

Party and Group Dynamics on the Topic of Immigration in Western Europe

By

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Abstract

The predictive ability of voter behavior theories is based on their reflection of reality. Currently, research on voting behavior does not account for the distinct differences between partisans and independent voters; this is a significant failing. The image of the average voter as a strong partisan with attitudes that are congruent with the traditional left-right spectrum is disappearing; increasingly they are independent, issue voters who favor issues that do not align with the traditional party and left-right ideological structures. Instead of drawing on a partisan lens to filter new information, independent voters must form opinions from the political environment and personal experiences about 'hot button issues'. Parties themselves must determine which issues to engage during the campaign in order to entice independent voters, while not alienating partisans. I argue that theories of voting behavior must take into account the differences between partisans and independents because they are two distinct groups of voters with different reference points for issue evaluation and psychological mechanisms for attitude formation. Using the topic of immigration as an example of a prototypical 'hot button issue' this project explores the role that 'hot button issues' play on attitude formation and issue congruence in Western Europe for partisans and non-partisans. The changing nature of politics influences how different voter groups behave in the political environment, and as scholars we need to evaluate theories of voter behavior with this in mind if we are to understand the new political environment.

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“Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women who have her back” –

Anonymous

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The dominant interpretation of party politics is that political parties compete within a single dimension, the ideological left-right continuum dominated by economic issues. Further, this dimension adequately captures both parties and voters; however, this no longer appears to be the case. New social issues are increasingly emerging that challenge the dominance of the traditional party system. Concurrently, voters express dissatisfaction with traditional attachments to parties. New issues such as immigration, the green movement and European integration do not fit neatly along the traditional left-right dimension. These new social issues are considered hot button issues since they are highly controversial and do not align with the traditional ideological base. As these issues began to dominate politics, dissatisfied party voters become independent voters. Hot button issues and independent voters continue to dominate the political reality in Western Europe, forcing parties to choose when to compete on a collection of new issues rather than their ideological background or to lose potential voters. Understanding the process that enables a hot button issue to become an important issue for both voters and parties enables researchers to understand how the relationship will continue to develop in an era of partisan decline and issue voting.

As the prominence of new hot button issues increase, how does it affect voters? Currently, mainstream parties face dual challenges from declining partisanship and the need to determine which new issues to engage and/or ignore during the campaign. In an era of declining partisanship, understanding the rise of new issues is paramount because these highly salient issues have the ability to influence partisans and independents differently. However, this issue is often left unaddressed in voter behavior literature, which predominantly treats partisans and independent voters as a singular entity. In this dissertation, I address this gap in the literature and

further examine this growing party dynamic by focusing on the evolving topic of immigration within Western Europe.

Theories of voter behavior must take into account the distinct differences between partisan and independent voters because the two groups utilize different reference points for issue evaluation and utilize different psychological mechanisms for attitude formation. Using the topic of immigration as an example of a prototypical hot button or new social issue, this project explores the role that hot button issues play on attitude formation in Western Europe for partisan and non-partisan voters. The changing nature of politics influences how different groups behave in the political environment and as scholars, we need to evaluate theories of voter behavior with this in mind if we are to understand the new political environment

Partisan Decline

The European electorate underwent a shift away from a traditional cleavage structure towards cleavages along new political dimensions. The shifts result from changing values and a reorientation towards new political goals (Inglehart 1990). Partisan de-alignment is occurring across advanced industrial societies, not just within Western Europe but also, within the U.S. as well (Dalton 2000). Scholars used party identification as the best predictor of vote choice. Identification with a political party provides voters with a lens in which to view the political environment. Given the relationship of political parties to vote choice, it is important to investigate the role of the changing social system on party identification, “feelings of partisanship tap the popular vitality of representative democracy” (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). Challenges from post-materialism and its resulting values shifts have weakened partisan alignments. This has resulted in the theory of partisan de-alignment, which postulates, “we are

witnessing a broad and ongoing decline in the role of political parties for contemporary publics” (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, 23).

The changing nature of the political individual has striking effects on the de-alignment of the party system. The rise in access to media has also adversely affected voters’ dependence on parties (Dalton 2008). Populations now are placing an increased importance on education, which results in individuals who are better equipped to process political information (Dalton 2000). The relationship between increased education and better access to media provides voters with the ability to research parties decreasing reliance on parties for information. These two factors are significant contributors to the rise in independents.

Declining party identification and the resultant weakening of party ties ultimately lead to volatile electoral behavior, an emergence of more peripheral candidates, and a splintering of parties (Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg 2000). New parties emerged across Western Europe during the period of partisan decline (Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg 2000). Newer parties develop to capture voters who no longer feel represented by the current traditional cleavage party system.

As partisanship decreased, the number of independents increased as voters do not feel close to nor identify with a particular party. Dalton rightly points out that individuals are parties’ “means to an end” and the functional basis upon which parties build platforms (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, 19). Partisanship is expected to last a lifetime rarely changing, but when voters grow up in a political system that they do not see as representing their views, they are less likely to form partisan attachments, as is the case in Western Germany (Schmitt-beck, Weick, and Christoph 2006). Independent voters identifying with issues rather than parties change the context of the political environment.

Not only has the party system expanded, but also the relationship between political parties and voters changed dramatically over the same period. As the number of loyal partisans shrank, parties became more concerned with a new type of voter, the independent voter. This shift away from viewing the majority of voters as loyal partisans to independent voters brings its own challenges. Political parties needed to figure out how to adapt.

New Social Issues

The dominant interpretation of party politics is that political parties compete within a single dimension, the ideological left-right. This dimension adequately captures both parties and voters; however, this no longer appears to be the case. New social issues are increasingly emerging that challenge the dominance of the traditional party system.

Traditionally, economic issues and the left-right spectrum dominated Western European politics; however, new social issues are increasingly emerging that challenge their control. These social issues are considered 'hot button issues' since they are highly controversial and do not align with the traditional ideological base.

If voters are no longer satisfied with parties located along the traditional cleavage lines, new parties emerge to fill the void. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) suggest parties develop along cleavages within society at their development; therefore, new party emergence is contingent upon the context of the existing party system (Dalton 2000). Are existing parties able to "absorb newly emerging cleavages [to] prevent the evolution of a new party," or is the result a fracturing of the political system (Rohrschneider 1993)? As voters began to focus less on economic security and increasingly on post-material values such as environmentalism, there was a representational vacuum at the party level.

As attachments to traditional parties continued to decline, niche parties began to emerge in greater numbers. Niche parties are parties with narrow issue appeals on new issues that do not align with entrenched political divisions (Meguid 2008). Niche party placement along the cleavage structure helps to determine political success or failure (Tavits 2008). They do this by carving out a niche issue that is not congruent with traditional party cleavages (Meguid 2008). In the case of anti-immigrant parties, they often cross-cut the traditional cleavage structure found in society bringing together groups of people from parties that would not traditionally vote in kind (Meguid 2008). Niche parties then do not moderate their positions as mass parties to achieve increased support (Adams et al. 2006). The success of niche parties indicates that the political system is more porous as the electorate realigns itself along new values and cleavage structures. Context of the political system is an important indicator of new party success. Issues regarding immigration have achieved high levels of salience for large sectors of the population allowing the formation of niche parties in several states and disrupting the party system in others. Radical right parties and their issues of immigration and nationalism are traditionally regarded as niche issues, but recent European elections and world events are challenging this notion. The potential emergence of the radical right and nationalist parties as mainstream is addressed in the remainder of this chapter.

Theory

Presently, far right anti-immigrant parties are competing at both the national and international level within Western Europe. Success has varied for niche parties but they have been elected to national and international office in several states. This is unexpected given the far rights expected niche status. Several studies look at the success of niche parties from the party perspective in order to determine why parties expected to be at the perimeter of society are able

to garner enough support for election. This is done through examining how a previously second order issue becomes a voting issue.

Voters themselves need to be included in theories on new issues in order to understand how new issues can attract various segments of the population. It is these new, highly salient issues that have the greatest ability to draw independent voters into the political system. With the expansion of the European Union (EU) and increasing immigration from countries outside the EU the pressure on the nation-state cannot be ignored. Social identity theory predicts a rise in a nationalist agenda, but is the rise attributable to a fear of economic or cultural loss or is it driven by other mitigating factors. If the rise of far right parties is attributable primarily to social identity theory, can we still draw insights from how this hot button issue has become center stage? I argue yes, we cannot simply ignore the psychological pressure of the EU in the future. The issue of immigration is both a cultural and economic issue that cross-cuts the typical left/right divide. Parties on both the right and the left need to make adjustments in order to appease voters, both partisan and independent, for this reason insights gained are for the next potential second-order issue to come to the fore of the agenda.

Partisanship is a strong predictor of vote choice, but research indicates that partisan ties are in decline. This decline of partisanship has allowed a previously unimportant issue to become a voting issue for many voters across Europe. Given the historical cleavage structure of parties across Europe, there should be little room for anti-immigrant parties to gain traction among the populace. However, the decline in importance of partisanship coupled with the rise of post-industrial values has led to issues that were once seen as trivial becoming salient and highly important for both parties and voters to consider. Because of the rising importance of the immigration issue, mainstream parties are forced to take a stance on the issue.

Another possibility is that non-partisans are more likely to vote on a psychological level in a time of greater economic hardship and follow insights from realistic conflict theory becoming more favorable of their perceived in-group and more antagonistic to the perceived out-group such as those from outside the nation-state. Insights from psychology indicate that an in-group/out-group mentality can develop from such simple a delineation as dividing children into two separate groups.

This project argues that the term voters is not a one size fits all description of the electorate. Instead, partisans and independent voters have different frames of reference when making decisions on which party to support, and as such our theories must adapt to the changing nature of the electorate as well as the political context. Parties link citizens to the governing process, providing the electorate with information about policies and the party. Under normal conditions, loyalty to the party is expected to drive partisans to prefer their party, while independents are expected to drive partisans to prefer the party closest to them spatially on the left/right spectrum. The spatial model of voter behavior as described is severely limiting because it does not allow for issues outside of the one dimensional left/right competition space to be considered voting issues.

Social psychological explanations for anti-immigrant attitudes include a wide variety of explanations; this dissertation will focus on social identity theory and realistic conflict theory as explanations. Within the context of Western Europe, social identity theory has been used to explain attitudes regarding immigrants and further integration of the European Union (EU) (Luedtke 2005; McLaren 2004; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Currently, there is little research that evaluates the role of group conflict theory in Europe with a few notable exceptions (Bohman 2011; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet 2009; Quillian 1995; Sniderman,

Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Realistic conflict theory emphasizes the importance of competition between groups for resources (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958). Both theories expect that during times of stress, individuals emphasize their in-group preferences and out-group antagonism. This in-group/out-group differentiation leads to antagonism with immigrants and immigration when the in-group is defined as the national identity. The in-group/out-group differentiation is central to both theories and indicative of human nature. Where the two theories differ is: what are the necessary conditions for the development of the in-group/out-group distinction to occur?

This dissertation will consider how the decline in partisanship affects voter's attitudes towards immigration. To determine if attitudes regarding immigration are related to group identity it is important to postulate the sudden rise in anti-immigrant parties. Partisanship is one of the primary indicators of vote choice as previously discussed. The original cleavages that established the party system in Western Europe are weakening. These weakened ties have led to the rise first of Green parties and now of far right extreme parties over the years. The ties to the traditional cleavage structures have only continued to weaken as demonstrated by the decline in partisanship.

The Issue of Immigration

Immigrants are often in a state of limbo. Due to the nature of citizenship and immigration, there are often dual legal restrictions that operate in many states emphasizing the otherness of immigrants (Stevens 2001). Immigrants are defined as non-native newcomers, or those who are foreign born (McLaren and Johnson 2007). Immigrants are people whom cross an international border and settle in a host country as long-term residents (Kriesi et al. 2012). Immigrants by definition are the other. Without full integration into society, immigrants remain

excluded from identification with their adopted state. This exclusion of immigrants from the protections of citizenship emphasizes a construction of citizen as superior to the inferior immigrant.

Conflict arises from increasing immigration in two ways, conflict over economic resources and/or conflict over the national identity (McLaren and Johnson 2007). Economic conflict is characterized by competition between native citizens and immigrants in the labor market (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). Cultural or national identity conflict is characterized by a sense of loss of the national identity with an increase in immigration (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Cultural impacts are viewed to be symbolic, whereas current scholars treat economic impacts as measurable concepts (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). Cultural limits of the national identity provide a way to exclude immigrants from belonging to the nation-state as with the expansion of the EU many peoples are granted the same legal rights as citizens (Kriesi et al. 2012). The party system is largely ignored by research on immigration issues other than to describe niche parties.

Further European integration pushed immigration onto the agenda in Europe, both for the European Union (EU) and domestically within the individual states. The pressure of increasing ethnic diversity and growing immigrant minorities caused the issue of immigration to become salient and at times, a contentious issue within many nation-states (Kriesi 2008). As a result, immigration is considered a top problem facing Europe (Lahav 1997).

The Brexit vote in summer of 2016 was a culmination of decade's long anti-Europe sentiment within the United Kingdom. Brexit, the vote for the UK to leave the EU, occurred on June 23, 2016, the referendum passed with 51.9% of voters opting to leave the EU (Goodwin and Milazzo 2017). At the core of the vote for Brexit were concerns regarding immigration

(Goodwin and Milazzo 2017). The importance of immigration to the political landscape of Western European politics led to the formation of new political cleavages and parties (Givens and Luedtke 2005). Despite the rise of new social issues such as environmentalism as early as the 1970s, immigration did not gain hot button status until the 1990s when a steady rise in salience between 1990 and 2002 led to immigration becoming one of the most prominent issues facing Europe (Givens and Luedtke 2005). Hot button issues for this project are defined as highly salient issues that motivate voters. Other examples of hot button issues include security, terrorism, and climate change. Throughout Europe the question of whether immigrants should be given permission to live in the country has been a prominent issue for many years, even overriding security and economic issues to become the number one issue facing Europe in 2004, according to Eurobarometer respondents in 2004 (Luedtke 2005). The importance of immigration for a majority of European citizens indicates that immigration is a highly salient hot button issue throughout Europe.

