

How Right Is Your Neighbor: Investigating Far-Right Party Success in a Fractionalized Society and Economic Hardship

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Abstract

This paper seeks to identify the factors that explain the variation in far-right party electoral success in the most advanced democracies. I argue that far-right parties in democracies with higher levels of ethnic fractionalization will experience more success, as there is more opportunity to create conflict between in-groups and marginalized out-groups in diverse settings. Further, I argue that ethnic fractionalization will have the most pronounced effect on far-right party success during times of economic hardship. I test these claims using data on far-right party electoral success in countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development from 2012 to 2022 and find partial support for my claims. The results suggest that analyses of far-right electoral gains are highly dependent on the sample of countries examined and shed light on the strategies that these parties use to attract voters.

Introduction

Far-Right aligned political parties have garnered increased success over the last decade. It is natural for democracies to experience ebbs and flows in different ideological directions. However, that alone cannot explain the distribution of success across developed democracies. One can look at the differences between political action in Japan and Germany to demonstrate this point. Both are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with strong GDP and have similar land areas, populations, and moderate population densities. Yet, their countries, political outcomes are staggeringly different. In the most recent German national election, the 'Alternativ für Deutschland' (AfD), a prominent Far-Right party, saw a substantive vote share capture of 20% - 152 of 630 seats - despite significant public condemnation of that party (Zeier 2025). During the same time in Japan, the Far-Right parties collectively won less than 3% - 6 of the 465 seats (Fahey 2024). This example raises the more general question: what social circumstances and political appeals explain the differences in Far-Right party success across advanced democracies?

To provide answers to this question, I argue that ethnic fractionalization, particularly under economic hardship conditions, will strongly predict Far-Right party success in national elections. To test these claims, I analyze the vote share received by Far-Right parties in OECD countries from 2012-2022. I find partial support for my claims, which advances our understanding of the conditions under which these parties can obtain greater vote-share, and thus greater political success.

To this point, much of the academic literature has focused on Western Europe, so my project seeks to extend the analysis beyond that region. Democracies are global and challenged by many shared phenomena including climate change, unstable global economic conditions, and increased population movements such as migration and refugeeism. Despite the highly varied global context, what we know about Far-Right party behavior and success is steeped in the history of Western Europe, which operates within a vastly different context than other regions. I seek to contribute to a more general understanding of a truly global phenomenon, one that currently poses a challenge for many democracies.

In what follows, I survey the literature on fractionalization and Far-Right success, which is very euro-centric. I then advance a more applicable theory explaining Far-Right success utilizing fractionalization and economic conditions to generate 2 hypotheses. From there, I sample wealthy democracies' national elections and measure variables that are common political issues. The results lend credence to the power of rhetorical connections, but also how regional and social context are fundamentally part of political movements. I conclude with a discussion on the impact of global issues on national elections and how Far-Right parties capitalize on the uncertainty surrounding demographic and economic change.

Literature Review

Factors causing far-right wing electoral success are a popular topic of investigation in academic literature. It is well-established that far-right parties utilize misinformation and victimization as tactics to garner voter support (Mudde 2019). Compared to previous variations of extreme and radical right-wing politics, the current 4th wave has seen the divide of populism-elitism particularly diminished (Mudde 2020). As one looks at the most recent crop of parties, the parties have broader goals but are still focused on common ideological pillars (Mudde 2019).

Far-right parties rally behind only a few ideologies, but not all are quantitatively measurable or directly impact government policies and processes (Mudde 2019). Because of the difficulty in measurement, there are 3 popular causes that have been explored; immigration, economics, and electoral rules (Golder 2003; Jackman 1996; Mudde 2020). Through various waves of far-right popularity, these measures have offered varied degrees of correlation (Mudde 2019).

Immigration is the most often investigated cause of far-right success and offers the most significant correlation. There are numerous measures and long-term data collections on immigration, including immigration flow, refugee admittance, and origin of migrants (Podobnik 2017). Anti-immigration is also a central pillar of far-right ideologies (Mudde 2019). The explanatory power of immigration as a cause of far-right success is not consistently strong across all temporal and spatial units (Golder 2003; Podobnik). The most investigated mechanism of immigration's impact on attitudes are the theory of cultural threat and competitive threat (or group threat) (Gorodzeisky 2023).

