissive authoritarian traits such as preferences for acting properly, following the rules, and the government providing safety. This study focuses on the shift in authoritarian attitudes that occurs when the status quo has been disturbed by a sudden change, such as the arrival of a large new cultural group to a country or region.

In addition to authoritarianism, this chapter also adds to the literature surrounding Contact Theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998, 2016). I use contact theory to test the impact of intergroup interactions on the assessment of immigrants by Germans with varying levels of authoritarianism. By adding to the understanding of how interactions between established and new people groups can help explain preferences for outgroup members, this work exemplifies the importance of encouraging opportunities for disparate groups to interact.

I propose three hypotheses to answer my research question in this chapter. First, hypothesis 1 states: I predict that those respondents reporting higher levels of submissive authoritarian personality traits will also report lower levels of preferences towards immigrant populations. Given submissive authoritarians predilection towards the maintenance of the status quo (Feldman & Stenner 1997, Feldman 2003, Passini 2017), I argue the sudden increase in immigrant population size within German Lander will be sufficient to trigger authoritarian attitudes in an otherwise tolerant group of people. This triggering of authoritarian attitudes will then lead to a negative appraisal of immigrants within the submissive authoritarian population.

Hypothesis 2 focuses on contact theory. It states: those respondents living in areas with larger increases in immigrant populations will evaluate immigrants as being more beneficial to society. In line with the theory, I expect larger populations of immigrants will lead to an increased level of interaction between the native and immigrant populations. Though early work claimed the necessity of goal-oriented interaction (Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 1954) to reduce intergroup hostility, later work has emphasized that there only be sustained interaction between groups to lessen intergroup tension (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

In this chapter I argue that Lander with higher percentages of immigrant populations foster increased interaction between groups in the aggregate. However, submissive authoritarians may have certain traits that prevent these helpful interactions. It is not in the nature of authoritarians to seek out new experiences or to be open to new experiences. This group is focused on the status quo and abhor violations of it. I predict that it is far more likely that submissive authoritarians will intentionally avoid interactions with immigrant groups, robbing themselves of the opportunity to reevaluate their preferences (Pettigrew 2016, Hassen 1987, Oesterreich 2005).

The data with which I test these hypotheses come from the European Social Survey from the years 2002-2018 (9 waves). I restrict the data to include only German citizens, as it is their preferences with which I am concerned. I construct two scales to test my hypotheses, the dependent variable and the main explanatory variable. The dependent variable measures preferences for immigrants, while the main explanatory variable captures submissive authoritarian personality traits.

The other main data used in the model are population data. I retrieved immigrant population data from the United Nations and German population data from the German government website. Because I expect there to be variation in population sizes between Lander and between years, I employ a hierarchical model; Lander being the first level and year the second. I control for various demographic variables, such as age, education, employment status.

## **Chapter 2: Fast food and French culture**

Most current research, including the first chapter in this work, considers the impacts and effects of globalization on the attitudes of the public, focuses on the movement of people from one region or country to another. The second chapter seeks to fill a gap left by those other efforts to explain the role of economic globalization on public support for RRWPs. The common argument against globalization by RRWPs is centered around the loss of jobs and depressed wages brought on by globalization. I am looking at a different angle to the puzzle. By studying the arrival of food MNCs, I am shifting the point of view of the research to consider the impact of foreign corporations on the level of cultural threat experienced by local populations. In this chapter I argue the arrival of cultural icons such as McDonalds, Walmart, and Burger King, create a level of cultural threat among the populations of host nations. Food is intrinsic to the culture of a nation. It, and its preparation, are institutions within local cultures that help give members their identity (Jensen et al, 2011). The incursion of fast food into new markets poses a new threat to the cultural identity of those places. This threat then leads to support of RRWPs via their anti-globalization platform.

This chapter is important for two main reasons. First, it fills a research gap left by other scholars studying RRWPs. The majority of research into this family of parties examines the impact of immigrants and the level of cultural and economic threat they generate. Less research is directed towards the cultural consequences of the arrival of MNCs, particularly those in the food services sector. This chapter seeks to help fill this void by uncovering the relationship between the arrival of foreign food producers and support for RRWPs.

Second, the setting of France offers a unique opportunity to study globalization and RRWP support. The 2017 French Presidential election, the timeframe with which this chapter is concerned, featured a strong discussion about the consequences of globalization and the loss of French culture. The success the FN had in the 2017 election was strongly influenced by an anti-globalization platform, centering on the recent cultural erosion experienced by the French people. Le Pen tried to emphasize that France's long history as a cultural center of the world was being threatened by the arrival of foreign people and corporations. She argued for increasing protections for French culture and economic security. The public embraced her anti-globalization rhetoric, voting her into the second round of elections in 2017.

I study the relationship between RRWP support and level of globalization via three hypotheses. The first, those electoral districts with Burger King restaurants present will present lower levels of electoral support for RRWP than areas without. I expect that fast food MNCs will have done an appropriate amount of market research into the susceptibility of the local markets, and will, therefore, select those places with the least amount of aversion to their arrival. I argue that the arrival of these MNCs in less supportive areas would trigger defensive cognitive

reactions in the local population as they would perceive them as icons of a foreign culture co-existing within their own cultural spaces (Chen and Chui, 2010). This visual interaction would prime their minds to perceive competition between the two cultures, resulting in negative attitudes toward the foreign cultural entity (Torelli and Cheng, 2011). Therefore, the MNCs choose locations with better potential for success.

Hypothesis 2 considers a possible interactive effect between the arrival of a fast food MNC and the level of immigration present in that commune. This hypothesis, those electoral districts without Burger King restaurants and low levels of immigration will present higher levels of electoral support for RRWPs, tests the level of exposure to fast food MNCs and immigrant population size. Changes in the power dynamics between groups can create an elevated level of anxiety in the dominant group (Tajfel, 1982; Stephan & Stephan, 2013), known as realistic threat. This is the exact situation faced in France following the immigration crisis of 2015 in the context of the Schengen area. Realistic threat theory postulates that large influxes of immigrant populations create concerns within native populations that they would now be in competition with immigrants for scarce resources such as jobs and welfare (Quillian, 1995). Due to reduced opportunities for exposure and interaction (Allport, 1950; Pettigrew, 1998), I argue that low levels of immigrant population and the lack of a Burger King will increase support for RRWPs.

My final hypothesis, those electoral districts without Burger King restaurants and high levels of unemployment will present higher levels of electoral support for RRWPs, measures the role of a common driver for the support of RRWPs, unemployment (Jackman & Volpert, 1996) along with the level of globalization in a commune. Economic losers due to globalization have

been a recent target of the FN. They and other RRWPs in Europe have developed economic strategies designed to exploit those most effected by offering support to welfare chauvinism (Achterberg et al., 2011) and developing slogans such as “France First.” I include this hypothesis to test for the strength of globalization as an indicator for cultural threat and support for RRWPs. A significant result of this test would indicate the level of globalization is working with economic fears, driving RRWP support.

This study uses the results of the first round of the 2017 French presidential election as the dependent variable, which is a combined total of the percentage of votes for the four RRWPs receiving votes during that election. I use a hierarchical model for analysis as the data exist at two different levels. The bulk of the data comes from the commune level; however, some is only available at the province level, therefore, the nesting of observations becomes necessary.

The dependent variable in this study is the combined voting percentage for all four RRWPs in the 2017 election. Burger King restaurant data comes from the Burger King France website and is available at the commune level. Election, population, and unemployment data comes directly from the French government website. I control for previous RRWP support from the 2012 election, as well as unemployment and immigration level in all models.

### **Chapter 3: Illiberal influences**

In the last decade, Europe has experienced an electoral trend in which RRWPs have gained significant political support. When these parties gain governing power, they create illiberal change in their societies. In Poland and Hungary, RRWPs have become the ruling

parties, making sweeping changes to consolidate power and restrict minority freedoms. These policy choices clearly have a negative impact on the democratic processes in their countries. But what happens when RRWPs are not in government, but instead, see a general increase in support? Does the increase in support for RRWPs create an incentive in center-right parties to adopt right-wing policy options? In this paper I explore the impact these parties have had on their center-right counter parts as they compete for electoral support. I ask the question, under what circumstances do RRWPs effect the policy positions of center-right parties?

My first hypothesis in this chapter is center-right parties' ideological shift to the right will be relative to vote share earned by RRWPs in the previous election. I argue that established center-right parties should be unwilling to make shifts to the right, unless they have been victims of support loss to RRWPs in previous elections. As Somer-Topcu (2009) argues, losses in previous elections predict greater risk acceptant behavior in subsequent elections on the part of party leadership. Without this incentive to alter policy positions, it is in the interest of center-right parties to maintain consistent party positions (Downs, 1957).

Hypotheses 2 and 2a focus on the likelihood a center-right party will adopt far-right policy choices based on the number of parties in the system and the relative strength of far-right parties. Hypothesis 2 states: Center right parties will seek to maintain a consistent ideological positioning when they are not threatened by extremist parties. The electoral center of most countries has been developed over multiple iterations of elections in which dominant parties have been able to carve out their own space on the political spectrum. In Europe, this is typified, generally, by the major parties creating a space within the center of the spectrum in which they are fairly similar in the policy options they offer, and those options are acceptable to a majority

of the public (Norris, 2005). I argue that it is unlikely to observe much change in the established policy preferences for center-right parties when the party system is unaffected by a center-right parties will seek to maintain a consistent ideological positioning when they are not threatened by extremist parties. Center-right parties will seek to maintain a consistent ideological positioning when they are not threatened by extremist parties.

However, the preferences of center-right parties may change given a viable threat from the far right when there is increased uncertainty in the electoral system. Hypothesis 2a states: Center-right parties' ideological shift will be conditioned by the percentage of votes received by RRWPs in the previous election and the effective number of parties in the system. I argue systems with lower thresholds for entry into the legislature are more sensitive to the emergence of far-right parties for two reasons. First, parties in systems with low thresholds are sensitive to the success of other parties in their same family, as this is who they generally compete with for votes (Adams, J. & Somer-Topcu, Z., 2009). And second, previous electoral success by RRWPs sends signals about the true nature of voter preferences, allowing for more informed decision making by party leaders (Monogan, 2012).

Hypotheses 3 and 3a focus on the ideological impact of the governing status of center-right parties and their likelihood of policy shifts when confronted by strong RRWPs. Hypothesis 3, center-right parties' ideological shift is moderated by their participation in the government, tests the theory that governing status is a moderating influence on the policy positions of parties. Moderate positioning by centrist parties is crucial to increasing the likelihood that these parties will be attractive candidates for coalition formation (Dandoy, 2014). Hypothesis 3a, center-right

parties' ideological shift will be conditioned by their role in the government and the percentage of votes received by RRWPs in the previous election, tests the strength of their preferences when faced with strong RRWP opposition. I argue that in those systems in which there is a strong RRWP presence, the governing center-right party will respond to this threat by moving to the right. The strong RRWP performance provides information to the center-right party about the true nature of the electorate. They should then respond with an ideological shift relative to the strength of the RRWP.

The data for this project come primarily from the Manifestos Project. I restrict the data to European OECD members who are classified as center-right, as I am concerned with their shifts in policy positions. I also limit the dataset to include effective parties, defined as those parties winning seats in their country's legislature. The dependent variable for this study is the policy position of the center-right party.

I employ three explanatory variables to test the three series of hypotheses. The first hypothesis is tested using a dichotomous variable identifying the presences of an effective RRWP within the system. Hypotheses 2 and 2a are tested using the absolute strength of the largest RRWP in the country's political system. Hypotheses 3 and 3a also use RRWP party strength to measure RRWP influence, but here it is interacted with the center-right party's governing status, which is a dichotomous variable.

This study employs time series cross-sectional models using an OLS estimator. As a party's left/right placement in period  $t$  are highly correlated with their placement in period  $t-1$ , I include a lagged dependent variable in all models. This lagged variable is included to help

control for serial correlation (Abou-Chadi, 2016). In an effort to control for heterogeneity, I employ a random effects model, controlling for correlation among countries and parties.

The remainder of this work proceeds as follows. Chapter 1 studies the impact of the relative size of immigrant population, and interaction with them, on the preferences of German citizens. Chapter 2 discusses the relationship between economic globalization and cultural threat among the French electorate. Chapter 3 explores the impact RRWPs have on their center-right counterparts. Finally, in the conclusion I will discuss my results and their implications.

## **CHAPTER 1**

# **AUTHORITARIANISM AND GERMANY: A STUDY OF NATIVIST ATTITUDES**

### **Introduction**

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the day before local elections were to be held in Cologne, Germany, Henriette Reker, independent candidate for the mayor, was attacked and stabbed in the neck and stomach. While the attack was taking place, the perpetrator was witnessed to have yelled about the current influx of refugees. The attacker was reported to have been motivated by xenophobic attitudes and chose Reker due to her governmental responsibilities of the housing and integration of immigrants and refugees (Deardon, 2015). Reker would go on to win the election while in the hospital recovering from her wounds, but the anti-immigrant sentiment espoused by her assailant remains active in the population.

Changes in the societal status quo affect change in people's political attitudes in various ways. For some, this change is met with open arms. The influx of new people groups represents an enrichment of the local culture and an improvement to society in general. However, not all people are as enthusiastic about the arrival of new cultures and their potential effect on the status quo. Instead, some fear the change new groups can bring. They often meet these changes with hostility and are supportive of policy that limits the impact of these societal changes. This paper asks the question, how have authoritarianism and contact theory played a role in the attitudes of German citizens when confronted by large scale changes in the population immigrants? Due to

myriad crises in the past two decades vast numbers of immigrants and refugees have migrated into Europe from the MENA region, with Germany being one of the main destinations.

The German case in this immigration crisis is of particular interest for several reasons. First, Germany, as the largest economy in Europe, is a leader among European nations. Of all the states within the EU, Germany is often the first state other member states look to for leadership in foreign policy, security and defense (Janning, J. & Moller, A., 2016). This status as a leader makes Germany a focal point for the region concerning immigration due to its evolving policy. Also, Germany's history with authoritarianism is well known. The study of authoritarian attitudes began with Adorno et al. (1950) as an attempt to understand the behavior and influence of the Nazi party following WWII. Given the current role of Germany on the world stage, a strengthening in internal illiberal influences, and the country's past experiences with authoritarianism, Germany seems a natural place to look when considering the contemporary impact of these attitudes.

