

# Not So Radical After All

## Ideological Diversity among Radical Right Voters and Its Implications for Party Competition\*

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### Abstract

Traditionally, parties on the radical right in Western Europe have espoused socially conservative, pro-family values, strongly opposing women's rights, reproductive rights, and LGBT rights, in addition to their broader, authoritarian orientations. Radical right voters have been assumed to be similar. However, in light of more liberal radical right parties such as the Dutch Party for Freedom, as well as the fact that others, such as the French Front National, have moderated some of their strongest-held positions on these issues, I ask, "What are the ideological characteristics of radical right voters in Western Europe, and what are the implications of this for party competition?" Using latent class analysis and the 8<sup>th</sup> wave of the European Social Survey, I find that only a minority of radical right voters conform to the traditional conceptualization – the remainder are either moderate or progressive. Second, using logistic regression, I show that radical right parties lose votes as their positions become more extreme and that generally, more moderate parties exist in countries with more moderate voters. Conditioned on the ideological makeup of their country, radical right parties face a trade-off between moderating and staying extreme.

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## Introduction

Within the last few decades, radical right parties have reappeared across Western Europe with renewed vigor and popularity. Although almost every country in the region is home to at least one radical right party, their success and popularity is far from uniform. These parties bear less resemblance to one another, instead mirroring the countries within which they exist and operate. Scholars of the radical right have tended to focus on the commonalities among those in this party family, noting the xenophobia, nativism, and racism inherent to their ideologies. Fewer scholars have looked past the commonalities and considered the variety among radical right parties and voters.

In the past 10-15 years, an increasingly prevalent phenomenon has appeared among the West European radical right – parties are abandoning their conservative and traditionalist positions on issues of gender, sexuality, and the family. This is especially curious considering the “post-materialist” or “transnational” cleavage and dealignment arguments, positing that these parties developed in reaction to the extreme progressivism of green or new-left parties. In this, a new politics dimension referred to by Hooghe et al. (2002) as “GAL-TAN” was created (Inglehart, 1977; Hooghe et al., 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006; Bornschier, 2018; Hooghe and Marks, 2018).<sup>1</sup>

Despite this moderating phenomenon, the literature has largely continued to assume that radical right parties are simply that – radically conservative and traditionalist – and that voters are similar. Other than our perception of radical right voters as nativist, authoritarian, disaffected, and marginalized by society, we know very little about the ideology of these voters. To shed light on this gap in the literature, I ask, “What are the ideological characteristics of radical right voters, and what are the implications of this for party competition?”

In the same vein as Spierings et al. (2017) who confirm the existence of “sexually-modern nativists,” this study proposes the existence of different ideological classes of radical right voters, finding that only a minority conform to the usual prototype of “conservative nativist” and that a significant portion are indeed “progressive” on social issues other than immigra-

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<sup>1</sup>GAL-TAN stands for “green/alternative/libertarian – traditional/authoritarian/nationalist” and represents parties’ sociocultural positions (Hooghe et al., 2002)

tion. In light of this, it is reasonable to assume that the positions parties take on these issues has implications for their success or failure, depending on the ideological makeup of their country. This article contributes not only to the literature on radical right parties, but also to that on extremist parties and electoral and ideological competition more broadly. This question is of vital importance as it will lead to a better understanding of how radical right parties are adapting to a changing electorate and behaving in ways that have been hitherto unexpected per the broader literature on this topic.

This article proceeds in two parts. First, using the 8<sup>th</sup> wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) and latent class analysis, I find four latent ideological classes among West European voters as a whole and show how these classes are distributed among radical right voters, specifically. I also show how these classes map onto countries as well as individual-level demographic characteristics such as age, education, gender, and income. Second, I examine how these ideological classes interact with party ideology (using party position data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES)) and how this affects the success of radical right parties. I argue that radical right parties lose votes from non-conservative voters as their positions become more extreme and that generally, more moderate parties exist in countries with more moderate voters. Evidence from logistic regression models provides support for this argument.

## The Radical Right and Its Voters

Extant research on the ideology of the radical right has suffered a significant blind spot. Albeit with a few exceptions (Spierings et al., 2017; Akkerman, 2015), radical right parties are assumed to be conservative and traditionalist, as the name of the party family might suggest. These assumptions harken back to the party family's origins, as explained by cleavage theory. Although Lipset and Rokkan (1967) predicted a "freezing" of the West European party system in their book on cleavage theory and party system development, this prediction was not borne out by the events of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. While previously the party system had been structured on class-based, economic – or materialist – cleavages, the 1970s and 1980s saw the development of the post-materialist cleavage, which

gave rise to green, or new-left, parties (Rydgren, 2007). As Inglehart (1977) writes, this was a “silent revolution,” involving a “fundamental shift from ‘materialist’ values to ‘post-materialist values ... prioritiz[ing] the expansion of individual freedom ... multiculturalism, gender and racial equality, and sexual freedom.” Subsequently, the beginnings of the radical right’s rise to prominence began to take shape, with these parties “demanding the protection of (patriarchal) family values and a nationally-oriented immigrant-free way of life” (Kitschelt, 1995; Meguid, 2005, p.384).

The rise of the radical right in the aftermath of this shift led many to attribute cultural backlash against this progressivism as a primary cause of the rise of the radical right (Inglehart, 1977; Kriesi et al., 2008; Inglehart and Norris, 2016; Bornschieer, 2018). However, specific, empirically testable factors have also been cited including expansion of higher education, economic and cultural modernization, globalization, and electoral dealignment.

First, when examining the effect of education on voting behavior, it becomes clear that green parties draw heavily from highly educated sectors of society. According to Bornschieer (2018), “the expansion of education could be considered a revolution similar to the national and industrial revolutions that were at the center of Lipset and Rokkan’s model.” So-called “universalistic values” became politicized during this time of “cultural modernization”, creating a new sociocultural dimension of conflict. Starting in the 1980s, radical right parties began exploiting voters at the other side of this divide – those who are *not* highly educated (Kriesi et al., 2008; Bornschieer, 2010, 2018).

However, lack of education is not the sole reason that voters became vulnerable to radical right appeals. The process of dealignment was, according to some, a result of drastic changes to the economy in the form of modernization (Kitschelt, 1995; Betz and Immerfall, 1998; Van der Brug et al., 2005; Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014). Interestingly, proponents of this approach posit materialist concerns as the cause of this new post-materialist cleavage. According to this argument, the loss of manufacturing jobs resulting from the shift from an industrial economy to a service economy created clear “winners” and “losers” of modernization. These “losers” – primarily working class men – abandoned socialist and social democratic parties because these parties began moving to the center to appeal to the growing middle class (Kriesi and Bornschieer, 2012). Similar theories include

“realistic group conflict” and the “status politics” approach (for a review, see Arzheimer, 2018). The radical right’s anti-immigrant and anti-system appeals are believed to resonate with these disaffected voters. As such, many of these “losers” are assumed to support the radical right, since these parties seek to arrest the rapid change occurring in society. However, scholars have not found clear empirical evidence in support of the economic modernization argument. Globalization has similarly created “winners” and “losers”, but there is similarly little evidence that “globalization losers” comprise a significant radical right support base (see Bornschier, 2018).