Measurements of immigration are utilized to indicate cultural change and challenges to economic opportunity (Gorodzeisky 2023; Shehaj 2021). State failure to manage immigrant integration is linked to economic hardship, societal out grouping, and unfavorable policy outcomes for immigrant populations (Wright 2012). With that in mind, cultural threat is not directly measurable and as such is considered a symbolic threat. The underlying premise is that previously non-existent values and cultural activities are more salient due to immigration which challenges majority population attitudes and political leanings. Likewise, competitive threat imagines a similar narrative, where in-group members perceive economic opportunity, privileges, or resources as under threat from immigrants (Gorodzeisky 2023). In either circumstances, the anticipated outcome is greater majority in-group prejudice against immigrant out-group populations that effects assimilation and policy (Gorodzeisky 2023; Podobnik 2017).

Economic explanations are well documented with a vast number of historical measurements including unemployment rate, inequality, trade deficits, GDP growth, and various other market behaviors. Unemployment is among the most well-studied variables in economic causes (Golder 2003; Podobnik 2017; Sipma 2020). Of note, however, is that

most studies of unemployment demonstrate a weaker relationship than immigration and can be linked back to ethnic and racial conflict (Sipma 2020).

Electoral rules and processes are less frequently explored as the cause of far-right success. The impact, however, does not consistently demonstrate a strong correlation (Golder 2003; Jackman 1996). Democratic rules and processes vary greatly between countries and change over time. As this is readily available information recorded into a wealth of records, the explanatory strength is not as straight forward, sometimes producing contradictory interpretations with the same information (Golder 2003; Jackman 1996). While it should be noted that political systems with greater voter protections and representative distribution balance see less far-right success (Golder 2003), variations in democratic norms are not strongly predictive (Jackman 1996).

Competitive threat theory is a commonly referenced explanation for far-right success, leaning into both immigration and economic concerns (Gorodzeisky; Golder; Shehaj, Wright). As many strengths as the theory has, the literature oscillates between immigration and economics having stronger explanatory power (Gorodzeisky 2023; Lichter 2020; Matsubayashi 2012). Both are clearly causes with tremendous repercussions for a state and inform policy outcomes. The obvious link of economics, immigration, and voter outcomes has been researched outside of investigations into the far-right, in the phenomena of fractionalization (Alesina 2001; Kustov 2018; Lichter 2020; Sturm 2015).

There has not been a notable degree of exploration of fractionalization as a cause in far-right wing success. Fractionalization is a measure of deliberate grouping or segregation of people based on identity and has notable impacts on outcomes (Kustov 2018; Lichter 2020). The phenomenon has been measured to impact internal resource distribution, government policy, employment, and wealth (Kustov 2018; Lichter 2020; Matsubayashi 2012; Podobnik 2017; Strum 2015). Fractionalization provides a mechanism that describes the intrinsic link of immigration and economics to policy (Kustov 2018; Lichter 2020; Strum 2015) yet the literature falls short of exploring it's potential link to far-right regime success.

As multiple analyses have noted immigration provides an impact on far-right success, immigration has been an ongoing concern for multiple generations (Gorodzeisky 2023, Sipma 2020, Shehaj 2021). It is well established that communities developed into insular and segregated neighborhoods (Podobnik 2017; Wright 2012). Analysis of inflow rates and measures are common, yet the community building and spatial distribution of immigrant groups is not well explored as a mechanism for far-right success. Further, much of the research on far-right success is Eurocentric. This dearth of research on political and societal values outside mainstream western literature is notable and requires addressing.

Theory

I first assume that resources are limited and that governments decide how to allocate them. This can create competition as all resources, even the most abundant ones, are

subject to scarcity. Thus, the choices voters make about who represents them in government are very high stakes.

Secondly, voters are self-interested. They will elect candidates from parties that they believe will improve their well-being, particularly their material or economic well-being. Although an individual may act irrationally at the aggregate level, the rational choice model indicates that actors choose from available options that best serve their interest.

My final assumption is that parties and their candidates are motivated to win elections. They will adopt platforms and rhetoric that helps them do so. All parties must advertise their position and appeal to voters to gain votes for their expressed goal of obtaining government representation.