Germany has a mixed history with immigration since the end of the Second World War. Immediately following the war, the country faced a shortage of labor in its efforts to rebuild. With the absence of so many men, the country's leadership looked to immigration to help reduce this shortage (Ireland, 1997). This resulted in a large influx of men providing cheap, unskilled labor. Initially, these men were expected to work and then leave. However, in reality, the workers stayed in Germany and their families began to follow them. While this primary immigration was welcomed at first, the subsequent secondary immigration of wives, children and extended families began to become a burden on the state. Beginning in the late 1960's, this

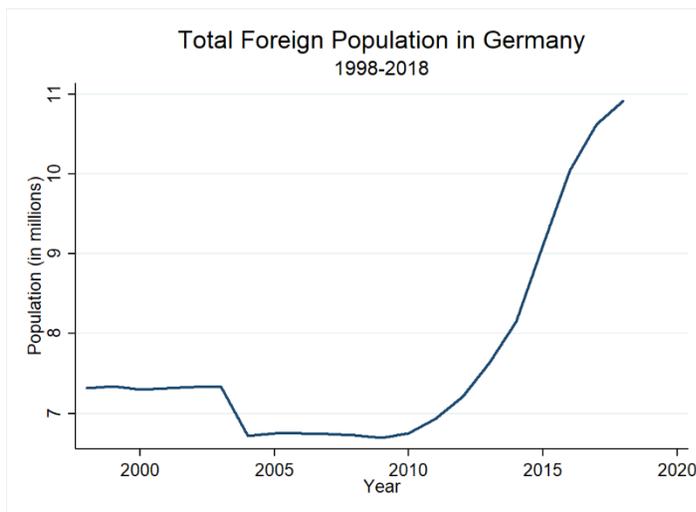
policy of recruitment changed to one of zero-immigration and the restriction of immigrant rights (Joppke, 1998).

Germany has been on a path of immigrant inclusion since 1990 with establishment of the “Foreigner Law of 1990.” This law consolidated previous court rulings to create a statutory precedent granting significant rights to immigrants. The Foreigner Law established immigration rights for spouses and children of the men working in Germany, granted freedom of travel for second and third generation foreigners, and children of immigrants would no longer have a waiting period to marry. Despite these legal advancements, anti-immigrant sentiment still had a foothold within the native population.

Following unification and the downfall of communism, Germany faced many new challenges surrounding immigration. Competition for jobs and resources grew at an exponential rate due to East Germans joining the labor pool. This coupled with an enormous influx of asylum seekers, created a social environment extremely hostile to immigrants (Ireland, 1997). In 1995 alone, nearly 4,000 hate crimes were committed against immigrants by German right-wing extremists (Migration News Sheet, 1995).

In 1999 Chancellor Schroder and the Social Democrat (SPD)/Green party government continued the liberalization of the Germany immigration policy. Through a series of incremental adjustments to the German immigration policy, the concept of becoming a country of immigration began to take hold; moving from a theory of *kein Einwanderungland* (not a country

of immigration), to one that embraces it (Bergfeld, 2017). The culmination of this movement towards a more open immigration policy occurred in 2015, when the German government, led by Angela Merkel, announced a plan to accept refugees from the Syrian civil war (Bosweel, C. & Hampshire, J., 2016). However, Merkel’s welcoming attitude towards those displaced by violence has been somewhat at odds with a large number of her fellow European leaders and even those in her own coalition. Soon after this event the CDU leadership publicly challenged Merkel’s position and the AfD began to receive significantly higher support in polls (Benecek, D. and Strasheim, J., 2016).



The public response to the recent wave of immigration has also been mixed. While some, like Merkel, rushed to support those seeking shelter in Germany, other German political actors had much more negative reactions. For example, beginning in 2014 the group

Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamification of the West (PEGIDA) began holding rallies every Monday night in the east German city of Dresden, an Alternative for Germany (AfD) stronghold (“Far Right Critics Hold Rallies,” 2109). After enduring five years of weekly rallies led by PEGIDA and supported by the AfD, often with AfD leadership in attendance, the city declared a Nazi emergency (Winter, 2019). Although it was a non-binding resolution, the declaration acts as a reminder and a warning concerning the potential of such groups.

This paper is concerned with the attitudes native Germans have towards immigrant populations. Utilizing data from the European Social Survey (ESS) I will explore the relationship between submissive authoritarianism and anti-immigrant sentiment. I hypothesize that those respondents scoring higher in submissive authoritarian attitudes will have increasingly negative perceptions of immigrants. I also predict, via contact theory, consistent exposure to large numbers of immigrants will encourage all portions of the population to report higher levels of preferences towards immigrants. Also, though this positive shift will affect the entire population, it will be diminished in those respondents with authoritarian attitudes. My results indicate support for these hypotheses indicating an overall positive change in preferences towards immigrants throughout the population.

This paper will proceed as follows. First, I discuss the role of cultural threat exerts on the activation of authoritarian attitudes within a native population. Then I will discuss the role of contact theory on opinions of outgroup members. This will be followed by a presentation of the data and an analysis of results. Finally, I will conclude with a discussion of the implications of my findings and ideas for future research.

### **The Role of Authoritarians**

The study of authoritarianism began as an attempt to understand how fascism and Nazism were able to garner such widespread support in the first half of the twentieth century. The development of the F-scale by Adorno et al. (1950) defined right-wing authoritarianism as set of personality traits which, combined, would lend one towards an authoritarian disposition. Adorno argued that those predisposed to these behavioral traits are overly prejudiced and aggressive

towards minorities and “particularly susceptible to anti-democratic propaganda” (Adorno et al. 1950, p.1) Though flawed, this work created a foundation for future research on the motivations and personality traits of right-wing authoritarians (RWA).

More recently, the predominant method for measuring RWA is the tripartite scale developed by Altemeyer (1981, 1996). This scale identifies RWA as a covariation of three behavioral traits: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. Authoritarian submission is characterized by personality traits which support social cohesion over the importance of individual liberty (Feldman, 2003). Those who typically score highly on authoritarian submission tests place high importance on the maintenance of the status quo and are quick to conform to the preferences of leaders. This group’s motivations are driven by fear, triggering defensive behaviors aimed at maintaining social control (Van Heil et al., 2004).

This behavior is exemplified by support of President Trump’s anti-immigrant policy choices. Submissive authoritarians are supportive of these policies, such as building a wall along the southern U.S. border and the banning of immigrants from Islamic nations, because they fear the potential for the changing of American cultural norms. Supporting policy positions like this one, and political leaders that espouse them, allow submissive authoritarians to ‘fight back’ against the threats they experience without any overt action.

Aggressive authoritarians, on the other hand, are actively aggressive towards those who threaten social order. They are also highly supportive of actions by the authorities that punish those who they consider threats to the status quo. However, unlike Altemeyer, Feldman (2003)

argues these aggressive authoritarians are not likely to exhibit these behaviors outside the presence of a perceived threat from an out-group. These attitudes and behavior should only be exhibited in the presence of a perceived threat to the status quo.

Those classified as conventionalists are focused on traditional values. They are highly sensitive to changes in established societal institutions (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013). These attitudes are triggered when conventionalists sense that the old-fashioned way of doing things is being altered by another group.

Early work employing the RWA scale utilized it as a unidimensional scale, which was heavily weighted towards those expressing authoritarian aggression and conventionalism traits (Duckitt et al., 2010), thus diminishing the role of submissive authoritarians. Submissive authoritarians' preferences for obedience to leaders (Feldman, 2003) includes a latent aggression towards non-conformists which may not be detectable via RWA tests absent a perceived threat (Passini, 2017). The uneven balancing of this scale has led to criticism of it as an effective tool to measure authoritarianism, and an argument has been made to measure all three dimensions separately (Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Feldman, 2003; Funke, 2005; Duckitt & Bizumic 2013). A major issue with treating RWA as a unidimensional variable, is that there is no differentiation among the components of the scale. By combining all three authoritarian components into one scale the researcher is unaware of which dimension is driving the scores. A respondent presenting high scores in authoritarian submission is treated the same as a respondent presenting high aggression or conventionalism scores. The results, therefore, are unclear as to which type of authoritarian attitudes have been triggered in the population. As most work previously has

focused on either the traditional RWA scale or aggressive authoritarianism, it is prudent to also consider the role of submissive authoritarians and the impact they have on the political climate of a county. Their impact may differ from the other categories of authoritarians, in that they have the potential to be a large voting bloc. While they may not be as likely to take to the streets in protest of cultural shifts, they can be counted on to show up to the ballot box once activated.

This study focuses on submissive authoritarian attitudes. The data, which is discussed in a later section, comes from the European Social Survey which includes items throughout its waves which are effective at capturing the submissive authoritarian mindset. These questions focus on the importance of acting properly, following the rules, and the government providing safety.

The key component to the triggering of these attitudes towards nonconformists is a perceived threat to the natural order of social cohesion. Submissive authoritarians should not be expected to display a significant level of prejudicial attitudes as long as the status quo is perceived (Feldman & Stenner 1997, Feldman 2003, Passini 2017). However, in the presence of a significant threat to the societal status quo, such as large shifts in the immigrant population, it should be expected that submissive authoritarians will exhibit negative attitudes and behavior towards those people groups identified as presenting the threat. Therefore, (H1) I predict that those respondents reporting higher levels of submissive authoritarian personality traits will also report lower ratings of immigrant populations.

## **Contact Theory and Immigration**

It is not always the case that the interaction between cultures will lead to negative attitudes towards one another. While those possessing authoritarian attitudes can feel threatened due to a change in the societal status quo, other factors can impact evaluations of out-groups. Contact theory (Allport 1954, Pettigrew 1998) may provide a mediating force in a society when it is presented with a large shift in its cultural makeup. Initially addressing relationships between Whites and African-Americans in the United States (Brophy 1946, Williams, 1947, Kephart 1957), contact theory has been expanded to study a variety of intergroup relationships such as the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream classrooms (Harper & Wacker, 1985), reconciliation post-civil war (Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008), and attitudes towards transgender rights (Tadlock et al., 2017). I employ this theory to test the impact of intergroup contact between native Germans and immigrants in the face of large-scale changes in the immigrant population.

Contact theory argues that repeated interactions with members of outgroups can serve to reduce prejudices and alleviate concerns of cultural threat (Allport 1954, Voci et al. 2015). Allport (1954) argued those interactions would need to exist in a very specified set of circumstances. As competition has the ability to heighten awareness of differences between groups, the interaction must occur outside of a competitive setting, such as co-workers trying to complete a project. Second, the contact must be sustained. Occasional meetings and exchanged pleasantries do not meet the requirements set forth by Allport. Interactions need to be consistent and meaningful. Third, the contact must be one on one and the status of the individual must be equal. The interaction between doctor and patient or employer and employee is not sufficient to meet Allport's conditions (Jackman & Crane, 1986). In order for contact theory to apply to the

interaction, the two people cannot have a disparate power dynamic. Equal standing for each person and personal interaction is required to break down barriers related to out-group bias.

Also, signaling from authorities that the outgroup is in some way beneficial to the success of society can have positive effects on outgroup preferences when it establishes norms of acceptance. This strength of this conclusion is drawn into question by more recent research. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) show those interactions which included some of these structured requirements do significantly improve outgroup preferences more than non-structured interactions. However, non-structured interactions are still related to a negative relationship between outgroup contact and prejudice. Therefore, while Allport's preconditions to contact theory's success are not requirements for improved preferences, they seem to amplify the effects of intergroup contact in a positive manner.

The data used in this study (discussed in the following section) are not sufficiently focused to determine the type or frequency of interaction. This is due to the fact that the smallest division of respondents is at the Lander (state) size. This limits my ability to make assumptions about the specific types of interactions between native and immigrant interactions, per Allport's theory concerning structured vs non-structured interactions. However, Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) conclusions concerning general interactions between people groups inform my theory in that those natives in Lander experiencing larger flows of immigrants, as a percentage of the population, should have higher incidences of contact leading to higher levels of immigrant preference. More specifically, Germany has taken action to ensure the participation of immigrants in the labor market. The government has instituted programs designed to train

immigrants to be successful in the workplace. They offer job and language training along with internships to participants, greatly improving their chances to be successful economically (Joyce, 2018).

Other opportunities for contact outside the workplace can be expected to happen in places in which people congregate, such as the theater and shopping trips, and general day to day life. This meets the requirements Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) discuss in their reevaluation of Allport's theory. This is further exemplified by Jackman and Crane (1986), who find that the frequent interactions regardless of the level of intimacy is effective at improving opinions of outgroups. Therefore, I hypothesize (H2) that those respondents living in areas with larger increases in immigrant populations will evaluate immigrants as being more beneficial to society.

Authoritarians pose a challenge to this logic, however. It is not in the authoritarian nature to seek out new experiences, nor is it in their nature to open their minds to new experiences they may happen upon. Instead, it is far more likely that authoritarians will actively try to avoid interaction with outgroup members and will do their best to prevent the reevaluation of their preferences in the event they come across an outgroup member in their daily life (Pettigrew 2016, Hassen 1987, Oesterreich 2005). Therefore, contact theory will not have the opportunity to provide the boost to improved evaluations for this group of people. Given this predisposition to avoid new people and experiences, I propose hypothesis 2A: I predict that gains among the general population, in their preferences towards immigrant populations, will be significantly lower for those reporting submissive authoritarian attitudes.

## Data and Research Design

Data in this study come primarily from the nine rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2002-2018. As my research question focuses on native attitudes towards immigrants the data set has been restricted to include only German citizens. The resultant dataset consists of 16,541 observations over 9 waves of the survey. Using this data, I created two scales to test my hypothesis. First, ranging from 0-30, the dependent variable combines several questions from the survey to measure attitudes towards immigrants, with higher levels indicating greater preference for immigrants. The scale is composed of three questions tapping citizen attitudes on the effect immigrants have on the country. The first question asks the respondents opinion on immigrants making the country a better place to live. The second asks if they believe that immigrants enrich or undermine the country's culture. And the last asks if immigrants are good or bad for the economy. The alpha test was performed for this scale and is .8324.

Second, the main explanatory variable is a scale designed to capture submissive authoritarian personality traits, higher scores indicating higher levels of authoritarianism. This scale includes responses to three questions: the importance of behaving properly, the importance of following the rules, and the importance of having a strong government. These traits were combined to make a scale ranged from 0-3. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher levels of submissive authoritarianism. The alpha for this scale is .6103.