Perhaps more promising is the “transnational cleavage” hypothesis (Hooghe and Marks, 2018). By introducing cultural aspects, this approach conceptualizes “globalization” as encompassing more than simply trade and economic policy. As Hooghe and Marks (2018) discuss, the Euro and refugee crises have reinforced the importance of the GAL-TAN dimension to West European politics. They relabel the post-materialist cleavage “transnational” because it pits issues of nationalism and the autonomy of nation-states against immigration, European integration, and the accompanying loss of agency to “foreigners” both inside and outside Europe. These issues are undeniably of great concern to radical right parties, and this new emphasis on the integrity, or lack thereof, of the nation-state is in line with numerous studies that show that anti-immigrant sentiment is a major reason voters are drawn to the radical right (Lubbers et al., 2002; Van der Brug and Fennema, 2003; Norris, 2005; Van der Brug et al., 2005; Cutts et al., 2011; Arzheimer, 2018). While this theory may not explain the *emergence* of the sociocultural dimension of politics, it does offer an explanation for both why this dimension has remained salient and why radical right parties have shifted their appeals in recent years. To illustrate how these appeals have changed, or not, overtime, in Figures 1–3, I present longitudinal radical right party positions on the three facets of TAN – social lifestyle (T, traditionalism), civil liberties (A, authoritarianism), and immigration (N, nationalism). To aid in comparison between the three positions, the y-axes are on the same scale.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The 2002-3 data are from Benoit and Laver (2006)’s expert survey (a precursor to CHES) and are measured on a 0-20 scale where 0 is extremely supportive and 20 is extremely opposed. The 2006-2014 data are from CHES, which measures these variables on a 1-10 scale, where 0 is extremely supportive and 10 is extremely opposed (Bakker et al., 2015; Polk et al., 2017). I divided the Benoit and Laver (2006) scores by 2 to place them on the same scale as CHES. The Benoit and Laver (2006) dataset does not contain civil

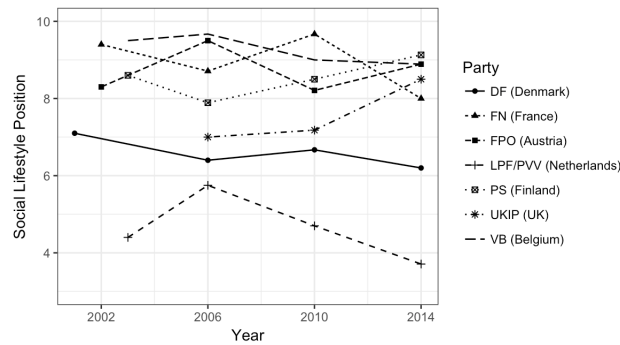


Figure 1: Social lifestyle position, 2002-2014

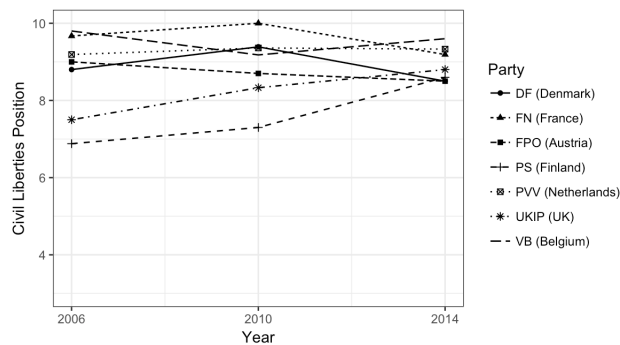


Figure 2: Civil liberties position, 2006-2014

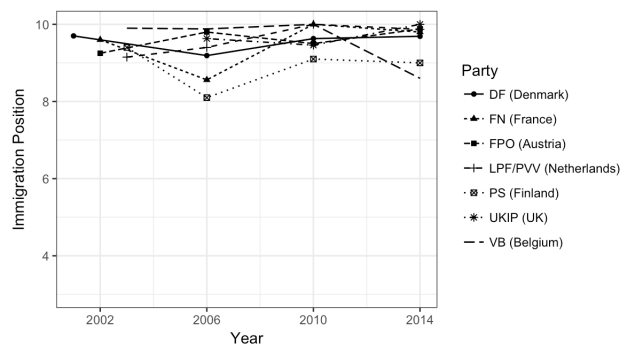


Figure 3: Immigration position, 2002-2014

From these figures, a few main observations should be noted. First, as Figure 3 illustrates, there is little variation in immigration position overtime and across parties – these parties are strongly nativist across the board. Civil liberties position is similar, though not as striking. liberties scores for 2002-3; therefore, this variable begins in 2006. Parties chosen are West European radical right parties active for the entire 12 year period, with the exception of UKIP, which is not measured in 2002-3. I treat the defunct LPF as functionally equivalent to its successor, PVV (for further explanation, see Akkerman (2005)).

Notable is the parties' relative convergence on this issue in 2014, however – perhaps related to the increased salience of immigration. In contrast, social lifestyle position exhibits notable variation not only between parties but also within parties. Party rhetoric and behavior corroborates this observation. For example, the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) has been committed to gender equality and LGBT rights for much of its existence, claiming this to be a bastion of Western society (Vossen, 2011). This is not unlike its defunct predecessor, the Pim Fortuyn List, founded by the eponymous Pim Fortuyn, a xenophobic, openly gay sociologist (Akkerman, 2005; Spierings et al., 2017). Further, then-leader of the Danish People's Party, Pia Kjaersgaard, once stated, "In Denmark we adhere to liberal values. We accept and respect the choices people make. We accept homosexuality. In Iran you will be hanged for your homosexuality" (Akkerman, 2015). As a specific example of a policy shift, Marine LePen, leader of the French Front National, began to support civil partnerships during debates over the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2012 (Akkerman, 2015).

As previous work has shown, the radical right is no longer uniformly "rightist" with regard to economic policy. In fact, these parties frequently are ardent supporters of the welfare state (Mudde, 1999, 2007; Ennser, 2012). They also commonly choose to downplay economic issues since the sociocultural dimension is their primary dimension of contestation (Rovny, 2013; Koedam, 2017). As such, some scholars, such as Marks et al. (2006), have begun to refer to these parties as "radical TAN" rather than "radical right". Although patriarchal traditionalism was indeed important in the 1980s and 1990s during the initial rise of this family, it has clearly become less of an issue in recent years. According to the transnational cleavage argument, this is largely due to the increased salience of the immigration issue. Thus, perhaps this family is moving towards the name "radical AN".

In light of these party-level observations, how do voters compare? Ideologically, we know little about radical right voters aside from their strong nativism. Can it be assumed that they are conservative traditionalists reacting against "universalistic values", as the literature argues, or do they exhibit ideological variation not unlike the parties they support? In order to address this gap in the literature, this article explores ideological diversity among radical right voters.

## Latent Class Analysis

In order to examine the ideological characteristics of both Western Europe’s voters at large as well as voters on the radical right, I employ a method known as latent class analysis (LCA), estimated with the `poLCA` package in R. LCA is a type of structural equation modeling whereby unobserved patterns (“classes”) in the data are uncovered (Oberski, 2016). Observations are “probabilistically group[ed through maximum likelihood estimation] ... into a ‘latent class’, which in turn produces expectations about how that observation will respond on each manifest variable” (Linzer et al., 2011).<sup>3</sup> LCA is similar to an ideal point model, such as that on which DW-NOMINATE is based, except it assumes that the latent trait is categorical, rather than continuous (Linzer et al., 2011). The number of classes the model estimates is chosen by the researcher, either through theoretical expectation or model fit criteria. I determined that my model should estimate four classes because it exhibited the lowest Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC) as compared to other class number specifications.<sup>4</sup> LCA has been frequently used in public health and psychology research but has only recently been applied to questions in political science (e.g. Blaydes and Linzer, 2008; Feldman and Johnston, 2014; Alvarez et al., 2017).

As Feldman and Johnston (2014) show in their study of American voters’ ideologies, it is dangerous to assume that party identification, or identification as “liberal” or “conservative”, holds the same meaning for every individual. Ellis and Stimson (2012) concur. Much of this conceptual confusion for voters is related to their attempts at placing themselves on a unidimensional ideological scale, despite that political competition operates on at least two dimensions – economic and sociocultural (Carmines and Stimson, 1981; Hooghe et al., 2002; Miller and Schofield, 2003; Feldman and Johnston, 2014).<sup>5</sup> Should a libertarian place

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<sup>3</sup>A manifest variable is an observed survey response. This is in contrast to a latent variable, which is unobserved.