Argument

I argue that states with greater racial and ethnic fragmentation create a social context for Far-Right parties to have greater success. People are (naturally or conditioned) inclined to associate with perceived members of their in-group, often to the exclusion of others (McAuliffe 2016). The social and geographical separation of groups causes non-interaction. Intergroup interaction allows for familiarity and enhances understanding of competing political views or goals. Without interaction, competing ideas, experiences, and concepts are not exchanged. This creates a situation where individuals become more insular in their political behavior. Voters will increasingly focus on their own interest and that of those who share their culture and values. In a fractionalized society, this is often a smaller and isolated subset of the population.

These dynamics are exacerbated by the fact that immigration is a primary cause of fractionalization in many countries. This can lead to anxieties about cultural change or loss of identity, a common Far-Right concern, and increase perceptions of increased competition over resources (Rutland 2015). Further, if a society adopts a fragmentary policy of non-integration, those salient differences do not become more familiar, accepted, or understood. As such, voters will prioritize the comfort or well-being of members of their social and cultural groups, relying on the perception that shared identities equate to shared goals and values (Rutland 2015). It is in this context that Far-Right political groups find greater political success.

In this environment, the Far-Right capitalizes on increasing fractionalization. A core Far-Right principal champions inequality and segregation as normal and desired, part of the natural order of society. Far-Right parties identify in-groups and out-groups and impose a hierarchy. The out-groups will be composed of immigrant minorities and other marginalized communities, using nativist, xenophobic, and racist rhetoric to identify and focus on ostracizing out-group individuals (Mudde 2019). They highlight the most salient differences, exemplifying the sharp divide between in-and-out groups. Further, Far-Right parties will lean on populist appeals of a disconnected 'elite' group that is unresponsive to

the needs of the majority. This tactic is especially useful to increase the perceived value of Far-Right parties while also diminishing the value of current parties. It is key that other political entities be perceived as oppositional and not part of the in-group dynamic (Mudde 2020). This allows Far-Right parties to further levy grievances and promote fear through its support base, which due to fractionalization, creates a feedback loop. Given this, I hypothesize:

H1: Far-Right parties are more likely to be successful in states with greater degrees of ethnic or racial fractionalization.

While fractionalization on its own will contribute to Far-Right political success, I further argue that economic conditions have a compounding relationship with fractionalization. Economic conditions are always a prominent political topic (Mudde 2020). Voters are particularly sensitive to trends in unemployment, inflation, and housing prices, as people feel the impact personally. In times of economic hardship, resources are perceived as more finite and diminishing more quickly. With scarcity perceived as more prominent a concern, the threat of competition for those diminishing resources is also perceived as greater. In a more highly fractionalized society, Far-Right parties can double down on the preexisting narrative of nativism and anti-immigration.

Far-Right politicians and parties are already mobilized to capitalize on these circumstances. They further victimize immigrants and other out-group members, blaming these groups as the cause of economic hardship. The in-group, already understandably agitated by diminishing opportunity and higher competition for resources, is looking for those who are responsible. This rhetoric strongly resonates. Far-right candidates emphasize and embellish the severity of out-group threats, which increase discontent, resentment, and even outright hostility. This is extremely useful in mobilizing voters. As such, I hypothesize:

H2: Far-Right parties are more likely to be successful in countries with a high degree of fractionalization, particularly in times of economic decline.

Empirics

I take a quantitative observational approach for this study. I examine far-right party success cross-nationally from 2012-2022. This corresponds with the start of the European immigration crisis precipitated by Syrian civil war, a major event in the resurgence of far-right political efforts (Mudde 2020). This puts the dataset firmly in the 4th wave of far-right politics. The unit of analysis is party-election year

My specific observations are drawn from member states of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD is composed of 38 member countries all dedicated to economic growth and free trade; thus, my analysis will focus on

democracies only. Another major benefit of drawing from OECD states is the extensive measurements for comparison across member states that is reliably maintained across decades (OECD 1960). The OECD is also an international organization; the data measured are not constrained to core western European countries which is the focus of most literature. However, of the 38 member countries, 25 are represented in my data due to data availability issues.