Another key variable in this model is the change in immigrant population within each Lander. The inclusion of this variable calls for the nesting of observations within Lander, which requires the implementation of a hierarchical model. Because I expect there to be differences in

the change of immigrant populations within Lander and over time, observations are nested within Lander at the first level, with year being the second level of the model. The advantage to this method is that it allows authoritarian attitudes in each of these levels (Lander and year) to vary. This borrowing of variance from the second level (year) allows for more accurate estimation of the first level (Lander) coefficients.

### Threat and Attitude Activation

My expectation for this test of H1 is that larger changes of immigrants as a percentage of the population in a Lander will lead to increasingly negative reported preferences towards immigrants by authoritarians. Given authoritarians' predilection for maintaining the cultural status quo, I expect them to report negative preferences toward immigrants when immigrant populations rise significantly, such as during the recent refugee crisis and during the wars surrounding the breakup of Yugoslavia. However, small or negative changes to the immigrant population should not have a significant effect on submissive authoritarians as they do not create sufficient threat to activate authoritarian attitudes.

Table 1

Immigrant Preference	Coefficient	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	
Authoritarianism	-1.051	0.099	-1.24571	-0.85668
Immigrant Population Change	5.869	1.295	3.330546	8.40727
Gender	-0.175	0.085	-0.34155	-0.00934
Education	0.394	0.014	0.366507	0.421136
Age	0.015	0.003	0.010129	0.02036
Income	2.170	0.191	1.795745	2.54357
Unemployment	-1.150	0.177	-1.4982	-0.80275
Ideology	-0.576	0.023	-0.62142	-0.52996
Constant	16.178	0.464	15.26941	17.08662

Random-effects Parameters	Estimate	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	
<b>Region: Independent</b>				
Authoritarianism	1.134	0.223	0.772205	1.666245
Constant	0.868	0.296	0.445187	1.693135
<b>Year: Identity</b>				
Constant	0.826	0.080	0.683603	0.998202
Residual	5.379	0.030	5.321377	5.437789

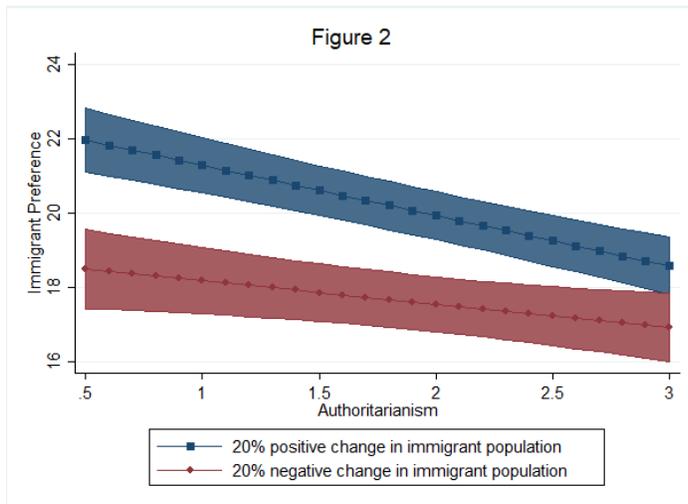
Table 1 shows the results of the test of this hypothesis. Because higher values of the dependent variable indicate a greater preference for immigrants and higher values of the main explanatory variable indicate higher levels of authoritarianism, my expectation is of a negative relationship between the two. In line with these expectations, the analysis shows a negative relationship between authoritarianism and immigrant preference. However, this only confirms that authoritarian attitudes have been activated, not that they are related to the change in immigrant population. The main variable of interest in this test is the interaction of authoritarianism and the change in immigrant population found in Table 2. While it has the appropriate sign, its coefficient is not shown as significant, therefore more exploration of the results is required.

**Table 2**

Immigrant Preference	Coefficient	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	
Authoritarianism	-0.992	0.108	-1.20378	-0.78119
Immigrant Population Change	9.568	2.961	3.765587	15.3713
Authoritarianism * $\Delta$ immigrant population	-1.807	1.303	-4.36049	0.74709
Gender	-0.176	0.085	-0.34169	-0.00951
Education	0.394	0.014	0.367088	0.421741
Age	0.015	0.003	0.010142	0.020372
Income	2.164	0.191	1.789951	2.537924
Unemployment	-1.149	0.177	-1.4963	-0.80088
Ideology	-0.575	0.023	-0.62112	-0.52967
Constant	16.049	0.476	15.11628	16.98085

Random-effects Parameters	Estimate	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	
<b>Region: Independent</b>				
Authoritarian	1.133	0.222	0.771303	1.664966
Constant	0.895	0.297	0.467036	1.714034
<b>Year: Identity</b>				
Constant	0.825	0.080	0.6823	0.996699
Residual	5.379	0.030	5.321035	5.43744

Figure 2 plots the interaction variable across the authoritarian spectrum at two of the more extreme values of the immigrant population change variable. The 20% negative change in immigration is a value which occurred in multiple Lander in 2004. This shift was precipitated by the conclusion of the Yugoslavian wars and the desire of refugees to return home. The 20% positive change is common during the mid-2010's during the most recent immigration crisis (see Figure 1 for reference). The y-intercept for each value is quite different given the power of repeated interactions for the non-authoritarian portion of the sample. However, it is quite evident authoritarian attitudes have a significant impact on preferences of immigrants for those experiencing a large influx of immigrants. Such a large change in immigrant populations clearly constitutes a threat to the status quo for authoritarians, contributing to their negative evaluations of this outgroup.



The attitudes towards immigrants in areas with a large population decline appear to be different. Here, despite the lower overall score, the data indicate there is very little difference in the way authoritarians and non-authoritarians view immigrants. Combined, this data supports the hypothesis that large

increases in immigrant population constitute a significant threat to those respondents reporting authoritarian personality traits leading to lower reported preferences for immigrants.

Contact theory plays a generous role in the appraisal of immigrants by native Germans. The change in immigrant population is easily the most powerful variable in either model, thus supporting my second hypothesis: those living in areas with larger increases in immigrant populations will report higher preferences towards immigrants. The effect of increased interaction with the immigrant groups is demonstrated by the y-intercepts of Figure 2. An almost 4-point gain for the least authoritarian respondents can be observed in the two samples. Even at the mean of 2 for the authoritarianism variable, there appears to be a significant difference in the expressed preferences for immigrants.

Further evidence of the power of intergroup contact is displayed below in Table 3. This table reports results from a test of contact theory using the same model as seen above in Model 1 of Table 1. I have removed the authoritarian variable from this test, and as is shown, increases in

immigrant population size led to significant changes in the reporting of preferences of immigrants.

Table 3

Immigrant Preference	Coefficient	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	
Immigrant Population Change	5.429	1.283	2.914701	7.943376
Gender	-0.150	0.085	-0.31608	0.015937
Education	0.407	0.014	0.380062	0.434392
Age	0.012	0.003	0.007264	0.017441
Income	2.190	0.191	1.816618	2.563534
Unemployment	-1.138	0.177	-1.48595	-0.79054
Ideology	-0.592	0.023	-0.63744	-0.54636
Constant	14.975	0.471	14.05277	15.8977
Random-effects Parameters				
	Estimate	Standard Error	95% Conf. Interval	
Region: Independent				
Authoritarian	1.498	0.281	1.037577	2.162308
Constant	1.024	0.307	0.568849	1.843726
Year: Identity				
Constant	0.814	0.080	0.672088	0.985976
Residual	5.396	0.030	5.337762	5.454149

Despite these gains related to contact theory, it appears those reporting at the highest levels of authoritarianism are significantly less likely to be swayed in their opinions by increased chances of interaction with the outgroup. Evidence indicates strong authoritarians, while there is some discernable change, are far less likely to modify their appraisal of immigrants while the rest of the population improves in their preferences for immigrants, a conclusion which is in line with hypothesis 2A. It seems that while the rest of the population is able to alter their viewpoints regarding outgroup members, authoritarians are unwilling to adapt to the changes brought on by new members of the community, instead preferring the previous status quo.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper has examined the impact of large changes in immigrant populations on the opinions of native populations. By investigating the role of authoritarian attitudes and large-scale changes in immigrant populations within the German setting, I was able to show evidence of two simultaneous behaviors. First, those who report the highest levels of authoritarian attitudes are most likely to express lower levels of preferences towards immigrants. Clearly, large changes in the makeup of the population represents a significant threat to the status quo to those who fear its change the most. Second, native interaction with members of the outgroup leads to improved preferences towards that outgroup. Contact theory is clearly supported by findings. This holds true even without the necessary conditions Allport (1954) put forth.

The significant population shifts the world has recently experienced has led to increased interactions between cultures. People are being forced together by events beyond their control with considerable implications to political processes in the host countries. The results of this study show that the arrival of so many immigrants in a rather short time has triggered an authoritarian response from a portion of the population. This has undoubtedly been a driver for the success of so many of the right-wing nationalist parties in much of Europe. A main consequence of the rise in influence of these parties has been the establishment of several anti-immigrant laws in not only Germany, but also many other European countries.

Instead of considering RWA as a unidimensional construct, this study focuses on the traits associated with the subdimension of submissive authoritarianism. Considered the core of

authoritarianism (Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner 1997), the study of submissive authoritarianism focuses on the degree to which someone submits to authorities and is concerned with those who represent a threat to the status quo. This is opposed, but still related to, aggressive authoritarians who believe in a strong response to threats to the status quo and are directly aggressive to them (Passini, 2017). Those scoring as high submissive authoritarians, but lower in aggressive attitudes, are the not necessarily the ones who will join in anti-immigrant protests or violence. Instead, they are the people who support the politicians who want to implement illiberal policies directed towards the out-group. While they may not commit the violence that makes the front page of the newspaper, they are the people silently supporting these undemocratic policies.

Given that the data used in this survey exists at such a broad level of analysis, I cannot hope to describe with any detail the level of interactions the respondents had with the immigrant population. I can only say with certainty they lived in the same region and interacted with one another in a manner proportional to the makeup of the population. Even so, without evidence of the two people groups being forced to work together to achieve a certain goal, I find that increased likelihood of interaction leads to improved levels of preferences. This finding holds true for the entirety of the population. Of course, the level of change is non-constant, those who score the lowest on the authoritarian scale make greater gains than those at the top. But across the board, every level of authoritarianism improves their preference level when they encounter large increases in the immigrant population. Figure 2 illustrates this result. Even at the extreme right of the authoritarian scale improvement in preferences is visible.

As Allport's (1954) early work showed, it is important for people to have repeated interaction with out-groups for their evaluations of those groups to be altered. The results in Figure 2 are likely to be influenced in two ways. First, the general size of the immigrant population in each Lander impacts the opportunity for natives to interact with immigrants. Those areas with higher concentrations of immigrants are the most likely to foster these interactions which foster improved evaluations. Therefore, it is likely, that in areas with high immigrant populations interaction with immigrants is inevitable. This encourages an increase in positive changes in immigrant evaluation through the native population.

Second, individuals still have agency. I have argued that those reporting authoritarian attitudes are least likely to seek out the opportunities that would help improve evaluations. Even in areas with large immigrant populations, those with high authoritarian scores have the ability to diminish interaction as much as possible. This, among other things, may help explain why I find such a small shift in immigrant evaluation by high authoritarians.

The implication of this result is that there is still hope for improved relations between immigrants and their harshest critics. Despite the negative influence of authoritarian attitudes, it seems exposure does positively impact the evaluation of immigrants across the range of authoritarianism. The message is clear for those in power who want to improve relations between people groups. Increasing the opportunities for group interaction will lead to improved intergroup relations. However, this is probably easier said than done. As I noted previously, those who report the highest levels of authoritarianism are those who are also the least likely to seek out, or be open to, opportunities to interact with members of the outgroup. It will be

incumbent, therefore, upon community leaders to seek out those members of the communities and encourage their peaceful interaction with the new members of the society.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **FAST FOOD AND FRENCH CULTURE: GLOBALIZATION AND SUPPORT FOR NATIONALIST PARTIES**

### **Introduction**

The rise of right-wing populist movements in the United States and Europe can be traced to a multitude of sources. Many studies focus on the role immigration and racial attitudes have played in this right-ward shift. In these studies, it is reported that it is not those who are in direct daily contact with outgroup members that report negative preferences towards outgroup members, but those who are less likely to encounter outgroup members who exhibit anti-outgroup sentiments (Svelkoul, M et al., 2011; Kim, 2019). However, it is not only the influx of people that can impact a population's political preferences, the arrival of foreign corporate entities may also influence political preferences. This paper explores the relationship between support for radical right-wing political parties and level of local globalization. Using the presence of an American fast-food company as a proxy for the level of globalization in French electoral districts, I measure the relationship between globalization and the electoral support of

right-wing nationalist parties. Results indicate a negative relationship between globalization and radical right-wing support. Increases in the level of globalization predict lower support for nationalistic political parties, even when controlling for other predictors for right-wing support such as immigration and unemployment.

Multinational food corporations have been expanding their influence globally for decades. When these food MNC's decide to branch out into new countries they are not just bringing their name with them, but also the American fast-food culture. Often these companies will adopt portions of the local food culture in an effort to endear themselves to the local populations, but the formula of high efficiency-large volume sales developed by these companies remains. In some instances, these companies are welcomed with open arms. Many of us can recall the images of the hours long lines at the first McDonald's to open in Russia after the fall of communism. However, this is not always the case. Negative reactions to the appearance of the symbols of globalization are also a possible outcome. For example, the first Starbucks to open in the Forbidden City was met with open hostility from the local population (Han, H. K. & Zhang, A., 2009) citing threats to the Chinese culture.

This paper focuses on the impact globalization has had on French food culture, its national identity, and the role globalization has played in its evolution. As described by Reicher and Hopkins (2001), national identity is comprised of history, emblems, cultural icons, and the physical environment. For the French people, food, and its preparation, is an important part of their national identity. The French response to the potential threat fast food MNC's pose to their

national identity has been quite vigorous. The people and the government have taken significant symbolic and concrete steps to preserve their food culture in the face of this relatively new threat. For example, France has petitioned UNESCO to add the French baguette to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The head of the Confederation of French Bakery and Pastry, Doninique Anract, is quoted in an argument for the inclusion of the baguette on the List, “Bread is the image of France... stop going to buy bread in supermarkets... [buying from local producers] favors the artisan bread maker” (Pinay-Rabaroust, 2018). This statement not only indicates the importance of the baguette as a symbol of the national identity of France, but also highlights the importance of the process through which it is made. Anract goes on to lament the role of foreign producers of the bread sold in supermarkets and the potential impact this has on the production of bread within France. He argues that foreign producers are driving local bread makers out of business, which will lead to the loss of the traditions related to the local production of the baguette.