<sup>4</sup>According to Linzer et al. (2011), class number can be decided iteratively, by first fitting a model with two classes and increasing class number by one “until a suitable fit is achieved” (p.6). A balance should be struck between under- and over-fitting because although fit is generally improved as class number increases, the model eventually begins to fit to noise. BIC is the recommended model fit criteria to consider because it measures not only how well a model fits but also whether it may be over-fit through penalizing the model as the number of parameters increases. This criterion indicates to the researcher which model is the most parsimonious.

<sup>5</sup>Multidimensional competition typically occurs in contexts with a salient regionalism issue. See Elias et al. (2015).



herself on the left or right? What about a post-communist? Because there exist voters whose economic and social stances do not fit neatly onto a unidimensional scale, it is not unreasonable to expect fairly significant heterogeneity within broad ideological groupings or party families.

For these analyses, I utilized the 8<sup>th</sup> wave of the European Social Survey (ESS), completed in 2016 (NSD Norwegian Centre for Research Data, 2016). I included data from West European countries available in the survey with a competing radical right party, for a total of 10 countries.<sup>6</sup> The models were estimated using four survey questions and two covariates – age and level of education. Age is a continuous variable ranging from 15-100 and education was recoded to a 1-5 scale where 1 indicates an individual who has not completed high school and 5 indicates a holder of a master’s, professional, or doctoral degree. The latent classes were estimated from questions pertaining to social progressiveness and libertarianism.<sup>7</sup> First, as an indicator of authoritarianism, should rules be followed at all times, even if no one is watching? Second, are men more entitled to jobs during an economic downturn than women? Third, should gays and lesbians be allowed to adopt children? And finally, do immigrants undermine or enrich one’s country? For the first question, respondents were asked to place themselves on a scale from 1-6, with low values indicating agreement. The second and third questions were measured on a 1-5 scale, again with low values indicating agreement. The final question asked respondents to indicate their beliefs on a 0-10 scale, with low values representing a belief that immigrants undermine one’s country. I recoded this variable to a 1-5 scale to better resemble the other three response structures. “Don’t know”s and refusals were coded as missing.

Below I present my results from a latent class analysis on the full dataset ( $N = 18,054$ ).<sup>8</sup> Four latent classes emerge from the data, the largest of which is “moderates” at 35% of the sample. These are individuals with no strong feelings regarding the four survey questions. 21% of voters are “conservative nativists,” fairly authoritarian and traditionalist and opposing immigration. The final two categories are “progressives” and “pro-immigration

<sup>6</sup>Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix 1 for exact question wordings and Appendix 3 for descriptive statistics.

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix 2 for full results.

progressives”, 19% and 25% respectively. The main difference between these two classes is that the latter believe strongly that immigrants enrich their country while the former take a more neutral stance.

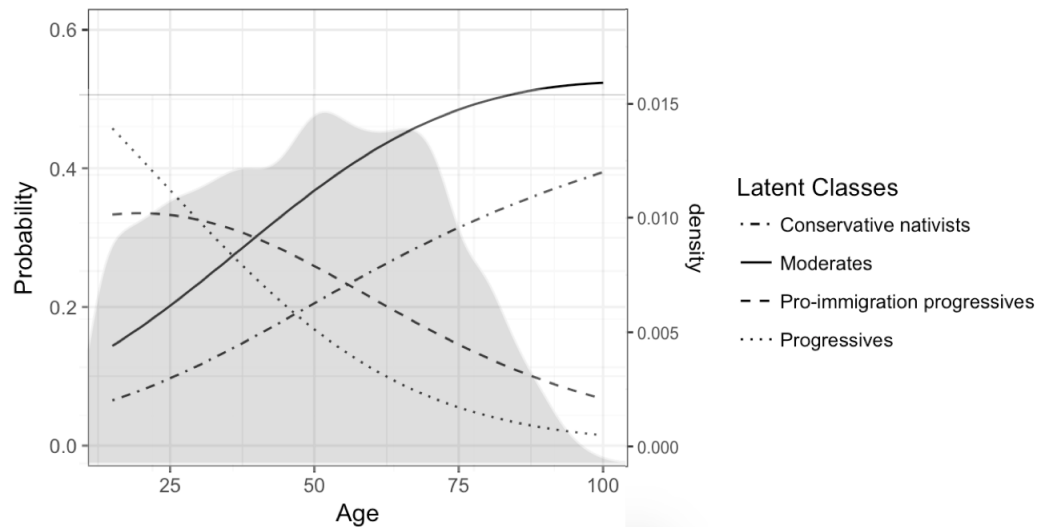


Figure 4: Predicted Probability of Latent Class by Age, Full Sample

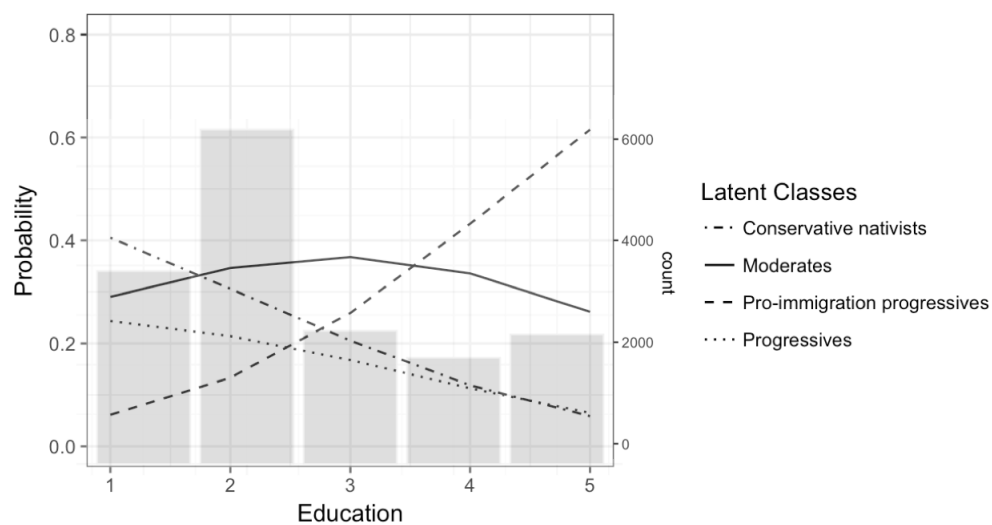


Figure 5: Predicted Probability of Latent Class by Education Level, Full Sample

As Figure 4 shows, at mean level of education, as age increases, the probability of being in the conservative nationalist and moderate classes increases. Conversely, older individuals have

a very low probability of being in the progressive or pro-immigration progressive classes. Figure 5 indicates that at age 50 (the sample mean), those with advanced degrees are more likely to be pro-immigration progressives, while they are very unlikely to be progressives or conservative nationalists. As the literature predicts, individuals with low educational attainment are more likely to be conservative nationalists.

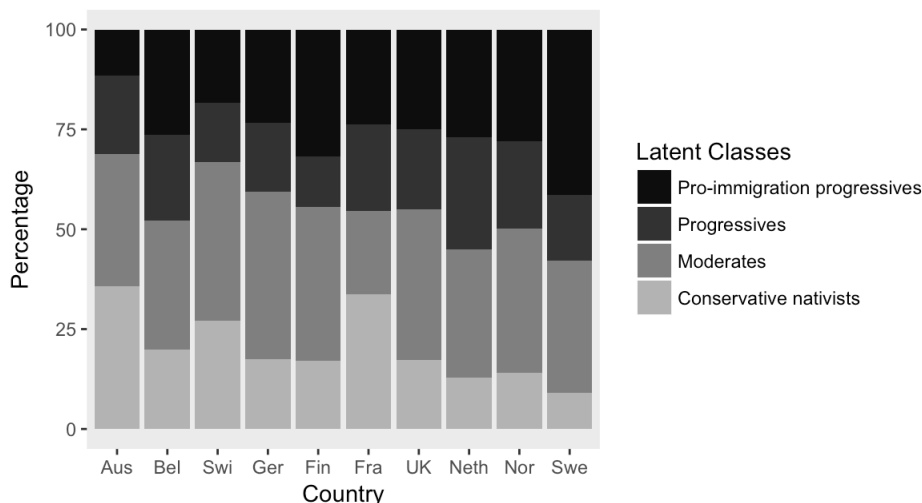


Figure 6: Latent Class Allocation by Country, Full Sample

Per Figure 6, latent class allocation varies by country.<sup>9</sup> Countries such as France and Austria have the largest percentage of voters in the conservative nationalist class. The fewest of this type of voter exist in the Netherlands and Sweden, where a majority of their populations fall into the two progressive classes.