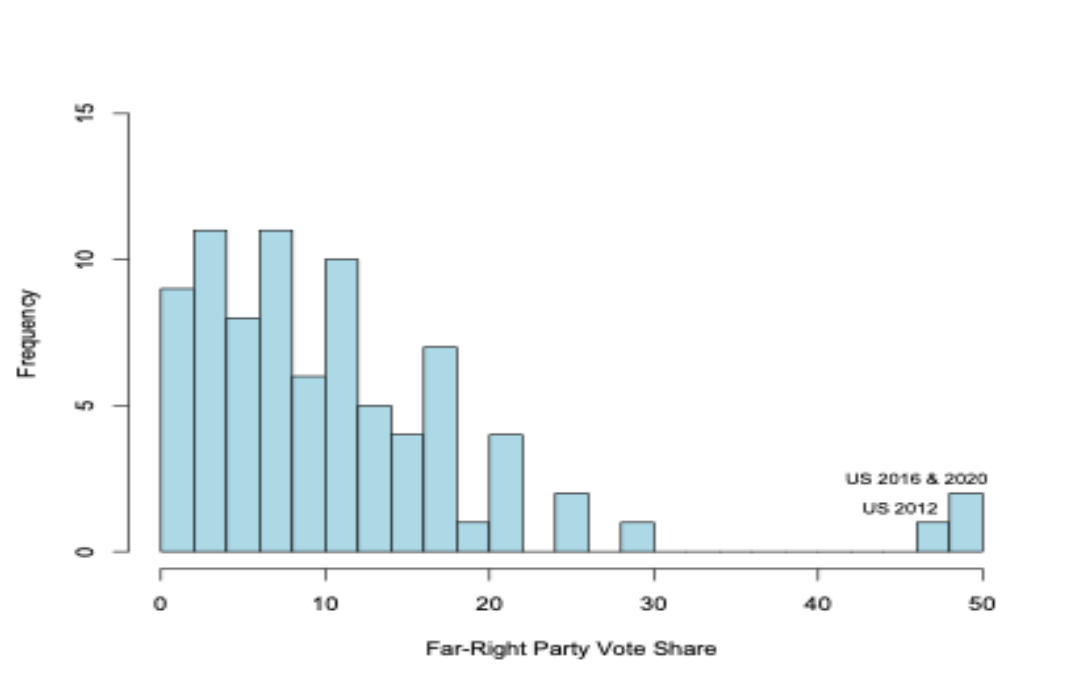


Figure 1: A histogram of Far-Right party vote share, showing the frequency of percentage captured in elections. Most parties have frequently obtained between 3-17%. Due to voting norms in the US, there are high outliers in the 45-50% range for US elections in the studies time range.

To identify Far-Right parties, I used the Manifesto Project. This study produces a dataset that measures party platforms and policy preferences of political entities in countries with a multi-party system. They code political parties in different categories based on their stances on issues. Far-right parties, according to the project, are those that champion prioritization of national interest, cultural conservatism and national identity preservation, anti-immigration, anti-globalization and populist, focus on law and order, and reject democratic norms and equality. As such, I use the categorization to identify Far-Right parties. The Manifesto Project also provides information on the percentage of voter share that party attained in a particular election year for the period of interest (see Figure 1). This will serve as my dependent variable, as a measure of success.

A major downside of the Manifesto Project is the static coding of political parties; once a party is categorized, it is rarely updated. As such, the United States Republican party is coded as a conservative party rather than a Far-Right one, despite recent platform and policy shifts that position it in the Far-Right. Because of this, I conduct two analyses: one with the United States Republican party and one excluding it. With the United States

included there are 82 observations; without the United States there are 79 observations. Because of the time frame under consideration, parties can appear in the sample twice across different elections.^[1]

Ethnic fractionalization is the independent variable for Hypothesis 1. Ethnic fractionalization is a measure of the probability that two randomly drawn individuals in a country are not from the same ethnic group. It is measured on a scale of 0-1, with 0 being mono-ethnic and 1 indicating high diversity. It is drawn from the Historical Index of Ethnic Fractionalization. The most recent year for which the data is available is 2013, so the variable only varies by party and country, not across time in the sample. This is a standardized measurement that is used throughout academia, providing a well-tested set of measurements for use.

For Hypothesis 2, the independent variable is the interaction of fractionalization and the economic climate of the country, whether it meets a hardship criterion. To measure the latter, I construct a dummy variable where observations are coded as a ‘1’ if the country was experiencing hardship and a ‘0’ if it does not. To determine the economic condition, I used 3 common economic indicators.

