To Co-Opt or Antagonize: Left Party Responses to the Far-Right
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In the 2010 Swedish election, the far-right Sweden Democrats tried to air an ad showing an aging woman losing a race to collect pension funds to a large number of women in burqas. The television station they submitted the ad to refused to air it because of its racism. In addition to noting the ad's obvious racism, it is worth reflecting on the audience the Sweden Democrats were trying to reach. The ad sought to scare low-income, non-immigrant, Swedes into thinking immigration is a threat to their welfare benefits. The Sweden Democrats were not just going after centre-right voters, they were also making appeals to voters who traditionally would have supported the left. These appeals are not unique to Sweden, far-right parties across Europe are trying to take voters from the left by making claims that immigration threatens the welfare state benefits these voters rely on.

It is important to think about how left parties are responding to far-right parties that try to win over left voters. Most mainstream left parties have built electoral coalitions around alliances of working class and socially progressive voters. These voters may have similar views on left/right issues related to class, but are likely to be divided over immigration, culture, and national identity. This leaves left parties with a difficult dilemma when facing a far-right challenge. They can co-opt some of the anti-immigrant and nationalist positions of the far-right in order to hold on to their more nationalistic voters. This strategy, however, is likely to alienate socially progressive and cosmopolitan voters. Alternatively, they can position themselves in opposition to the far-right. This allows them to hold on to their more socially progressive voters, but could cost them their more nationalistic ones.

Much of the work on far-right parties focuses on their broad influence over mainstream parties (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup, 2008; Imerzeel et al., 2016; Marthaler, 2008; van

Heerden et al., 2014; Westlake, 2018). There is less work on how far-right parties have linked nationalistic appeals to the values traditionally supported by left parties, though Triadafilopoulos (2011) provides insight into this. In this paper, I examine the relationship between the way that far-right parties position themselves on issues other than immigration and the way that mainstream left parties position themselves on immigration and multiculturalism. I argue that responses to the far-right are not uniform across left parties. Rather, they should be shaped by far-right parties' position on left/right issues unrelated to immigration. The further to the left far-right parties position themselves on issues other than immigration, the greater the threat they pose to left parties, and the greater the incentive left parties have to co-opt anti-immigrant positions.

Literature Review and Theory

Variation in left/right and far-right positions

There is an extensive literature that looks at the emergence and electoral success of far-right parties (Carter, 2005; Green-Pedersen and Krogrstrup, 2008; Green-Pedersen and Odmalm, 2008; Jensen and Thomsen, 2011; van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009). Particular emphasis has been placed on the way that far-right parties have influenced the development of immigration and immigrant integration policies (Howard, 2010; Marthaler, 2008; Schain, 2006). Because of their limited time in government, much of this analysis looks at whether and how mainstream parties have co-opted far-right positions. Understanding this co-option is essential to understanding far-right parties' influence over politics.

There is also an extensive literature that looks at how the centre-right responds to the far-right. This work finds that the centre-right often co-opts the anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural policies of the far-right, though usually with less extreme policy and rhetoric

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(Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup, 2008; Imerzeel et al., 2016; Marthaler, 2008; van Heerden et al., 2014; Westlake, 2018).

The way left parties respond to the far-right is less clear. Bornschier (2010) argues finds that left are often on the socially progressive and multicultural side of an emerging cultural dimension of politics. Meguid (2008) goes further, showing that the French Socialist party sought to strengthen the far-right Front-National in the hopes that it would take votes from the centre-right. In contrast, van Heerden et al. (2014) find that left parties co-opt far-right positions, but not to the same extent as centre-right parties. Further, Schumacher and van Kersbergen (2016) and van Spanje (2010) find that both centre-right and left parties co-opt far-right positions. Finally, in previous work, I find that some mainstream left parties co-opt the positions of the far-right, but that others do not (Westlake, 2018).

The variation in the literature matches variation in left party positions on multiculturalism and nationalism in Manifesto Project data. Figure 1 shows the difference between left parties' and far-right parties' positions on multiculturalism and immigration. The dots show the average difference between the parties while the lines show the range of differences for all elections where the party faced such a competitor. There is significant variation across parties. On average, the Swedish Social Democrats, Finnish Social Democrats, Danish Social Democrats, Dutch Labour Party, and French Socialists are all at least 10 points more supportive of multiculturalism than their far-right competitors. In contrast, the Norwegian Labour Party, Flemish Socialists, Italian Democratic Party of the Left, and Swiss Social Democrats all tend to be quite close to the far-right. It should be noted that in some cases, such as in Norway, some of the close positioning between the left and the far-right is a result if weak support of nationalism on the part of the far-right party.

(insert figure 1 here)

There is also significant variation in the way that some left parties respond to the far-right from election to election. This is particularly the case for the Swedish Social Democrats, Danish Social Democrats, Dutch Labour Party, Austrian Social Democrats, and Swiss Social Democrats. In some elections these parties took positions on multiculturalism and nationalism quite close to those of the far-right. In others, they took positions that were quite distant. There is, thus, not only variation in the way that different left parties respond to the far-right, but also in the way that the same left party responds in different elections.

Just as there is variation in the distance between mainstream left and far-right parties, there is also variation in far-right parties' positions on issues unrelated to multiculturalism and immigration. The use of the labels "far-right" or "radical right" should not be taken to suggest that such parties are merely more extreme versions of their centre-right counter-parts. Where far-right parties are more extreme than mainstream right parties in their opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, they are not necessarily to the right of such parties on other issues. This is particularly the case with respect to support for the welfare state.

Differences between far-right and centre-right parties in approaches to the welfare state come through in a number of different studies. Looking at the Netherlands, Koster et al. (2012) show that, unlike mainstream right voters, far-right voters tend to be supportive of redistribution so long as that redistribution does not include immigrants. Derks (2006) comes to similar conclusions when analyzing the policies of the Vlaams Belang in Belgium. Nordensvard and Ketola (2015) find support for the welfare state in both the Sweden Democrats and the True Finns, provided such benefits are not extended to immigrants. Finally, in analysis of far-right

parties across Europe van Spanje (2011) finds that extreme right positions on the economic left/right spectrum do not always match extreme anti-immigrant positions.

Variation in the non-immigration positions of far-right parties can be confirmed by looking at Manifesto Project data. Figure 2 shows the positions of far-rights on the project's left/right scale, which excludes measures of multiculturalism and nationalism.[1] While far-right parties tend to be on the right (a positive score on the project's left/right scale), there are several that are either slightly to left or very close to centre. This holds over time. The FPO in Austria ends up on the left in the 1970s as does UK Independence Party in 2015. Highly nationalist parties such as the French Front National in 2012, the AfD in Germany in 2013, and the Dutch List Fortuyn in 2003 all have centrist or left-wing scores.

(insert figure 2 here)

This is not to say that all far-right parties take positions that are either centrist or left on issues other than immigration. Figure 2 also shows a large number of far-right parties with very right-wing scores. Far-right parties are not uniform in their approaches to issues other than immigration. Some take positions that are supportive of welfare benefits, though generally that are also supportive of excluding immigrants from such benefits. Others take more free-market positions favouring smaller welfare states and lower taxes.

While there is substantial work on left party responses to the far-right and on variation in far-right parties non-immigration positions, little has been done to connect these two things together. This is the case, despite the likelihood that far-right parties' approaches to issues like the welfare state will affect their appeal to left voters that are skeptical of immigration. This paper builds on existing work by examining the connection between far-right parties' positions

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[1] For a list of policies included in the measure, see table 1 in the methods section.

on non-immigration issues and left parties' decisions to co-opt the anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism positions.

Far-right parties' non-immigration positions and the threat to the mainstream left

I take Meguid's (2008) theory regarding competition between major and minor parties as the departure point for my theory. Two ideas are central to this theory. First, that major parties' decisions over how to respond to minor parties influences minor parties' success. Second, major parties' responses to minor parties depend on the threat that those minor parties pose. When a minor party is a threat, a major party will want to weaken it to protect itself from losing votes. When the minor party is a threat to a major party's opponents, the major party will want to strengthen the minor party.