Next, to elucidate whether or not radical right voters concentrate in the conservative nationalist class, I subset the data to include only those individuals who indicated that they voted for a radical right party in their country's last election. As Table 1 shows, almost 43% of radical right voters comply with the radical right prototype of "conservative nationalist," about a two-fold increase from the amount in the full dataset. However, percentages of radical right voters falling into the moderate and progressive classes are comparable to the respective percentages of voters in the full dataset. Unsurprisingly, there are very few pro-immigration progressives among radical right voters; the fact that any appear at all is likely

<sup>9</sup>Because I include only one radical right party per country, this figure equivalently shows latent class by party. For included parties and further explanation, see Appendix 3.

due to measurement and prediction errors, the latter of which is due to the fact that the model can only estimate an individual's probable, not actual, class membership

Table 1: Weighted Latent Class Percentages

Latent Class	Radical Right %	Full %
Conservative Nativists	42.82%	20.42%
Moderates	33.38%	34.55%
Progressives	20.48%	19.37%
Pro-Immigration Progressives	3.32%	25.66%

Because the literature finds that women are more likely than men to hold progressive social stances (Dolezal, 2010), in Figure 7, I present latent class by gender for radical right voters. Most notably, a larger proportion of women are progressives than men, who are more likely to be either moderate or conservative nativist. Although women are less likely to vote for the radical right than men (Immerzeel et al., 2015), women comprise about 1/3 of the weighted sample. Thus, women are not rare in this subset, and this finding is likely not an artifact of the data.

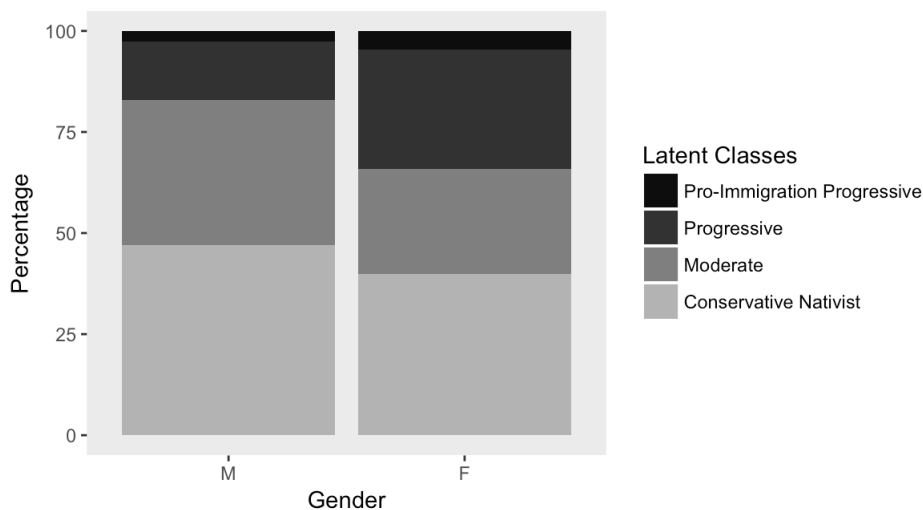


Figure 7: Latent Class Allocation by Gender, Radical Right Subset

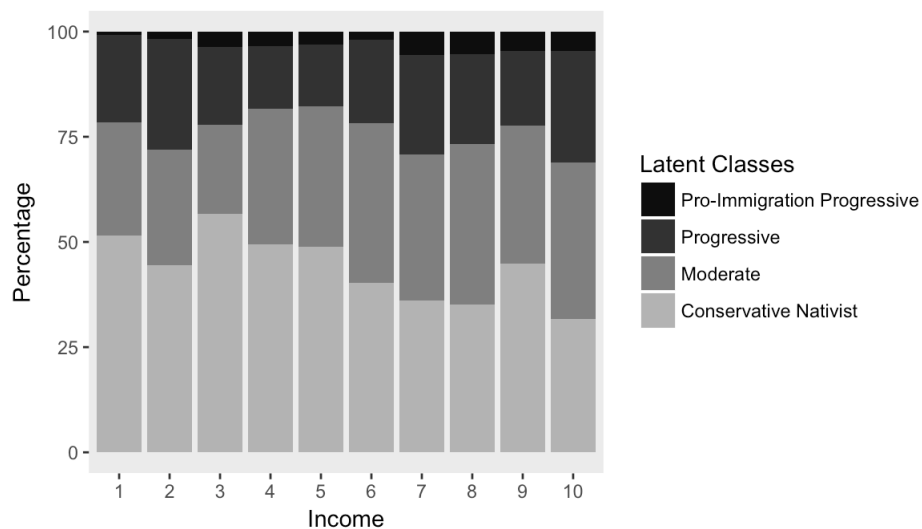


Figure 8: Latent Class Allocation by Income, Radical Right Subset

Further, since the literature has argued that the radical right is heavily supported by working class men, Figure 8 illustrates latent class among radical right voters at various levels of household income, with 1 being the lowest value. Although conservative nativists are more likely to be found at lower levels of income, there is no clear trend.

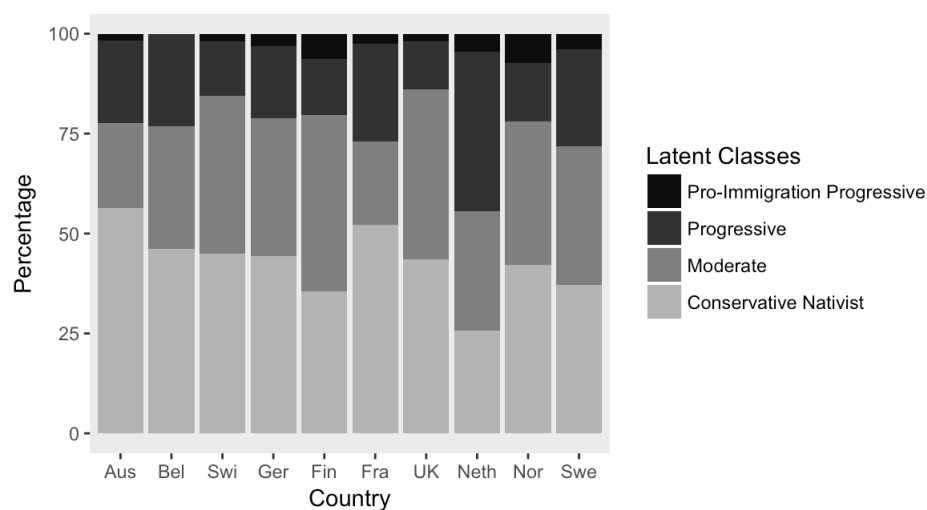


Figure 9: Latent Class Allocation by Country, Radical Right Subset

Finally, I again present latent class allocation by country in Figure 9. The results largely mirror those in Figure 6 above – the Netherlands and Sweden have the fewest conservative nativists while Austria and France have the most, suggesting that the ideological distribution

of radical right voters is not wholly distinct from that of voters on the whole.