This anecdote is important as it illustrates two main ideas. First, that food is an intrinsic part of the national identity of France. Anract’s declaration of the baguette as important to the French identity clearly places the role of food as an extremely important part of the cultural make up of French culture. Second, this argument focuses not only on the food, but the manner in which it is prepared as being a part of the French identity. Not only does Anract lament the loss of the integrity of the bread, he also is dismayed that the bread is not produced by French bread makers, but by a Romanian company. He is expressing the threat he feels of the loss of culture surrounding the production of this French staple. Instead of artisan bread makers producing the baguettes and passing their knowledge down to their apprentices, foreign producers, with a

competitive advantage, are taking over the market and driving the bread making industry out of France.

Similar thinking surrounds the arrival of fast-food chains, which first arrived in Paris in 1972, via McDonald's. Fast food, or *malbouffe*, flies in the face of the tradition of French cuisine and the industry which surrounds it. Fast food is threatening to replace the traditions and customs which were built and maintained over centuries, passed down from generation to generation. Instead of passing by restaurants that are locally owned and run by people they know, French people are driving down streets and finding new establishments with foreign names like McDonald's, Burger King, KFC and Starbucks. These new names represent a threat to their culture and national identity.

The relationship between Burger King and France provides an interesting opportunity to study the role of globalization and support for right-wing nationalist political parties (RRWPs). Burger King initially attempted to break into the French market in the 1990's but was unable to turn a profit. However, in 2013, Burger King made a second attempt at the French market and has become fairly successful. This return to France is fortuitous for this study as it occurred just after the 2012 French presidential elections, and just before the immigration crisis hit Europe in 2014-15. This coincidence provides a reference point for analysis of the impact of Burger King, and globalization in general, on electoral support of RRWPs.

France is not only interesting due to the presence of its food culture and Burger King. It is also of interest due to its recent history of RRWPs. In the early 1970's, France played host to the rebirth of nationalism and right-wing extremism in Europe when Jean-Marie Le Pen established the National Front (FN), now named the National Rally (Berenzin, 2009). The FN received little electoral support until a shift in electoral rules<sup>2</sup> allowed them to gain 35 seats in the National Assembly. They used their newly found political legitimacy to propose legislation focused on limiting access to citizenship and employment for foreigners (Fabre, 2002). Following a return to a majoritarian system, the FN was reduced to one or no representatives in the following elections until 2012 and 2017 in which they won two and eight seats, respectively.

Since 1974, the FN has put forth candidates for President seven times, two of which succeeded in reaching the second round; first in 2002 with Jean-Marie and in 2017, with Marine, his daughter. The ascension of Marine to the leadership of the National Front led to a softening of the extremist views of the party. She backed the party away from some of her father's more extreme viewpoints, such as the questioning of the existence of gas chambers during the Holocaust. While both of her presidential runs maintained an anti-immigrant platform, there was an increased emphasis on anti-globalization. Le Pen focused on the role globalization played in the high unemployment rate and the loss of French culture. In both campaigns she advocated strongly for protectionist policies for French products and for a return to a national currency (Schofield, 2012).

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<sup>2</sup> In the 1986 national elections, France shifted from a winner-take-all system to a proportional representation system.

The arrival of the National Front heralded the beginning of a new political trend in Europe. Through a variety of processes, RRWPs have cropped up in most European nations with varying levels of success. In some cases, such as Poland and Austria, they have been able to rise to government status, the results of which have been drastically illiberal (Wasik, Z. & Foy, H., 2016). The populist Law and Order party in Poland, in addition to other illiberal policies, has used its power to pack the courts and control the national news organizations. The rise of RRWPs in Austria has encourage the implementation of various anti-immigrant laws and the construction of fences on their borders with other EU members.

In Germany, in 2017, the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) became the first nationalist political party to enter the Bundestag since WWII. The Lega Nord, which began as a regional nationalist movement in northern Italy, has become one of the most vocal anti-globalization parties within Europe, arguing globalization is ruining the culture of European civilizations (Zaslove, 2008).

In this paper, I examine the relationship between globalization and shift in popular support of the radical right-wing parties between first rounds of the 2012 and 2017 French Presidential elections. The 2017 election represents the most success the FN has had in presidential elections since its inception. The combination of the immigrant crises, incidents of terrorism, high unemployment and anti-globalization preferences led to Marine Le Pen's surprise first round success. Controlling for the impact of immigration and the economy, I study the relationship between globalization, using Burger King Restaurants as a proxy, and the electoral

support of right-wing parties in France. I also interact the influence of globalization with variables measuring immigration and the economy to determine whether globalization is working in conjunction with these phenomena or if it stands alone as a predictor to RWP support.

This paper will proceed as follows. First, I will discuss the role of food and food service in the context of the French national identity. I will then discuss the impact of identity and cultural threat on the likelihood of supporting a RWP candidate for president. I will then review the dataset developed to test my hypotheses regarding the impact of globalization on French support for right-wing nationalist parties. I will close with a discussion of the results and their implications for globalization and political actors.

### **French National Identity and Food**

French culture is currently being transformed by two distinct forces of globalization. On one hand, we have the influence of new cultures via the large influx of immigrants due to the recent immigration crisis and the expansion of the EU. Combined with the softened borders within the Schengen area and the expansion of the EU's membership, each new wave of countries admitted to the EU brought new opportunities for people to immigrate in search of new opportunities (Akaliyski, 2019). These migrants not only brought with them the desire for improved lives, but also their cultures. The influx of these new cultures in the more prosperous Western European states created some sense of anxiety within certain portions of the populations due to the potential erosion of the national culture (Alkopher, T. D. & Blanc, E., 2017). On the

other hand, we have globalization and the homogenization of culture brought on by the expansion of world markets and the political integration of the European continent. It is this latter influence which this paper will explore.

The expansion of capitalistic economic strategies in the last three decades has had a dramatic impact on the influence of MNC's throughout Europe (Castles, 2011). As these MNC's fight for control of markets and to expand their consumer base, they bring with them the potential to influence local cultures (Holton, 2000). There has been significant discussion of the homogenization of culture due to the influence of MNC'S, especially those based in America. As American brands have attempted to branch out into foreign markets, there has been significant push back against the McDonaldization of culture. Other brands such as Coca-Cola, Wal-Mart and Disney have received similar criticism for their role in the homogenization of culture around the world (Gordon & Meunier, 2001; Meyer, J. P., 2008). However, it is unlikely that these MNC's have the potential to create cultural change on the global scale for which they are credited. Yes, they do have the potential to alter culture, but there are too many other influences acting upon culture to allow these MNC's to create the drastic changes some fear.

There are too many other factors that go into the maintenance of culture to allow for complete homogenization. As large and influential as corporations like McDonald's and Burger King are, they do not have the ability to completely change food culture. Consider the dietary restrictions of the Hindu culture concerning beef. You will not find a beef Whopper on the Indian Burger King menu. Instead, you will find a menu full of chicken and vegetarian options.

French culture too, has found its way onto the Burger King menu. While the Burger King France menu looks very similar to an American menu, the desserts on offer there are of a greater variety than those of their American counterparts. The impact in the French context is the manner in which food is presented and consumed. This Americanization of food changes its presentation, content, and dining experience. These examples lend themselves to the idea that instead of homogenizing culture, MNC's instead are hybridizing culture (Holton, 2000). They are taking parts of the local culture, combining them with their own cultural identity and packaging it all up to sell in that market.

The French response to globalization has been one of resistance. Known for centuries as one of the cultural leaders and trend setters of the world, France has fought to keep its cultural identity intact from the influence of MNC's and foreign institutions such as Hollywood. And while France is still widely known for its cultural influences in fashion and film, it is arguably most well-known for its cuisine. The importance of food to the national identity is hard to be overstated, and consequently threats to this portion of the country's culture are taken quite seriously. Fast food is an especially egregious challenge to France's food culture as it flies in the face of their culinary traditions (Gordon and Meunier, 2001).

The French people and their government have fought a long battle against the influence of MNC's, especially American companies, on French culture. Beginning with fights for the

protection of the French movie industry, the “Coca-Cola affair<sup>3</sup>” (Kuo, 2017), and the vilification of Disney (Meyer, 2008), the French have consistently fought perceived threats to their national identity. The intensity and consistency of these efforts is a testimony to the French people’s attachment to that identity, and evidence to the threat they experience when they perceive that identity to be under attack.

The most recent national elections in France in 2017 featured globalization as one of the key issues, with Macron supporting and Le Pen speaking out in defiance (Meunier, 2017). While the focus of the globalization debate in this election was generally concerning the impact of immigration, globalization and the concept of food as part of the national French identity was strongly in place. One regional slogan ‘Non au Kebab, oui a la socca’ (no to Kebab, yes to socca) was a direct attack on the large number of Kebab shops which have opened in the city of Nice. These shops pose a threat to local socca producers, an integral party of the identity of that region. A pancake made of chickpea flour and olive oil, socca is ingrained into the culture of Cote d’Azur, some tracing its roots to the times of the Roman occupation. While we should not ignore the obvious racist undertones of this slogan, this example shows the importance of food culture to the identity of the French people (Binet, 2016).

The sharing of a national identity connects the members of the group to one another via shared values, norms, and traditions, and food and food service are an intrinsic part

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<sup>3</sup> In the late 1940’s Coca-Cola attempted to enter the French market. Communists and wine growers fought back against this expansion, seeing it as the beginning of American economic imperialism.

of the fabric that makes up the French national identity (Porcini, 2017). From the dishes prepared and the ingredients used, to the shared history around its creation, cuisine is inherently a part of the French culture. I argue that globalization presents a clear threat to the French national identity via its erosion of the tradition surrounding food and food service.

### **Globalization and Cultural Threat**

Globalization has affected the world in a variety of ways. Politically the world is becoming increasingly integrated. The rise of international organizations such as the EU, UN, and NAFTA have encroached on state sovereignty, resulting in significant pushback among certain domestic audiences. Immigration has had a tremendous impact on domestic policy making and voter preferences. Economically we are tied together more than ever before. Put simply, globalization is the process of compacting the worlds cultures and economies and increasing their interactions among its people (Robertson, 1992). The result of so much increased trade, travel and communication in recent years is that people are more frequently exposed to different cultures, ideas, and people than ever before. These increased levels of globalization imply that it has become more likely that people will be exposed to representations of their own culture and foreign cultures simultaneously. There are two possible outcomes to this experience. One, people will find this an enriching experience, in which they are able to broaden their horizons and open themselves to new ideas and experiences. Or two, they can withdraw and make a concerted attempt to resist the encroachment of the world on their way of life (Chiu et al., 2011).

In this study, Burger King stands in as a representation for the level of globalization an area has experienced. One of the main reasons Burger King was chosen for this study, is that it has not come close to reaching the level popularity of McDonald's in France. Burger King has about 250 different locations in France, while McDonald's has over 1,300. McDonald's has been around in France since the late 1970's and has maintained that presence ever since. Their arrival certainly created a certain amount of fear over cultural homogenization and was met with quite a bit of hostility from those who viewed them as a threat to France's food culture. However, their long tenure and vast presence within the country makes them representative of an earlier wave of globalization.

The reemergence of Burger King, however, represents a new wave. They were present in France in the 1990's but were unable to make a profit and closed their stores. In 2013, Burger King returned with a mindset to become major players in the food industry and have developed a strong presence. Also in this wave were Chipotle, opening in 2012, Subway in 2001, Five Guys in 2016, and KFC, who has recently made a new investment push in attempt to capture more of the market. I chose Burger King for this study due to the proximity of its arrival to the 2012 election and its strong effort to capture a large portion of the market quickly. The other options for study either arrived too early, too late, or only appeared weakly in the market. For example, Chipotle is only located in Paris and Five Guys only appeared just prior to the 2017 elections. Burger King, on the other hand, came into the market rapidly and covered a large geographic area, with at least one store in every department. This expansion of American fast-food chains in France, for some, has the potential to create an environment in which the French people feel a certain level of anxiety over the threat these restaurants pose to French culture.

Negative reactions to foreign cultures, in this case American fast food, are brought on by the perception that the presence of a foreign company is in some way a threat to the continuation of the local culture. The arrival of Burger King and other fast food MNC's can trigger defensive cognitive reactions in the local population if they see these icons of a foreign culture co-existing within their own cultural spaces (Chen and Chui, 2010). This visual interaction primes their minds to perceive competition between the two cultures, resulting in negative attitudes for the foreign cultural entity (Torelli and Cheng, 2011).

The threat of loss of culture is a main driver for a plethora of negative reactions in various societies. In fact, a major impetus of terrorist violence is the perceived subjugation of the terrorist's culture to that of foreign cultures (Kruglanski et al., 2009). In 1999, José Bové, a French producer of Roquefort cheese, attacked and destroyed a McDonald's which was under construction in Millau, France. He claimed his motivation was twofold: tariffs placed on, among other goods, Roquefort cheese by the American government, and the use of American hormone treated beef in the McDonald's restaurants (Daley, 2000).

Mr. Bové's attack on such a well-recognized symbol of America and globalization is an example of the importance of culture to a person's identity. He was attacking two perceived threats to that identity, the economic impact of the tariffs on the culturally significant food he produced and the use of foreign sourced beef in foreign owned restaurants. Globalization has created an environment in which traditional national cultures have become threatened and

contaminated by other cultures (Craig & Douglas, 2006) which has led to push back from those who view their cultural identity as under attack.

Why is national identity so important to Bové and people like him? Why does it matter that foreign firms are spreading around the globe and bringing their home cultures with them? I argue it is due to our instinctual need to belong to a social group, in this case a national identity. Belonging to social groups has been important for human survival for millennia. Belonging to a social group provides a frame of reference for what is from the in-group and safe and what is from the out-group and is a potential threat (Theiss-Moore, 2009).