In Meguid's theory, parties can adopt one of three strategies. First, is a dismissive strategy. In this case the major party downplays the importance of the issues the minor party runs on in the hopes that voters will see the minor party as irrelevant. I expect that major parties, left or right, will be unlikely to use this strategy in response to far-right parties for two reasons. First, because far-right parties are generally successful in raising the profile of immigration on their own (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup, 2008; Jensen and Frølund Thomsen, 2011; Koopmans et al., 2012; Odmalm, 2012; Perlmutter, 1996), it is unlikely that a dismissive strategy will be successful. Rather, the mainstream party runs the risk of being seen as out of touch with voters for ignoring an issue of increasing salience. Second, dismissive strategies are only effective if all mainstream parties pursue them. Given that mainstream parties are competing with each other, it is unlikely they will be able to coordinate closely enough to all pursue a dismissive strategy. Rather than run the risk of being the only mainstream party adopting a dismissive strategy, and

therefore being seen as out of touch with voters on an important issue, mainstream parties should opt for one Meguid's other two strategies.

Parties can use an accommodating strategy, taking on the positions of the minor party to try to prevent voters from defecting to it. Alternatively, they can use an adversarial strategy, taking positions opposed to the minor party in the hopes that this will make the minor party seem more important, and lead it to take votes from the major parties' competitors. When minor parties are a threat to take votes from major parties, the major parties should adopt accommodating strategies. When minor parties are a threat to their opponents, major parties should adopt adversarial strategies.

The general assumption tends to be that far-right parties are a threat to centre-right parties. As a result, centre-right parties should pursue accommodating strategies while left parties pursue adversarial ones. In her work Meguid points to the French Socialist Party's efforts to strengthen Front National as evidence of this. She argues that Socialist party stood benefit from Front National taking support from the centre-right Rally for the Republican.

This assumption that the far-right is only a threat to the centre-right is problematic. There is a growing amount of work that demonstrates that far-right parties take votes, particularly from working-class voters, from left parties as well as from centre-right parties (Arwine and Mayer, 2008; Bale et al., 2010; Cincu, 2017; Hinnfors et al., 2012; Kriesi et al., 2008; Lucassen and Lubers, 2012). These findings fit with Kitschelt's (1994) work that notes a divide in left parties' traditional coalitions between libertarian left voters who one would expect to support multiculturalism and authoritarian left voters who one would expect to oppose it. The left stands to lose from the emergence of far-right parties if it fractures the electoral coalition the left has built between pro-immigrant social progressive and immigrant skeptic working-class voters.

Not all far-right parties should pose the same threat to left parties. The closer a far-right party is to left voters on issues other than immigration the greater ability it has to appeal to left voters. This in turn should make the far-right party a greater threat to the left and force it to do more to adopt that anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural positions of the far-right. I hypothesize that the distance between the far-right and the left on immigration and multiculturalism should be related to the distance between the far-right and left on issues unrelated to immigration. This is expressed below.

H1: The greater the distance between the far-right and the left on issues on immigration, the greater the distance should be between the two parties on immigration and multiculturalism.

One can note three examples of far-right parties that should see different responses from the left parties. The Norwegian Progress Party provides an example of a party that is far from the left on non-immigration issues. As a party with economically right leaning anti-tax positions it should have trouble appealing to working-class voters. Because of this, the Norwegian Labour party should feel little threat from the Progress Party and do little to co-opt its positions. The French Front National, by contrast, have made economic appeals to working class voters. As a result, the French Socialists should feel a greater threat from the Front National and so more to co-opt their positions. Finally, in the Netherlands both the List Pim Fortuyn and the Party for Freedom link[2] their anti-immigrant appeals to social liberal ones. The Dutch far-right often argues that immigration threatens Dutch values with respect to gender and sexual orientation equality. This should pose a threat not just to the Dutch Labour Party's working-class voters, but also to some of their socially progressive voters. This should put a great deal of pressure on the Dutch Labour to co-opt the positions of the far-right, though this may also be dependent on the

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[2] In the case of the List Pim Fortuyn, linked.

willingness of social progressives in the Labour party to accept the way that far-right links socially liberal appeals to anti-immigrant ones.

Importantly, this is a probabilistic theory. I expect there to be a number of voters in every left party that are conflicted between voting for a far-right party because of its anti-immigrant positions and supporting a left party because of its support for the welfare state. As the far-right party moves closer to the left party on the welfare state (and social liberalism) it should become easier for conflicted voters to move to the far-right because they have to give up less of their support for the welfare state to do so. The point at which the far-right party is close enough to the left party on welfare state or social liberalism to justify a defection will be different for each conflicted voter. Similarly, the degree to which the left will have to co-opt the positions of the far-right to prevent a defection will be different for every voter. I expect that the closer the far-right party gets to the left party the more voters will defect to it. Therefore, the closer the far-right party gets to the left on the welfare state and on social liberalism, the closer the left party will have to get to the far-right party to protect itself against defections.

It is finally worth noting that this theory can operate through two mechanisms, one that speaks to policy and one that speaks to identity. Far-right parties can go after working-class voters by taking positions extolling the benefits of welfare state expansion. Here commitments to protect pensions and other forms of income support can assure working-class voters that far-right parties are committed to protecting working-class voters' interests. This can also apply to gender and LGTBQ equality if the far-right party makes a commitment to policies supporting such views.

H2a: The closer far-right parties are to the left on support for the welfare state or protection of social rights, the more left parties will co-opt far-right anti-immigrant positions.

The second way that far-right parties can threaten to take support from the left is through expressions of support for the working-class. Here policy commitments are less important than expressed affinity. The far-right party may not make an explicit commitment to defend a particular social program or particular social rights, but rather claim that it understands the difficulties that working class voters have in a way that other parties do not. The far-right's appeal to working-class voters in this case becomes an anti-elitist appeal rooted in claims that the left has lost touch with the working class and that only the far-right is willing defend "ordinary" people's interest. Here, far-right parties attempt to reframe politics as a contest between "the people," inclusive of the working-class, and elites (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015). The more a far-right party speaks directly to the working-class when making these populist appeals, the more left parties may see the far-right party as a threat and the more they should do to co-opt the far-right's anti-immigrant appeals. Thus, by speaking about the importance of the working-class and the need to defend the working-class against political elites, far-right parties may force the left to co-opt anti-immigrant positions even if the far-right parties say little about welfare-state expansion or other left policies. This leads to the following hypothesis.

H2b: The more the far-right expresses support for or identification with the working-class, the more left parties will do to co-opt far-right anti-immigrant positions.

Neither hypotheses 2a or 2b are mutually exclusive. It is possible that both policy commitments to and expressed affinity for the working class by far-right parties make left parties more likely to co-opt the anti-immigrant positions. Either or both could work as mechanisms for hypothesis 1.

Data and Methods

Measuring Party Positions

To measure party positions, I use Manifesto Project data (Volkens et al., 2017). The Manifesto Project scores parties on different issues based on the number of mentions of the issue in a party's platform. The data includes a broad measure of left/right positions using issues noted in table 1, support for a number of economic and social issues, and commitments to promoting the national way of life and multiculturalism. For both national way of life and multiculturalism the Manifesto Project includes positive and negative scores. To get a nationalism score for each party, negative mentions of the national way of life are subtracted from positive mentions. To get an overall multicultural score, negative mentions of multiculturalism are subtracted from positive mentions.

(insert table 1 here)

The Manifesto Project does not use explicit mentions of the term "multiculturalism" to determine whether a statement is supportive or opposed to multiculturalism. Rather, statements are coded as positive if they include positive references to cultural diversity or suggest that ethnic minorities should be allowed to preserve their cultural heritage. Statements that refer to the importance of encouraging or enforcing cultural assimilation are coded as negative (Volkens et al., 2013). For example, a 2003 Swiss Social Democratic Party mention of the value of including minorities in the police force is coded as a positive mention of multiculturalism. In New Zealand, a Labour manifesto arguing for the creation of a Minister of Ethnic Affairs and fostering language education for people from the pacific islands is coded as a positive statement about multiculturalism. In the 2002 Swedish Social Democrat manifesto, positive references to

diversity (even without mentions of multiculturalism explicitly) are coded as positive statements (Volkens et al., 2013).

The Manifesto Project conflates multiculturalism with multinationalism, which is problematic. Support for national minorities does not necessarily reflect a commitment to support multiculturalism directed at immigrants and ethnic minorities. Indeed, in some cases national minorities see multiculturalism as mutually exclusive with their own recognition goals. Multiculturalism has experienced some opposition from Quebecois political elites in Canada and Maori elites in New Zealand concerned that multicultural recognition will replace recognition of their own distinct status[3] (McRoberts, 1997; Spooney, 2005). Unfortunately, without access to the manifestos for all countries in the analysis (the number of actual manifestos available is limited), there is no way to compensate for this. Some noise in the multiculturalism scores is unavoidable for a data set that covers the range of time and countries that the Manifesto Project does.