## Party Competition

The literature on radical right party success has heavily emphasized electoral system context. Lubbers et al. (2002) contend that micro-level indicators such as educational attainment, gender, and anti-immigrant sentiment are fairly invariant cross-nationally and that the differences in radical right vote share stem from country-level contextual factors such as whether center-right parties have taken on nativist stances. Van der Brug et al. (2005) concur, arguing that radical right party success “will depend on the competition they face from large (right-wing) parties” (p. 548). Since larger parties generally are more successful policy-wise, the extent to which voters will choose a smaller radical right party depends on how strong the center-right appears to be regarding immigration (see also Pardos-Prado, 2015).

However, how does radical right success interact with voter ideologies, and are these effects conditioned on parties’ distance from their center-right competitors? Spierings et al. (2017) argued that “sexually modern nativists” will be more likely to vote for radical right parties that take on more moderate positions on LGBT rights. This hypothesis was not confirmed. As the authors discuss in their conclusion, this is likely due to not taking into account the positions of parties’ center-right competitors, as voters may be inclined to choose a more moderate center-right party provided this party has taken on a nativist stance. Following from Pardos-Prado (2015), instead of absolute party position, I use radical right parties’ position *distance* from their center-right competitor as a measure of relative extremism. Figures 10 and 11 show that there is indeed a negative relationship between vote share and position distance on social lifestyle and GAL-TAN.

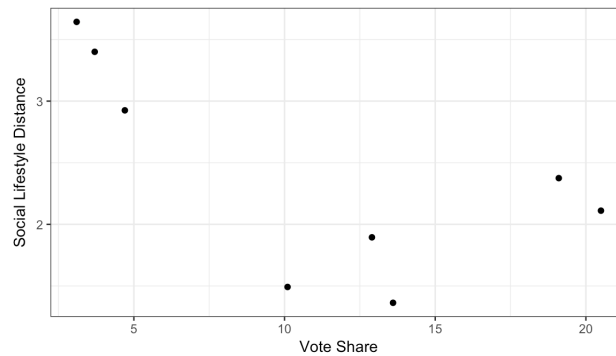


Figure 10: Correlation between Social Lifestyle Distance and Radical Right Vote Share

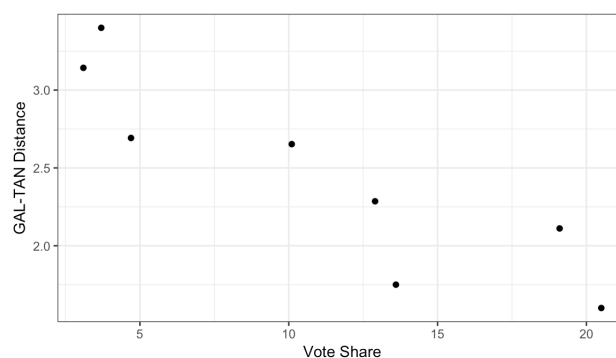


Figure 11: Correlation between GAL-TAN Distance and Radical Right Vote Share

Because a majority of radical right voters are *not* conservative nationalists, I argue that as a party's ideology becomes more distant from their center-right competitor, they can expect to lose votes from moderates and progressives and gain votes from conservative nationalists. I also argue that as a radical right party's distance on immigration from their center-right competitor increases, it can expect to gain votes. Because of the increased salience of immigration in recent years (Hooghe and Marks, 2018), taking an extreme stance on this issue offers a signal to voters that the radical right is more credible on this issue than other parties. From the discussion thus far, I formulate the following hypotheses:

**H1:** As ideological distance on social issues between a radical right party and their center-right competitor *decreases*, radical right parties can be expected to win more votes.

**H2:** As ideological distance on immigration issues between a radical right party and their

center-right competitor *increases*, radical right parties can be expected to win more votes.

**H3a:** As ideological distance on social issues between a radical right party and their center-right competitor *decreases*, radical right parties can be expected to win more votes from progressives and moderates.

**H3b:** As ideological distance on social issues between a radical right party and their center-right competitor *increases*, radical right parties can be expected to win more votes from conservative nativists.

To test these hypotheses, I now proceed with logistic regression analyses predicting radical right vote. From the above analysis, I obtained a predicted latent class for each individual in my dataset, included as a factor variable with “progressive” as the reference category. In order to determine how a radical right party’s relative position vis-a-vis a center-right alternative affects the choice to vote radical right, I use party position variables from the 2014 CHES wave – social lifestyle, civil liberties, immigration, and GAL-TAN (Bakker et al., 2015; Polk et al., 2017). I transformed these positions into distances by subtracting a country’s center-right party’s position from that of the country’s radical right party.<sup>10</sup> I control for gender, age, and education level (reference category is “did not complete high school”) in Models 1–4. However, because I include latent class variables in Models 5–8, I only include gender as a control because age and education were covariates in my latent class analysis and thus have already been controlled for (Linzer et al., 2011).<sup>11</sup>

Several findings emerge from Table 2. First, as the literature predicts, women are less likely to vote radical right than men. Second, as education level increases, an individual becomes less and less likely to vote for a radical right party. Interestingly, moderates seem slightly less likely to vote radical right than progressives while conservative nativists, unsur-

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix 3 for parties and descriptive statistics.

<sup>11</sup>The use of maximum likelihood estimation for hierarchical models with a small number of groups is not advised if one is attempting to make inferences about level-2 variables. As (Stegmueller, 2013) notes, although the coefficient estimates tend to be unbiased, the standard errors are biased downward, possibly leading to unwarranted confidence in one’s results. To account for this issue, I have begun to fit Bayesian models. These preliminary analyses corroborate the maximum likelihood results presented here with regard to direction, size, and significance.



prisingly, are more likely.

Finally, what role does party position play in vote choice? As Models 1 and 5 show, as distance on social lifestyle increases, the likelihood of voting radical right decreases. In Models 2 and 7, I find a similar, yet stronger result for GAL-TAN distance. Contrary to expectations, immigration distance is not significant and takes on opposing signs in Models 3 and 7. However, it *does* attain significance in Model 8 and has a positive coefficient. Further corroboration for this result is found in Models 4 and 8 in the interaction between social lifestyle distance and immigration distance. Figure 12 provides an interpretation of this result. As shown, at the lowest value of social lifestyle distance, parties have a greater baseline probability of receiving votes compared to at higher values, and this effect is amplified as immigration distance increases, providing support for both H1 and H2.

Taken together, the results from Table 2 imply that radical right parties are punished electorally for taking positions that are seen as too extreme or out of sync compared to the right more broadly, as H1 predicts. Interestingly, taking more a distant position on immigration seems to only help parties in combination with more moderate positions on social issues.