First, I considered the Gini Coefficient of a country, which is a measure of economic inequality, where a ‘1’ is perfect inequality. Second, I considered the inflation in a country as the percent increase in consumer prices from year to year. Finally, I used the reported unemployment in that election year. All these metrics are available from the World Bank. Once these were identified, I consider a country to be experiencing hardship if it was above the sample mean on at least 2 of those indicators. Excluding the United States, 28 countries are coded ‘1’ and 51 countries are coded ‘0’. Including the United States, 27 countries are coded ‘1’ and 55 are coded ‘0’.^[2]

Excluding US	Max	Min	Mean
Percent of Vote	29.386	0.381	9.451
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.669	0.019	0.297
Immigration Flow	1719.075	1.347	176.269

Table 1: Summary statistics for maximum, minimum, and mean of percent of vote captured, ethnic fractionalization, and immigration flow. This table is excluding the US.

Including US ^[3]	Max	Min	Mean
Percent of Vote	48.467	0.381	10.862
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.669	0.019	0.305
Immigration Flow	1719.075	1.347	208.172

Table 2: Summary statistics for maximum, minimum, and mean of percent of vote captured, ethnic fractionalization, and immigration flow. This table is including the US.

I control for other common explanatory factors that could affect Far-Right success: Immigration inflow, electoral system type, and EU membership status. Immigration inflow is covered in Table 1 and Table 2. It is a measure of the number of people entering a state in the preceding year, not the current election year. The impact of large migrations or inflows is not immediate; however, it is always a pillar of far-right policy, based on previous literature. As indicated in Tables 1 and 2, Immigration inflow maximum and minimum do not change with or without the United States. Figure 2 illustrates the variety in this variable, noting the numerous outliers. Notably Germany is at the maximum. It is 65% greater than the second highest, the United States, which is also an outlier. Additionally, the mean has a substantive increase of 18% once the United States is included. The range is incredibly large for this variable as well.

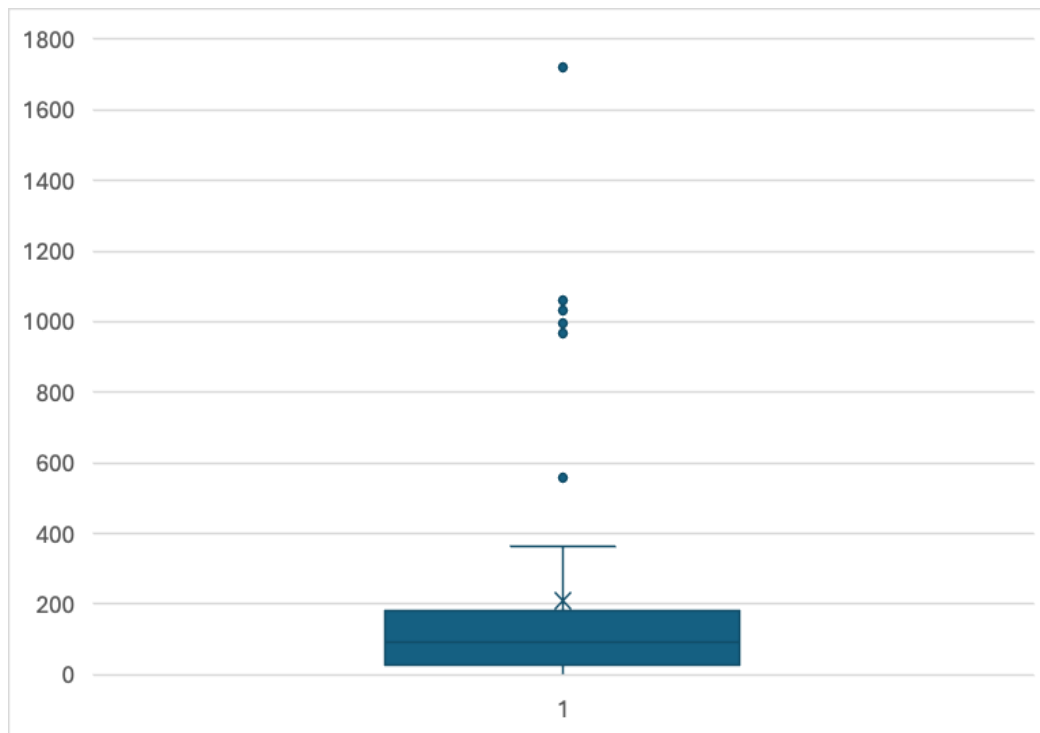


Figure 2: A box-whisker plot showing the variation in Immigration Inflow across all units measured. All units are measured in thousands. The highest is 1719000, but outliers start much lower at 560000. While most measures are under 200000, Germany, Turkiye, and the US are notably higher and all outliers.