In addition to the conflation multiculturalism and multinationalism, there are other issues that have been noted with the use of Manifesto Project Data. Gemenis (2013) argues that inconsistent selection of documents coded (where manifestos are not available the Manifesto Project uses a range of other documents as substitutes) and inconsistencies in coders' decisions can create inconsistencies and errors in the data.

To compensate for such issues, I also run tests using Chapel Hill Expert survey data (Bakker et al., 2010; Polk at el., 2017). This survey scores parties for their positions on

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[3] This is not to say that all or even most national minority groups oppose multiculturalism. Rather it is to suggest that there is a tension between the recognition of ethnic minorities and the recognition of national minorities. This makes the conflation of the two in the coding of party manifestos problematic.

multiculturalism, immigration, and a number of left right issues by surveying experts on parties from different countries.

The Chapel Hill survey has two important drawbacks. First, it covers less time and fewer countries than the Manifesto Project. The Manifesto Project includes data from 1960-2016 and covers every country in Northern, Western, and Central Europe. The Chapel Hill data is limited to 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2017.[4] Additionally, not all countries are included in each year of the survey. The survey only has 2017 data, for example, from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. It is missing data from countries with important far-right parties such as Austria, Belgium, and Denmark. Also missing are important elections that took place before 2006, such as the Dutch elections that saw the emergence of List Pim Fortuyn as a socially liberal anti-immigrant far-right party. The Manifesto Project's greater coverage of elections allows me to compare the relationship way left parties have responded to far-right parties in the entire post-war error to more recent elections, providing a fuller picture of the way left parties' strategies have evolved.

Expert surveys can also be shaped by the context in which they are taken. Experts in different countries and different years may have different ideas about what kinds of issues lead a party to be a right or left party (Benoit and Laver, 2007). Benoit and Laver argue that this is an advantage of such surveys, but for my work it is a problem. If experts in one country include immigration and multiculturalism positions in their evaluation of how left a party is, they will over-state the distance between the far-right party and left party on the left/right dimension of politics, and as such, under-state the pressure the left party is under to co-opt the positions of the far-right party. By looking at what parties say in their manifestos, the Manifesto Project data

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[4] There are surveys that pre-date 2006, but they do not include questions on multiculturalism and immigration policy.

provides a more concrete account of parties' positions that is more easily comparable across countries.

Measuring Co-option

Both the degree to which the far-right needs to move to the left to force the left to co-opt its positions and the degree to which the left co-opts the positions of the far-right should be measured in relative terms. If a left party is very close to the centre on economic issues, a far-right party should not have to move very far towards the left to threaten to take voters from it. If the left party is further to the left of economic issues, the far-right party will need to move further left in order to threaten to take voters from it. The stronger the anti-immigrant positions of the far-right party, the more the left has to co-opt anti-immigrant positions in order to prevent its voters from defecting.

As a result of this, I look at the positions of left and far-right parties relative to each other. A positive result in my regression analysis means that as the distance between a left and far-right party on an issue other than immigration increases, so does the distance between the two parties on multiculturalism, immigration, and nationalism. In contrast, a negative result means that as the distance between the two parties on an issue other than immigration decreases, the distance between them on immigration, multiculturalism, and nationalism decreases. Each of my hypotheses predict positive results.

There are several ways in which left parties might co-opt the positions of far-right parties. They might reduce their positive mentions of multiculturalism to become a party less supportive of the policy, they might increase their negative mentions of multiculturalism explicitly taking on some of the anti-immigrant positions of the far-right, or they might increase their support for nationalism. In my measure of co-option, I try to capture all of these possibilities. In tests that

use Manifesto Project data I use a measure of co-option that subtracts parties' support for multiculturalism from their nationalism score to get at the extent to which left parties are co-opting the far-right. In my tests using the Chapel Hill data I create a score for co-option by adding together parties' opposition to immigration, opposition to multiculturalism, and opposition to policies favouring ethnic minorities.

In analyses that rely on Manifesto Project data and those that rely on Chapel Hill data I use different measures to capture the proximity of far-right parties to left parties on non-immigration issues. In the Manifesto Project data, I use the project's general left/right score to determine the overall policy distance between far-right parties and the left. I also ran tests on a number of specific policy areas. These include support for the market economy, the welfare state, and social conservatism. There is no evidence that of a connection between these specific policy areas and policy adoption, so I include such models in appendix A. I measure the distance between left parties' and far-right parties' affinity with labour groups using the Manifesto Project's scores for support for labour.

For the Chapel Hill data, I use parties economic left/right ratings as the measure of how left a party is. I do not use their general left/right score because of the possibility that experts are considering parties' positions on immigration and multiculturalism when assigning that score. Unfortunately, there is no Chapel Hill score for a party's affinity with labour, so I am unable to check my findings from the Manifesto Project against Chapel Hill data on this issue.

It is worth making note of the distribution of differences in nationalism and multiculturalism positions. This can provide a sense of how substantial any particular magnitude of an effect is. Figure 3 shows the distribution of differences in multiculturalism and nationalism scores between left parties that win at least 10% of the vote and far-right parties. Most parties

have a difference in nationalism and multiculturalism position from far-right parties that is

between 0 and 10 sentences in their manifesto. There are a handful of parties with negative

scores, suggesting that those parties are more opposed to multiculturalism and supportive of

nationalism than their far-right competitors.[5]

(insert figure 3 here)

Control Variables

I use five control variables in my analysis. First, I account for changes in incentives for left

parties to co-opt far-right positions over time by including a variable for the year in which the

election is taking place. Second, I account for the influence that foreign born population may

have on left parties' positions using United Nations foreign born data (United Nations, 2008).

Third, I control for the impact electoral systems have on the way left parties respond to the far-

right by including a dummy variable for whether a country has a proportional electoral system.

Fourth, I control for the impact that changes in the economy have on left responses to the far-

right with a variable for countries' unemployment rates (OECD, 2013). Finally, I included

dummy variable controls for the country the party comes from. These country controls are

included in all analyses, but not presented in tables for readability's sake. I use the same control

variables for both the tests that use Manifesto Project data and the Chapel Hill data.

Methods

In my analysis I run time series cross-section regressions. For each independent variable of

interest, I run one test with controls only for year and for the country the party comes from and

one test with all of the control variables in the analysis. I do not run a model with all

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[5] There are 4 cases, all in Belgium, where left parties over 10% have Manifesto Project scores that are more
nationalist and multicultural than there far-right counter-parts. I expect this to be a result of the contentious debates
over federalism in Belgium and the way the Manifesto Project conflates multiculturalism and multinationalism.

independent variables of interest because of the likelihood of covariation between these different variables. I do not use fixed effects models in my analysis because I want to control for the country an observation comes from instead of the particular party. Similarly, I cluster standard errors by country instead of by party. I suspect that left parties in the same country face similar incentives both with respect to the party system they compete in and the voters that they are competing over. As such, I expect observations are going to be closely related across country and want to account for that in my regression analysis.

I separate parties into two sets of subgroups for my analysis, one based on year and one based on left party strength. Multiculturalism and immigration have been much more contentious issues in the late 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. As I result, I expect left parties to face more pressure to co-opt the anti-immigrant positions of the far-right in those years than in years previous. To capture this, in the main body of the paper I present analysis that look at only elections that occur in or after 1995. I present tests that look at elections going back to the 1970s in appendix A, but as I expect, these tests yield little evidence of left parties co-opting far-right positions. I choose 1995 as my cut off date so that I have a sufficiently large sample of left parties to run tests on. All elections in the Chapel Hill data take place after 1995, so I do not run separate sets of regressions for analyses using that data.

I also expect that the larger left parties may face greater pressure to co-opt far-right parties' views than smaller parties. Because they are not competing to form government, smaller left parties may be more willing to stand on principle and take positions opposed to far-right parties even if doing so means losing votes. They are also likely to have more ideologically narrow coalitions of supporters and thus may have fewer voters that might defect to the far-right. Larger left parties are likely to have a wider-range of supporters and thus have more supporters

who might defect to a far-right challenger. The fact that they are competing for government should also make them more willing to compromise to hold such coalitions together. To capture this, I run separate regressions that look only at left parties that win at least 10% of the vote. I choose 10% because it is a threshold small enough to give me a sufficient sample of parties, yet large enough to exclude most of the more ideological left parties.