Prior to Brexit there was a growing unrest regarding immigration within Europe. The increase in attention to issues related to immigration is not restricted to specific states within Western Europe. Nationalism as an issue has increased in popularity across Europe over the past several decades (Bohman 2011). Traditionally, immigration is expected to be a niche issue, with limited appeal beyond a small segment of the population. Despite this, the *Sweden Democrat* party recently polled 13% of the vote in national elections, while running on a staunch anti-Europe and anti-immigrant stance (Profile n.d.). Notably, extreme right parties have risen from the fringes of the political arena challenging mainstream parties for positions at all levels of government throughout Western Europe. In Austria's most recent national elections, the far-right *Freedom Party* (FPOe) gained over 1/5th of the countries vote, making it the third most popular

party (News and Paris 2014). In local French elections in 2014, the Socialist party urged voters to back any party that could beat La Pen's *National Front* (News and Paris 2014). This is unexpected given that the *National Front* initially held niche party status.

The trend of increasing support for the right continues on the national stage in 2017. Emmanuel Macron of *En Marche!* was elected president of France defeating Marine La Pen of the *National Front* with 66.1% of the vote during the second round of voting (Hoyo and Chandler 2017). Unlike *En Marche!*, the *National Front* is not a new party post 1990s immigration salience, the *National Front* has competed in elections since the 1980s. The dominant message of the *National Front* has persistently been a tough stance on immigration. While the National Front lost the election, they received the highest vote share in a national election to date, with 33.9% of the vote (Hoyo and Chandler 2017). This large share of the vote indicates that the message of the *National Front* is resonating with a third of French voters.

Parties on the right are also making significant, yet unexpected gains in Germany's Bundestag after the September 24, 2017 election (Witte, McAuley, and Birnbaum 2017). The right wing *Alternative for Germany* party (AfD) now holds 94 seats carrying 13% of the vote in the election (Kirby 2017). The AfD and the FDP, a second right wing party with a pro-business stance, were absent from the last Bundestag election and captured 174 seats combined in 2017 (Kirby 2017). Immigration was a primary topic during the election cycle, in fact the only televised debate between Angela Merkel and her primary challenger for the chancellorship, Martin Schulz, focused predominantly on the topic of immigration (Kirby 2017). When it came to evaluating the party positions, approximately 55% of AfD voters believe that the party stances are too extreme on the far right, but that did not stop the respondents from voting for the AfD (Kirby 2017). Therefore, attitudes toward immigration are leading the charge.

What these recent elections in Germany, France, and the Brexit referendum in the UK have in common is a surprising margin of victory for the far right positions. Even though the far right did not win the Chancellorship in Germany or Presidency in France, the gains by the far right exceed the expectations of pollsters. The Brexit vote to leave the UK shocked pundits and pollsters alike. It was expected that the outcome would be close with the polls suggesting the UK would choose to remain in the EU (“Leave is gaining ground. But do not rule out Remain just yet - Brexit polling” 2016). In contrast, the pollsters were correct for the French presidential vote, predicting a win for Macron. The surprise was the vote share for La Pen, which was approximately 12% higher in the second round of voting than in the first round (Hoyo and Chandler 2017). In Germany the election was expected to provide Angela Merkel the Chancellorship easily, instead her party lost significant ground to the far right (Witte, McAuley, and Birnbaum 2017). Overall, voters came out to support the far right in greater numbers than predicted.

Dissertation Structure and Layout

Given arguments from the US that independent voters who lean towards a party are more likely to emulate expected partisan behavior, I first establish that partisans in Western Europe are different from independents. In chapter two, I first determine which group of voter feels closer to a party, independents or partisans.

Broadly, in chapter three, I look at which group of voter feels increased threat from immigration. I expect that independents are more likely than partisans to feel threats to the home country. Independents lack ties to parties for cues about the political environment. Because independent voters must access political information from the entire political and media system, I expect that they are more likely to feel threatened in general from immigration. Partisans on the

other hand will receive cues from their party about other important topics, which could dampen the effect of increased political discussion regarding immigration.

In chapter three, I break down the possible threats from immigration. Focusing on the cultural aspect of immigration, I investigate whether there are group differences between partisans and independents regarding perceived cultural threats from immigration. Determining whether independent or partisan voters are most susceptible to negative rhetoric about immigration is important. If there is no difference between the groups then the issue is not expected to impact the electoral climate. If independents perceive an increased threat to immigration it could have lasting impacts on the party system as political parties compete for independent voters.

The added benefits of multiculturalism vs threats from immigrants who fail to assimilate to their new nation's culture are a common discourse among Western states. How voters respond to perceived threats or benefits of immigration to the culture of the state are important to understand. Cultural threats to the national identity challenge the very definition of what it means to be a citizen. When voters perceive threats to the traditional notions of national identity, xenophobic attitudes increase (Lucassen and Lubbers 2012).

Social identity theory posits that humans naturally form in-groups and out-groups as a way of categorizing ourselves from distinctions of the 'other'. To perceive threat only a minimum of perceived otherness needs to be detected. These in-group/out-group divisions exist even when the distinction between the two groups is arbitrary (Tajfel 1978). This is known as the minimal group paradigm. The mere division of people into groups will affect their attitudes towards those in the group and those not in their group (Brewer 1979). When the distinction between the two groups is less arbitrary stronger favoritism towards the in-group and bias against

the out-group occurs (Huddy 2001). Xenophobia is expected to occur in nations with a homogenous native population and a large culturally distinct immigrant population that does not assimilate.

Economic threats from immigration are important to determining whether partisans or independents are more likely to perceive threats when they feel their economic prospects are lower. I expect that independent voters will perceive higher threats from immigration because they will reflect on the economic status of their in-group as the nation state whereas partisans are more likely to evaluate their economic misfortune or boons against all other groups not only immigrants.

Chapter four discusses the influence of the economy on perceptions of immigration for partisans and independents. Party competition is traditionally based on the economic left/right spectrum. In times of scarcity, such as an economic crisis, group membership becomes important because people desire to view their group as superior to other perceived inferior groups. This chapter utilizes the assumptions of realistic conflict theory that when a group perceives threats to their resources or status they develop negative attitudes towards other competing groups. Partisans ought to follow insights from realistic group conflict theory, identifying with their party rather than the nation-state. They will only perceive threats from immigration when their economic interests as a group are challenged.

I expect that independents with the most negative perception of economic immigration are more likely to place themselves further right along the left/right spectrum. Independent voters will place less emphasis on economic issues as an immigration issue and perceive economic issues as a statement about the economy in general. During times of an economic crisis, independent voters are more likely to self-identify further right. This is due to an increase in the

issue salience of anti-immigrant rhetoric. Independent voters are most likely to be influenced by salient issues.

As outlined above independent and partisan voters have different reference points for evaluating new issues. These reference points need to be considered when determining how voters will behave in an era of declining partisanship. The issue of immigration is a perfect case to use to look at how voters internalize new issues as it is currently, one of the most salient issues across Europe today.

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Chapter 2: Let's Have a Party

Immigration has become a hotly contested topic throughout Western Europe. We see this in the rise of extreme right parties in several Western European countries as well as increasing scholarly attention to the issue of immigration. There is a need to understand how attitudes regarding immigration affect party and voter interactions.

There is a burgeoning literature linking the rise of immigration salience with media attention (i.e. Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007; de Vries 2010; Walgrave, Lefevere, and Nuytemans 2009). These articles link salience of immigration with increased media attention, but few look at the electoral effects of immigration on party preference. A possible exception is Van der Pas et al (2013) which focuses on the leadership effects of Geert Wilder and support for his PVV throughout the 2006 election in the Netherlands. Even their study falls short of being ideal because it does not link voters' attitudes regarding immigration with vote choice. Immigration has become a focal point of recent European elections. Clearly, the issue of immigration is registering with voters.

This chapter tackles the role of parties in the debate on immigration. The focus of Chapter 2 is the question: Is the term partisan still relevant in the modern European party system? In this chapter, I discuss the evolution of the modern European party system and determine whether the term partisan is still a relevant term to use in research. The focus of this chapter is not to rehash previous debates, but to emphasize the important dance between parties and potential voters.

In this chapter, I give the historical context for party competition in Western Europe and describe the current state of the research on party competition and voter behavior. The focus of this section is describing the importance of partisanship as an identity for partisans and the

transition into an era of declining partisanship and increasing issue competition. In advanced industrial democracies, parties are integral to the concept of democracy. Making Schattschneider's claim as true today as when he originally said it seventy years ago, "democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties," (1975).

Sociological Explanation for Party Competition – Tradition

According to Duverger, "parties are profoundly influenced by their origins" (Duverger 1954, xxiii). In Western Europe, parties developed as groups of people were granted suffrage and entrance into the political arena. Social cleavages and conflict lines morphed into party identification as democracy expanded to larger portions of the population (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). "We might think of party choices as a function of the number of social cleavages that exist in a society and thus the number of parties that compete because they have a distinct constituency to represent" (Lijphart, Arend 1984, 14). Initially partisanship was located along the boundary lines of social divisions among both American and Western European publics' (Bereleson, Lazarfeld, and McFhee 1963; Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984; Lijphart, Arend 1984). In Western Europe party loyalty and social group were initially believed to be so consistent that the terms partisanship and vote choice were used interchangeably (Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984). These early ties to social identity enhance the psychological component of partisanship.

Democratic party systems are expected to remain stable over time rarely fluctuating between elections. The norm for a party system is a stable alignment, one in which there is "constancy in party coalitions and aggregate partisan equilibrium" (Dalton, Beck, and Flanagan 1984, p11). During this time period there is very little vote switching among voters. Within Western Europe "the party systems reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage

structures of the 1920s” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Cleavages manifested in the development of the party family system that we still recognize today. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) characterized the party system based on four cleavages: center/periphery, state/church, land/industry and owner/worker. Accordingly, today’s party system is dominated by cultural cleavages along the social and religious class cleavages lines (Thomassen 2005).

Partisan loyalty remains predictable and unaltered. The bases for loyalties during stable periods are prone to be along the social and economic boundaries, the party cleavages. Examples of this include the religious right voting consistently with the Republican Party and pro-union activists voting with the Democratic Party in the US. And in England the working class aligning themselves consistently with the Labour party, while the upper class is more likely to vote with the Conservative Party. Party loyalty and social group were initially so consistent outside the U.S. that the terms partisanship and voter were frequently congruent (Dalton, Beck, and Flanagan 1984, p12). When the two terms were found to be inconsistent, often party identification was changed to be in line with vote choice (Dalton, Beck, and Flanagan 1984).

While Lipset and Rokkan’s research (1967) focused predominantly on the first three cleavage structures, other scholars explored other potential cleavages (e. g. Lijphart 1979). Looking for predictors of vote choice, Lijphart identifies three potential factors, religion, class and language (1979). These cleavages are similar to those identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Class “although important, occupied a lower place in the hierarchy of voting determinants” (Lijphart 1979, 443). To construct a variable of religion, Lijphart distinguishes between protestant and catholic voters and secular versus religious values (1979). Lijphart advances the position that parties reflect distinct societal cleavages occurring during their origin, further indicating that there is high relative strength attached to each conflict dimension (1979).

Additional research found partisanship to be consistent with social groups specifically religion and class (Dalton, Beck, and Flanagan 1984, p12). Party families continue to dominate party level politics across Western Europe.

Post-Material Party System

Parties continue to operate along the traditional cleavage structures within Western Europe; however, new cleavages continue to emerge. The cleavage structure articulated by Lipset and Rokkan focus on aspects of survival and material desires (1967). While focusing on the cleavage structure of church and government may seem out of place in 2016, it was a threat to portions of the population when it emerged as a cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Lijphart 1979). Despite the overwhelming stability of the party systems of Western Europe prior to the 1960s, as noted in the statement the party systems were already beginning to fluctuate and fracture (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 50).

Societies changed from an industrial society to a post-industrial society, which transformed the electorate that sought a more active role in the political decision making process (Dalton et al. 1984). Inglehart (1977) describes this shift as a shift to post-materialism and post-material values. According to post-materialism, as economic and political stability emerged in Europe, the public increasingly placed higher importance on post-material values (Inglehart 1977). Social movements were no longer formed around issues such as defense, but around protection for the environment.

The shift to post-materialism was brought about by the proliferation of mass communications, rising levels of education, changes in the occupational structure, rising prosperity and the absence of war within advanced industrial societies (Inglehart 1977). Previously, societies needed to focus more on survival, food and safety rather than aesthetic

needs. As societies changed, the focus shifted away from economic security to new social movements such as gender equality and environmentalism. Post-materialism further postulated that there ought to be distinct cohort values based on experiences during each group's formative years (Inglehart 1977). Given that political values are a learned behavior and don't change as much after adulthood, there should be similar values among those in the same age group and different values among those from differing age groups. Value change also effected attitudes regarding orientations to political issues.

Furthermore, this process was expected to result in changes in the social bases of politics (Inglehart 1977). Change in social bases ought to result in challenges to traditional parties from the rise of new parties. Educational levels in the electorate rose as accessibility of higher education increased, leading to increases in information handling skills and increased informational resources (Dalton et al. 1984). Class voting decreased as social mobility increased (Dalton et al. 1984). These factors and others led researchers to declare that "contemporary electorates remain fundamentally different from their predecessors" (Dalton et al. 1984, 7).

Traditionally parties emphasize the economic cleavage, new social movements question whether this emphasis is legitimate. New social movements can either cross-cut or be "located outside of the realm of traditional controversies over economic issues" (Rohrschneider 1993b). Fundamental changes to the electoral structure due to economic affluence and the alleviation of security fears occurred concurrently with a trend toward secularism (Thomassen 2005). Modernization of the electoral system is expected to affect voter turnout due to rising levels of education and instrumental orientations to democracy (Thomassen 2005). The effect of class cleavages on vote choice decreased (Oskarson 2005). Over time, voters pay less attention to

traditional cleavage structures and increasing attention to values and ideological orientations when choosing parties to vote for in a given election.