Different electoral systems have different rules to determine thresholds for representation, the number of political parties, whether multiparty coalitions exist, and the checks in place to mitigate large political movements. I control for this because it could affect the calculus of voters and Far-Right success. Each state is noted as having either 'proportional' (coded as 1) or 'other system' (coded as 0) to control differences. There are 53 units coded as '1' and 29 coded as '0' when including the United States. Excluding the United States lowers the '0' count to 26.

States are also measured for EU membership, measured as 1 for a member or 0 for non-member. If a state is probationary or seeking membership, it is coded 0. I am studying EU membership to measure the impact of European geographical location and sociopolitical norms. Much of the literature on Far-Right success is highly Eurocentric. There are 56 units coded '1', 26 coded '0' when excluding the United States. Excluding the United States lowers the '0' count to 23.

The typical country is characterized by far-right parties gaining nearly 11% of the vote share with a moderate degree of fractionalization, low inflation (2% is ideal), high unemployment close to 9% (3-5% is ideal), has proportional representation, and is an EU member, and is not experiencing economic hardship.

Regression Analysis

I estimate two separate linear regressions to evaluate my hypotheses. The first analysis excludes the United States and includes all other sampled countries. Results are in Table 3.

Variable	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Intercept	11.045	3.290	0.001
Ethnic Fractionalization	-13.114	7.455	0.083
Economic Hardship	-8.535	3.835	0.029*
Fractionalization*Hardship	21.870	10.868	0.048*
Immigration Inflow (in thousands)	0.001	0.003	0.708
Proportional	2.233	1.947	0.255
EU Member State	1.820	1.659	0.276

Table 3: Regression Results Excluding the United States. Statistical significance is observed in two variables, economic hardship and fractionalization*hardship. Ethnic fractionalization and economic hardship have a strong negative effect on the unit of analysis. Fractionalization*hardship has a substantive impact. Notably immigration inflow is the least significant variable. Proportionality and EU membership have weak predictive power.

As seen in Table 3, fractionalization has a -13.114 coefficient. It is noteworthy that it is negative which is opposite to the hypothesized expectation. It indicates that a 1-point

increase in fractionalization is associated with a 13-point decrease in far party vote-share. Fractionalization is measured between 0-1, so although the difference can account for 13.1% of vote share, realistically the range between the maximally and minimally fractionalized states is 0.65, which would account for 8.5% of vote. Notable changes in fractionalization take years, not quarters or months and a shift of that magnitude is unlikely to occur. As such, the effect should be considered with this in mind. However, the effect misses statistical significance at the 95% confidence interval, though it is statistically significant if the 90% confidence interval is considered.

Economic hardship has a -8.535 coefficient. The expectation was that a state experiencing hardship would also exhibit an increase in far-right success. However, the results do not support this. Economic hardship instead accounts for an 8.5-point decrease in far-right success. I would consider this to be both a large and meaningful effect. The effect is substantively and statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval; states undergoing economic hardship have a notable decrease in Far-Right political party electoral success.

My second hypothesis is tested by the inclusion of interaction of fractionalization and economic hardship. It is hypothesized that in more fractionalized states that are subsequently experiencing economic hardship, we will see a compounded effect increasing far-right voter share. The results support this hypothesis. The size of the effect is large, meaningful, and statistically significant. The coefficient indicates that countries with economic hardship experience a 21.8-point increase in Far-Right vote-share across the range of fractionalization relative to those not experiencing hardship. The size of the shift demonstrates how establishing a rhetorical link between fractionalization and economic hardship would be of great benefit to Far-Right electoral success. The statistical significance of this finding further highlights the strength of this relationship. This provides strong support for Hypothesis 2.

As I turn to the controls, immigration inflow shows the smallest effect on far-right success. Although the coefficient is positive, it is small. It indicates an increase in far-right vote-share by 0.001 for every thousand immigrants that enter a country. It would require nearly a 1 million immigrants to make a 1% far right vote share increase. The only states this would have a notable impact on is Germany and Turkiye where it would potentially cause a 1-1.7% increase in vote share. However, in both states, relatively high fractionalization (Turkiye) and a healthy economy (Germany) mitigate the negative effect. Even in this case, the lack of statistical significance points to this circumstance being uncommon.