Findings

General Trends and Left Parties Co-opting the Far-Right

Table 2 shows the results for regression analysis on Manifesto Project data. It demonstrates a link between the proximity of left and far-right parties on the general left/right spectrum and on multiculturalism and nationalism. For every point on the left/right scale that the left parties and far-right parties get further apart, they get 0.083 points further apart on multiculturalism and nationalism. This means that left parties increase the percent of their platform devoted to positive statements on multiculturalism or negative statements about nationalism by 0.083 points for every 1 point further to the right that far-right parties move on non-immigration issues.[6] This positive relationship between the distance holds both for models with and without controls for the size of a country's foreign-born population, electoral system, and unemployment rate.

<center>(insert table 2 here)</center>

Table 1 also shows a positive relationship between the proximity of far-right parties and left parties on support for labour groups and left parties' co-optation of far-right multiculturalism and nationalism positions. For every one-point increase in far-right parties' opposition to labour groups relative to a left party, the left party increases it support for multiculturalism or decreases

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[6] They may also be decreasing their negative statements about multiculturalism or increasing the negative statements about nationalism. Additionally, they may be doing some mix of increasing positive statements about multiculturalism and negative statements about nationalism or decreasing negative statements about multiculturalism and positive statements about nationalism.

it support for nationalism by 0.256 percentage points. This positive relationship holds for models without controls for the size of the foreign-born population, the electoral system, and unemployment, but is only statistically significant at the 90% confidence level when these controls are excluded.

As expected, both relationships get stronger when one looks only at parties that won at least 10% of the vote. When one looks at general left/right positions, the distance between left parties' and far-right parties' multiculturalism and nationalism positions increases by 0.101 points for every point increase in difference on the left/right spectrum. At 0.095 points, the model with few controls also shows a stronger relationship for left parties with at least 10% of the vote than for all left parties. Both models, however, show relationships that are only statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. This may be because there are only 43 observations in these models. Despite this, the lack of a statistically significant relationship at the 95% level should lead one to take this finding with more caution than for the results of analysis looking at all left parties.

For left parties that win at least 10% of the vote, an increase in one point in the distance between far-right parties and left parties in support for labour groups leads to a 0.377 point increase in distance on multiculturalism and nationalism. Unlike for general left/right positions, this result is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Like for all parties, this relationship holds for models with limited and with the full set of controls.

It is important to put these results in context. The impact of the overall impact of the relationships shown in table 2 depends on the distance between left parties and far-right parties on the left/right spectrum and on support for labour groups in any given election. Figure 4 shows the predicted difference between left parties' multiculturalism and nationalism positions based

on the average difference between left and far-right parties' left/right positions in different countries. This prediction looks at only those parties that win at least 10% of the vote after 1995. The figure shows that even though the magnitude of the relationship appears small in table 2, the impact can be quite substantial when one considers the differences in distances between left parties and far-right parties' left/right positions. In the UK, Austria, and Germany, the relative closeness of the left parties and far-right parties on the left/right scale leads to small predicted difference in multiculturalism and nationalism scores. In Greece, France, and Norway, the large gap between parties left/right positions leads to quite large predicted differences in predicted multiculturalism and nationalism scores. Given that most left parties score between 0 and 10 with respect to multiculturalism and nationalism a predicted 5-point difference is very substantial.

(insert figure 4 here)

Figure 5 shows the same predicted differences, but for differences in support for labour groups as opposed to for the general left/right spectrum. The smaller differences between left parties' and far-right parties' support for labour groups means that the overall impact of support for labour is weaker than for differences in the general left/right spectrum. This is the case even though the magnitude of the relationship suggested in table 2 is larger. This being said, the impacts are still substantial. The 2-3 point difference between the average predicted impact on parties in countries such as Austria, the Netherlands, and France and countries such as Finland, Germany, and Greece is important given the relatively narrow range of multiculturalism and nationalism scores for left parties.

(insert figure 5 here)

The tests using the data from the Chapel Hill expert survey do not find the same results as the tests using the Manifesto Project data. Table 3 shows a positive relationship between differences in left and far-right parties' positions and differences in their multiculturalism and immigration positions. This relationship, however, is not statistically significant. This is the case despite the fact that the sample sizes for the Manifesto Project data and the Chapel Hill data is almost exactly the same.

(insert table 3 here)

These analyses provide qualified support for the three hypotheses in the paper. The positive relationships in the Manifesto Project data between left/right positions and co-optation and between support for labour and co-optation support hypotheses 1,2a, and 2b. Figures 4 and 5 showing the impact of left/right positions and labour positions on co-optation suggest that overall left/right positions is larger than for labour groups. This suggests that, while both hypotheses 2a and 2b are important, that hypothesis 2a may be the more important of the two. It appears that proximity on a broad range of policies on the left/right spectrum has a larger impact on left parties' decisions to co-opt the positions of the far-right that proximity in affinity for labour groups. All of this should be taken with a grain of salt, however. The lack of a statistically significant relationship in the Chapel Hill data suggests that this relationship may depend on whether one is looking at party manifestos or expert assessments of where parties stand. This should give one some caution when interpreting the strength of this relationship and when determining how much confidence one can have in its existence.

Comparing Individual Major Left Parties to the Average

It is interesting to look at the extent to which different left parties fit the predicted model. Figure 6 shows where major left parties end up in the model in relation to what the model would

22

predict. The x's shows real party positions while the line shows the predicted relationship between positions (for left parties with at least 10% of the vote after 1995). Below the line are parties who are closer to their far-right competitors on multiculturalism and nationalism than one would expect based on their left/right position. These include the Norwegian Labour Party and Swiss Social Democrats. Above the line are parties whose positions on multiculturalism and nationalism are farther from their far-right competitors than one would expect. These parties include the Dutch Labour party, the Danish Social Democrats, the Finnish Social Democrats, and the French Socialist party. The Swedish Social Democrats also fit into this group, but with only data from one election, it is hard to say that this position is as consistent as with the other parties mentioned.

(insert figure 6 here)

Figure 7 shows that, when it comes to support for labour, major left parties deviate less from what is expected than when one looks at left/right positions. This fits with the models using support for labour being statistically significant at the 95% confidence level while the models looking at left/right positions are statistically significant at only the 90% confidence level. None of the parties I look at are consistently closer to their far-right competitors than one would predict based on their level of support for labour groups. In particular elections, though, the German Social Democrats, Finnish Social Democrats, and Swiss Social Democrats are closer to the far-right than expected. Three parties are farther from the far-right than expected. These are the Dutch Labour party, Danish Social Democrats, and French Socialists.

(insert figure 7 here)

It is notable that the Dutch Labour party and French Socialists are outliers in both models. Both parties are farther from their far-right counter-parts than one would expect. This is

particularly surprising given the positions of their far-right competitors. The Dutch far-right links many of their anti-immigrant appeals to progressive social positions. Both the List Pim Fortuyn and Party for Freedom have argued that immigration is a threat to gender and LGTBQ equality in the Netherlands. Similarly, the French Front National under Marine Le Pen has made a concerted effort to appeal to working class voters who would be traditional supporters of the Socialists. It is worth noting, however, that both parties have suffered significant losses in recent elections. It may be that the failure of these parties to co-opt far-right positions is hurting them electorally. Without further examination this is only speculation, but these results suggest both cases merit further investigation.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper I theorize that the closer far-right parties get to left parties on issues other than multiculturalism and immigration, the more pressure left parties will face to co-opt far-right positions on immigration and multiculturalism. While my findings provide some evidence for this theory, they also suggest there are significant limitations to the amount of variation in left party responses it can explain. Manifesto project data shows the presence of a significant and substantial relationship both with respect to general left/right positions and with respect to support for labour groups. The lack of consistency between the relationships in the Manifesto Project data and the Chapel Hill data, along with the number of outliers in figure 6 and 7, however, mean this relationship should be interpreted with caution.

Despite the need for caution in interpreting them, these findings are important. The Manifesto Project data shows some evidence that far-right parties' general left/right positions matter to the way left parties react them. It provides stronger evidence for the idea that appeals to labour groups matter. This has important implications from broader research into the way that

far-right parties are affecting party systems. It suggests that scholars trying to understand the impact of such parties need to consider the way far-right parties position themselves on issues beyond immigration and multiculturalism. Their positions on more traditional left/right issues matter because they affect which parties feel threatened by them. The more a far-right party tries to broaden its appeal on non-immigration issues to reach voters across the political spectrum, the more parties will have to co-opt its positions and the more the far-right party will affect the political discourse.