The decline of political parties began decades ago (Coleman 1996; Dalton 2000). Rather than disappearing from political competition, the number of competitive political parties has increased since Lipset and Rokkan published their cleavage theory of political parties (1967). Political parties formed when different social groups achieved political power and the political cleavages facing the state at that time (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The party systems of Western democracies remained relatively frozen until the emergence of newer social issues (Inglehart 1997). New social issues began to emerge at a time when voters expressed a lack of commitment to the traditional party system. The rift between voters and parties allowed new parties, most notably the Green party family, to emerge as a political competitor in several Western democracies (Rohrschneider 1993). Today's party systems not only feature the traditional political parties, but also often feature the Green party or other niche parties. Niche parties are expected to play little substantive role in the political process. With voters' attachment to traditional parties declining, fringe parties are playing an increasingly important role in the electoral process for many Western democracies.

Emergence of New Parties

The Green movement baffled both the Left and Center-Conservative party families because the movement questioned the underlying premise of the party system (Rohrschneider 1993a). Parties in existence did not address the social politics dimension. As a traditional party they have established constituencies which expect the party to offer a specific program, adapting to a new cleavage could stress the relationship with their traditional supporters. Further, there is pressure from the emerging new cleavage with the formation of a new party attempting to steal

voters (Inglehart 1977). Initially, established parties did not adapt to the emergence of new social movements, but were able to offer programs including the new social issues (Rohrschneider 1993a). New parties are more likely to emerge in electoral systems where parties are unresponsive to voters and within electoral systems that allow for small-party interaction (Rohrschneider 1993). Elff argues that despite the emergence of Green parties the scholarly claim that social cleavages declined in importance is exaggerated (2007, p 289). His findings indicate that social groups still vote for parties in their expected manners particularly along the religious and class cleavage (Elff 2007). Even regarding the environmental movement evidence suggests mixed results at best, the social cleavages remain strong, the old left is strong among predicted voters, but there is some value change voting occurring although not dominant (Elff 2007, p 289). Voters who traditionally vote for the left are found among Green party partisans. This is further established by determining the policy stances of the traditional left from the new left.

Initially, Green party issues developed orthogonally from the traditional left/right spectrum, but other scholars challenged this view stating that Green issues were merging with the traditional left (Kitschelt 1993; Rohrschneider 1993a). Looking at the policy stances of parties within the Green party family from 1989 and 2002-2003, Dalton found there was little change along the economic spectrum, but that the Green parties moderated their stance on environmental policy during the time period (2009, p 170). While he argues this is not a full integration of environmentalism into the traditional party system, it does indicate that environmental issues no longer cross-cut the general left/right spectrum (Dalton 2009). To take this a step further, Green parties are now mainstream. They have an electorate with expectations for them to maintain a specific program. In order to establish and maintain their mainstream

status they need to moderate their views once in government. The Green Party is perceived as the owner of environmental issues, but is not perceived as a niche party because they have mass appeal and moderated their position to achieve a broader base.

Evolution of Parties in Western Europe: Shape of the Party System

To determine the changing nature of the party environment in Western Europe, it is important to explore the changing nature of competitive parties since 1999. Party level data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey Data is used to determine the state of the party system within Western European member states (Polk et al. 2017). The Chapel Hill survey utilizes experts to provide information regarding party positioning on various issues including immigration, economics, general social issues and the most important issues for each party. The survey began in 1999, with subsequent surveys in 2002; 2006; 2010 and 2014. Originally the survey asked experts about only 14 Western European states, but the survey expanded to include 31 countries in 2014 (Polk et al. 2017). For this project, only EU member states in Western Europe are included. Party families included in the Chapel Hill data include Radical Left; Socialist; Green; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Agrarian/Center, Confessional; Conservative; Radical Right, Regional; and No Family (Polk et al. 2017). I exclude the Regionalist, No Family, Confessional and Agrarian/Center families from the graphs, although they are discussed briefly here. Parties that do not belong to one of the traditional parties are excluded as they are often single-issue parties. Regional parties are excluded from the following figures as their issues often overlap with immigration issues.

[Insert Table 1: Parties across Competitive Political Parties in Western Europe]

For this project, Western Europe is divided into four distinct regions. The four regions include Peripheral Europe (Periphery): Ireland and the United Kingdom; Central Europe

(Central): Belgium, France, Austria; Luxembourg and Germany; Southern Europe (South): Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Cyprus¹; Northern Europe (North): Sweden, Finland and Denmark. The divisions are based on the historical and traditional boundaries within Europe.

The Conservative family is popular across Western Europe. Only the Netherlands does not have a relevant Conservative party. The Conservative party has steady representation across Western Europe from 1999 to 2014. The number of Conservative parties increased only in Belgium and Italy. The Christian Democrat party family is popular across Western Europe. The Christian Democrat family is not represented in Denmark, Greece, Spain, France, the UK and Portugal. Overall, there was a decrease in Christian Democrat representation by two across Western Europe from 1999 to 2014. The Liberal party family gained three parties across from 1999 – 2014, explained entirely by an increase in three parties in France and adding Luxembourg to the 2014 survey. Greens moved out of niche party status prior to 1999, which is attested to in this dataset by the fact that the Green family is competitive in all Western European states except Denmark. The Agrarian/Center and Confessional families are almost exclusive to Northern Europe. Exceptions include France in 1999 and Italy in 2014. In any given survey, the Agrarian/Center family did not include more than four parties across the 15 included in the Chapel Hill Survey. The following section discusses the variation across party systems regarding representation of Radical Right parties.

[Insert Table 2: Relationship with the Radical Right by Country and Region]

¹ Cyprus is included in the individual level analysis, but the Chapel Hill Expert Survey does not include Cyprus. For this reason, Cyprus is excluded from the party system explanations.

To visualize changes in the party system I discuss graphs made of the party systems for five states, one from each quadrant of Table 2. Graphs of the movement of party families are presented to indicate change in the party system over time. Each set of graphs represents a different region of Europe and history with radical right parties. The graphs indicate the position of each political party on the economic left/right and value dimension. The scores are from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey dataset. Experts were asked to assign political parties a score from zero to ten. A score of zero for Economic Position indicates that political parties express an interventionist stance on economic policy, scores of five are neutral and scores of ten indicate that a political party prefers a reduced role for the government in the economy such as privatization and less regulation (Polk et al. 2017). The variable GALTAN asked experts to score political parties on their views of democratic freedoms and rights on a scale from zero to ten (Polk et al. 2017). Post materialist parties receive scores of zero; examples of post materialist values include access to abortion, active euthanasia and same-sex marriage. Scores of five are assigned to center values. Experts were instructed to assign scores of ten to traditional or authoritarian parties.

These graphs indicate that there is a wide variation of party positions across Western Europe. Each region has representation across the traditional left/right economic spectrum in addition to the new emergent social movement scale. The New Politics positions for parties are changing over time and less solid than the economic position of each party, specific in party systems with a Radical Right presence.

Table 2 displays the regional divide across Europe and the party system divisions. Party systems are categorized based on their experience with Radical Right parties from 1975 to 2014. I divided states into those that do not have experience with a Radical Right party, Flash Radical

Right parties, strong Radical Right parties prior to 1980 and Strong Radical Right parties only after 1980. 1980 is used as a turning point for the Radical Right because this is when social issues become more prominent (Rohrschneider 1993a). The Radical Right is represented in 11 different states at one point.

States that did not have a competitive Radical Right party during this time period include half of Southern Europe, Spain and Portugal. Additionally Luxembourg and Ireland do not have a history of Radical Right parties. I will explore the Spanish party system as an example of a party system that lacks representation from Radical Right parties.

[Insert Figure 1: Party System without Radical Right Parties (Spain)]

Given the dominance of regional parties in Spain, the lack of radical right parties is unsurprising. Spain has a strong regional identity in both the Basque and Catalan regions. Culminating in a non-sanctioned vote for independence in Catalonia in 2017. Madrid is currently resisting Catalonia's attempts for separation. The only parties that scored above a five on the Social Politics position are Conservative parties. This shows that the economic left/right scale continues to dominate Spanish politics aside from Regional parties.

Party systems are considered Flash Radical Right systems if they do not have a consistent competitive Radical Right party. Germany has two Radical Right parties from 1999 to 2014, but the parties are only competitive in 1999 and 2014.

[Insert Figure 2: Party System with Flash Radical Right Parties (Germany)]

The party systems in these countries are dominated by the economic divide. This is understood by little variation on Social positions across the party system. In both Germany and Sweden, the mean score for Social Issue within each family is located +/-2 points from the middle score of five. Figure 2 shows the German party system. Only the Radical Right and

Christian Democrat parties scored above a five on social issues. The liberal party (FDP) is further right on the Economic left/right scale than the radical right parties are located. The CDU and the Radical Rights parties are located at approximately the same place as each other on the Economic scale.

[Insert Figure 3: Party System with Flash Radical Right Parties (United Kingdom)]

The party system in the United Kingdom is similar. The United Kingdom is classified as a Flash Radical Right party system because the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) has limited access to the government. UKIP and the Conservative party are located at almost the same coordinates on the Economic issues, with UKIP having a higher score on social issues.

Party systems with a history of strong Radical Right Parties after 1980 include Sweden, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium (Wallonia). These party systems include a wide amount of variation. Because of their long history of competition with the Radical Right, these party systems have parties that are spread across both the Economic and Social position.

[Insert Figure 4: Party System with Strong Radical Right Parties after 1980 (France)]

France's party system is in a state of reorganization to combat the strength of La Pen's *National Front* and scandals within the Socialist party under Jacques Chirac. Despite the fluctuation in the competitive liberal parties in France, there is a clear pattern of dominance from Social Issues. The range of scores for social issues is between one and ten. While the scores range between party families, there is a clear sense of competition along the Social divide based on the range of scores. This is mirrored by party competition in Sweden, which also indicates a range of scores among Social Issues.

[Insert Figure 5: Party System with Strong Radical Right Parties Prior to 1980]

The dominance of social issues is also apparent among party systems with experience with the Radical Right prior to 1980. The Italian party system is displayed in Figure 5. The Italian party system shows a range of scores from 1 to 10. Italy's Radical Right is more economically neutral than the liberal parties.

Partisan Decline

Despite the pivotal function that parties serve in democratic society, many citizens do not feel attached to a particular political party resulting in partisanship decline. As the dominance of the left-right spectrum decreases, large segments of voters are severing ties to parties. The result is a rise in unaffiliated members of the electorate or independents. The youth are least likely to have a partisan affiliation, with the highest decreases in partisanship among them (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). This is particularly prominent in Western Germany, where large segments of the younger generations are rejecting the political system of their predecessors and remaining or becoming independents (Schmitt-beck, Weick, and Christoph 2006) . When partisanship is no longer driving vote choice, the public is more likely to be influenced by the salience of new issues such as immigration and the environment. The concept of partisanship, once a dominant feature of Western European states, is changing and with it our understanding of party preference.

As independent voters increase, the traditional cleavage structure that heavily influenced voting and scholarship became less important and the era of the issue voter arrived. Parties in turn are increasingly competing on the hot button issues rather than confining themselves strictly to the ideological spectrum. Discovering how voters perceive hot button issues enhances our understanding of voter behavior because it allows us to determine if partisan and independent voters truly view the political environment differently. Spatial theories of voter behavior would

predict that independent voters clustered in the center of the left-right spectrum would prefer parties located in the political center, but these theories do not account for issues that are not part of the traditional left/right dimension.

Parties are important aspects of the democratic system, although not inherently required for democracy to function. In advanced industrial democracies, parties are integral to the concept of liberal democracy. Parties are important to the democratic system because they provide the most direct access for citizens to influence government through elections. Partisanship provides voters with a cost-saving device when choosing between political issues. In an era of increasing partisan decline, it is necessary to evaluate the relationships between parties and their voters, partisan or independent, to determine whether the changing nature of politics influences these groups in a similar manner.

Theory and Argument

The mass public lacks detailed knowledge regarding political affairs, but they are able to place themselves and parties accurately along the left-right scale (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976). Parties provide distinct programs to voters that serve as cognitive shortcuts. Voters then are able to clearly identify differences in parties and act on those differences during the election. Voters use party identification to evaluate candidates, decreasing the information cost of voting (Campbell et al. 1960; Riker and Ordeshook 1968). Psychological attachment to a party serves as a guide for attitude and behavior for voters (Campbell et al. 1960). These traditional explanations of party preference are sufficient when partisanship and the left/right spectrum are the dominant features of the party system. In today's political climate, these assumptions are no longer assured. Partisanship has drastically declined among the population of Western Europe and the U.S.

further, the dominance of the left/right spectrum to predict party preference is increasingly challenged by the rise of newer hot button issues.

The predictive ability of voter behavior theories is based on their reflection of reality. Currently, research on voting behavior does not account for the distinct differences between partisan and independent voters; this is a significant failing. The image of the average voter as a strong partisan with attitudes that are congruent with the traditional left-right spectrum is disappearing; increasingly voters are independent, issue public, who favor issues that do not align with the traditional party and left-right ideological structure. Instead of drawing on a partisan lens to filter new information, independent voters must form opinions from the political environment and personal experiences about hot button issues. Parties themselves must determine which issues to engage during the campaign in order to entice independent voters, while not alienating their partisan voters.

Partisanship decline led many to question whether the term partisan was still a valid concept. Membership in parties has drastically declined after 1970 (Van Biezen, Mair, and Poguntke 2012). Despite the decline in membership levels, parties remain an entrenched aspect of democracy. If the concept of partisanship has no meaning in a modern society, parties should lose their place of dominance in the political space. In France, *En Marche!*'s election to the presidency is an indicator that parties are weakening their hold on the political process. I argue this is not the case due to the electoral system in France. France's two round presidential election system produces a more person driven politics at the presidential level, but parties themselves remain strong in France.

Despite arguments (Farrell 2011) indicating that more sophisticated electorates do not need the party to function as a political cue, current research indicates that this does not hold for

the younger population past the 1990s (Thomassen 2005). In Western Europe research indicates youth and education have reverse effects on levels of partisanship (2005), challenging Dalton's (2011) argument that increasingly educated electorates no longer need parties. Despite being more cognitively mobilized, European publics well educated individuals report higher levels of partisanship.