Table 2: Multilevel Logistic Regression with Country Random Effects

	Dependent variable: Radical Right Vote							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
<b>Female</b>	-0.566*** (0.075)	-0.568*** (0.075)	-0.566*** (0.075)	-0.567*** (0.075)	-0.506*** (0.076)	-0.507*** (0.076)	-0.507*** (0.076)	-0.506*** (0.076)
<b>Age</b>	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)				
<b>Education</b>								
<i>High School</i>	-0.119 (0.091)	-0.124 (0.091)	-0.135 (0.091)	-0.111 (0.091)				
<i>Some College</i>	-0.493*** (0.126)	-0.497*** (0.126)	-0.510*** (0.126)	-0.491*** (0.126)				
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	-1.170*** (0.191)	-1.171*** (0.190)	-1.178*** (0.191)	-1.166*** (0.191)				
<i>Advanced Degree</i>	-1.443*** (0.179)	-1.441*** (0.178)	-1.444*** (0.179)	-1.440*** (0.179)				
<b>Latent Class</b>								
<i>Conservative Nativist</i>					0.500*** (0.097)	0.497*** (0.098)	0.486*** (0.098)	0.507*** (0.097)
<i>Moderate</i>					-0.426*** (0.104)	-0.432*** (0.104)	-0.435*** (0.104)	-0.427*** (0.104)
<i>Pro-Immigration Progressive</i>					-2.443*** (0.223)	-2.442*** (0.223)	-2.442*** (0.223)	-2.454*** (0.223)
<b>Social Lifestyle Dist.</b>	-0.580*** (0.143)			0.031 (0.350)	-0.602*** (0.125)			0.120 (0.271)
<b>Immigration Dist.</b>		-0.022 (0.128)		0.401 (0.244)		0.030 (0.129)		0.529*** (0.191)
<b>GAL-TAN Dist.</b>			-0.812*** (0.171)				-0.773*** (0.194)	
<b>Soc. Life. Dist. * Imm. Dist.</b>				-0.217* (0.117)				-0.252*** (0.092)
Constant	-0.858** (0.378)	-2.170*** (0.515)	-0.252 (0.445)	-1.920** (0.755)	-1.050*** (0.317)	-2.604*** (0.508)	-0.595 (0.489)	-2.529*** (0.575)
Observations	15,096	15,096	15,096	15,096	15,096	15,096	15,096	15,096
Log Likelihood	-2,930.610	-2,935.187	-2,929.628	-2,928.944	-2,799.184	-2,804.708	-2,800.151	-2,796.122
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,879.220	5,888.374	5,877.257	5,879.887	5,612.368	5,623.416	5,614.303	5,610.244
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	5,947.820	5,956.973	5,945.857	5,963.731	5,665.723	5,676.772	5,667.658	5,678.844

Note: Reference categories are “did not complete high school” and “progressive”; \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

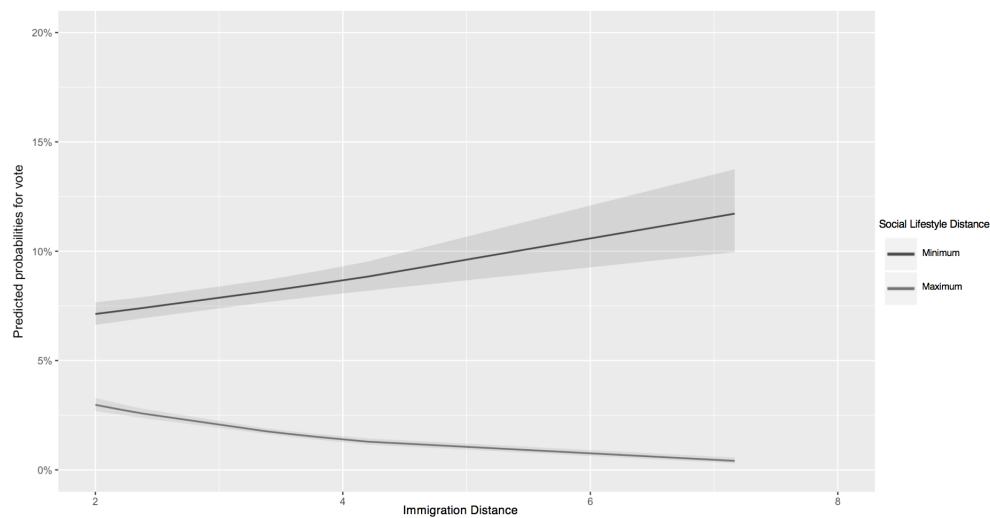


Figure 12: Predicted Probability Plot – Social Lifestyle Dist.\* Immigration Dist.

I test hypotheses H3a and H3b in Table 3. Here, I interact position distance with latent class. As shown in Figure 13, at low social lifestyle distance, there is a greater probability of radical right vote across the board. However, at higher values, conservative nativists have the highest probability of voting radical right, providing support for both of these hypotheses.

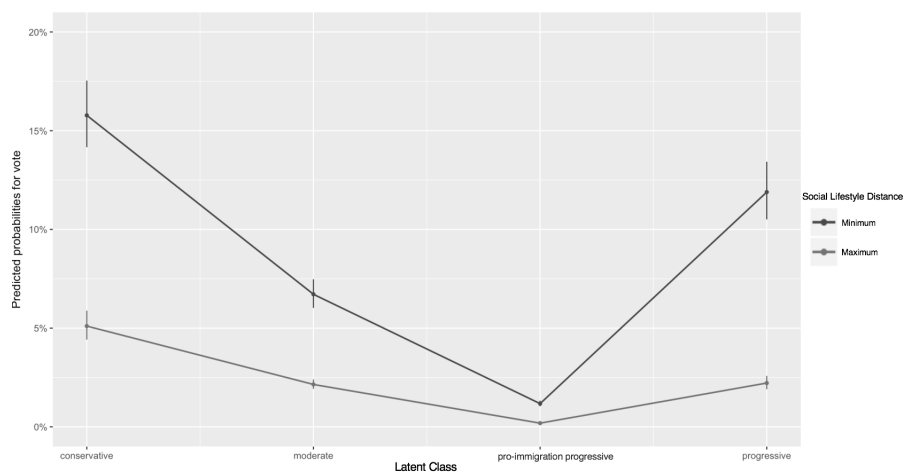


Figure 13: Predicted Probability Plot – Latent Class \* Social Lifestyle Distance

Table 3: Multilevel Logistic Regression with Country Random Effects

	<i>Dependent variable: Radical Right Vote</i>		
	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11
<b>Female</b>	−0.506*** (0.076)	−0.505*** (0.076)	−0.507*** (0.076)
<b>Social Lifestyle Dist.</b>	−0.782*** (0.160)		
<b>Immigration Dist.</b>		−0.007 (0.137)	
<b>GAL-TAN Dist.</b>			−0.965*** (0.237)
<b>Latent Class</b>			
<i>Conservative Nativist</i>	0.008 (0.306)	0.024 (0.253)	−0.119 (0.405)
<i>Moderate</i>	−0.985*** (0.337)	−0.396 (0.261)	−0.991** (0.460)
<i>Pro-immigration Progressive</i>	−2.392*** (0.722)	−2.111*** (0.522)	−1.954* (1.109)
<b>Interactions</b>			
<i>Soc. Life.*Con.</i>	0.235* (0.139)		
<i>Soc. Life.*Mod</i>	0.261* (0.149)		
<i>Soc. Life.*Pro-Im.</i>	−0.027 (0.341)		
<i>Imm.*Con.</i>		0.142** (0.069)	
<i>Imm.*Mod.</i>		−0.008 (0.069)	
<i>Imm.*Pro-Im.</i>		−0.089 (0.137)	
<i>GAL-TAN*Con.</i>			0.273 (0.178)
<i>GAL-TAN*Mod</i>			0.245 (0.197)
<i>GAL-TAN*Pro-Im.</i>			−0.215 (0.488)
Constant	−0.674* (0.375)	−2.477*** (0.534)	−0.161 (0.578)
Observations	15,096	15,096	15,096
Log Likelihood	−2,797.105	−2,800.961	−2,798.439
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,614.209	5,621.922	5,616.877
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	5,690.431	5,698.144	5,693.099

*Note:* Reference category is “progressive”; \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

In order to further test how party position affects voters, I turn again to my radical right subset. Because of the small number of pro-immigration progressives in this sample, I removed these 23 observations. In Table 4, I present results from multinomial logistic regression models predicting radical right latent class with party distance variables. As above, I do not control for age and education since these variables were included in the latent class analysis. These results further corroborate the evidence presented above. First, as Model 12 shows, compared to conservative nativists, progressive radical right votes are more likely to be found supporting those parties with lower values of social lifestyle distance. Second, for both moderates and progressives, there is negative coefficient on immigration distance, suggesting that these two groups are less likely to support radical right parties that take more distant positions on immigration. However, as shown above, this effect is likely mediated by social lifestyle distance. Figures 14 and 15 show predicted probability of latent class over values of social lifestyle distance and immigration distance, respectively.