Scholars should pay particular attention to the extent to which far-right parties go after left voters. Existing scholarship suggests that far-right parties see an opportunity to expand their vote bases by winning over working class left party voters (Arwine and Mayer, 2008; Cincu, 2017; Bale et al., 2010; Hinnfors et al., 2012; Kriesi et al., 2008; Lucassen and Lubers, 2012). The way that the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn linked anti-immigrant appeals to questions about immigrants' views on gender and LGTBQ equality demonstrates that far-right parties will at times go after left voters on issues that go beyond the economy and the welfare state. The more far-right parties make these kinds of appeals, the more important it will be to look at the way that left parties respond to them. Understanding how much left parties co-opt far-right positions in response to far-right appeals to their voters is essential to understanding the way that far-right parties are re-shaping voting systems across Europe.

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Tables and Figures

<u>Tables</u>

Table 1: Manifesto Project Left and Right Policies for Rile Scores

Right Wing Policies	Left Wing Policies
Military Positive	Anti-Imperialism
Freedom and Human Rights	Military Negative
Constitutionalism Positive	Peace
Political Authority	Internationalism Positive
Free Market Economics	Market Regulation
Market Incentives Positive	Economic Planning
Protectionism Negative	Protectionism Positive
Economic Orthodoxy	Controlled Economy
Welfare State Limitation	Nationalisation
National Way of Life Positive	Welfare State Expansion
Traditional Morality Positive	Education Expansion
Law and Order Positive	Labour Groups Positive
Civic Mindedness Positive	Democracy

**Table 2: The Impact of Proximity on Left Right Issues on Left Co-optation of the Far-Right in or After 1995**

Variable	All Parties				Parties Over 10%			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Left/Right	0.073**	0.083**			0.095*	0.101*		
	(0.033)	(0.037)			(0.050)	(0.059)		
Support for Labour			0.273*	0.256**			0.383**	0.377**
			(0.143)	(0.125)			(0.190)	(0.175)
Year	0.309*	0.679*	0.422**	0.722*	0.271**	0.614*	0.349*	0.644
	(0.168)	(0.351)	(0.190)	(0.391)	(0.136)	(0.357)	(0.180)	(0.411)
Foreign Born Pop		-2.046*		-1.659		-1.639		-1.444
		(1.144)		(1.275)		(1.211)		(1.367)
Proportional ES		19.822		14.080		14.006		11.236
		(15.830)		(16.778)		(17.190)		(19.138)
Unemployment		0.661		0.435		0.903		0.704
		(0.969)		(0.877)		(1.077)		(0.953)
Constant	-3.249	-14.405	-10.483	-15.276	-2.603	-17.526	-5.001	-15.507
R^2	0.680	0.695	0.673	0.682	0.634	0.648	0.626	0.635
Observations	89	89	89	89	43	43	43	43

Table 3: The Impact of Proximity on Left Right Issues on Left Co-optation of the Far-Right (Chapel Hill data)

Variable	All Parties		Parties Over 10%	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Econ Left Right	0.193	0.104	0.244	0.320
	(0.384)	(0.428)	(0.512)	(0.488)
Year	0.073	0.116	0.124	0.274
	(0.131)	(0.167)	(0.199)	(0.351)
Foreign Born		-0.103		-0.537
Pop		(0.401)		(0.797)
Proportional ES		-0.143		21.839**
		(2.444)		(11.023)
Unemployment		-0.143		-0.031
		(2.444)		(0.128)
Constant	14.350	16.824	13.976	Omitted
R^2	0.382	0.367	0.600	0.617
Observations	83	83	42	42

**Figure 1: The Difference Between Mainstream Left Parties and their Far-Right Competitors**
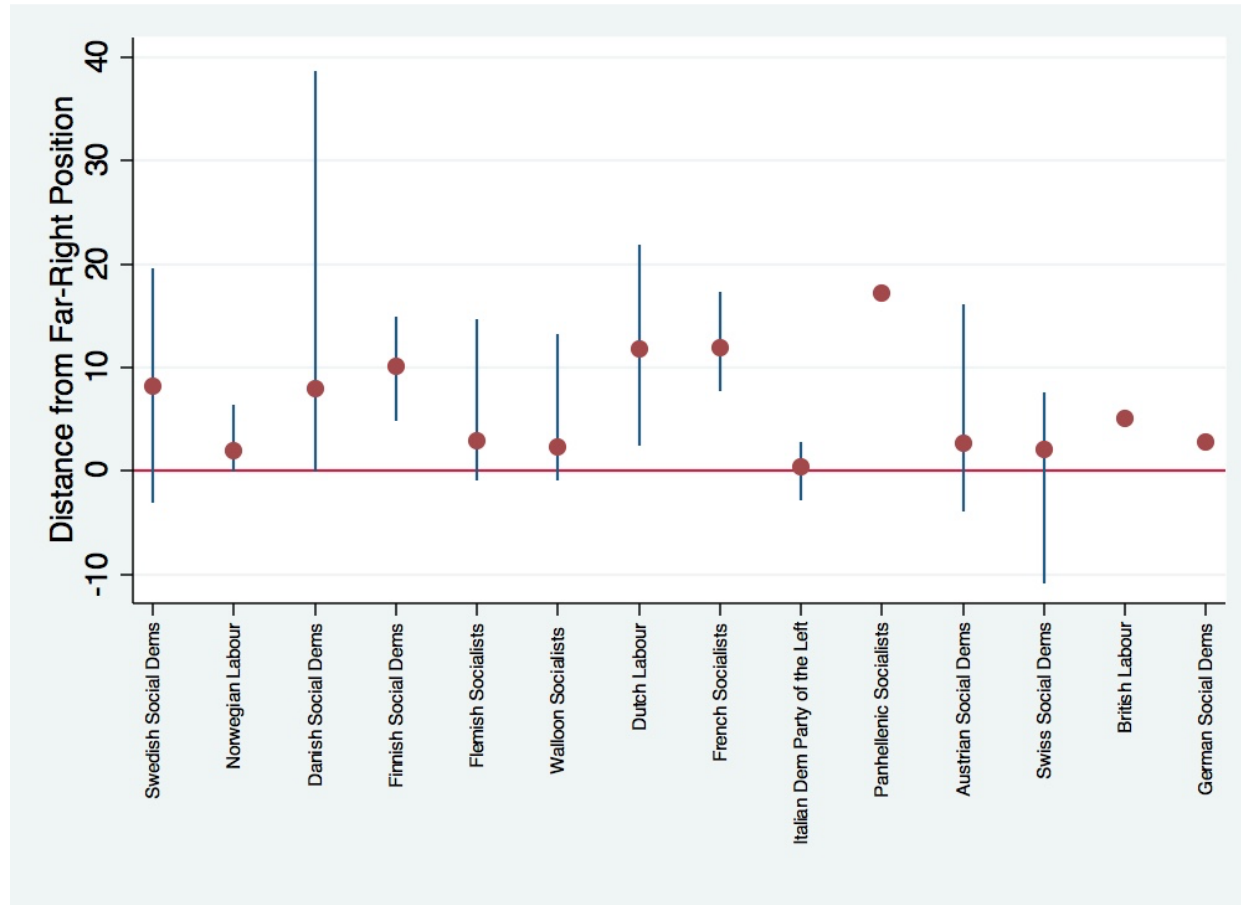
Dots show the average different between Manifesto Project scores for Nationalism and inverted scores for support for multiculturalism. Lines show the range in differences for all elections in which the mainstream left had a far-right competitor.