We assume parties function as cue givers for voters, partisan and independents alike, providing a schema for voters in which to process new issues. Schemas provide a structure for interpreting new information, activating cognitive shortcuts for processing new information without the need to reinvent schemas for every interaction (Conover and Feldman 1984; Lodge and Hamill 1986). This process allows individuals to simplify reality by providing presorted responses based on the activated schema (Fiske and Taylor 1984). Attachment to a political party changes the way voters perceive the political world, causing them to filter information in terms of their partisanship (Dalton 2009; Lodge and Taber 2005). I expect that the same information affects voters in different manners depending on whether they have a partisan identity or are unaligned. For partisans, identification with a political party provides a lens through which to view the political environment, a partisan schema. Independent voters do not interpret the world through a partisan schema; often labeled as issue voters because of a propensity to switch parties between elections, understanding when issues become voting issues is an underdeveloped area of research (Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg 2000). When it comes to choosing which party to vote for on Election Day, partisans and independents have different motivations guiding their choice. It is important to understand how these factors influence voters' decision making for both groups.

Partisan voters are expected to remain loyal partisans based on the old cleavage structure of party systems; while independent voters shifted into the newer issue oriented party system. As noted by Greene those whom identity as close to political parties often reflect similarly held belief structures. This indicates that for partisans the partisan identity remains a strong predictor of attitude and vote choice. One of the dominant reasons given for the younger generation in Germany's lack of attachment to a political party is that they do not believe the political party system represents their views (Schmitt-Beck, Weick, and Christoph 2006). Given these reasons, I would expect that partisans and independents differ in their attachment to a political party.

Hypothesis: Partisans are more likely than Independents to identify as being “close” to a party.

Partisans are expected to be identify as close to the party because they have a connection to the party. Independent voters are expected not to identify as close to the party because they lack the strong emotional attachment of partisan voters. *Closeness to a political party* is dichotomous for this study. Respondents either identify as close to a political party or not close to a political party. Indicators of level of closeness do not guarantee a group attachment.

Identifying as close to a party is used rather than a level or partisan attachment because it establishes the connection expected between partisan and party. This relationship is based on identity. Further, this allows me to establish whether respondents identify as a member of a group. Using level of identification for all respondents could result in the inclusion of whether respondents believe they have similar or dissimilar views to the party.

Data and Methods

I utilize data for this project from two sources. Individual data for this project is from the European Social Survey (ESS) (European Social Survey 2016). The ESS is conducted every two

years with 36 states across Europe and the wider community participating at least once. The ESS began surveying in 2002. States may opt in or out depending on the year. The ESS covers a broad range of topics including immigration, social trust, family, work, health and care, climate change and justice to name a small selection (European Social Survey 2016).

Every two years the ESS asks general questions known as the core section. The core questionnaire is supplemented with rotating modules every round. These modules allow the ESS to go in-depth on specific topics. Further, a supplementary questionnaire includes other topics including an evaluation of respondent's basic value orientations.

The ESS is ideal for tapping attitudes regarding immigration as it contains various measures of public opinion towards immigration. Immigration questions addressed by the ESS include details about economic consequences and cultural effects (Card, Dustman, and Preston 2005). Attitudes regarding immigrant groups is also included in the ESS unlike other surveys. These unique attributes make it the ideal survey for this analysis.

The survey's cross-national design allows us to analyze attitudes regarding immigration across various states at once. While 36 states participated at least once in the ESS, not every state is ideal to include in this analysis. This analysis is restricted to Western Europe and the states that participated in Rounds 1 – 5. I restrict the study to Western Europe because multiple studies indicate that Eastern European party systems are not as entrenched due to a lack of historical significance with democracy (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012). Without a history of strong party attachment, partisanship cannot be expected to influence voters in the same manner as in Western Europe.

The ESS – methodology

The ESS utilizes a pooled cross-sectional methodology to collect data. ESS methodology samples different individuals at different points in time. Despite the fact that the same questions are asked every two years, the ESS data is not panel data for this reason. There is no problem with serial correlation of residuals in a pooled cross-sectional research design because the samples are independent. Therefore, I do not need to use a longitudinal analysis for pooled cross-sectional data. Pooled cross-sectional data can be treated as cross-sectional data because the samples are comprised of different individuals at different points in time.

Variables

Dependent Variable: Closeness to Political Party

In order to demonstrate that partisans and independents are indeed different, I examine the relationship between partisanship and feelings of closeness to a political party. This key dependent variable, closeness to political party, is a dichotomous variable coded one if the individual remarks that he/she feels close to a political party, and coded zero if the individual remarked that he/she does not feel close to a political party. Analyzing this relationship is important because it shows that independents feel differently from partisans with regard to political parties and place themselves more distant from the party system.

[Insert Table 3: ESS Party Membership 2002 - 2012]

Party membership is not high in any state within Western Europe. Membership is highest in Austria at 15% across all years surveyed. Membership is lowest in France with only 200 respondents indicating that they are members of a party. On average respondents indicate that they are members of a political party 6.48% of the time across all states. Germany is predictably low due to the over sampling of Eastern Germany.

Previous research on a partisan identity versus independent identity indicates that a component of partisanship is group belonging (Greene 2004). Group belonging is measured as self-identification as being close to a political party. For this study, partisans identify as members of a party. This is important because it can encapsulate a broad range of partisan membership. Using self-identification is important for this study as it speaks to a respondent's attachment to a political party. Formal party membership is not required for an individual to be considered a partisan (White and Ypi 2016). Attachment to a political party is important for this study. The dependent variable in this analysis is whether the respondent identifies as being close to the party. The main explanatory variable is whether the respondent is a member of a political party. As described above party membership is a dichotomous variable therefore standard logistic regression is used to test Hypothesis One.

[Insert Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Independent Voters]

[Insert Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Partisan Voters]

Table 4 and Table 5 give more descriptive details of both independent and partisan voters respectively and key dependent variables used throughout this dissertation. Partisans within the dataset have an average left-right self-placement of 5.236 on a scale from 0-10². They are slightly more right leaning than independents whose left/right self-placement averages 5.012. This difference is negligible given the standard deviations exceed 2 points for both groups. Partisans are more likely to be satisfied with the economy, but the difference between the two

² A score of 0 indicates the far left and a score of 10 indicates the far right.

groups is less than 0.2 points. Partisans are more likely to be male, but the difference is again less than 0.2 points.

Despite arguments that independents higher education levels enable them to sift through the political environment, partisans actually have a higher level of educational attainment, 3.17 for partisans and 2.999 for independents. Partisans tend to be older than independent voters, but the difference in the average age is only 7 years, which is inside of the standard deviation for both groups which is approximately 17.

Independent variables

The primary independent variable of interest in these analyses is whether a respondent is *a member of political party*. A sense of belonging to a political party is expected to curb xenophobic attitudes in Western Europe. Respondents who claimed they belonged to a political party received a score of one where individuals who claimed they had no party affiliation received a score of zero. Analyzing how partisanship affects attitudes towards immigration will give understanding to whether partisanship remains a worthwhile construct.

Individuals who are politically interested are expected to have weak or non-existent attachments to political parties. According to Dalton, as an individual's interest in politics increases, closeness to a political party is expected to decrease (Dalton and Anderson 2011). As an individual's interest in politics increases individuals lack the need for a partisan schema to interpret the political world, according to cognitive mobilization theory of partisan dealignment (Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984). *Political interest* is measured on a four point scale with a score of one assigned to respondents who are extremely interested in politics, two for individuals who are quite interested, three for respondents who are hardly interested and four for individuals who are not at all interested. I expect this relationship to be positive which indicates that

individuals with the highest levels of political interest are the least likely to identify as close to a political party.

ESS respondents were asked to place themselves on the *left/right scale*. The left was given a score of zero and the right a score of ten. The left/right was not defined for respondents allowing them to internalize their own understanding of the left/right spectrum. I do not expect there to be a difference between respondents who place themselves on the left or right. I expect that individuals regardless of party affiliation are equally likely to identify as close to a political party.

The standard control variables are used in these analyses. *Age* is a continuous variable based on the individuals reported age at the time of the survey. Older individuals are expected to be more likely than younger individuals to identify as close to a political party. Partisan attachments are formed in youth. It takes voting for a party in multiple elections before individuals feel attached to a particular political party (Barnes 1985). Closeness to a political party will not form if individuals do not feel that the party system represents their views. In an era of declining partisanship, younger voters are not forming the partisan attachments of previous generations.

A measure of *citizenship* is included in the analysis. The ESS does not exclude respondents who are not native to the state in which the survey is given. Respondents are asked if they are a citizen of the state where they are taking the survey. Citizenship is a dichotomous variable, non-citizens are coded zero and citizens are coded one. For this reason, I expect that respondents who are citizens of the state are more likely to feel close to a party than non-native respondents. Citizens are expected to feel more attached to the party system in general.

Religious individuals are more likely to join other social groups according to Putnam (2001). Further, recent research in the US strengthens the notion that an individual's religiosity is tied to their partisanship (Putnam and Campbell 2012). Research in the US indicates that individuals with strong social networks at their church are more likely to identify as Republican (Putnam and Campbell 2012). This evidence indicates that those who identify as religious are more likely to identify as close to a party. ESS respondents are asked whether they consider themselves to belong to particular religion. Respondents who answered no are coded zero and respondents who answered yes are coded as one. I expect this relationship to be positive.

Education is coded in levels. Respondents with less than lower secondary education received a score of one; lower secondary a score of two; upper secondary a score of three; post-secondary non-tertiary a score of four; and tertiary, a score of five. Individuals with increased levels of education are expected to be independents because they do not need the party to provide political cues in line with Dalton's cognitive mobilization theory. Once individuals have the ability to process the political environment, Dalton theorizes that the political party becomes less important (2011). Evidence strengthening his theory would indicate that non-partisans are more likely to have higher levels of education than partisans.

Gender is coded as a dichotomous variable with male coded as one and female coded as zero. Gender is not expected to be significant. I expect that male and female respondents are equally likely to be close to a party. Employment is included to determine how employment status affects identification. *Employment* is a dichotomous variable where a score of zero indicates that the respondent has been unemployed and seeking work for a period of more than three months. I expect that employment status will not affect whether an individual identifies as close to a political party.

Discussion of Results

Standard logistic regression³ is utilized for Hypothesis 1 because the dependent variable is whether or not the respondent is a member of a political party. This variable is coded as ‘zero for no’ and ‘one for yes’ a respondent is either close to a political party or not.

[Insert Table 6: Feelings of Closeness to Political Parties]

[Insert Table 7: Feelings of Closeness to Political Parties by Region]

[Insert Table 8: Feelings of Closeness to Political Parties by Odds Ratios]

The results for hypothesis one in all countries are listed in Table 6 and Table 7. Table 0-6 gives the results for all countries in a single model and Table 7 lists the results for regional models. Table 8 lists the odds ratios for the full country model. The results indicate that Hypothesis One is accurate for both the full model and each regional model. Respondents who are members of a political party are more likely to feel close to a political party. Being a member of a political party increases the odds that a respondent feels close to a political party by 6.47 with all other factors held equal in the full model. Party membership is a significant predictor of closeness to a political party. This indicates that party membership remains an important facet of political identity within Western Europe. Party membership is expected to provide voters with a

³ As discussed previously, the ESS dataset used in this analysis is a pooled cross-section rather than panel data. As individuals from each release of the ESS vary, I do not have measures for the dependent variable at two different points in time. This is a problem for all pooled cross-sectional data as its nature violates the assumptions of fixed effects models. Violating the first assumption makes the fixed effect model inappropriate for this project. Pooled cross-sectional data does not contain serially correlated errors. This means that there is no dependence over time; therefore, we can analyze the data as a normal logit model

lasting attachment to a specific political party, this attachment and loyalty means that partisans rarely deviate from their partisanship (Thomassen 2005). The results of this analysis indicate that this remains the case as partisans continue to identify as close to political parties despite declining overall levels of partisanship in Europe. Even in an era of partisan de-alignment. The fact that all four regions indicate that partisans are more likely to feel close to a particular political party strengthens the argument that the partisan identity remains an important predictor for voter behavior research.

Political interest plays an important role in respondents' relationship with a political party. The relationship is negative indicating that individuals with higher interest in politics are more likely to identify as close to a political party. The odds that a respondent feels close to a political party increases by 0.57 as an individual's interest in politics rises. This challenges Dalton's cognitive mobilization theory (2000). Individuals with high levels of interest in politics continue to identify with parties despite having the knowledge of the party system to act as a signpost for political issues rather than the parties themselves. One explanation for this is increasing polarization of the party system. In times of significant polarization party attachment increases (Thomassen 2005). Political interest may be driven by party polarization. Similarly, political interest is significant and maintains a negative relationship across all four regions. Individual regardless of region, are more likely to be close to a party when they are more politically interested. Interest in politics does not act as its own filter for political information. Despite their interest in politics, the politically interested remain close to political parties.

Surprisingly self-right placement is a significant predictor of whether or not individuals feel close to a political party in the full model and all the regional models except the southern region. The relationship is negative in the full model, northern region and central region

indicating that individuals on the left are more likely to identify as close to a political party. This indicates that newer traditional party members are more likely to feel close to a political party than members of newer radical right parties. One potential explanation for this is increased competition along the right end of the spectrum. The strength of right parties' increases as the salience of right owned issues increased in prominence. In the southern region, an individual's self-placement on the left right scale is not a predictor of whether or not they feel close to a party. In the northern region this relationship is positive, indicating that individuals on the right are more likely to feel close to a political party. This relationship will be explored more in Chapter Three and Four to determine how the Radical Right plays a role in issue ownership and partisanship in all regions.

As expected, age has a significant effect on closeness to party. Age plays a significant role in predicting whether an individual is close to political party in the full model and across all four regions. Older respondents are more likely to identify as close to a political party. A one-unit increase in age increases the odds that an individual is close to a party by one. This is unsurprising given previous research indicating that younger individuals are less likely to identify as close to a political party (Schmitt-Beck, Weick, and Christoph 2006). Hypothesis one confirms that younger individuals are not attaching to political parties in the same manner as previous generations.