The proportional system control has a positive coefficient as expected, given the threshold for success in such systems. Countries with such rules see their far-right parties gain 2.2-points in voter-share relative to the parties in countries with other systems, though the effect is not statistically significant. EU membership is associated with a 1.8-point increase in Far-Right party voter-share relative to those states not in the EU, but this effect is also not statistically significant.

The second regression analysis includes the United States and all other states included in the previous regression. The test results are in Table 4. Inclusion of the United States dramatically changes the evaluation. The results in Table 4 are quite different from those in Table 3.

Variable	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Intercept	9.186	4.612	0.050
Ethnic Fractionalization	4.178	9.973	0.676
Economic Hardship	-6.095	5.357	0.259
Fractionalization*Hardship	6.971	14.654	0.636
Immigration Inflow (in thousands)	0.011	0.004	0.002**
Proportional	-0.956	2.713	0.725
EU member State	0.006	2.333	0.998

Table 4: Regression Results Including United States. Immigration inflow has high statistical significance and a substantive effect. Fractionalization*hardship and economic hardship have substantive effects, though are not statistically significant. Proportional and EU member state have weak predictive power. Compared to Table 3, Economic Hardship and Fractionalization*hardship are the only variable that maintains substantive affect between both regressions despite a lack of statistical significance. Immigration Inflow was the weakest predictor and is now the strongest predictor.

The coefficient of ethnic fractionalization is commensurate with the anticipated effects of Hypothesis 1. Although the directionality aligns with expectations, the effect is small across the actual range of the fractionalization variable. The coefficient indicates Far-Right success increases 4.178 points, but across the sampled countries observed range, the realistic impact is only a 2.7% vote share change. Further, there is no statistical significance associated with this result.

Economic Hardship still maintains a negative coefficient of -6.1, indicating that under both regression models, economic conditions in isolation do not lend to Far-Right vote share. Although the impact is smaller in this model, a 6.1-point decrease in vote-share is meaningful. Consistent with the analysis in Table 3, the public response to economic hardship does not favor Far-Right political vote share, though the effect is not statistically significant.

The interaction of fractionalization and economic hardship also has become significantly less impactful compared to analysis without the US. However, despite the reduced substantive impact, it still supports Hypothesis 2. The coefficient indicates that countries experiencing economic hardship see an increase in Far-Right support by almost 7 points. This is only 1/3rd the effect of regression 1. While the effect is not as large, it is still meaningful. Notably, the effect is not statistically significant.

The most dramatic finding in this analysis centers on Immigration Inflow. The effect increased by an entire factor, going from 0.001 to just over 0.01 between models. This is

now a substantive and meaningful finding. Looking at Table 4, the coefficient indicates that far-right vote share increases by 0.011 per 1000 immigrants to a country. Türkiye, the United States, and Germany would all expect to see between a 10-18% increase in far-right vote-share resulting from immigration. This offers support to many findings in the literature, but the difference in regression results cannot be ignored; with the inclusion of the United States, far-right success becomes largely dependent on the single issue of immigration. Of note, this calls into consideration a critique of results bias in the literature that overvalues the impact of immigration on far-right success (Sipma 2020).

The two controls of proportionality and EU membership have become less powerful predictors in this regression. Far-right parties in countries with proportional rules can expect a reduction in vote share of 0.96 points compared to those in countries of different rules, a small effect which is not statistically significant. EU membership is associated with a 0.006 increase in Far-Right vote-share. This is very small and not statistically significant.

Taken together, the results provide some validation for Hypothesis 1 and fairly strong support for Hypothesis 2. Ethnic fractionalization can help in explaining Far-Right party success in capturing vote-share, particularly when that country is in a period of economic adversity. As the analyses further suggest, the results will be highly dependent on what countries are included in the analysis.