Figure 2: The Left/Right Positions of Far-Right Parties
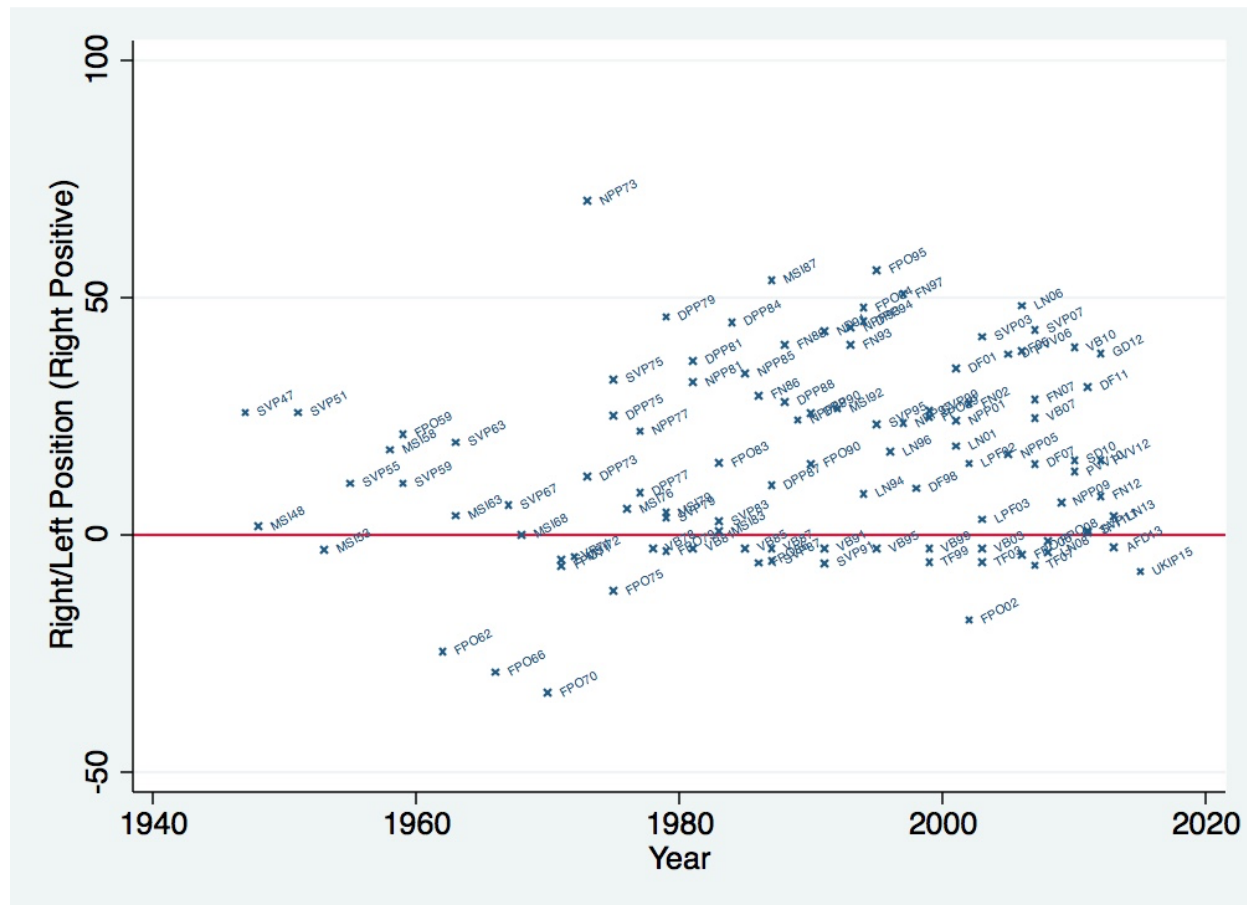
Each data point marks the far-right party positions on the Manifesto Project's left/right scale. Positions on nationalism, multiculturalism, and immigration are not included in this scale.

Figure 3: The Distribution of Combined Nationalism and Opposition to Multiculturalism Scores Amongst Left Parts with at Least 10% of the Vote Post 1994
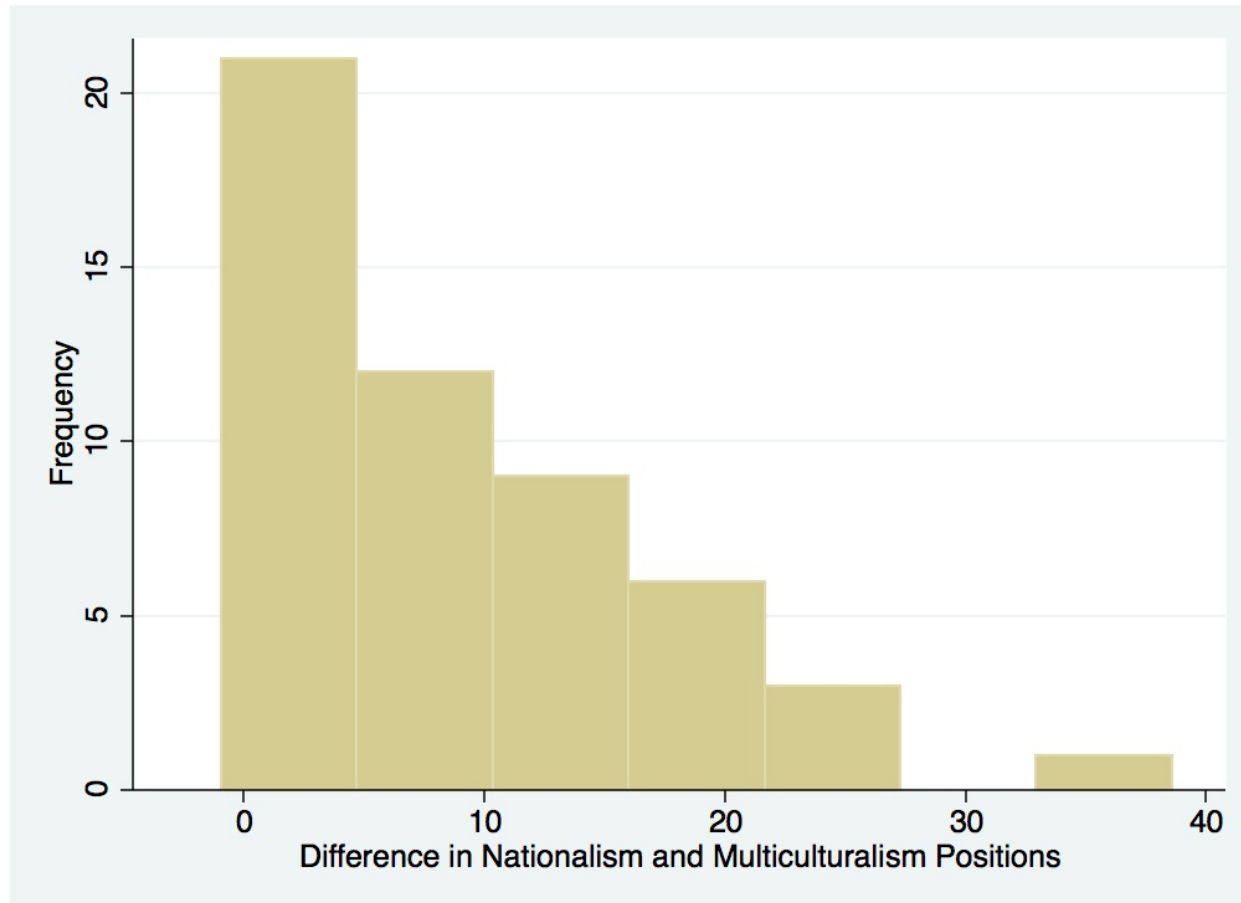
Bars show the frequency of different nationalism/multiculturalism positions.