Gender is a significant predictor of whether or not a respondent feels close to a political party in the full model, peripheral and central regions. Men are more likely to identify as close to a political party than female respondents according to these models. In the northern and southern region, a person's gender is not a significant predictor of whether they feel close to a party.

As expected citizens are more likely to feel close to a political party than non-citizens in all models except the northern model. In the northern region a respondent's citizenship status does not predict whether they are more or less likely to identify as close to a political party. The role of citizenship will become more important as I explore how attitudes towards immigrants are reflected based on whether an individual identifies as a member of a party.

Employment is not significant in the full model. Nor is employment significant in the southern or peripheral regions. This indicates that individuals' attachment to a political party does not hinge on their employment status for these regions. In the northern and central regions employment is significant and negative. This indicates that individuals who experienced more than three months of unemployment are more likely to identify as close to a political party. Chapter Four will further explore how the role of economics and satisfaction with the economy are related to individuals' perception of immigrants and membership in a political party.

The results of these analyses are important because they indicate that the partisan identity is still relevant for research and voters. Despite historic levels of partisan decline, individuals who identify as members of a political party remain closer to parties than individuals who identify as non-partisans. Establishing that partisanship remains a valuable term is important to this study because it validates the claim that partisanship is a group identity that needs to be considered in future research. This is in line with Thomasson's conclusion that party identification has increasing value despite declining levels of partisanship (Thomassen 2005). Partisans are closer to parties than independent voters as expected. Partisanship remains a strong predictor of vote choice, but not exclusively. In the current political context, one in seven partisans will vote for a different party (Thomassen 2005).

Conclusion

This chapter explored the evolution of the Western European Party system. Parties in Western Europe developed in response to the societal cleavages when suffrage was granted. This created strong social ties to political parties for specific social groups. These ties remained strong until the 1970s when an increase in post-material values began to challenge the structure of the party system. Once considered to be frozen in time, newer niche parties began to break onto the scene in the mid-80s beginning with the Green party. The shift away from a traditional party structure reliant on an economic left-right to a multifaceted party system with a functional economic and social axis. As new issues became important for voters and traditional parties struggled to adapt to the changing political climate, voters either never formed attachments to political parties in the case of younger voters or became independent voters in the case of older voters.

Despite declining levels of partisanship, political parties have not ceased to exist in any state. The traditional political parties continue to compete alongside newer niche parties. Further, individuals continue to identify as members of a political party. This chapter focused on whether the concept of partisan was still a relevant concept by investigating whether party members were more likely to identify as close to a party than non-members. The results of the logistic regressions for all states and each region indicate that partisan identity remains a relevant concept. Individuals who identify as members of a political party had higher odds of identifying as close to a political party.

Parties' adoption of newer social issues indicates that parties are attempting to adapt to a changing electoral environment. Approximately half of Western European voters continue to feel close to a political party. This includes about half of all independent voters. Political parties are

adapting to the changing electoral environment to capture independent voters. One of the ways that parties adapt to the changing environment is by owning specific issues. I delve into more detail in Chapter 3 about dominant issues for parties.

In Chapter Three, I explore the concept of party membership further to determine whether partisans or independents are more likely to view the immigration issue differently. Broadly, the chapter asks whether independent voters are more likely to view immigration as a negative impact on their home country. This is important to establish as many fears about independent voters indicate that they are more likely to be issue voters and swayed by minimal issues. In the next chapter, I also further examine the relationship between cultural perceptions of immigration and partisanship. I extend the party analysis to party views of immigration as well as where immigration ranks for parties as one of the top three most important issues in 2014.

Figure 1: Party System without Radical Right Parties (Spain)

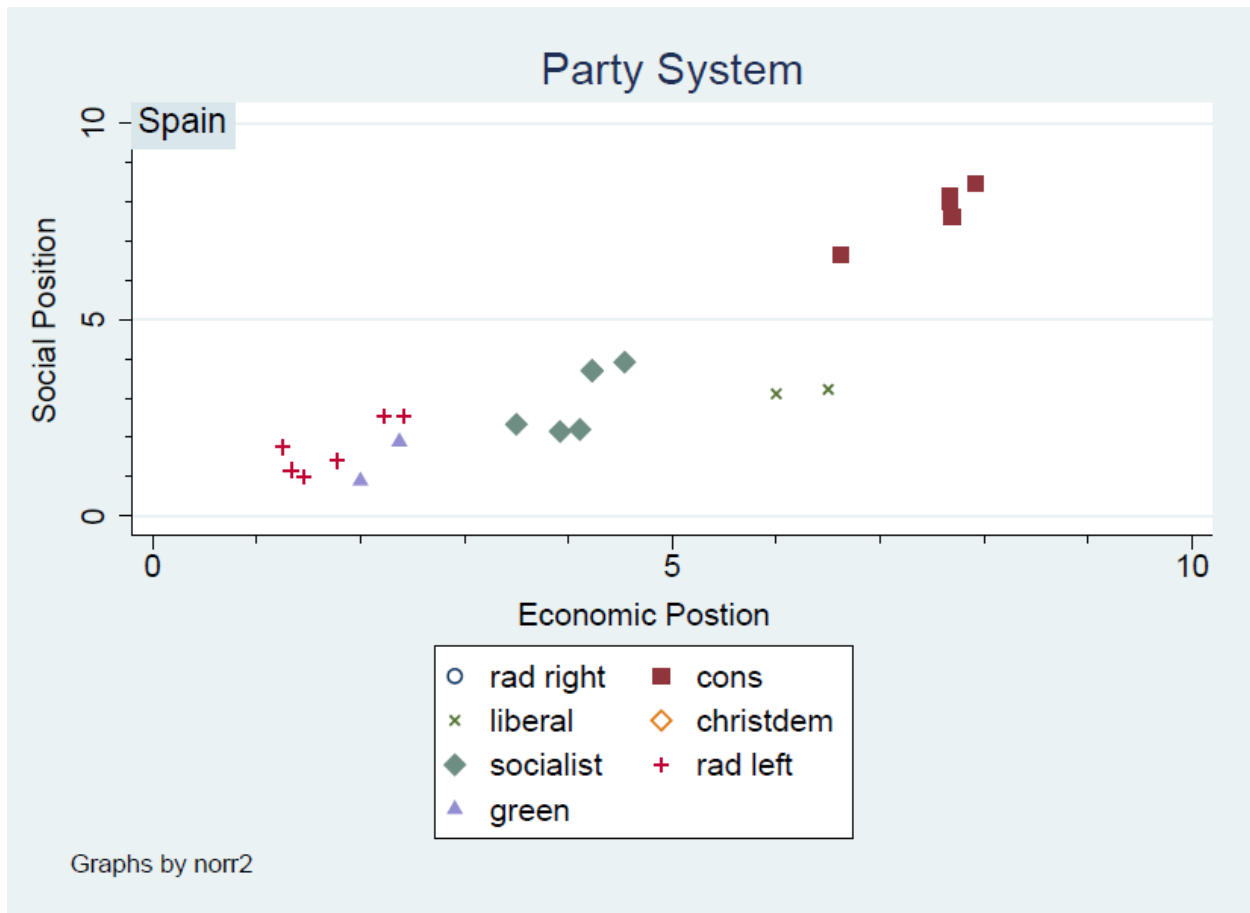


Figure 2: Party System with Flash Radical Right Parties (Germany)

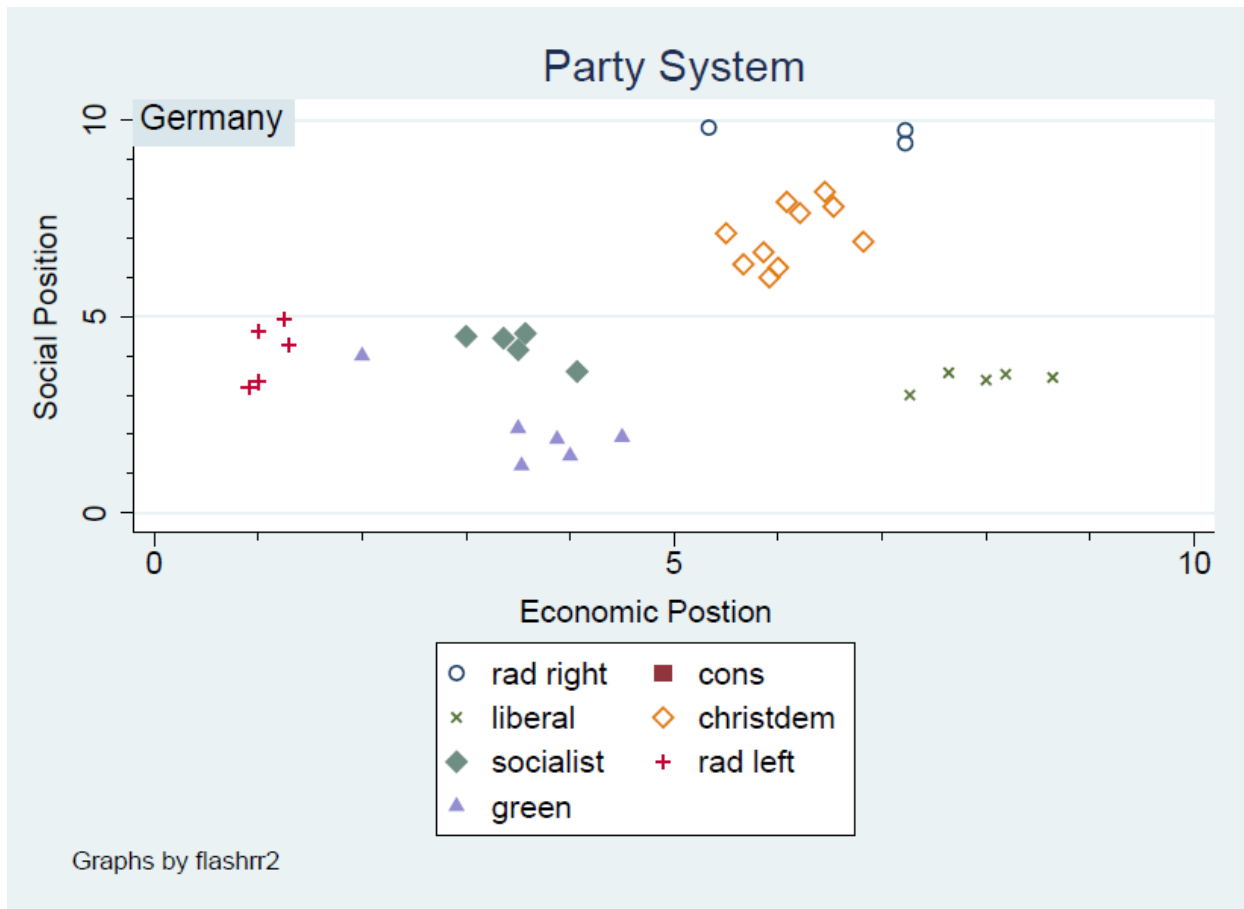


Figure 4: Party System with Strong Radical Right Parties after 1980 (France)

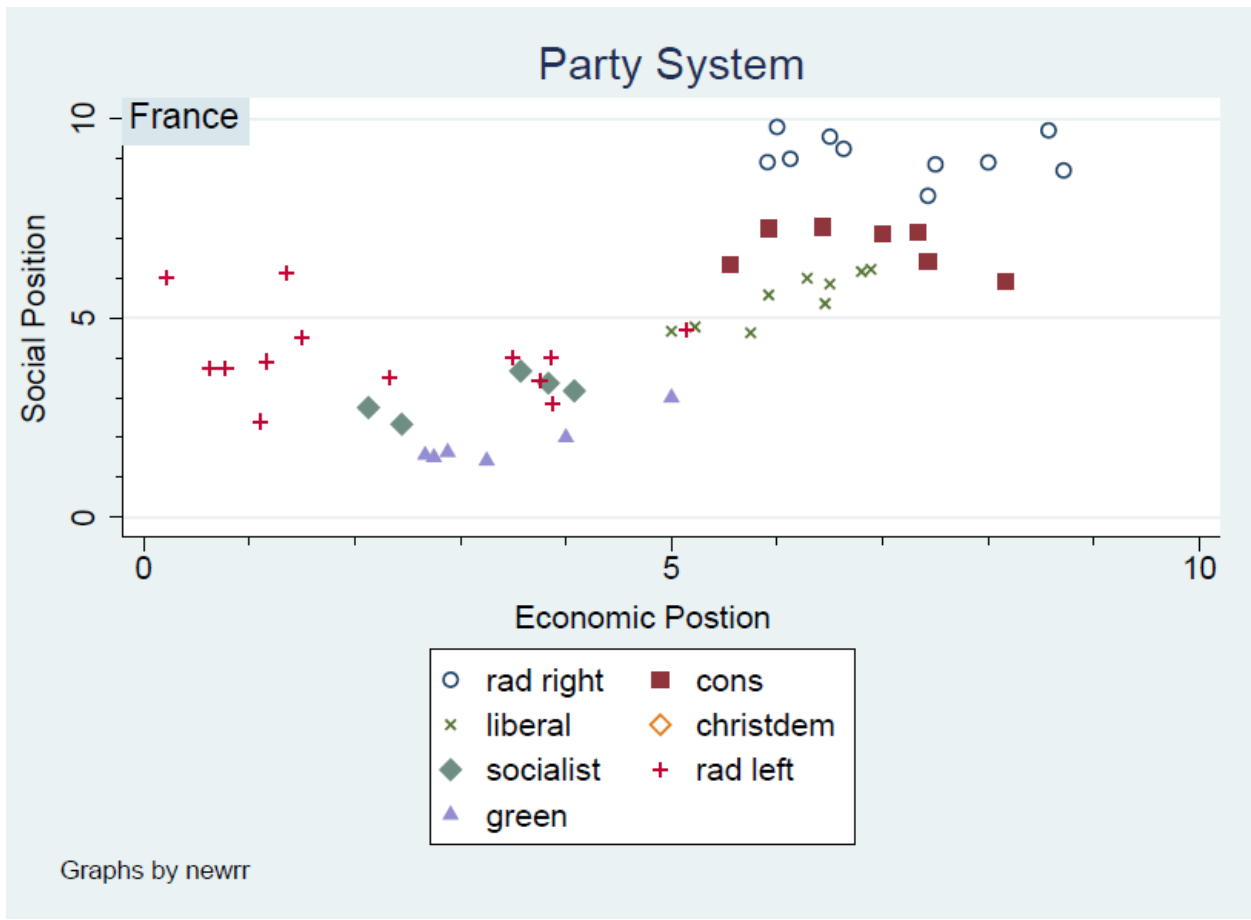


Figure 5: Party System with Strong Radical Right Parties Prior to 1980 (Italy)