Brewer (1993) argues that the larger an in-group becomes and the more depersonalized its customs become, the more its ideology becomes moral authority. Once a social group has developed its norms into a moral authority, it becomes relatively easy to view its morals as superior to the morals of other groups. One of the French's largest objections to the American fast-food industry is its lack of artistry. The methods of French food making have been passed down from master to apprentice and have been developed into an art. Fast food, on the other hand, can be cooked and assembled by a teenager following one afternoon of training. Why would French restaurateurs and food merchants not feel threatened by the fast-food industry? A Whopper from Burger King surely offers strong competition to socca. In a world that is becoming increasingly fast paced and cost conscious, the Whopper is an attractive option to those looking for a quick meal. This perceived shift in societal preferences poses a threat to those who view food and food service as part of their national identity.

MNC's are attuned to the conditions of the markets they are considering for expansion. Prior to investment, they perform significant research into economic and social aspects of the area in an effort to gauge the potential for success. It is my hypothesis that fast-food MNC's are aware of the increase in anxiety brought on by the threat to the national identity their arrival can cause, and will therefore, seek out locations that are more tolerant of the presence of foreign cultures. I predict restaurants will be less likely to be placed in those areas which electorally support candidates who speak out against the impacts of globalization. The FN and the Le Pens have been vocal opponents to the processes of globalization and their deleterious impacts on French culture, focusing on food culture quite often. Hypothesis 1 predicts that those areas in which Burger King has opened a new store will be less likely to electorally support the RRWPs.

Hypothesis 1: Those electoral districts with Burger King restaurants present will present lower levels of electoral support for RWP than areas without.

Up to this point I have considered globalization acting alone as a predictor for RWP support. However, it may be that globalization is working in conjunction with other forces of RWP support, such as immigration or economic conditions. Both of these forces have been shown to influence voter support of RRWPs (Jackman, R. W. & Volpert, K., 1996).

The FN slogan of "Keep France for the French," is an obvious indicator of their nativist preferences, and a signal to those who are threatened by the presence of immigrants. This threat can manifest in a variety of ways. Symbolic threat, as I have discussed previously in this paper,

absolutely applies to assessments of immigrants. Hostility produced by symbolic threat is rooted in the idea that the out-group in some way violates traditionally shared values of the in-group (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Symbolic threat from groups that are highly dissimilar from one's own can lead to negative evaluations towards these groups. Reactions to symbolic threat in the time period in question are exemplified by laws against head coverings in public places and moratoriums of minaret construction.

Changes in the power dynamics between groups can create an elevated level of anxiety in the dominant group (Tajfel, 1982; Stephan & Stephan, 2013), known as realistic threat. This is the exact situation faced in France following the immigration crisis in 2015. Realistic threat theory postulates that large influxes of immigrant populations create concerns within native populations that they would now be in competition with immigrants for scarce resources such as jobs and welfare (Quillian, 1995). Supporters of the FN and likeminded parties cast their votes for them with the expectation that they will follow through with their nationalistic platform promises, such as limiting the political and social rights of non-citizens (Della Posta, 2013).

Given the sudden rise in immigration and the expansion of globalization I theorize that the relationship between the two forces would be multiplicative. The people of France are witnessing an increased level of foreign cultures impacting their environment in two ways. New people are coming to their country to live and new corporations from foreign lands are buying up property and erecting symbols of those foreign countries. The combination of these two forces is likely to cause a certain level of anxiety within the population. However, given the role that

repeated interaction plays in the assessment of out-groups (Allport, 1950; Pettigrew, 1998), only those who do not have a consistent level of interactions with immigrants should be negatively affected by their presence in the country. Therefore, I hypothesize support for RRWPs should increase in those communes without a Burger King and with lower levels of immigration.

- Hypothesis 2: Those electoral districts without Burger King restaurants and low levels of immigration will present higher levels of electoral support for RRWPs.

Another potential driver for support for RRWPs is the condition of the economy, specifically unemployment (Jackson & Volpert, 1996; Golder 2003). Globalization does not just affect the culture of an area; it also has the potential to impact the labor market. As the global market becomes more intertwined and jobs shift from import competing sectors of the economy, perceptions of the process of globalization shift as well. This can lead to a negative evaluation of the process of globalization despite all of the benefits we receive from it as a society (Kletzer, 2005). RRWPs have an opportunity surrounding economic policy that most parties do not have. Generally, RRWPs shy away from taking a strong stance on economic issues, instead focusing on cultural issues, such as immigration (Rydgren, 2005). This historical ambivalence allows RRWPs to tailor economic strategies relevant to the economic environment surrounding the current election.

While unemployment is used in this study as an indicator of the economic situation in an area, the impact of globalization on Western economies reaches much further than mere job loss.

Those areas most impacted by import competition also face reduced earnings (Acemoglu et al. 2016) and poorer physical and mental health (Colantone & Stanig, 2018). Due to the economic concerns contemporary to the most recent French elections, RRWPs became attractive to those who see globalization as a threat to the economy and their jobs could turn to as they promised a return to the old structures that allowed jobs to be plentiful and wages to be high (Umbrass, 2017). This is accomplished by these RRWPs via several strategies, a common one being the development of platforms in which they offer support for welfare chauvinism (Achterberg et al., 2011). Marine Le Pen has been a vocal advocate for this strategy, tying it into immigration fears, by arguing for reserving employment, housing, and welfare for French citizens (Schumacer & van Kersbergen, 2016).

This economic strategy is clearly aimed at potential voters who are considered losers to the process of economic globalization. Welfare chauvinism, as promoted by Le Pen, targets the working class who face the most economic threat from globalization. By shifting towards a more socialist economic policy position the FN can attract new voters who may not be located as far right culturally, but fear the loss of jobs to foreign producers (Ivaldi, 2015). Given the FN's shift towards a more well-defined economic strategy targeted towards globalization losers, I hypothesize there will be a positive interactive effect between globalization and unemployment.

- Hypothesis 3: Those electoral districts without Burger King restaurants and high levels of unemployment will present higher levels of electoral support for RRWPs.

## Data and Results

The data used to explore these hypotheses is multi-level, with the lowest level existing at the commune level. While individual level data would be somewhat more effective in exploring the hypotheses put forth, data at this level will help determine the overall mood of the electorate as it relates to globalization. Using data at the commune level instead of the individual level allows for equal representation across all groupings as issues such as variation in the number of responses between departments are avoided. The data from this study come predominantly from the French Ministry of the Interior through publicly available sources. Ministry data includes election, population, and employment data. Additionally, I developed the restaurant portion of the data set by pulling location data from the Burger King France website.

The dependent variable for all tests of the hypotheses is share of the vote for right-wing national parties in the first round of the 2017 presidential elections. This variable includes the votes for four parties, the FN, Debout la France, Resistons!, and the Popular Republican Union. The FN, as previously discussed, ran Marine Le Pen as their presidential candidate. Debout la France, headed by Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, is a small party with one seat in the national assembly, whose main focus is French Nationalism and the impacts of European integration. Dupont-Aignan ran in both 2012 and 2017, receiving very few votes. In 2017 he endorsed Le Pen in the second round of presidential voting. Neither of the other two parties hold seats in any legislative body.

Geographically, mainland France is divided into 13 political regions. This study does not consider those areas outside the continent. Further each of those 13 regions are divided into departments, which are divided into communes. The main explanatory variable for the testing of the hypotheses is at the commune level. Both the actual number of restaurants and a dichotomous variable were tested for both hypotheses and the results were unaffected. Reports for hypothesis 1 are shown with the dichotomous variable in which 1 equals the presence of a Burger King restaurant. All results are reported with the four major cities of Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and Toulouse included. The results are unaffected in tests run with the omission of these cities, with only minor changes to the size of the coefficients.

I control for three different variables in each test. First, I control for previous voting patterns by including the RWP voting percentage of the commune in the 2012 elections. Second, as immigration is a major part of RRWPs' platforms, I have included the percentage of immigrants in each commune for the year 2016. This is the most time relevant data made available via the Ministry of the Interior. Finally, I control for unemployment as a percentage of the population as this is the most reliable economic indicator for voting for RRWPs (Jackman and Volpert, 1996).

This study employs a multilevel model as data is aggregated at two different levels. First restaurant, electoral, immigration, and population data are all at the commune level. This first level is nested within the second level, the department level, which includes the unemployment data. The resultant data set includes an N of 34,472 with 93 distinct groups.

It does need to be stated that in no way does this study assume the selection of restaurant location to be exogenous to voter attitudes. These rather wealthy MNC's are fully capable of researching potential restaurant sites prior to their expansion. It is reasonable to assume some overlap in the traits of less-than-ideal customers and RRWP supporters. Also, the main goal for these MNC's is to maximize profit, not promote any sort of cultural change. Location selection is likely to be influenced by factors such as local economic factors, presence of other similar MNC's, and internal coordination costs (Sami, M. & Eldomiaty, T. I., 2020).

Results for the test of the first hypothesis, those electoral districts with Burger King restaurants present will present lower levels of electoral support for RWP than areas without, are shown below on Table 1. The results do support the hypothesis. We can see the main explanatory variable is significant at the .01 level, however the sign in the correct direction of the theorized expectation indicating those communities with Burger King restaurants are less likely to support an RWP.

The coefficient for the main explanatory variable is fairly weak in comparison to the control variables. Unsurprisingly, the strongest predictor for votes supporting RRWPs in 2017 was the electoral support from the previous election in 2012. The economic variable was also fairly strong and in the expected direction. The immigration variable was the weakest of the three control variables and was in line with the main explanatory variable.

Both the presence of a Burger King and the presence of an immigrant population lead to a decrease in the vote share enjoyed by RRWPs. Clearly, the percentage of immigrants is a stronger indicator of electoral support for a department, but to what extent. The value of a one unit change in the number of Burger Kings for a department is equivalent to an increase in the immigrant percentage in a department of .164%. While immigrant percentage is the stronger indicator for RRWP support, both are statistically and substantively important to the dependent variable.

Table 1

Votes Supporting the Right - 2017	Burger King	-0.024 (0.004)***
	Votes Supporting the Right - 2012	0.892 (0.005)***
	Immigrant level	-0.146 (0.008)***
	Unemployment level	0.479 (0.179)**
	Constant	0.08 (0.017)***
<i>N</i>		34,472

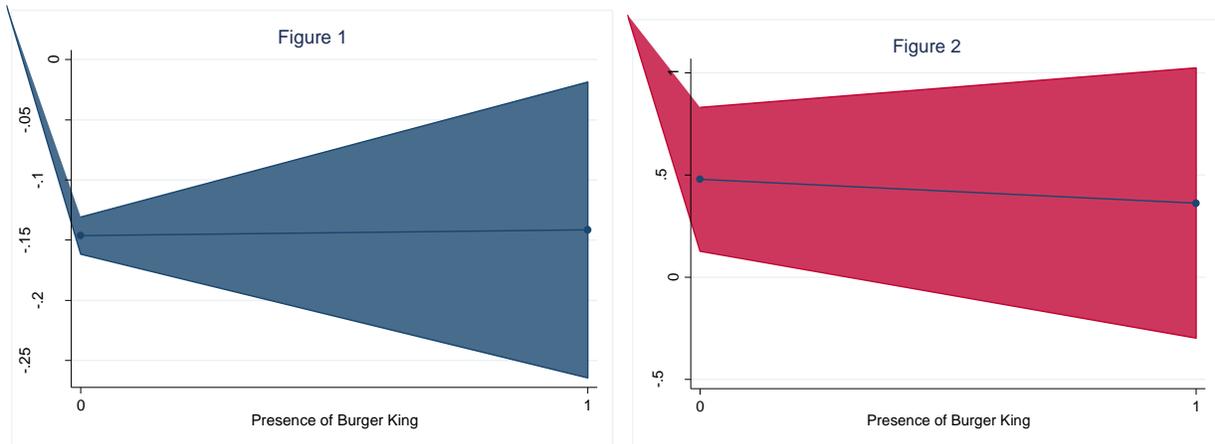
\*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$   
Standard errors in parentheses

Table 2 reports the results of the tests of hypotheses 2 and 3. These hypotheses considered the interactive role of the presence of Burger King and immigration, and Burger King and unemployment. In both models the Burger King variable takes the value of 1 if there is not a restaurant present in the commune. In both tests of the interactive effect of globalization, the interacted variable was insignificant, indicating there is no interactive relationship between globalization and common drivers of RWP support. The implications of this finding will be discussed in the next section of the paper.

Table 2

Votes Supporting the Right - 2017	Immigration	Unemployment
Burger King	-0.024 (0.008)**	-0.013 (0.028)
Immigrant Population	-0.146 (0.008)***	-0.146 (0.008)***
BK * Immigrant %	0.005 (0.063)	
BK * Unemployment %		-0.117 (0.289)
2012 RRWP Vote %	0.892 (0.005)***	0.892 (0.005)***
Unemployment	0.479 (0.179)***	0.480 (0.179)***
Constant	0.086 (0.017)***	0.086 (0.017)***
<i>N</i>	34,472	34,472

\*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$   
 Standard errors in parentheses



Figures 1 and 2 further exemplify the lack of an interactive relationship between the globalization variable and immigration (Figure 1) and globalization and unemployment (Figure 2). At no point in either figure is the interaction close to relevance, implying that globalization is

an independent indicator of support for RRWPs. I will discuss these results and their implications in the next section.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper has explored the relationship between globalization and the support for right-wing nationalist parties. Using Burger King restaurants as a proxy for the level of globalization a community has experienced, I developed tests to examine this relationship. Tests indicate that those communities with lower levels of globalization are more likely to be supportive of RRWPs than those with higher levels of globalization. Based on the information available in extant literature and the results reported here, it seems that those who live in areas giving them increased exposure to symbols of globalization are less likely to support RRWPs. These results do not indicate a causal relationship between the arrival MNCs and electoral support of RRWPs, only the indicative nature of the relationship between the two.

Culture is an ever-changing aspect of our societies. Influences such as foreign restaurants, members of other cultures, and the media are constantly bringing new ideas and customs into our communities. Some of these ideas become adopted into our cultures and some are left to fall to the wayside. The people who are less threatened by these changes are likely those who have more consistent exposure to new ideas and symbols. Contact with, and exposure to, other cultures is extremely important to the development of positive attitudes towards them (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 2016). These are people who live in more urban areas. Due to their comfort

with a globalized world, the people here are less likely to buy into messages from groups like the FN who tout the threat globalization has on the French national identity.