Figure 4: Predicted Difference in Multiculturalism and Nationalism Position Based on Difference in Left/Right Position
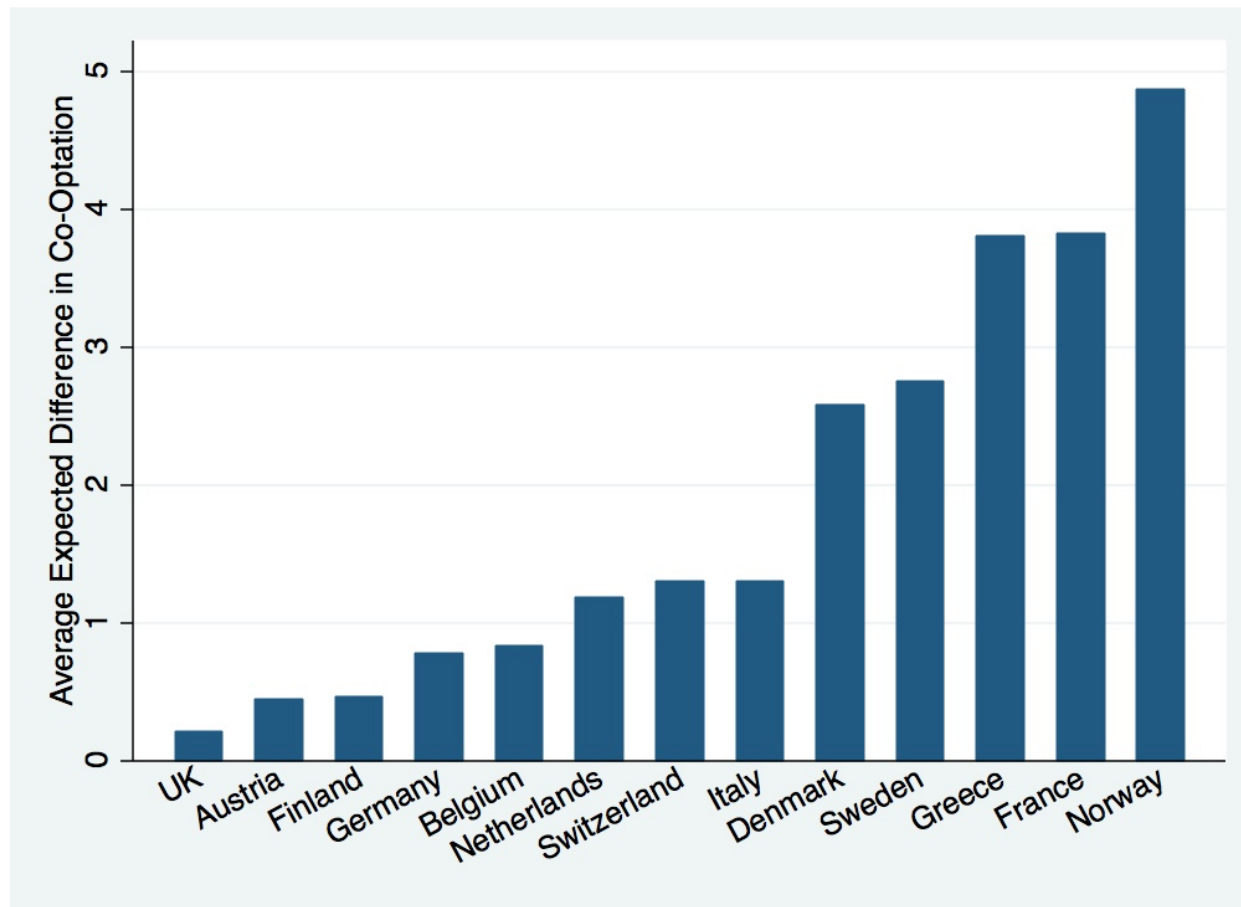
Bars show the predicted difference based on the coefficient in model 2 for parties over 10% in table 2.

Figure 5: Predicted Difference in Multiculturalism and Nationalism Position Based on Difference in Position on Labour Groups
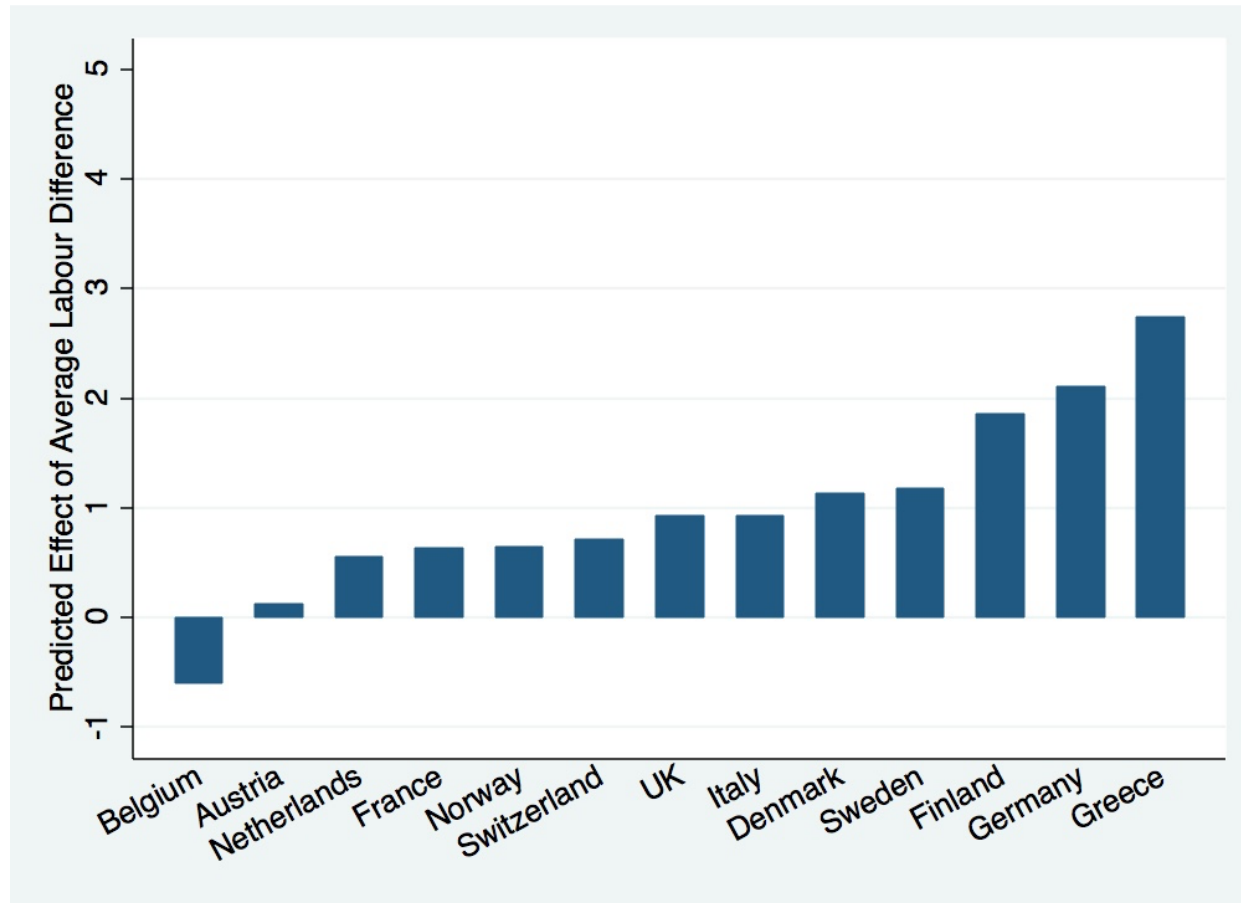
Bars show the predicted difference based on the coefficient in model 4 for parties over 10% in table 2.

Figure 6: Major Left Party Positions Compared to the Left/Right Model Prediction
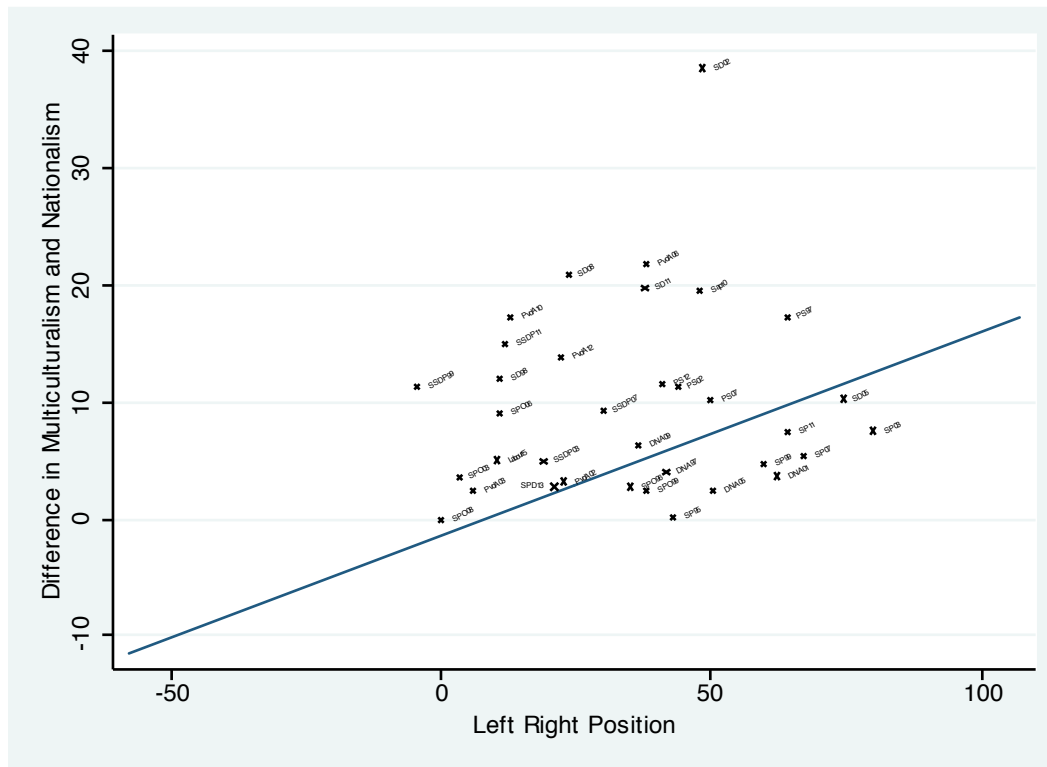
The predicted relationship is based on model 2 in table 1 for parties over 10%.