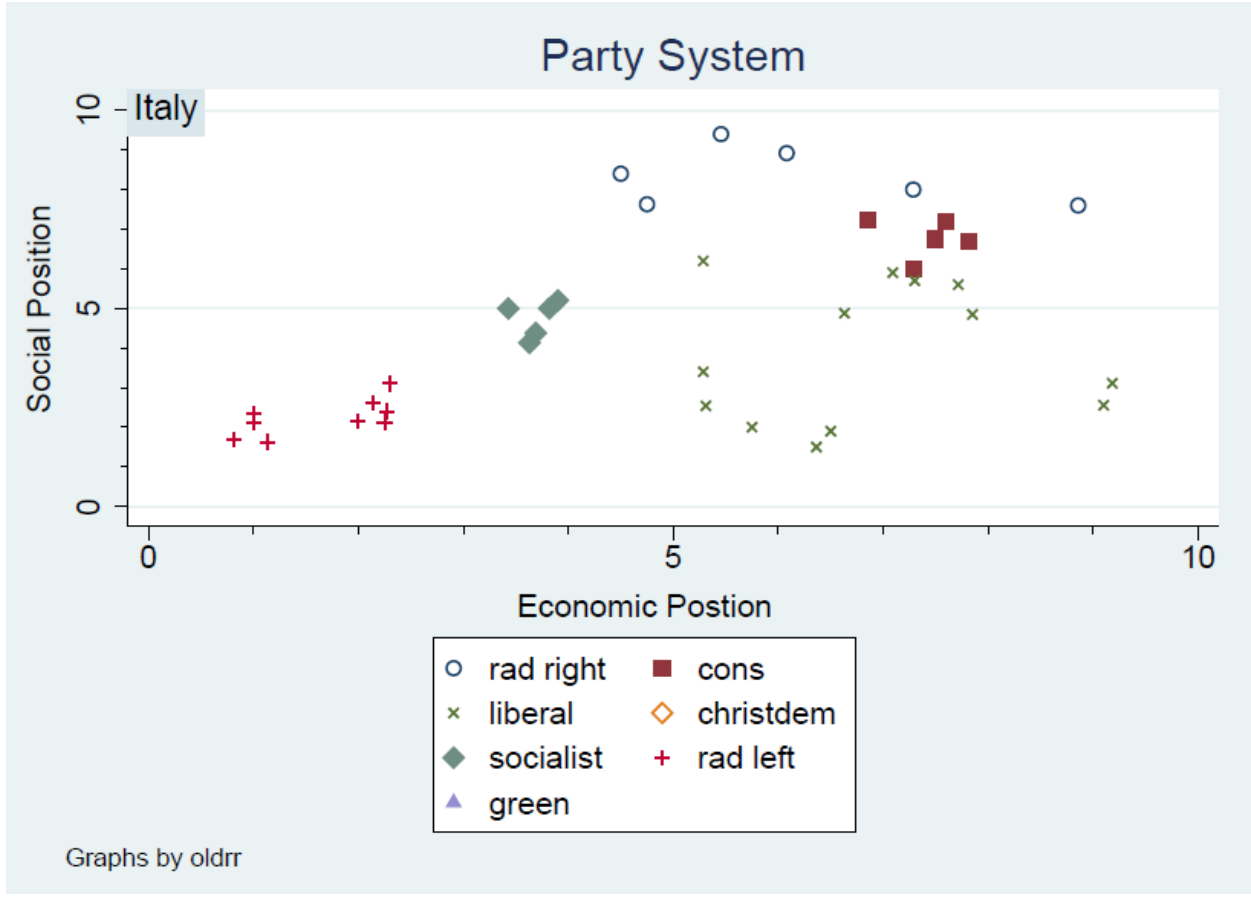


Table 1: Parties across Competitive Political Parties in Western Europe

Region	Country	1999	2014	Families 1999	Families 2014
Periphery	Ireland	7	7	Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional	Conservative; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional
	United Kingdom	7	7	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Green; Regional	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Green; Regional
Central	Austria	5	6	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Green	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Green
	Belgium	14	13	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Green; Regional	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional
	Germany	8	8	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green
	France	13	13	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Agrarian/Center	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green
	Luxembourg	NA	6		Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrat; Socialist; Radical Left; Green
	Netherlands	11	10	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian Democrats;	Radical Right; Liberal; Christian

				Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional; Confessional	Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Confessional
Southern	Greece	5	9	Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left;	Radical Right; Conservative; Socialist; Radical Left;
	Spain	15	14	Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional	Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional
	Italy	17	12	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional	Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Regional; Agrarian/Center
	Portugal	5	6	Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left	Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left
Northern	Finland	9	7	Conservative; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional; Confessional; Agrarian/Center	Radical Right; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Regional; Confessional
	Denmark	12	8	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left; Confessional	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Socialist; Radical Left
	Sweden	9	11	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green; Agrarian/Center	Radical Right; Conservative; Liberal; Christian Democrats; Socialist; Radical Left; Green
Total		137	137		

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File 1999 – 2014

Cell entries are the number of parties surveyed in each year and party families

Table 2: Relationship with the Radical Right by Country and Region

Region	No Radical Right Parties	“Flash” Radical Right Parties	Strong Radical Right prior to 1980	Strong Radical Right only after 1980
North	Finland		Denmark	Sweden
South	Spain; Portugal		Italy	Greece
Central	Luxembourg	Germany	Austria Belgium	France; Netherlands; Belgium
Periphery	Ireland	United Kingdom		

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend Fill 1999 – 2014

Prior to 1999 categorizations are based on Alonso and Fonseca 2012

Table 3: ESS Party Membership 2002 - 2012

Country	Party Membership	Non-Members
Austria	892 (15.1%)	5906
Belgium	565 (6.75%)	8360
Cyprus	426 (14.96%)	2848
Germany	475 (3.4%)	13984
Denmark	534 (7.49%)	7129
Spain	233 (2.47%)	9432
Finland	709 (7.65%)	9263
France	200 (2.25%)	8885
Great Britain	296 (2.74%)	10807
Greece	564 (6.16%)	9158
Ireland	485 (4.85%)	9932
Italy	50 (4.35%)	1149
Luxembourg	286 (9.91%)	2885
Netherlands	507 (5.50%)	9214
Portugal	304 (3.06%)	9935
Sweden	649 (7.60%)	8537
Total N	7,175 (5.63%)	127,424

Data Source: ESS Respondents Round 1 – 5

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Independent Voters

Variable Name	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min-Max
Dependent Variable				
Close to Party	125,237	.509	.500	0-1
Support for Immigration	123,457	6.192	2.289	1-11
Xenophobia	123,808	2.535	.866	1-4
Immigrants are bad for the Economy	122,504	6.118	2.389	1-11
Independent Variables				
Right Self-Placement	111,683	5.012	2.042	0-10
Level of Education	102,207	2.999	2.733	1-5
Age	126,812	47.348	18.518	13-123
Gender	127,310	.461	.498	0-1
Satisfaction with the Economy	124,585	2.032	.688	1-3
Unemployed>3 Months	126,805	.257	.437	0-1
Citizen	127,375	.953	.212	0-1
Religious	125,114	.622	.485	0-1

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Partisan Voters

Variable Name	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min-Max
Dependent Variable				
Close to Party	7,131	.920	.271	0-1
Support for Immigration	7,016	5.935	2.356	1-11
Xenophobia	7,015	2.497	.876	1-4
Immigrants are bad for the Economy	7,003	5.690	2.465	1-11
Independent Variables				
Right Self-Placement	6,879	5.236	2.636	0-10
Level of Education	6,032	3.17	2.627	1-5
Age	7,156	54.027	17.062	15-99
Gender	7,169	.593	.491	0-1
Satisfaction with the Economy	7,084	2.203	.688	1-3
Unemployed>3 Months	7,148	.201	.401	0-1
Citizen	7,173	.989	.106	0-1
Religious	7,005	.720	.449	0-1

Table 6: Feelings of Closeness to Political Parties

	Closeness to Party (All Countries)
Party Member	1.867*** (.053)
Political Interest	-.553*** (.009)
Right	-.017*** (.004)
Level of Education	.001 (.003)
Age	.013*** (.004)
Male	.079*** (.015)
Satisfied with Economy	.059*** (.011)
Citizen	.629*** (.038)
Religiosity	.268*** (.015)
Pweight	-.134*** (.007)
Constant	.314*** (.058)
Pseudo R2	0.0892
Chi Square	0.0000
N	90,205

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

Table 7: Feelings of Closeness to Political Parties by Region

	Closeness to Party Periphery	Closeness to Party North	Closeness to Party South	Closeness to Party Central
Party Member	2.33*** (.176)	1.693*** (.114)	2.241*** (.144)	1.794*** (.073)
Political Interest	-0.534*** (.021)	-0.662*** (.023)	-0.574*** (.019)	-0.623*** (.013)
Right	0.028** (.011)	-0.034*** (.008)	0.008 (.007)	-0.029*** (.005)
Level of Education	0.005 (.004)	0.062*** (0.013)	-0.006 (.01)	0.013** (004)
Age	0.229*** (.011)	0.086*** (.010)	0.137*** (.01)	0.124*** (.006)
Male	0.133*** (.037)	0.021 (.033)	0.019 (.032)	0.093*** (.022)
Employed	0.015 (.045)	-0.106** (.036)	-0.048 (.036)	-0.05* (.025)
Citizen	0.552*** (.093)	0.096 (.112)	0.874*** (.087)	0.476*** (.052)
Religiosity	0.181*** (.039)	0.171*** (.334)	0.353*** (.043)	0.214*** (.023)
Year	-0.077*** (.016)	0.011 (.424)	-0.026 (.013)	0.040*** (.010)
Constant	0.310** (.136)	1.700*** (.151)	0.553*** (.013)	0.549*** (.077)
Pseudo R2	0.1064	0.0814	0.0869	0.0942
Chi Square	2078	1920.79	2298.33	5042.74
N	14,085	18,528	20,162	38,820

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: *p<=.05, **p<=.01, ***p<=.001

Table 8: Feelings of Closeness to Political Parties by Odds Ratios

	Closeness to Party (All Countries)
Party Member	6.47*** (1.076)
Political Interest	-.575*** (.017)
Right	-.983 (.190)
Level of Education	1.001 (.850)
Age	1.014*** (.001)
Male	1.079*** (.022)
Satisfied with Economy	1.061 (.011)
Citizen	1.876*** (.149)
Religiosity	1.307*** (.094)
Pweight	-.875 (.075)
Constant	1.369 (.363)
Pseudo R2	0.0892
Chi Square	0.0000
N	90,205

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

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Chapter 3: Culture and Immigration Attitudes

Modern Party System – Issue Competition

Identification with a political party provides voters with a lens in which to view the political environment. Given the relationship of political parties to vote choice it is important to investigate the role of the changing social system on party identification, “feelings of partisanship tap the popular vitality of representative democracy” (Dalton 2000, 21). Challenges from post-materialism and its resulting values shifts have weakened partisan alignments. This has resulted in the theory of partisan de-alignment which postulates that “we are witnessing a broad and ongoing decline in the role of political parties for contemporary publics” (Russell J. Dalton 2000).

Partisan de-alignment is occurring across advanced industrial societies, not just within Western Europe but also within the U.S. as well (Dalton 2000). The shifts result from changing values and a reorientation towards new political goals (Inglehart 1990). The European electorate underwent a shift away from a traditional cleavage structure towards cleavages along new political dimensions.

As independent voters increase, the traditional cleavage structure that heavily influenced voting and scholarship became less important and the era of the issue voter arrived. Parties in turn are increasingly competing on the hot button issues rather than confining themselves strictly to the ideological spectrum. Discovering how voters perceive hot button issues enhances our understanding of voter behavior because it allows us to determine if partisans and independent voters truly view the political environment differently. Spatial theories of voter behavior would predict that independent voters clustered in the center of the left-right spectrum would prefer

parties located in the political center, but these theories do not account for issues that are not part of the traditional left/right dimension.

As partisanship decreased, the number of independents increased as voters do not feel close to nor identify with a particular party. Dalton rightly points out that individuals are parties' "means to an end" and the functional basis upon which parties build platforms (Russell J. Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, 19). Partisanship is expected to last a lifetime rarely changing, but when voters grow up in a political system that they do not see as representing their views, they are less likely to form partisan attachments as is the case in Western Germany (Schmitt-beck, Weick, and Christoph 2006). Independent voters identifying with issues rather than parties change the context of the political environment.

Partisan voters are expected to use the party brand as a lens through which to view the world. Reinforcing the notion that the "shared social origins of parties and voters entails that partisan constituencies likely hold ideological views that resemble the policy stances of parties" (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012, 28). Partisan voters form psychological attachments to political parties that enable them to adopt the policy positions of the preferred party.

"Psychological mechanisms also help to reduce the (perceived) distance between parties and voters with partisan loyalties" (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012, 28). Partisan attachment is a source of cues and used to evaluate political figures and issues (R. J. Dalton 1985). Without these prescribed schemas partisans would be lost.

Voters that lack a partisan schema to draw upon when evaluating policy must utilize a different cost saving mechanism in order to reduce the complicated world of politics. These independent voters "are not influenced to the same degree by psychological mechanisms that help reduce the distance between parties and partisan voters" (Rohrschnieder and Whitefield

2012, p 28). This lack of psychological attachment causes voters to search for other cost saving devices. Parties provide these cost saving devices by owning issues.