Table 4: Multinomial Logistic Regression with Country Fixed Effects

	Cons:Mod Model 12	Cons:Prog Model 12	Cons:Mod Model 13	Cons:Prog Model 13	Cons:Mod Model 14	Cons:Prog Model 14
<b>Female</b>	-0.074 (-0.455, 0.307)	0.940*** (0.547, 1.332)	-0.074 (-0.455, 0.307)	0.940*** (0.547, 1.332)	-0.074 (-0.455, 0.307)	0.940*** (0.547, 1.332)
<b>Social Lifestyle Dist.</b>	0.012 (-0.131, 0.156)	-0.360*** (-0.543, -0.177)				
<b>Immigration Dist.</b>			-0.123*** (-0.213, -0.033)	-0.156*** (-0.259, -0.053)		
<b>GAL-TAN Dist.</b>					0.338*** (0.104, 0.571)	0.043 (-0.221, 0.307)
Constant	-0.970*** (-1.479, -0.461)	-0.752** (-1.331, -0.173)	-0.480*** (-0.794, -0.166)	-0.923*** (-1.295, -0.551)	-1.484*** (-2.196, -0.773)	-1.582*** (-2.351, -0.812)
Observations	774	774	774	774	774	774
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,483.147	1,483.147	1,483.147	1,483.147	1,483.147	1,483.147

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

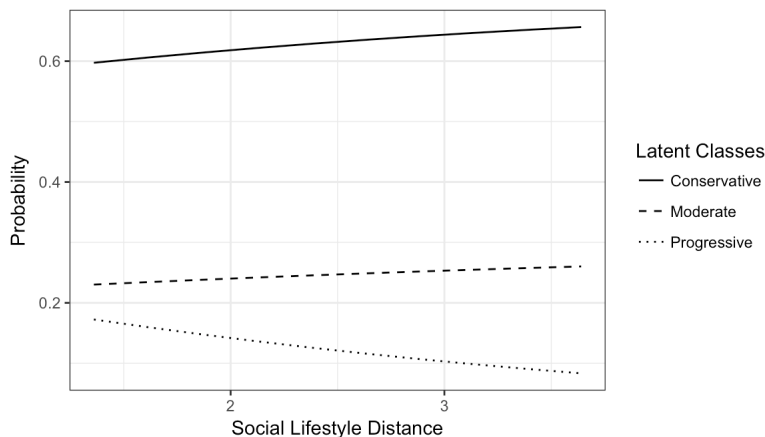


Figure 14: Predicted Probability of Latent Class over Values of Social Lifestyle Distance

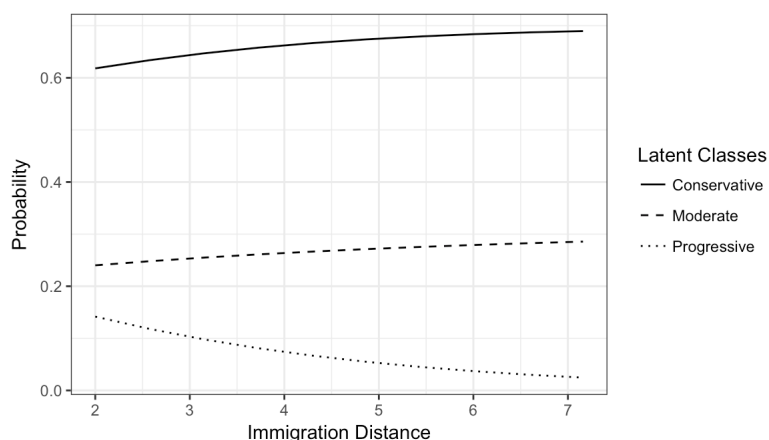


Figure 15: Predicted Probability of Latent Class over Values of Immigration Distance

On the whole, my evidence suggests that these parties garner more votes when taking more moderate positions, but this is conditioned by the ideological makeup of their countries. The three parties with the lowest social lifestyle distances are the French Front National (FN), the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands (PVV), and the Sweden Democrats (SD).<sup>12</sup> Referring back to Figure 9, we see that these countries are also the three with the largest proportion of progressive radical right voters. Taken with the results from my full logistic regression analyses (Tables 2 and 3), it seems that radical right parties face a trade-off when deciding which constituencies to court. For example, when FN decided to support civil partnerships for gay and lesbian couples, they likely made themselves vulnerable to losing

<sup>12</sup>See Appendix 3

votes from their more conservative supporters. However, the vote loss could be offset by the party opening itself to a new, more progressive base. In some cases, such as with the Netherlands and Sweden, there truly are fewer conservative nativists than elsewhere (see Figure 6) and moderating would likely have less of a negative effect. In France, the opposite is true – along with Austria, it is the country with the *most* conservative nativists. The fact that FN is moderating in such a climate is perhaps surprising. In this case, we can assume that French conservative nativists are possibly voting for other parties.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Is there ideological diversity among radical right voters? This article answers with a resounding “yes”. Importantly, I found that conservative nativists comprise only a minority of radical right voters, corroborating a previous study of the “progressive nativist” phenomenon (Spierings et al., 2017). Second, through combining latent ideological classes with party position distance, I found that radical right parties that take on more extreme ideological positions on social issues likely lose votes from all but their most conservative constituencies. I also found that extreme stances on immigration lead to more votes not in isolation but rather in the presence of moderate social stances. Finally, I found that more moderate parties, such as the PVV and SD, are more likely to exist in countries with more moderate voters, such as the Netherlands and Sweden. In deciding whether or not to moderate, radical right parties are faced with a trade-off – is it more preferable to lose conservative voters or gain moderate and progressive ones? The answer to this question likely is conditioned upon the country within which they exist and operate and the way these country-level characteristics are reflected in the party landscape.

In 1995, Kitschelt argued that the radical right’s “winning formula” was economic neoliberalism combined with sociocultural authoritarianism. Previous studies have shown that pro-welfare state stances on the part of radical right parties are increasingly common, chipping away at the economic side of the formula (Mudde, 2007). This article brings new evidence against the sociocultural aspect – parties that maintain extreme sociocultural stances seem to be at a disadvantage. This likely is a result of the increased salience of immigra-



tion and the “transnational cleavage” (Hooghe and Marks, 2018). This disadvantage may be compounded in the future if younger radical right voters remain progressive as they age (see Figure 4). In light of this evidence, I concur with Pardos-Prado (2015) who stated that radical right parties “are better off by minimizing old ideological dimensions and only stressing a cultural framing of immigration” (p. 366). Thus, future research on this topic could focus on the salience of issues. Do radical right voters actually care about issues other than immigration? If not, what is the utility in parties maintaining comprehensive platforms?

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## Appendix 1 – Questions

- **ESS H1** – (Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you.) **H1G** – He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.
- **ESS B33a** – When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.
- **ESS B36** – Gay male and lesbian couples should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples.
- **ESS B42** – Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?