Figure 7: Major Left Party Positions Compared to the Labour Model Prediction

The predicted relationship is based on model 4 in table 1 for parties over 10%.
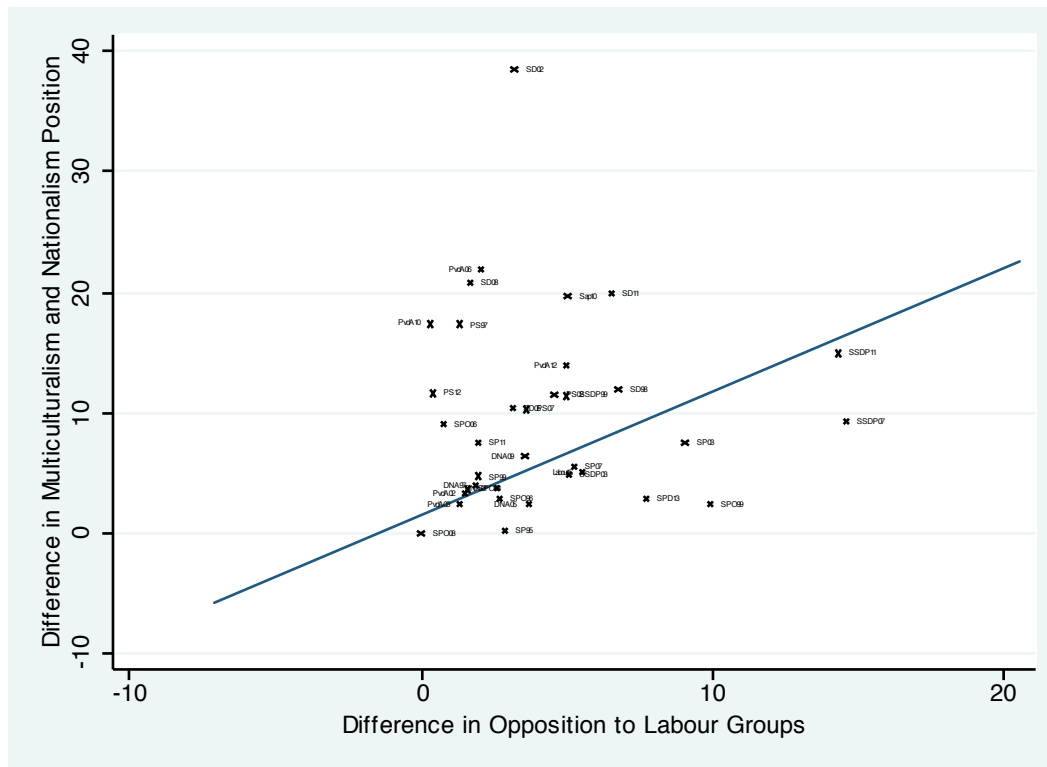
Appendix A

Table A1: The Impact of Proximity on Left Right Issues on Left Co-optation of the Far-Right in or After 1995

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Market Economy	-0.078 (0.112)	-0.090 (0.164)				
Welfare			-0.221 (0.164)	-0.194 (0.175)		
Social Conservatism					0.594 (0.419)	0.581 (0.408)
Year	0.440** (0.202)	0.760* (0.399)	0.399*** (0.154)	0.620* (0.340)	0.425*** (0.155)	0.728** (0.321)
Foreign Born Pop		-2.036 (1.384)		-1.367 (1.140)		-1.828** (0.853)
Proportional ES		17.765 (17.863)		10.793 (14.776)		17.374 (13.170)
Unemployment		0.232 (0.960)		0.163 (0.778)		0.310 (0.793)
Constant	-8.976	-10.100	-11.026	-12.903	-10.935	-16.068
R^2	0.662	0.673	0.683	0.687	0.690	0.699
Observations	89	89	89	89	89	89

Table A2: The Impact of Proximity on Left Right Issues on Left Co-optation of the Far-Right in or After 1995 for Parties with At Least 10% of the Vote

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Market Economy	-0.045 (0.200)	-0.075 (0.280)				
Welfare			-0.214 (0.199)	-0.193 (0.248)		
Social Conservatism					0.748 (0.456)	0.733 (0.466)
Year	0.407* (0.216)	0.732* (0.430)	0.365*** (0.136)	0.546 (0.345)	0.416*** (0.146)	0.709** (0.342)
Foreign Born Pop		-1.956 (1.447)		-0.766 (1.578)		-1.597* (0.884)
Proportional ES		5.363 (21.293)		-14.203 (25.912)		-6.156 (12.680)
Unemployment		0.520 (1.012)		0.491 (0.762)		0.591 (0.851)
Constant	-6.838	Omitted	-9.471	Omitted	-10.811	Omitted
R^2	0.599	0.611	0.620	0.623	0.651	0.660
Observations	43	43	43	43	43	43

Table A3: The Impact of Proximity on Left Right Issues on Left Co-optation of the Far-Right

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Left/Right	0.024	0.031								
	(0.015)	(0.021)								
Market Economy			-0.169*	-0.089						
			(0.072)	(0.061)						
Welfare					-0.034	-0.108				
					(0.073)	(0.066)				
Social Conservatism							0.237	0.119		
							(0.207)	(0.296)		
Support for Labour									0.153	0.135
									(0.099)	(0.089)
Year	0.258	0.040	0.241*	0.069	0.264*	0.027	0.268*	0.062	0.261*	0.060
	(0.154)	(0.109)	(0.137)	(0.108)	(0.159)	(0.111)	(0.161)	(0.114)	(0.155)	(0.109)
Foreign Born Pop		2.022*		1.813		2.121*		1.926		1.943*
		(1.139)		(1.128)		(1.166)		(1.198)		(1.158)
Proportional ES		-3.798***		-3.639***		-4.376***		-3.934***		-3.706***
		(1.463)		(1.250)		(1.356)		(1.419)		(1.365)
Unemployment		-0.753		-0.698*		-0.769*		-0.734		-0.763
		(0.484)		(0.405)		(0.453)		(0.462)		(0.469)
Constant	-6.376	-33.624	-6.179	-29.393	-6.063	-34.282	-6.998	-31.815	-6.445	-32.233
R^2	0.402	0.504	0.433	0.505	0.397	0.505	0.405	0.497	0.404	0.501
Observations	228	228	228	228	228	228	228	228	228	228

Table A4: The Impact of Proximity on Left Right Issues on Left Co-optation of the Far-Right for Left Parties with at Least 10% of the Vote

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Left/Right	0.006	0.027								
	(0.038)	(0.026)								
Market Economy			-0.172*	-0.099						
			(0.100)	(0.066)						
Welfare					0.004	-0.095				
					(0.154)	(0.132)				
Social Conservatism							0.209	0.149		
							(0.313)	(0.320)		
Support for Labour									0.150	0.163
									(0.212)	(0.199)
Year	0.175	-0.039	0.140	-0.013	0.177	-0.057	0.170	-0.019	0.165	-0.037
	(0.118)	(0.026)	(0.094)	(0.126)	(0.130)	(0.149)	(0.122)	(0.131)	(0.123)	(0.118)
Foreign Born Pop		2.070**		1.705*		2.168**		1.919*		2.003**
		(0.957)		(0.907)		(0.995)		(1.078)		(0.970)
Proportional ES		-5.581***		-5.430***		-6.362***		-5.693***		-5.675***
		(1.538)		(1.285)		(1.711)		(1.552)		(1.404)
Unemployment		-0.739		-0.650		-0.723		-0.730		-0.709
		(0.516)		(0.410)		(0.492)		(0.469)		(0.505)
Constant	-2.104	-29.739	Omitted	-22.233	-1.481	-30.090	-2.356	-26.897	-2.580	-27.736
R^2	0.389	0.507	0.436	0.515	0.388	0.508	0.395	0.504	0.394	0.508
Observations	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112