Currently, immigration is an important domestic and international issue facing many Western European countries. In many countries there is an emerging nationalist/radical right party which indicates that there was a vacuum left by the established parties that needed to be filled (Meguid 2008). With the growing pressure put on the welfare system by both an aging population and European immigrants, there is reason to suspect that there may be an anti-immigrant leftist sentiment. Further, parties on the left may shift their policies regarding immigration in order to appeal to a broader spectrum of voters. Research indicates that the left leaning parties have already started to respond to extreme right parties (Greene 1999). As noted earlier, immigration is a highly salient issue within Western Europe satisfying both the directional model and issue ownerships need for an issue to be salient in order for voters to make decisions based on the issues.

Issue Ownership

Despite the overwhelming amount of research that indicates parties represent their voters in terms of the left-right spectrum by providing clear, coherent choices and programs to voters, research cannot capture when voters identify most with particular issues. This is particularly important if we are to believe, that the level of partisan voting is declining and that independent voters are more likely than partisans to switch allegiance between elections. Problems arise when elites and party competition occur only along the left/right spectrum while the population is increasingly spread out across the economic and social dimensions as in America (Carmines and Wagner 2006). As partisan ties erode, the prominence of issue voting is expected to increase.

Issue voting translates into party preference through the concept of issue ownership. Traditionally, due to the dominance of economic issues in the political system, “parties must also be sensitive to electoral cues, e.g. changes in issue saliency, in order to attract enough votes, which will enable them to implement their policies” (Odmalm 2011, 1076). Voters who decide to vote for a party “because they perceive it as the best able to handle what they see as the most pressing political problem” are known as single issue voters (Lachat 2014). In a changing political environment parties must “behave selectively and emphasize the issue/s where they experience the highest level of public trust” in order to capitalize on single issue and independent voters (Odmalm 2011, 1076). Salience is vital for issue ownership because if an issue is not salient, ownership of an issue does not matter (Belanger and Meguid 2008). Issue ownership serves as a frame of reference for these voters to quickly evaluate and understand the complicated political system where the party brand stands for specific policies, whether because they are the most capable or have the best long time association with the issues (Walgrave et al., 2012).

Issue-specific theories do not have the same limitations as the spatial/directional or social cleavage models of voting. Budge and Farlie argue that campaigns are an attempt by parties to raise awareness of their issues, rather than how to best solve the most pressing issues of the day (1983). Parties emphasize issues where they see an electoral advantage during the campaign (Budge 1983). The theory of issue ownership has been refined to indicate that the most pressing issue may change based on the political environment even if the underlying political inclinations change at a slower rate (Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003). Partisanship plays a role in determining whether a party is perceived as owning an issue (Petrocik 1996; Stubager and Slothuus 2012). Recognizing the importance of issue voting, parties are increasingly competing

on a selection of issues rather than spatially (Green-Pedersen 2007). The constituency effects are important to consider as partisanship declines and issue voting rises.

Theories of issue ownership provide a way to understand party competition in a changed political environment. Over time the number of survey respondents who claim not to be a member of a party has increased in such a dramatic fashion that in 2014 the European Social Survey no longer asked respondents whether they were members of a political party. Party membership decline is a noted phenomenon across Western Europe and the United States since the 1960s (Elff 2007). As noted earlier partisan decline is extremely prominent in Germany where voters often use split ticket voting for the country's legislative body the Bundestag.

Issue ownership serves as a frame of reference for these voters to quickly evaluate and understand the complicated political system where the party brand stands for specific policies, whether because they are the most capable or because of long time association with the issues (Stefaan Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012). In a changing political environment parties must “behave selectively and emphasize the issue/s where they experience the highest level of public trust” in order to capitalize on single issue and independent voters (Odmalm 2011). Salience is vital for issue ownership because if an issue is not salient, ownership of an issue does not matter (Belanger and Meguid 2008). Salience comes into play when voting, if the party's reputation is linked with a hot button issue for a voter (S. Walgrave and De Swert 2007). In an era of declining partisanship issue ownership provides voters with the schemas that party loyalty once provided. On highly salient issues, voters are able to identify parties based on their positions. Recent research in Austria indicates that parties compete by emphasizing the issues that they own more than issues they do not own while still engaging in other issues (Dolezal et al. 2014). Owning issues is extremely important for parties because they are then able to curate their brand

and attract potential voters. Dolezal et al's findings indicate that parties behave in the expected manner, by emphasizing issues they own while still attempting to compete in the traditional party space.

Party Systems in Western Europe

To determine the state of the party system, I utilize the Chapel Hill Expert Survey Dataset (Polk et al. 2014). Recall from Chapter One, "Let's Have a Party" that the party systems of Western Europe are in transition from the traditional party systems based on the economic left/right structure to a system where newer issues are increasingly important. The Chapel Hill Expert Survey Data asked experts to choose the three most important issues for political parties in their 2014 survey (Pols et al. 2014). Experts ranked the top three most important issues on a wide variety of topics including immigration, multiculturalism, urban/rural divide and civil liberties among others. Table 9 displays the most important issue by party family. Numbers listed in the table are the number of parties where the specific issues was ranked as either the first, second or third most important issues. I focus on issues with the most parties in a family.

[Insert Table 9: Most Important Issue by Party Family]

As indicated in Table 9, the issue of immigration is ranked as the most important issue by 57% of Radical Right parties. More importantly, the issue of immigration was ranked in the top three issues for all Radical Right parties. Nationalism and multiculturalism also had strong showings as the second most important issue for three parties each. No other party family collectively ranks immigration in the top three most important issues according to party experts. This indicates that the Radical Right parties overwhelmingly own the issue of immigration in the Western European party space.

Experts rank nationalism as the third most important issue for two Conservative parties (17% of parties included). The Conservative party family focused on traditional left/right economic issues such as public services versus taxation, deregulation and redistribution. The top issue for a majority of the Conservative party is the traditional question about public services versus taxation issues, 9 of the 12 (or 66%) parties indicated a focus on the public services versus taxation issue as the number one issue. The second most important issue for Conservative parties is deregulation, trailed by a collection of typical conservative issues with one party each (i.e. EU integration; nationalism). Experts identified two Conservative parties where immigration was the second most important issue.

While the Conservative party focused primarily on traditional left/right ideological issues, they were not the only party whose focus was on this sector. Experts indicate that the Christian Democratic Party family overwhelmingly focuses on questions regarding public services versus taxation as the number one priority (8/9 or 89% of parties). The second most important issue for Christian Democrats is overwhelmingly redistribution (3/9; 33% of parties). There is no consensus on the third most issue among Christian Democrats.

Among liberal parties, unsurprisingly, deregulation (6/20) was the second most popular issue that was followed closely by state interventionism (4/20). The third most popular issue among liberals is EU Integration (4/20; 20% of parties) although several other issues were important for two parties (i.e. deregulation and anti-elite rhetoric).

As expected, experts ranked the Green parties number one issue as the environment for 8 out of 11 Green parties (79%). Experts ranked redistribution as the second most important issue for 5 out of 11 Green parties. Green parties have a wide range of second most important issues, ranging from redistribution (5/14), corruption (2/14), and multiculturalism (1/14). The Green

Party family does not have a consensus on the third most popular issues in 2014 although three parties focus on public services versus taxes. Experts ranked the issue of immigration within the top three most important issues for two parties within the Green party family. The wide range of issues is indicative of the Green party's transition from niche party to mainstream party since the 1990s.

The Radical Left and Socialist party families' focus predominantly on issues regarding issue allocation. The top three issues for the majority of both families are public services versus taxes; redistribution and state intervention. The most important issue for the Socialist party family is public services and taxes (13/20 parties 65%) and experts ranked the public services versus taxes debate as the second most important issue for a majority of Radical Left parties (8/20 or 40%). The number one issue for the Radical Left according to experts is redistribution (13/18 parties 65%). Redistribution is the second most popular issue among Socialist parties (9/18 or 50% of parties). The Socialist and Radical Left families were ranked with state intervention as the third most popular issue. Experts indicated that state intervention is the third most popular issue for approximately 33% of both party families.

While immigration only appears as the top three most important issue for a majority of Radical Right parties, it is not without representation as an important issue for a small number of parties outside the Radical Right. Party families that had at least one party where immigration ranked as one of the top three most important issues include two Green parties, one Socialist party, and five Conservative parties. These numbers are indicative of a party system where the Radical Right owns the issue of immigration but the issue is bleeding into other parties. Conservative parties also have a strong hold on issues related to immigration including nationalism.

Immigration as Threat

The pressure of increasing ethnic diversity and growing immigrant minorities caused the issue of immigration to become a salient and at times contentious issue within many states (Kriesi 2008). Increased levels of immigration to Western European states from within the European Union through the Schengen agreement and peoples from states outside Europe increased ethnic diversity within Western Europe's nation-states. Immigrants are defined as non-native newcomers, or those who are foreign born (L. McLaren and Johnson 2007).

Conflict arises from increasing immigration in two ways, conflict over economic resources and/or conflict over national identity (McLaren and Johnson 2007). Economic conflict is characterized by competition between native citizens and immigrants in the labor market, this type of conflict will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Four (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). Cultural or national identity conflict is characterized by a sense of loss of the national identity with an increase in immigration (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Cultural impacts are viewed to be symbolic whereas current scholars treat economic impacts as measurable concepts (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). The party system is largely ignored by research on immigration issues other than to describe the role of niche parties.

Postulated to be “[t]he single most important predictor of intolerance – perceptions of the threat posed by one’s political enemies” remains under theorized (Gibson 2006, 22). Literature typically utilizes social identify theory, group conflict, and personality structures to explain group threat (Gibson 2006). The most popular of these is social identity theory. Group threat leads to attitudes of intolerance and fear. “Those who are more threatened by their political enemies are less likely to tolerate them” (Gibson 2006, 24). For this reason, I explore how social

identity theory and group conflict theory explain differences between partisans and independents' perceptions of threat from immigration.

The added benefits of multiculturalism versus threats from immigrants who fail to assimilate to their new nation's culture are a common discourse among Western states. How voters respond to perceived threats or benefits of immigration to the culture of the state are important to understand. Social identity theory posits that humans naturally form in-groups and out-groups as a way of categorizing ourselves from distinctions of the 'other'. To perceive threat only a minimum of perceived otherness needs to be detected. These in-group/out-group divisions exist even when the distinction between the two groups is arbitrary (Tajfel 1978). This is known as the minimal group paradigm. The mere division of people into groups will affect their attitudes towards those in the group and those not in their group (Brewer 1979). When the distinction between the two groups is less arbitrary stronger favoritism towards the in-group and bias against the out-group occurs (Huddy 2001).

Cultural threats to the national identity challenge the very definition of what it means to be a citizen. When voters perceive threats to the traditional notions of national identity, xenophobic attitudes increase (Lucassen and Lubbers 2012). Xenophobia a reaction to the symbolic threat of multiculturalism. Culture is a prime variable of symbolic threat. Symbolic threats are perceived as challenges to a group's way of life rather than challenges to group resources (L. M. McLaren 2002). Individuals who view immigrants as a threat to the states' culture are expressing xenophobic sentiments. Xenophobia is expected to occur in nations with a homogenous native population and a large culturally distinct immigrant population that does not assimilate.

Theory and Argument

Perceived threats to the national culture are expected to cause individuals to emphasize the national identity as their primary reference group. This would be indicated by a higher perception of cultural threat from immigration among independent voters than partisan voters. Research from the United States found that “[p]olitical parties represent real and meaningful groups that any person could potentially readily identify with in a way not true for independents” (Greene 2004, 143). Because they do not have the party as a cue giver, independents are more susceptible to interpreting the perceived other, those who are culturally dissimilar to the majority, as a potential threat. Independents see all citizens of the nation-state as socially and culturally similar to them and all others as different, part of the other. High levels of in-group favoritism are expected and out-group discrimination, manifesting itself in support for anti-immigrant parties during elections. These strong ties to national identity explain an in-group bias and can predict xenophobic attitudes (Luedtke 2005). Independents who perceive an ‘us vs. them’ dichotomy are more likely to be issue voters.

An important factor in the activation of these in-group/out-group feelings is high salience of the activated identity (Mullen, Brown, and Smith 1992). Social identity theory views threats to culture and way of life as equal to economic and safety threats. Accordingly, when immigrants are perceived as a threat to the national culture and national identity there is a more negative view of immigration than economic threats or safety issues (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Voters with higher levels of threat perception will be expected to have more hostile attitudes towards immigrants and show higher levels of favoritism towards the in-group.

Partisans are bound by their loyalty to a party; they see their immediate group as the party, rather than the nation-state. Independent voters are likely to perceive members of their

nation-state as their in-group and immigrants as members of the out-group. Cultural and social differences are easy to perceive and do not require manipulation by a political elite to manifest. I argue that independents are more likely to perceive immigration as a threat to their countries' cultural values than partisans. This is congruent with the minimal threat paradigm; independent voters only need to perceive that there are cultural differences between themselves and immigrants rather than a catastrophic event where immigrants are labeled as the scapegoat. Perceived threats to the national culture are expected to cause individuals to emphasize the national identity as their primary reference group.

Hypothesis One: Partisans are more likely than independents to perceive immigrants as “good for culture.”

Hypothesis one tests whether partisans or independent voters are more likely to view immigration as a positive impact on culture. I argue that according to the minimal group paradigm of social identity theory, independents are more likely to have antagonistic views of the cultural influences of immigrants. This would be indicated by a higher perception of cultural threat from immigration among independent voters than partisan voters.

Xenophobia

According to theories of issue ownership, when there is high salience on the issue of immigration, there should be high congruence between voters and parties if that issue is perceived as owned by the party. The importance of an issue to both the voter and the party is expected to coincide in order for the party to be truly representative. “Congruence on salient issues is more important than on less salient ones” (Russell J. Dalton and Anderson 2011). Parties must choose wisely which issues to engage to not alienate their partisans while simultaneously attracting independent voters. This is particularly important if we are to believe,

that the level of partisan voting is declining and that independent voters are more likely to switch allegiance between elections than partisans. As partisan ties erode, the prominence of issue voting is expected to increase. This suggests that independent voters who must interpret the political world for themselves without a partisan lens are more likely to perceive threats from immigration.