Those living in more rural areas where globalization has not had as much of an impact are less likely to be confronted with images of globalization as frequently as their urban counterparts. Due to this limited exposure to globalization, when they are faced with representations of different cultures in their country, they are more likely to experience cultural threat. The lack of forced exposure to the images of globalization allows this group of people to choose their level of exposure to them (Pettigrew, 2016). They are not compelled to daily walk down the street and see all the evidence of globalization in juxtaposition to the symbols of their national identity. They can choose how often they want to travel to the closest Burger King for a meal. If they are threatened by these symbols of globalization, they have the ability to remain in their hometowns, insulate themselves from the world, and vote for political candidates who support the limiting of globalization.

In addition to these findings, the results also indicate that globalization is a predictor of RRWP support. It operates independently from other known RWP influences such as immigration and economic factors. While these other influencing variables are stronger and more predictive of RWP support on their own, globalization clearly still plays a role in the decision-making calculus of French voters. This is significant because it shows voter response to messages from RRWPs that are supportive of protectionist policies. These protectionist policy preferences, spurred by the recent economic and immigration crisis, threaten France's

participation in international organizations such as the EU and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Limiting participation in organizations like these has the potential to prevent France from prospering from future investment and international trade opportunities. The consequences of pursuing such protectionist policies could exacerbate current economic hardships faced by those already suffering due to job/wage loss brought on by globalization.

The results also provide information to two groups, MNC's and politicians. MNC's can take away from this study the importance of national identity in those areas where globalization has least touched. They may be able to make inroads into these communities if they are able to show they are less of a threat to the national identity. By embracing the local culture and adopting its symbols, these companies may be able to reduce the perceived threat they pose to national identities. However, this may be unlikely. As these companies are motivated by increasing their profits, engineering acceptance of foreign brands in small markets is not likely a part of their agenda. Companies like Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and Burger King are well aware of the welcome their industries have received in the past and have likely learned their lesson. They will seek out potential locations with local acceptance in mind, shying away from those places they feel will not support their products.

Politicians seeking election in these less globalized areas should consider the amount of support they display towards agents of cultural change such as these MNC's. The results of this study indicate people in less globalized areas cast votes in support of parties whose platforms include the minimization of the effects of globalization. Showing support for this process in

these areas least touched by globalization is likely to cost the candidate at the ballot box. Instead, it would be wise for pro-globalization candidates in these areas to focus on other topics that are germane to the region.

Future research into the effects of globalization should include more individual level attempts at measuring its effects. While the opportunity provided by Burger King and the French presidential elections has provided a good window in the impact globalization has had on the French electorate, it would be helpful to better understand individual level motivations for supporting anti-globalization political candidates. The more we understand about why people support nationalistic right-wing groups, the better we are able to counter illiberal influences and ensure democratic rights for all members of democratic regimes, not just those in the dominant group.

## CHAPTER 3

# ILLIBERAL INFLUENCE: THE EFFECT OF RADICAL RIGHT-WING PARTIES ON CENTRIST PARTIES' POSITIONS

### Introduction

The rebirth of right-wing extremism in Europe occurred in France in the late 1970s with the foundation of the National Front (Berezin, 2009). Since then, right-wing extremism has slowly grown into an international movement, gaining strength and influence throughout the continent. Recent regional events, coupled with long term trends, have created an environment in which extremism has been able to thrive. Radical right-wing parties (RRWPs) have been able to use divisive rhetoric to improve their electoral success, in turn taking influence and support from mainstream parties. These electoral gains, such as the success of the AfD in Germany, have led to very real threats to established international organizations like the EU, and to the freedoms of those living in countries in which these parties have influence.

A recent report by Freedom House (2019) highlights the deleterious impact RRWPs have had on the global level of freedom. In the last 13 years, Europe in particular has experienced a decrease in all categories Freedom House uses to measure freedom, with functioning of government, freedom of expression, and rule of law being the categories with the greatest losses. A clear example of the threat RRWPs pose to liberal institutions has taken place in Poland. The

Polish Law and Justice Party (PiS), following electoral success which placed them in control of the government, replaced judges seen as hostile to the new as an effort to fix Polish society (Wasik, Z. & Foy, H., 2016). This allowed the new government to make drastic changes to media organizations, including ownership, content, and distribution.

The Hungarian government has also taken steps to limit liberal institutions and their influence within its borders. The government has withdrawn accreditation from gender studies programs, taxed programs for migrants and refugees, and expelled the Central European University from Budapest (CEU). The CEU, backed by George Soros, the United States, and the European Union, was initially designed to help the European academic community transition from communism following its fall in the early 1990's (Redden, 2018). The expulsion of the university from Hungary, along with the incursions on academic freedom, clearly indicates a regime hostile to liberal influences.

The influence of illiberalism in Europe is exemplified by the closing of the CEU in Hungary and the overhaul of the justice system in Poland. These are just two examples of the ways in which these RRWPs are changing the political landscape in Europe when they have government status. What impact do they have when they are not in government? Are they still able to wield influence and alter the behaviors of governing parties?

There are several examples of their ability to impact policy without being in government, Brexit being the most obvious. UKIP, though never gaining more than two seats in the House of

Commons (they did, however, win a majority of the British seats in the EU parliament), was able to force the Conservative Party to run on a promise of a referendum on the UK's membership in the EU (Evans, G., & Mellon, J., 2019). However, in many European countries the changes brought on by these RRWPs are much more subtle. Following the electoral success of Marine Le Pen in the most recent presidential elections, the French government has moved to adopt a stricter anti-immigrant/refugee stance.

In 2019, President Macron issued a number of new policies aimed at reducing the attractiveness of France to low skilled immigrants. This was a two-pronged approach, first they are attempting to make the country less attractive to low skilled immigrants. The government began this process by restricting access to healthcare for immigrants by instituting a 3-month waiting period. They also announced plans to remove all unofficial immigrant camps from Paris. Macron was quoted as saying, "My goal is to throw out everybody who has no reason to be here (Onishi, 2019)." This was a move directly related to policy preferences put forth by Le Pen in an effort to recapture right-wing voters. Secondly, the French government put forth plans to create a quota system to allow skilled workers into France. Combined these new policies are an attempt to exert more national control over immigration, and consequently win voters from the extreme right in subsequent elections.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects RRWPs have on policy agendas of center-right parties. To achieve this goal, I have asked the question, under what circumstances do RRWPs effect the policy positions of center-right parties? First, I will consider the role RRWPs'

success in previous elections has on center-right parties' ideological positioning. This will also include an exploration of the roles of system permissibility and government participation on the part of the center-right party. Answering this question will add to our understanding of the behavior of political parties and how they react to new challenges from fringe group in various settings. This study assesses the role RRWPs play in the agenda setting of center-right parties and how various institutional factors relate to this interaction.

This paper will proceed as follows. First, I will discuss and identify the groups I am classifying as illiberal. Second, I will review relevant literature and discuss my research question and hypotheses. This will be followed by a discussion of my methods. Finally, I will describe my results and discuss the implications they have for the future of party behavior in the presence of radical right-wing parties.

### **Illiberal Influencers**

I use the term radical right-wing parties as a catchall category for those parties that exist on the far right of the ideological spectrum. The media would like to label these parties as populist and move on. However, in reality, those parties who would institute illiberal reform are a diverse group, of which populism is only one form. While these groups have similar political goals, their origins and tactics can vary widely.

Pappas (2016) breaks these parties into three sub-groups: anti-democrats, nativists, and populists. The populist label is often applied to many of the parties that make up the two other groups, however they have some distinguishing characteristics that appropriately differentiate them from the pure populists. While anti-democrats share some of the populists' preferences for majoritarianism, they do not necessarily subscribe to the elite versus the people rhetoric the populists rely on (Pappas, *The specter haunting Europe: Distinguishing liberal democracy's challengers*, 2016). Instead they focus more on strategies such as direct election of political leaders and referenda as a decision-making process.

Nativist parties and movements form in environments which have been largely affected by immigration, as a response to social change (Pappas, 2016). These groups prey on the public's fear that new groups which have entered previously homogenous regions, will begin to change the cultural makeup of the region. While they are illiberal in nature, these groups are still in support of democratic institutions; however, they only want those institutions to serve for the betterment of the national people group. They view outsiders as threats to already scarce resources and would prefer to practice some form of welfare chauvinism (Marx, P. & Naumann, E., 2018).

Despite their differences, these three groups do have some commonalities. First, they all seek to create sharp divides in society. Often, this divide focuses on immigration and the impacts it has on the native population. Prior to the recent immigration crisis, most countries in Europe were rather ethnoculturally homogenous (Pappas, 2014) and the arrival of such a large group of

people from very diverse backgrounds posed a threat to the status quo. This change created an opportunity for these RRWPs to assert their agenda via the public's fear of cultural change.

Another attribute these groups have in common is an anti-EU agenda. All three types are able to focus blame for their pet grievances squarely on this organization. The populists can frame them and their supporters as elites working against the people, while the anti-democrats and nativists point to the EU as the organizers of their troubles. To all three groups, the EU represents the source of policies that integrated economies and cultures throughout the continent. The EU, then, becomes the focal point for blame due to its programs encouraging the integration of economies and the acceptance of refugees.

However, disdain for the EU is not solely owned by these RRWP groups. There are extremist groups on the left who are wary of the consequences of EU membership. Their grievances, though, grow from other sources of concern, and therefore should have different consequences for competing parties. Left-wing anti-EU sentiment stems from fear of changes to the welfare state and the liberalization of the markets. This is in contrast to RRWPs and their concerns about nationalism and sovereignty (van Elsas, E. J., Hakhverdian, A., & van der Brug, W., 2016)

## **Mainstream response**

Given the rise and influence of these RRWPs, how can we expect their center-right counterparts react to the changes in the political landscape? Will they move further to the right in an effort to own the issues and recapture lost support? Will they simply ignore the RRWPs in an attempt marginalize these extremist groups? Or, will they retreat to the center and focus on the median voter in the face of uncertainty?

Political parties have three main goals: win votes (resulting in influence), hold office and implement policy (Strom, 1990). Voters choose to align themselves, generally, with political parties which best reflect their own interests, identity, and have a chance to provide representation (Cox, 1997). Therefore, a change in a party's ideological positioning represents a risky venture by that party's leadership. A wrong ideological move could alienate a section of the electorate, resulting in a loss of influence for the party. However, European parties are being forced to come to terms with shifts in the political landscape that are fairly new and unprecedented. The rise of RRWPs has forced center-right party leadership to evaluate these new circumstances and make a risky decision. They must either choose to maintain their current ideological positioning in the center and risk losing those supporters who would prefer policy outcomes further to the right or shift their party's policy position and risk alienating their more centrist base.

I argue that center-right parties will choose to change their policy positioning further to the right relative to the electoral threat of the RRWPs with whom they are competing. Much of

the success RRWPs have achieved has been related to their perceived ownership of the immigration issue (Abou-Chadi, 2016) and their Euro-sceptic rhetoric (Szocsik, E. and Polyakova, A., 2019). Therefore, as these RRWPs gain influence, center-right parties experience increasingly greater pressure to make policy concessions in an attempt to counteract the effects of the RRWPs' successes in previous elections. Electoral gains by RRWPs directly impact center-right parties' abilities to win votes and gain influence in legislatures in Europe (Szocsik, E. and Polyakova, A., 2019). Therefore, center-right parties must develop a strategy for combating their extremist opponents.

Ignoring RRWPs and their platforms is not always a viable option for center-right parties. RRWPs are effective at politicizing issues important to them, bringing these topics to the forefront of the public's attention (Hutter, S., and Grande, E., 2014). Given their success, center-right parties must risk taking stances on these issues put forth by RRWPs. Previous research indicates it is possible for center-right parties to maintain control of issues advanced by RRWPs, thus reducing their potential success (Szocsik, E. and Polyakova, A., 2019). This can be achieved by making concessions such as placing economic and cultural constraints on immigrant populations (Pardos-Prado, 2015). While these positions may not have been optimal prior to the ascension of RRWPs, shifts in policy preferences may be necessary for center-right parties to maintain electoral support.

This process is exemplified by the success, and subsequent loss of support, experienced by the Danish People's Party (DPP) in the 2015 and 2019 elections. At the height of the

immigration crisis in 2015 the DPP received the second highest number of votes and seats in the parliament, mostly running on anti-immigrant policies. Their success spurred change within most of the centrist parties in preparation for the next election cycle, forcing them to add anti-immigrant stances to their manifestos. Their adoption of the DPP's policy preferences lead to a restoration of the status quo with the socialists regaining their position as the dominant party in the government and the worst showing by the DPP in two decades.

Somer-Topcu (2009) argues losses in previous elections predict greater risk acceptant behavior in subsequent elections on the part of party leadership. Parties typically are reluctant to modify their policy positions, due to the potential loss of electoral support. This explanation for risk acceptant behavior is supported by prospect theory. In the face of perceived loss, people/parties are more willing to accept risks they would otherwise not accept (Vis, 2011). In this case, losses experienced by center-right parties to RRWPs incentivize risky behavior, such as promoting anti-immigrant legislation or restricting access to social services for refugees.

These policy shift decisions do not come with ease. Significant change to long standing policy stances by such large organizations as political parties is quite difficult. As Downs (1957) argues, parties are not only reluctant to change ideology, but it is difficult to do so. This is due to the public's association of that party with certain policy preferences. A shift in a policy as salient as immigration is inherently risky. Therefore, it is only in extreme conditions that we could expect a mainstream party to make significant policy changes (Adams, J., Clark, M., Ezrow, L., and Glasgow, G., 2004).

The public requires their parties to be reliable and consistent, adverse to dramatic shifts in policy preferences (Downs, 1957). Whimsical changes in policy preferences on the part of a party would dramatically decrease the probability of gaining or retaining office. Given this desire for consistency and reliability, I argue changes in the ideological positioning of a center-right party will be highly dependent upon the success RRWPs had in the previous election. As party leaders feel threatened from RRWPs' encroachment on their support base, they should respond with ideological shifts relative to the perceived threat. Therefore, I hypothesize:

(H1): Center-Right parties' ideological shift to the right will be relative to vote share earned by RRWPs in the previous election.

Context absolutely matters when decisions are made concerning shifts in policy. The permissiveness of the electoral system has the ability to impact the choices parties make when confronted by the arrival of an RWPP. These entrants to political systems impact the electoral incentives differently based on the likelihood that they will be able to steal legislative seats from centrist parties. Absent these right-wing influences, center-right parties are not likely to shift their ideology in either direction along the continuum.