## Appendix 2 – Latent Class Model Results

Table 5: Full Sample

	Progressives	Moderates	Con. Nativists	Pro-Im. Progressives
<b>Rules</b>				
1 (Strongly agree):	0.0595	0.0520	0.1550	0.0585
2:	0.1907	0.3024	0.3170	0.1685
3:	0.2134	0.2527	0.1842	0.2092
4:	0.2288	0.1894	0.1217	0.2009
5:	0.2268	0.1774	0.1514	0.2522
6:	0.0807	0.0261	0.0706	0.1108
<b>Jobs</b>				
1 (Strongly agree):	0.0082	0.0009	0.0516	0.0043
2:	0.0049	0.0426	0.1579	0.0024
3:	0.0475	0.1190	0.1446	0.0064
4:	0.2179	0.5336	0.2480	0.1047
5:	0.7216	0.3038	0.3979	0.8823
<b>Adoption</b>				
1 (Strongly agree):	0.5954	0.0115	0.1056	0.5834
2:	0.2908	0.4537	0.1649	0.2617
3:	0.0475	0.1190	0.1446	0.0064
4:	0.0000	0.2739	0.2417	0.0362
5:	0.0188	0.0304	0.3196	0.0382
<b>Immigrants</b>				
1 (Undermine):	0.0674	0.0086	0.1702	0.0000
2:	0.1229	0.1067	0.2341	0.0000
3:	0.3147	0.3162	0.2927	0.0444
4:	0.2857	0.3735	0.1901	0.2623
5:	0.2093	0.1950	0.1129	0.6933
Predicted Probability:	0.2093	0.3059	0.2478	0.2369



## Appendix 3 – Descriptive Statistics

Table 6: Parties and Position Distances

Country	Radical Right	Center-Right	Soc. Life. Dist.	GAL-TAN Dist.	Im. Dist.	Civ. Lib. Dist.
Austria	FPÖ	ÖVP	2.11	1.60	3.78	2.50
Belgium	VB	CD&V	3.40	3.40	4.20	3.60
Finland	PS	KESK	2.37	2.11	3.37	2.37
France	FN	UMP	1.36	1.75	2.20	1.83
Germany	AfD	CDU	2.93	2.69	3.57	2.35
Netherlands	PVV	VVD	1.49	2.65	2.37	1.55
Norway	FrP	—	—	—	—	—
Sweden	SD	KD	1.98	2.28	7.16	2.45
Switzerland	SVP	—	—	—	—	—
United Kingdom	UKIP	Cons.	3.64	3.14	2.00	1.43

Denmark, Italy, and Greece were excluded because they do not appear in the 8<sup>th</sup> wave of the ESS. Norway and Switzerland were excluded from the logistic regressions because they do not appear in the CHES. Two countries in the dataset are home to two radical right parties, as coded by CHES – Austria (BZÖ) and Germany (NDP). These parties received smaller vote shares than the major radical right parties (FPÖ and AfD) and also are qualitatively different from other parties in the dataset – BZÖ is a moderate splinter from FPÖ, and NDP is a neo-fascist party.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Full Dataset

Variable	n	Min	q <sub>1</sub>	Median	Mean	q <sub>3</sub>	Max	SD	IQR
Rules	15,096	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.4	5.0	6.0	1.4	3.0
Jobs	15,096	1.0	4.0	5.0	4.3	5.0	5.0	0.9	1.0
Adopt	15,096	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.4	3.0	5.0	1.3	2.0
Immigration	15,096	1.0	3.0	4.0	3.6	5.0	5.0	1.2	2.0
Gender	15,096	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	0.5	1.0
Education	15,096	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.6	4.0	5.0	1.3	2.0
Age	15,096	15.0	35.0	51.0	49.9	65.0	100.0	18.6	30.0
Vote	15,096	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	2.0	0.2	0.0
Latent Class	15,096	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.8	4.0	4.0	1.1	2.0
GAL-TAN Pos.	15,096	7.8	8.7	8.9	8.9	9.1	9.3	0.4	0.4
Civ. Lib. Pos.	15,096	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.9	9.2	9.3	0.3	0.6
Soc. Life. Pos.	15,096	3.7	8.0	8.1	7.8	8.5	9.1	1.5	0.5
Im. Pos.	15,096	9.0	9.3	9.8	9.6	9.9	10.0	0.3	0.6
GAL-TAN Dist.	15,096	1.6	1.8	2.7	2.5	2.7	3.4	0.6	0.9

Im. Dist.	15,096	2.0	2.2	3.6	3.5	3.8	7.2	1.4	1.6
Civ. Lib. Dist	15,096	1.4	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.5	3.6	0.6	0.6
Soc. Life. Dist.	15,096	1.4	1.9	2.4	2.4	2.9	3.6	0.8	1.0

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics, Radical Right Subset

<b>Variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>q<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>q<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>IQR</b>
Rules	797	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.4	5.0	6.0	1.5	3.0
Jobs	797	1.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	5.0	5.0	1.1	1.0
Adopt	797	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.9	4.0	5.0	1.4	2.0
Immigration	797	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.4	3.0	5.0	1.2	2.0
Gender	797	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	2.0	2.0	0.5	1.0
Education	797	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.1	2.0	5.0	1.0	1.0
Age	797	15.0	35.0	50.0	49.6	63.0	95.0	17.5	28.0
Latent Class	797	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.7	1.0
GAL-TAN Pos.	797	7.8	8.7	8.8	8.8	9.1	9.3	0.4	0.4
Civ. Lib. Pos.	797	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.9	9.2	9.3	0.3	0.6
Soc. Life. Pos.	797	3.7	8.0	8.2	7.8	8.9	9.1	1.7	0.9
Im. Pos.	797	9.0	9.6	9.8	9.7	9.9	10.0	0.3	0.3
GAL-TAN Dist.	797	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.7	3.4	0.5	0.9
Im. Dist	797	2.0	2.2	3.4	3.4	3.8	7.2	1.4	1.6
Civ. Lib. Dist.	797	1.4	1.8	2.3	2.2	2.5	3.6	0.5	0.7
Soc. Life. Dist	797	1.4	1.5	2.1	2.1	2.4	3.6	0.7	0.9

Table 9: Correlation Matrix

	Rules	Jobs	Adopt	Immigration	Gender	Education	Age	Vote	Latent Class
Rules	1.00								
Jobs	0.13	1.00							
Adopt	-0.13	-0.25	1.00						
Immigration	0.08	0.20	-0.26	1.00					
Gender	0.04	0.10	-0.13	0.02	1.00				
Education	0.06	0.19	-0.12	0.28	-0.01	1.00			
Age	-0.11	-0.17	0.27	-0.10	0.01	-0.07	1.00		
Vote	-0.01	-0.05	0.09	-0.24	-0.06	-0.09	-0.00	1.00	
Latent Class	0.03	0.08	0.05	0.33	0.01	0.39	0.13	-0.06	1.00
GAL-TAN Pos.	-0.01	0.04	0.08	0.04	-0.01	0.02	0.00	-0.04	0.06
Civ. Lib. Pos.	0.10	0.13	-0.11	0.06	0.01	-0.01	0.06	0.02	0.04
Soc. Life. Pos.	-0.01	-0.03	0.15	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.00	-0.00	0.03
Im. Pos.	0.05	0.01	-0.03	-0.17	0.05	-0.09	0.04	0.05	-0.03
GAL-TAN Dist.	-0.02	-0.01	-0.14	0.09	-0.02	0.06	-0.04	-0.10	-0.03
Im. Dist.	-0.08	0.05	-0.08	0.12	-0.03	0.06	-0.02	-0.01	0.05
Civ. Lib. Dist.	-0.08	-0.04	-0.00	0.03	-0.03	0.04	-0.07	-0.04	0.01
Soc. Life. Dist.	-0.05	-0.08	-0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.05	-0.05	-0.09	-0.04

Table 10: Correlation Matrix, Continued

	GAL-TAN Pos.	Civ. Lib. Pos.	Soc. Life. Pos.	Im. Pos.	GAL-TAN Dist.	Im. Dist.	Civ. Lib. Dist.	Soc. Life. Dist.
GAL-TAN Pos.	1.00							
Civ. Lib. Pos.	-0.34	1.00						
Soc. Life. Pos.	0.84	-0.57	1.00					
Im. Pos.	-0.11	0.42	-0.31	1.00				
GAL-TAN Dist.	0.02	-0.08	-0.31	0.00	1.00			
Im. Dist.	0.30	0.01	0.20	-0.13	-0.04	1.00		
Civ. Lib. Dist.	0.24	-0.56	0.21	-0.37	0.20	0.56	1.00	
Soc. Life. Dist.	0.44	-0.60	0.32	-0.16	0.76	-0.04	0.30	1.00