Conclusion

My study focused on evaluating whether a country's fractionalization and economic conditions serve as predictors for Far-Right political party success. In Hypothesis 1, I started from the premise that Far-Right parties have an anti-diversity, pro-segregation ideology. If the talking points from the Far-Right reflect their true beliefs, then higher fractionalization (a more diverse society) should cause a clear political cleft between groups, which can advantage the Far-Right. To test this, I used a measure of ethnic fractionalization, an underutilized indicator of ethnic diversity in a country. As noted, Far-Right ideology casts diversity as detrimental to social and cultural stability. An increase in Far-Right vote-share captures as a result, however, is not supported by my findings. Instead, Far-Right parties appear to experience less vote-share in a more diverse society. This finding suggests that more diverse societies reject Far-Right ideological claims, perhaps as they are incompatible with the lived experiences that inform voting behavior and social values.

However, as theorized, I observed a notable reversal in the results when interacting economic hardship with fractionalization—in particular, fractionalization has a positive effect on Far-Right party success when a country is experiencing economic duress. This is consistent with my Hypothesis 2 under both regressions. Individually, fractionalization and economic hardship tend not to offer support of Far-Right parties during elections. Pursuing this rhetorical connection between othered out-groups and poor economic conditions helps to eliminate that loss of vote share. My findings suggest that Far-Right parties can

and do strategically focus on differences between ethnic groups and pit groups against each other when resources are scarcer. The value of this interaction is immense, as it is a key factor in Far-Right electoral success.

Although Hypothesis 2 has support across both analyses, there is a noted point of contention: the inclusion of the United States changes my results. Once the United States was included, immigration became not just the most impactful predictor of Far-Right vote-share, but the only statistically significant predictor. The interactive variable of fractionalization with economic hardship still maintained predictive power, indicating a continued relationship between diversity and perceptions of economic hardship, but the effect was not as strong. It further indicates a difference in the role of ethnic diversity, integration, and out-group threat.

As such, this requires further investigation as it indicates there are key differences between most countries and the United States regarding Far-Right political success. This is extremely important when considering political outcomes, policy action, and how political opponents may counteract the narrative of Far-Right parties, but also the means Far-Right parties use to mobilize support. Of course, the emergence of increasingly Far-Right ideologies and mainstream policy positions in the United States is not new, but the categorization of the Republican Party as a Far-Right party should be seriously considered. The predictive power of immigration inflow and my interactive variable demonstrate the current party alignment with Far-Right ideologies (Mudde 2020). This is important for academics, activists, and politicians to consider in future research. My results show that the sample of countries used to analyze Far-Right success can change the conclusions drawn, thus it is important to consider evolving ideological positions in established parties.

Part of the intent of my research was also guided by a desire to reach outside the confines of Western European democracies. While I was able to do so, it proved difficult for a variety of reasons. Most larger democracies, such as Brazil and India, do not have the same degree of publicly available economic data that other included countries do. The use of OECD countries, while often rich in measurements, creates a sample bias for analysis. OECD inclusion requires historical reporting transparency, which in the case of emerging economies is simply not available to the same degree. Even among OECD countries, there are data availability problems. Future research should aim to tackle some of the data limitations in this project to expand the analysis to a broader swath of countries. Also, with the inclusion of large geographic regions, such as in Brazil and India, internal migration may have a greater impact than any immigrant inflows would; this is an area that future researchers should explore as well.

Taken together, these limitations point to a point of criticism in the analyses of Far-Right parties in the academic literature. There is a sample bias to wealthy developed Western European democracies as previously noted. As I have demonstrated, analyses of Far-Right success are quite sensitive to the sampled countries. This again lends credence to the need to study Far-Right parties and political outcomes in countries outside of western Europe. Most emergent democracies are outside of Europe and face unique challenges. These unique challenges should be taken seriously as nascent institutions are

vulnerable to backsliding into autocracy. Although the ideological platforms and rhetoric of Far-Right parties may share numerous common features, it is ill advised to disregard the context of individual countries and regions in confronting the perils of the 4th wave.

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[1] This is due to national election processes resulting in two years of multiple rounds of national elections. This data was included because each instance was a general national election where the preceding election did not determine participation of a party in the subsequent election. These are unique elections with unique results despite occurring in the same year, thus included in the analyses. Appendix B shows all countries and elections in which this occurred.

[2] Appendix A and Appendix B provide frequency tables and complete data sheets for hardship variable.

[3] Of note, including the US changes the max percent of vote dramatically. This is due to the US electoral system being dominated by two parties. Vote share increases by 19.8%.