The electoral center of most countries has been developed over multiple iterations of elections in which dominant parties have been able to carve out their own space on the political spectrum. In Europe, this is typified, generally, by the major parties creating a space within the

center of the spectrum in which they are fairly similar in the policy options they offer, and those options are acceptable to a majority of the public (Norris, 2005).

With the development of such a strong center in most European countries, mainstream parties are incentivized to remain ideologically consistent. Small changes to the left or right based on voter preferences or other shifts from other parties can be expected, but large shifts in either direction risks the loss of voters in the next election (Adams, J. & Somer-Topcu, Z., 2009). Maintaining an ideological consistency provides these parties the best opportunity to maximize their chances at gaining or retaining office in subsequent elections.

Hypothesis 2: Center right parties will seek to maintain a consistent ideological positioning when they are not threatened by extremist parties.

A party's decision-making calculus is not limited to the perceived state of the current election cycle. They also have data from previous elections to help them determine the reality of the political environment. Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009) find parties are sensitive to shifts in previous elections, especially those in the same party families. When mainstream parties see a shift in support for these more extreme parties in their family, they should certainly be motivated to respond to the shift in voter preferences. However, those changes should be relative to the strength of those RRWPs. Changes to the party system in which only a small threat from a RRWP has presented itself should not be sufficient to convince a center-right party to modify its policy positions.

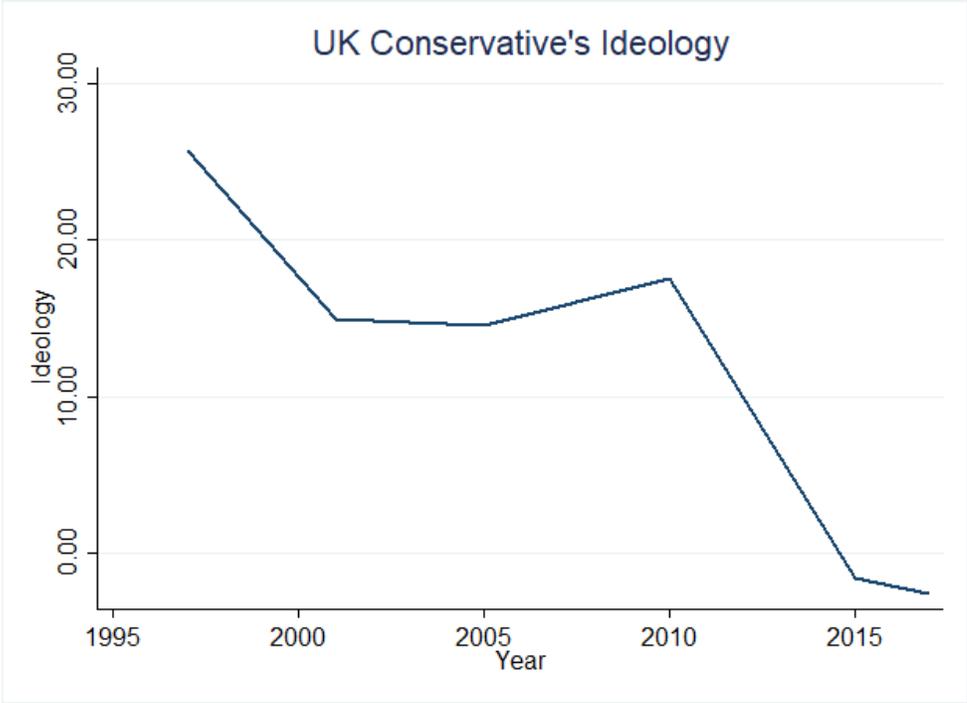
As discussed previously, absent a strong threat from a RRWP, center-right parties should remain risk averse in their policy choices. In this scenario the center-right party faces no incentive to adopt risky anti-immigrant policies. Doing so would certainly gamble the support they receive from more moderate voters. However, this incentive structure changes when center-right parties are threatened by a strong RRWP. The choice to modify an ideological stance is conditioned by two phenomena: the permissiveness of the electoral system and the strength of the RRWP.

The impact of RRWPs is affected by the electoral institutions under which parties operate. The strength of RRWPs is much more relevant in those system with lower barriers to entry into the legislature. This is the case for two main reasons. First, parties in systems with low barriers to entry are sensitive to the success of other parties in their same family, as this is who they generally compete with for votes (Adams, J. & Somer-Topcu, Z., 2009). As other parties in their same family gain traction among their traditional voters, or activate dormant voters, parties at the center must consider the impact of the success of the RRWP. Too many votes lost to these extremist groups can lead to seat loss, and therefore, the ability to affect policy.

Second, success in previous elections may indicate a shift in preferences among the electorate. The response of the public to the arrival of a RRWP can provide a lot of information to political parties. Strong support for RRWP can send the message that the public supports the policy positions espoused by the RRWPs. The strength of the support for the RRWP provides

more certainty to the center-right parties about the true nature of the electorate's preferences and allows them to adjust their ideology accordingly for upcoming elections (Monogan, 2012).

Figure 1



Parties in systems with higher barriers to entry into the legislature are not as likely to be threatened by RRWPs, and therefore, are less likely to shift their ideology in the presence of an RWPP. Figure 1 shows the pattern of movement of the UK's Conservative party over the term of the data. This figure shows, despite right-wing influences such as UKIP, the Conservative party actually moderated their positioning during this time. RRWPs do not pose a sufficiently strong threat to parties in such low permissibility systems as to cause them to make significant ideological changes.

Hypothesis 2a: Center-Right parties' ideological shift will be conditioned by the percentage of votes received by RRWPs in the previous election and the effective number of parties in the system.

The major parties of most countries have spent a long time carving out their space on the ideological continuum. In some cases, the ideological differences between these parties is quite small, resulting in a coalition between the major parties. Germany, for example, often sees a coalition between the two major centrist parties, the left leaning SPD and right leaning CDU/CSU. Only rarely do we see a third party enter a coalition with either of these parties in the recent past. In the German case the third party is usually the FDP, another centrist party. These parties have worked hard to maintain a central ideological positioning that is likely to capture a maximum share of the votes and, in turn, maximize the likelihood of their participation in government. In cases such as this, electoral competition exists to determine which of the major parties the public views as being the most competent at managing important issues of the country (Norris, 2005).

Absent the influence of these RRWPs, center-right parties are free(r) to adopt more centrist positions, capturing a larger portion of votes. Previous research has shown that those parties wishing to be involved in the formation of government have a significant incentive to moderate their policy stances. By maintain moderate positioning in their manifestoes, potential coalition parties place themselves in a better position to negotiate parameters of a coalition and make themselves more attractive to coalition partners (Dandoy, 2014). Proximity to the median

voter and dominant party (if they are not the dominant party themselves) are crucial to the likelihood a party will be considered for a role in a coalition (Savage, 2014).

Given extant literature indicates a clear advantage to those parties closest to the median voter; I hypothesize parties will adopt moderate policy positions if their goal is to be a part of the coalition, even more so if they wish to be the formateur. Therefore, I propose hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3: Center-right parties' ideological positioning is moderated by their participation in the government.

However, the arrival of a successful RRWP in the political arena puts the distribution of the electorate into question. Success at the extreme may signify that there has been significant shift within the voting populace. The success of these groups presents a challenge to the mainstream parties of the center-right. They must either maintain the status quo and retain their current positioning or make a shift to challenge the RRWP by adopting more radical policy stances. Understandably, the decision to make a such a shift in policy position is a difficult one.

Center-right parties faced with losing votes (and therefore office and policy influence) due to RRWPs must decide to what extent they will seek more radical policy options. Rightward shifts in ideology have two potential external consequences the parties must consider. First, they must balance the potential loss of votes from supporters from the center with the potential votes they are able to recapture from the RRWP. Too much of an over-correction has the potential to alienate voters at the center of the continuum leading to a loss of their base support.

Second, they must consider the impact an ideological change will have on their attractiveness as a coalition partner. Too much of a rightward shift will make supporters of their coalition partners uneasy. Savage (2014) indicates those parties who are closest ideologically to the dominant party increase their likelihood of inclusion in the governing coalition. Therefore, centrist parties moving away from the ideological center, and consequently coalition partners, run the risk of finding themselves left out of the government. Given the high stakes consequences of ideological shifts, I argue that this tradeoff is conditional upon the strength of the RRWP the center-right group faces.

Variation in the shifts of electorate's perceived distribution to the extreme provides different incentives for office seeking parties to move away from the center towards these extreme positions in an effort to recapture voters (Adams et al., 2006). In those systems in which RRWPs are not very strong electorally, there is little incentive for the center-right parties to modify their positioning. The lack of a strong RRWP sends the message to the center-right party that the distribution of the electorate has not changed and there is no need for the party to make changes to its policy positions.

However, in those party systems in which a RRWP has been successful in winning votes, a different message is being sent to the center-right party. In these systems it is clear that there has been a shift within in the electorate as to their preferences and the center-right party is forced into a position in which they must decide if they are willing to make policy concessions to the

supporters of RRWPs. This is a risky trade off party leadership will not take lightly. The decision to move to the right has the potential to alienate more centrist supporters, and the party risks losing their support to other parties pursuing more moderate positions. A miscalculation on the part of the party could potentially lead towards the loss of a governing position, and subsequently, the ability to enact policy. Therefore, I predict those center-right parties will become more risk acceptant in the presence of stronger RRWPs due to increased concern of the potential loss. This will then cause the center-right party to shift its ideological positions further to the right to compensate for the potential losses.

Hypothesis 3a: Center-Right parties' ideological positioning will be conditioned by their role in the government and the percentage of votes received by RRWPs in the previous election.

## **Data and Methods**

The data for this project come primarily from the Manifestos Project. The Manifestos data is compiled via analysis of party platforms. While the dataset provides position estimates on a number of position areas, I utilize only the general left/right scale. The dataset begins in 1945, however, I limit my data to only those elections since 1994, the year RRWPs were first elected to national legislatures in Europe. I also limit the dataset to only those countries who are a member of the OECD, as non-OECD European nations commonly have party bounds associated with ethnic groups.

Because I am focusing on the effect RRWPs have on their center-right counterparts, I have excluded all those parties from the analysis categorized as left-wing. Also removed from analysis are those parties listed as radical right, as I am not concerned with their placement on the left/right scale, only their effect on center-right parties. Additionally, this dataset only includes effective parties, defined as those parties winning seats in their state's legislature. The dependent variable in this study is the center-right parties' placement on the left/right scale as assigned by the Manifestos Project and consists of two-party families, Conservatives and Christian Democrats.

There are three explanatory variables used within this study, each measuring an aspect of RRWP influence. The first hypothesis (the effect of the presence of a rightwing party within the system) is tested via a dummy variable (1 if there is an effective party, 0 if not). My expectation for this test is that the presence of an effective RRWP will encourage center-right parties to move further to the right in an effort to recapture votes.

The second approach to exploring the influence of RRWPs tests the effect the absolute strength of RRWPs have on the ideological position of center-right parties. In this case the independent variable is measured as the percentage of votes the RRWP earned in the previous election. This variable ranges from 0 to 26.91. I, of course, expect to find there is a positive relationship between the number of seats won by RRWPs and movement of the center-right party on the left/right scale. Larger wins by RRWPs should incentivize these more centrist parties to change their public positions in an effort to retain votes and avoid marginalization.

Lastly, I consider the role of government participation has on center-right party behavior. This is also a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if the party is in government, 0 otherwise. I expect the impact of government participation will have a leftward influence on center-right parties; therefore, the sign should be negative. I also control for semi-presidentialism, also a dichotomous variable in which 1 indicates a semi-presidential system.

This study employs time series cross-sectional models using an OLS estimator. As a party's left/right placement in period  $t$  are highly correlated with their placement in period  $t-1$ , I include a lagged dependent variable in all models. This lagged variable is included to help control for serial correlation (Abou-Chadi, 2016). In an effort to control for heterogeneity I employ a random effects model, controlling for correlation among countries and parties.

## **Results and Discussion**

Model 1 of Table 1 represents a test of the base model of my analysis. The results of this test indicate support for my first and third hypotheses. The second hypothesis, center-right parties in more permissible electoral systems will be more ideologically moderate relative to center-right parties in less permissible systems, is not supported and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The variable 'Lag of RRWP vote share' in Model 1 represents the test of the first hypothesis, center-right parties will shift to the right relative to the percentage of votes received by the RRWPs in the previous election. The results do, in fact, indicate center-right parties are responsive to the success RRWPs have in the previous election. While the coefficient of .445,

significant at the .1 level, is not as strong as other variables it does show that center-right parties are aware of RRWP success and are willing to make adjustments to their manifestos in the face of that success.

- Table 1

Right/Left Placement of Center-Right Parties	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Lag right/left placement of C/R parties	0.454 (0.078)***	0.397 (0.076)***	0.448 (0.077)** *
Lag of RRWP vote share	0.445 (0.233)*	-2.306 (0.762)***	-0.120 (0.359)
Effective number of parties (seats)	0.324 (0.902)	-1.091 (0.943)	0.195 (0.895)
C/R party in government	-4.956 (2.813)*	-6.324 (2.723)**	-8.211 (3.203)**
Eff. number of parties X RRWP vote share (lag)		0.668 (0.177)***	
C/R party in gov X RRWP vote share (lag)			0.938 (0.457)**
Semi-presidential dummy	-2.450 (3.049)	-1.192 (2.943)	-3.370 (3.050)
Constant	2.122 (4.480)	8.538 (4.621)*	4.483 (4.580)
<i>N</i>	159	159	159

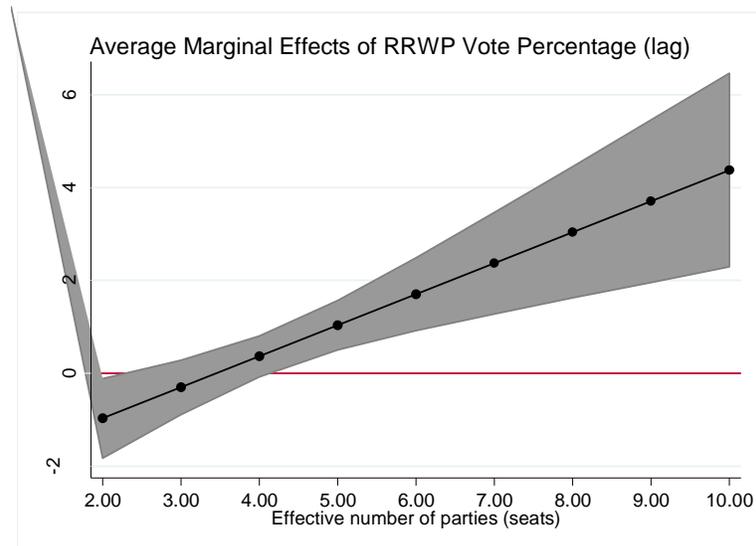
- \*  $p < 0.1$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$   
 - Standard errors in parentheses

Hypothesis 3, center-right parties' will moderate their positions if they are members of the government, is also supported in Model 1. The center-right party in government variable, with a coefficient of -4.956, is the strongest in this test and this result remains consistent throughout subsequent tests. Given the strength of this variable, I can draw the conclusion governing parties are very reluctant to move their ideological position to the extreme. Also, this

result suggests center-right parties in government prefer to moderate their position, moving closer to the center of the bell curve. Therefore, they will only move their ideological position to the right in the presence of a true threat from an extreme party.

Mode 2 of Table 1 represents a test of the hypothesis 2a, center-Right parties' ideological shift will be conditioned by the percentage of votes received by RRWPs in the previous election and the permissibility of the electoral system. The variable of interest in this model is the interaction of the effective number of parties and the lag of RRWP vote share. Given that the coefficient for this interaction is positive and significant at the .01 level, I can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that center-right parties do respond to threats posed by RRWPs when permissibility is high.

Figure 2



As demonstrated in Figure 2, one can see the direct positive relationship between the number of effective parties in a legislature and the ideological movement of center-right parties.

I argue this shift in ideological preference is due to increased pressure and uncertainty experienced by political parties in highly competitive electoral environments. Center-right parties in relatively less permissible systems do not appear to be influenced at all by these RRWPs. In fact, the results indicate in two party systems, center-right parties faced with a RRWP, move towards the left, a finding supported by Adams and Merrill (2006).

Hypothesis 3a, Center-Right parties' ideological shift will be conditioned by their role in the government and the percentage of votes received by RRWPs in the previous election, is tested in Model 3. The results indicate support for the hypothesis at the .05 level. While these parties have a tendency to move towards the center, in the face of a threat from a RRWP, center-right governing parties will move their ideological position to the right.

Figure 3

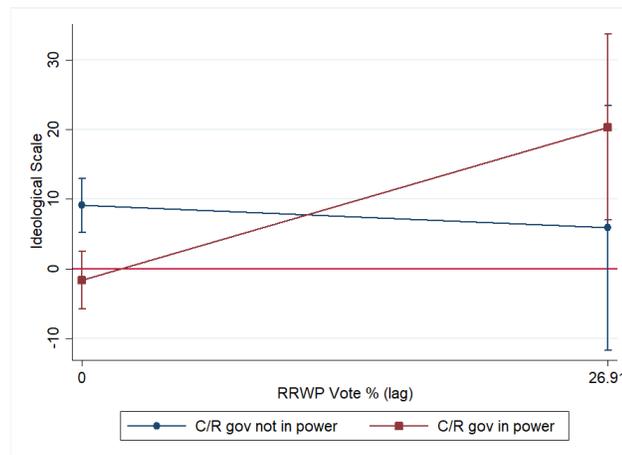


Figure 3 further describes the impact of RRWPs on governing parties. The range on the x-axis indicates the minimum and maximum vote shares for RRWPs in the data set. Those center-right parties in government show a willingness to modify their ideological position that is

not present in non-governing parties. Given the overlapping confidence intervals, I cannot say non-governing center-right parties are affected by RRWPs. It seems there is something peculiar to a center-right party's placement in government as it relates to ideological decisions when faced with increasingly powerful RRWPs.

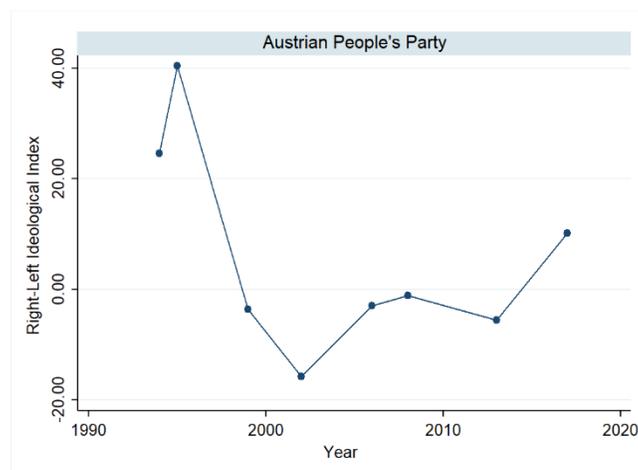
## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This study attempted to assess the effects RRWPs have on policy agendas of center-right parties. Via time-series cross-sectional analysis of European cases from 1994-2017, I found center-right parties adjust their ideological positioning in response to RRWP success in previous elections. However, the data indicate center-right parties are reluctant to make rightward shifts in their ideology. It is only in the face of increasing electoral permissibility and strong RRWP threats that center-right parties will move rightward on the scale. Outside of those conditions center-right parties choose to maintain their ideological positions, or in the case of governing parties, move to the left.

These findings support the previous works of Budge (1994) and Adams et al. (2004) demonstrating a reluctance of political parties to change their ideological positioning. I find only those parties facing true challenges from extremist parties were willing to make changes to their ideological positions. Ideological shifts to the extreme represent a risk to parties that under normal circumstances is unnecessary. However, successful rightwing extremist groups represent a real threat to the electoral success of center-right parties. This is especially relevant due to the current circumstances in Europe.

The case of the Austrian People's Party (OVP) is a fairly good example of exactly this phenomenon. Since 1970 the dominant party within Austria has been the Austrian Socialist Party (SPO) with the OVP often joining them as part of the ruling coalition. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the mass influx of refugees, extremist groups began to gain prominence, most notably the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO). Following this initial shock which caused a spike in the OVP's position on the scale (seen in figure 4), the OVP began a trend of moderation. Ostensibly, this was a strategy pursued by the party to maintain their position within the governing coalition.

Figure 4



The OVP continued to lose ground to the FPO through the remainder of the 1990's until the election of 2002. Due to internal struggles within the FPO stemming from its participation in the government, the party split and the OVP was able to reap the rewards, earning 42% of the vote in 2002 (Nordsieck, 2019). It was following this election that the FPO was able to regain traction with the public by refocusing on oppositional tactics and the immigrant Muslim

population. The success enjoyed by the FPO and its offshoot right-wing party the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO) in subsequent elections, compromised the electoral success of the OVP. Following the 2002 elections, the OVP lost its status as formateur and only received 34 and 26 per cent of the vote in 2006 and 2008, respectively. It is at this point which we can see the ideology of the party shift back to the right in an effort to counter the success of the FPO. Following this shift, the OVP was able to regain control of the government and formed a coalition with the FPO in 2017.

The real-world consequences of these shifts can be significant to those who reside in these states; in this case immigrants are the losers. The rightward shift of the OVP and the inclusion of the FPO in the governing coalition of Austria has had real negative effects on those non-natives who wish to live and work there. Sebastian Kurz (OVP), the chancellor of Austria following the 2017 elections and foreign minister prior to them, has taken a hard line against immigrants living in Austria. During his tenure as foreign minister, Austria closed off its borders with Turkey, placed a ban on full face coverings, and discontinued government support for Sudwind Magazine, a periodical focusing on migration, ecology, democracy and human rights (Der Standard, 2016). These strategies only continued during his tenure as chancellor.

As ideological changes continue throughout Europe, and even globally, it will be important to continue to study the role extremist parties have on others in their party system. While this study does not attempt to answer questions about issue ownership or what types of ideological changes parties make, future research should consider the changes to specific issue

areas in which RRWPs specialize. This paper has shown that RRWPs do influence center-right parties, especially those in government. As illustrated by the Austrian example, this can lead to very real negative consequences for the people impacted by these policy shifts. Therefore, understanding how these RRWPs affect those in power will be crucial in the coming years.

## Conclusion

This research project explored three facets of the resurgence of radical right-wing parties in Western Europe. Following the three-paper method, I chose three separate but related topics to study. I attempted to diversify the focus of the chapters by focusing on three distinct perspectives of the right-wing movement: immigration, globalization, and party influence. When designing each of these chapters, I tried to take an approach to the topic that I had not seen, or at least was not common in the literature. By doing this, I hoped to add as much value to the existing knowledge of these topics as possible.

The main contribution of the first chapter is related to the testing of submissive authoritarianism. Most prior work concerning right-wing authoritarianism typically skewed towards the measurement of aggressive authoritarians (Duckitt et al., 2010). I instead, attempted to focus on submissive authoritarians. This understudied group is vitally important to understanding motivations behind RRWP support, as these are the people who do not go out and protest or carry out violent acts, but instead quietly cast their ballot for extremist parties. As we see in the third chapter, these less obvious supporters of RRWPs help put them in position to influence the policy choices of governments.

Chapter 1 does have its limitations. By using existing data, the statistical model was restricted by the questions available on the ESS. I was able to build sufficient scales to test my hypotheses, but it is recognized that, with original data, analysis would be improved. Lack of localized population data was also an issue. More specified data would have helped to draw more

accurate conclusions surrounding immigrant populations. However, as the population variables were significant and in the expected direction, I believe they are sufficient to support the conclusions of the paper.

I would like to extend the research in this paper to study the potential shifting of preferences of the submissive authoritarians in Germany. There are a number of new research questions that can be spawned from this study, such as: how long does it take for a new status quo to be established? At what point do the submissive authoritarians no longer feel threatened by cultural change due to the presence of immigrants? Once they reach that point will they change their preferred political parties? The next several years, maybe decades, will provide plenty of opportunity for the analysis of submissive authoritarians.

The second chapter in this work studies the relationship between globalization and RRWP support. Globalization is certainly not a new focus of study; there is a wealth of literature focused on this topic. However, most globalization research that considers its relationship to the support of RRWPs looks at either immigration as a driver of support<sup>4</sup> or the economic consequences of globalization such as job loss (Arzheimer, 2009). I change the perspective in this chapter by addressing the cultural threat generated by foreign companies as they expand to new markets.

The findings of this study support the idea that the presence of foreign businesses is a negative indicator of RRWP support. This suggests, at least in the French setting, the success of

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<sup>4</sup> See Shehaj et al. (2019) for an exhaustive list.

a foreign fast-food company is a good indicator of how well that area supports RRWPs. Higher numbers of these establishments should correspond with lower support for these extremist parties. The causal arrow is not defined in this study. It could be that these stores generate cultural threat that drives support, but it is also just as likely that the owners of these stores know they are most likely to be successful in areas populated by people with less extremist political preferences.

This study does leave some questions that future studies could answer more fully. The generalizability of this study to other countries is uncertain. The importance of food culture to the French people may not be extendable to other societies. Food culture is certainly important to most nationalities, but possibly not to the extent that it is to the French. Future work would need to take into consideration how important food is to the culture of study. Also, the origin country of the MNC may be important. If relationships between the two societies is hostile, acceptance of the MNC may be affected and increased levels of threat may be experienced. This study focuses on food MNCs, but future studies could consider the manufacturing or technology sectors. It would be interesting to explore the juxtaposition between job creation and cultural differences introduced by a foreign entity and that area's preferences for foreign cultures. I think this research track has a lot of potential and I am excited to explore it.

The third chapter in this work looks at the impact of RRWPs on the center-right parties in the same political system. I find supporting evidence that shows RRWPs do encourage center-right parties to adopt policy positions further to the right than they would prefer under normal circumstances. Most other research focuses on two aspects of RRWPs; origins of support<sup>5</sup> or

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<sup>5</sup> See Milner (2021) for a list.

their ability to impact the seat share of center-right parties (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). This study shifts the perspective by exploring the shifts center-right parties have in policy preference due to the presence and strength of the RRWPs in the system.

This study is important to the literature as it shows the potential RRWP support has on policy choices. The results provide evidence that governing parties do shift their policy choices when confronted by strong RRWPs. The real-world implications for this finding are extremely important. As these RRWPs increase in strength, the consequences of their influence affect the lives of real people in a significant way. These findings provide further evidence of the democratic rollback the Western world has been experiencing that Freedom House has warned us about.

One drawback to this study is the large scope. This study encompasses all of Western Europe and most of Central Europe. Future study of this topic should consider the impact of RRWPs to specific countries. An in-depth case study would certainly be in order. Future study should also address the long-term impact of the policy shifts enacted by the center-right parties. Once/if they are able to regain the support lost to these RRWPs, will they revert to the previous policy positions closer to the center, or will these changes be permanent?

This body of work has contributed to our knowledge of RRWPs, their support, and the impact they have had on some of the most well-established democracies in the world. I believe that it is very important to understand these aspects of the current right-wing phenomenon we are experiencing. The influence of these groups has led to the questioning and mistrust of long-established democratic institutions, which, if left unchecked, can have significant implications

for current and future generations. Understanding the mechanisms behind their rise and influence is important to safeguarding the democratic institutions they threaten.

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## **Conclusion**

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## **Education**

Ph.D. Political Science, University of Mississippi, 2021

Major field: Comparative Politics

Minor field: International Relations

Dissertation: Illiberal influences: Extreme Right-Wing Support and its Consequences  
Dissertation Chair: Greg Love, Ph.D.

MPA, Western Kentucky University, 2013

B.A. History, Western Kentucky University, 2004

## **Teaching Experience**

Instructor, University of Mississippi, 2018-2021

Courses: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Teaching Assistant, University of Mississippi, 2015-2018

Courses: Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to American Politics, Terrorism and Conflict

Teaching Assistant, Western Kentucky University, 2012

Courses: Introduction to American Politics

## **Conference Presentations**

“Populist Push: The Effect of Right-Wing Populist Parties on Centrist Parties’ Positions” Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, IL, 2019.

“Authoritarianism and Germany: A study of native attitudes” Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, Il, 2018.

**Awards**

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**Research Interests**

Populism; Nationalism; Political Behavior; Party Politics; European Politics

**Working Papers**

“Authoritarianism and Germany: A study of Native Attitudes”

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**Professional Service**

Peace Science Conference. University of Mississippi, 2015.