Hypothesis Two: Partisans are less likely than independents to express xenophobia against immigrants.

Xenophobic attitudes are defined as fear of the other. Social identity theory expects that individuals identify with the in-group, in the case of immigration the national identity is expected to be the closest identity. Immigrants of a different race would activate the out-group threat. This indicates that as an individual respondent perceives potential immigrants as more racially different, than he/she is more likely to reject immigration (Harell et al. 2012). Analyzing this relationship in regards to partisanship allows us to determine whether independents are more prone to express xenophobic attitudes than partisans.

Xenophobia and Self-Placement

Hypothesis three addresses the relationship between self-placement and partisanship.

H3: Right-leaning independent voters are more likely to express xenophobia than left-leaning independent voters.

As discussed previously in this chapter, immigration is owned by parties on the political right, this includes a domination of the Radical Right and a portion of Conservative parties. Research in the United States indicates that Republicans are more likely to view immigrants with hostility with increased interactions (Hawley 2011). According to theories of issue ownership, when there is high salience on the issue of immigration, there should be high congruence between voters and

parties if that issue is perceived as owned by the party. The importance of an issue to both the voter and the party is expected to coincide in order for the party to be truly representative. Parties must choose wisely which issues to engage to not alienate their partisans while simultaneously attracting independent voters. This is particularly important if we are to believe, that the level of partisan voting is declining and that independent voters are more likely to switch allegiance between elections than partisans. As partisan ties erode, the prominence of issue voting is expected to increase. This suggests that independent voters who must interpret the political world for themselves without a partisan lens are more likely to perceive threats from immigration.

Data and Methods

The data utilized in these analyses are from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round One through Five (European Social Survey 2016). The ESS is conducted every two years with 36 states across Europe and the wider community participating at least once. States may opt in or out depending on the year. The ESS covers a broad range of topics including immigration, social trust, family, work, health and care, climate change and justice to name a small selection (European Social Survey 2016). Every two years the ESS asks general questions known as the core section. The core questionnaire is supplemented with rotating modules every round. These modules allow the ESS to go in-depth on specific topics. Further, a supplementary questionnaire includes other topics including an evaluation of respondent's basic value orientations.

The ESS is ideal for tapping attitudes regarding immigration as it contains various measures of public opinion towards immigration and politics generally. Immigration questions addressed by the ESS include: details about economic consequences and social effects (Card, Dustman, and Preston 2005)). Attitudes regarding immigrant groups are also included in the ESS unlike other surveys. The ESS asks individuals about immigrants from various regions, cultural

backgrounds, and economic status⁴. These unique attributes make it the ideal survey for this analysis.

The survey's cross-national design allows researchers to analyze attitudes regarding immigration across various states at once. While 36 states participated at least once in the ESS, not every state is ideal to include in this analysis. This project restricts all analyses to Western European and European Union member states. I restrict the study to Western Europe because multiple studies indicate that Eastern European party systems are not as entrenched due to a lack of historical significance with democracy (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012). Without a history of strong party attachment, arguments over whether partisanship influences identity do not hold water.

This analysis uses the technique of clustering to account for within group variance among states. I use clustering to account for country effects across time. I cluster on the variable of country because every respondent would be effected by the changes within a country over time. Clustering on country gives the within country distribution without necessitating a fixed effects model which is inappropriate for this data. The specific parameters of the state do not effect individuals differently. Every individual within a state has the same experience. Clusters allow for individual change within a group over time. When the economy is down, all individuals are experiencing a down economy, not just one group. Clustering allows us to account for shifts in the distribution of different units over time. Another approach would be to create dummy

⁴ Examples of these questions include: Whether the state could "Allow many/few immigrants of the same race/ethnic group as majority"; from "poorer countries outside Europe" (ESS Round 5: European Social Survey Round 5 Data (2010). Data file edition 3.2. Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data. n.d.)

variables. As the creation of country level dummy variables would eat up degrees of freedom a more robust analysis can be achieved through clustering on country.

Logistic Regression

Pooled cross-sectional data does not contain serially correlated errors. This means that there is no dependence over time; therefore, we can analyze the data as a normal logit model. I use standard and ordered logistic regression based on how many levels are in the dependent variable. Logistic regression is used because the dependent variables in these analysis are not continuous. Standard logistic regression is utilized when the dependent variable is dichotomous such as when an individual is close to political party. Other key dependent variables in this project are ordered, in those analysis an ordered logit is used.

Independent Variables

The primary independent variable of interest for Hypothesis One and Two is whether a respondent is a *member of political party*. A sense of belonging to a political party is expected to curb xenophobic attitudes in Western Europe. Respondents who claimed they belonged to a political party received a score of one where individuals who claimed they had no party affiliation received a score of zero. Analyzing how partisanship affects attitudes towards immigration will give understanding to whether partisanship remains a worthwhile construct. I argue that independent voters are more likely than partisans to harbor negative attitudes towards immigrants because independent voters do not have a partisan schema to rely on when evaluating new issues.

The independent variable of interest for Hypothesis Three is an individuals' *left-right self-placement*. Given that most of the popular discourse about attitudes toward immigration and indeed a portion of scholarship relates to how people relate to immigration based on their

placement on the left/right spectrum, a key independent variable is placement on the left right scale. This is determined by asking respondents to place themselves along the 11 point scale, with respondents giving themselves a score of 0 representing the most left and respondents with a score of 10 representing the most right. Analyzing self-placement on the left-right scale allows us to understand whether independent voter's preferences make sense. I expect that individuals who place themselves on the right are more likely to be xenophobic than individuals on the left.

Dependent Variables

The primary dependent variable of interest for Hypothesis One is a measure of whether a respondent views immigration as undermining the country's cultural life. This is an ordered variable asking respondents whether the *country's cultural life is undermined by immigration*, or enriched by immigration. The original variable was on an eleven point scale from zero to ten; where a score of one indicated that immigration made the country worse and a score of ten indicates that immigration makes the country a better place to live. I reversed the coding on the variable, a score of one now indicates that individuals believe that immigration makes the country better and a score of eleven indicates that the individual believes immigrants make the country worse. I expect that independent voters have a more negative attitude toward immigrants' cultural influence as they are more likely to perceive immigrants as a threat to the national identity. This would be indicated by a negative relationship between partisanship and cultural influence of immigrants.

Xenophobia is the dependent variable in Hypothesis Two and Three. *Xenophobia* is measured based on whether respondents believe that the state should allow immigrants of a different race to immigrate to the home country. This is important because it establishes the in-group versus out-group mentality emphasizing racial and cultural differences. Responses were

scored on a four point scale, where a score of one indicates that many immigrants of a different race were welcome and a score of four indicates that no immigrants of a different race should be allowed. Individuals who believed that some immigrants of a different race should be allowed were given a score of two and a score of three was assigned to individuals who expressed a desire for a few immigrants of different race/ethnicity than the majority groups should be allowed to move to the home country. To test Hypothesis Three, a subset of only the independent respondents was created in order to determine whether left/tight self-placement affects level of xenophobia among independent voters.

Control Variables

The standard control variables are used in these analyses. *Age* is a respondent's real age at the time of the interview. Older individuals are expected to be more likely than younger individuals to identify as close to a political party. Partisan attachments are formed in youth. It takes voting for a party in multiple elections before individuals feel attached to a particular political party (Barnes, McDonough, and Pina 1985). Closeness to a political party will not form if individuals do not feel that the party system represents their views. In an era of declining partisanship, younger voters are not forming the partisan attachments of previous generations.

A measure of *Citizenship* is included in the analysis. The ESS does not exclude respondents who are not native to the state in which the survey is given. Respondents who indicated they were citizens of the country in which they were interviewed were coded one and individuals who are not citizens are assigned a score of zero. Respondent who are immigrants themselves are expected to have a more favorable view of immigration and their influence on a countries culture.

Religious individuals are more likely to join other social groups according to Putnam (2001). Further, recent research in the US strengthens the notion that an individual's religiosity is tied to their partisanship (Putnam and Campbell 2012). Research in the US indicates that individuals with strong social networks at their church are more likely to identify as Republican (Putnam and Campbell 2012). This evidence indicates that those who identify as religious are more likely to identify as close to a party. Individuals are asked in the ESS to self-identify as a religious individual. Respondents who stated they were religious were assigned a score of one and individuals who indicated they were not religious received a score of zero. I expect this relationship to be positive in all three analyses.

Gender is coded as a dichotomous variable with male coded as one and female coded as zero. Gender is not expected to be significant in any analyses. A measure of employment is included to determine how employment status affects identification for hypothesis one.

Employment is a dichotomous variable where a score of zero indicates that the respondent has been unemployed and seeking work for a period of more than three months. I expect that employment status will not affect whether an individual views immigrants as a threat to a country's culture. Hypothesis two and three utilize a measure of *Satisfaction with the Economy*⁵ to test how economic perceptions influence attitudes of xenophobia. Satisfaction with the economy is a three level variable where respondents who are dissatisfied with the economy are

⁵ All analyses were conducted with both Satisfaction with the Economy and Employment status and no statistical difference was found in the results.

assigned a score of one; neutral is assigned a score of two, and respondents who are satisfied with the economy are assigned a score of three⁶.

Education is coded in levels. Respondents with less than lower secondary education received a score of one; lower secondary a score of two; upper secondary a score of three; post-secondary non-tertiary a score of four; and tertiary, a score of five. Individuals with increased levels of education are expected to be independents because they do not need the party to provide political cues in line with Dalton's cognitive mobilization theory. Once individuals have the ability to process the political environment, Dalton theorizes that the political party becomes less important (Russell J. Dalton 2011). Evidence strengthening his theory would indicate that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have favorable views of immigration effects on country's culture and lower levels of xenophobia.

Results and Discussion

Drawing on insights from social identity theory, Hypothesis One tests whether independents have higher levels of perceived cultural threat from immigrants than partisans. I use an ordered logit analysis to test Hypothesis One. The dependent variable in this analysis is the ordered variable asking respondents whether the country's cultural life is undermined by or enriched by immigration. Membership in a political party is the primary explanatory variable. The results are displayed in Table 10.

[Insert Table 10: Cultural Influence of Immigrants]

⁶ This was originally coded zero to ten. The variable was recoded to a three point scale for clarity. All analyses were run with both codings and there was no statistically significant difference.

As indicated in Table 10⁷, partisans are more likely to perceive of immigrants as good for culture than independent voters. The relationship is negative which indicates that independent voters are more likely to believe immigrants make the country worse than independent voters. This is in-line with predictions from social identity theory which prescribes an animosity between groups. Partisans utilize the political party as a primary reference group and do not attribute immigrants as a threat.

As expected non-citizens are more likely than citizens to embrace immigration's positive impacts on a country's culture. Education is expected to increase an individual's openness and desire for multiculturalism. Table 10 indicates that this is not the case. Level of education does not affect a respondent's likelihood of believing immigrants enrich the country. This differs from previous research. Employment status has no effect on whether a respondent views immigration as undermining or enriching a country's culture. This is in line with previous studies within the European Union that indicate a contextual factors do not influence attitudes toward immigration (Sides and Citrin 2007). Gender does not make a difference in the believing immigrants enrich or undermine the country.

To further explore how attitudes toward immigration differ between independents and partisans, Hypothesis Two explores the relationship between partisanship and xenophobia. Social identity theory predicts that perceived differences between groups lead to increased animosity. McLaren found that threat of losing one's national identity was a strong predictor of attitudes toward the European Union (L. McLaren 2004). Potential immigrants from a different race than

⁷ Odds Ratios are reported in the Appendix Table 15, Appendix 1: Cultural Influence of Immigrants Odds Ratios.

the respondent are expected to increase antagonistic views of immigration. Because they do not have the party as a cue giver, independents are more susceptible to interpreting the perceived other, those who are culturally dissimilar to the majority, as a potential threat. Independents see all citizens of the nation-state as socially and culturally similar to them and all others as different, part of the other. High levels of in-group favoritism are expected and out-group discrimination, manifesting itself in support for anti-immigrant parties during elections. These strong ties to national identity explain an in-group bias and can predict xenophobic attitudes (Luedtke 2005). Independents who perceive an ‘us vs. them’ dichotomy are more likely to be issue voters. This is expected to be strongest among independent voters because they lack an identity apart from the national identity.

[Insert Table 11: Xenophobic Attitudes **Table 3.3: Xenophobia**]

The results of Hypothesis Two are displayed in Table 11⁸: Xenophobia. Independent voters are likely to perceive members of their nation-state as their in-group and immigrants as members of the out-group. Cultural and social differences are easy to perceive and do not require manipulation by a political elite to manifest. I argue that independents are more likely to perceive immigration as a threat than partisans. This is congruent with the minimal threat paradigm; independent voters only need to perceive that there are differences between themselves and immigrants rather than a catastrophic event where immigrants are labeled as the scapegoat. As predicted, the relationship is negative which indicates that party members are more likely to accept immigrants of a different race than independents. Xenophobia is more likely among

⁸ Odds Ratios are reported in the Appendix Table 16 Appendix 2: Xenophobia Odds Ratios .

independent voters than partisans. This is particularly important as the numbers of independent voters increase.

Age is a significant predictor of xenophobia. Older individuals are more likely to harbor xenophobic sentiments than younger respondents. Religious individuals are more likely to express xenophobia than secular individuals. Gender and citizenship were not found to be a significant predictor of xenophobia. Again satisfaction with the economy is not a significant predictor of xenophobia. Individuals with higher levels of education are less likely to express xenophobic tendencies.

Threats to the national identity from immigration can quickly influence party preference when parties are deemed to respond to individuals' fears regarding the value of multiculturalism. As discussed earlier in this chapter parties that own the issue of immigration are on the right end of the spectrum. The independent variable in this analysis is self-placement on the left right scale. Voters are expected to internalize the salient issues of the day. I expect that individuals on the right are more likely to want to restrict immigration than individuals on the left. This analysis is conducted using only respondents who indicated that they were independent voters. I use an ordered logit model as left/right self-placement is scored from zero to eleven. The results are displayed in Table 12⁹: Left/Right Placement and Xenophobia.

[Insert Table 12: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement]

As issue ownership predicts, independent voters on the right are more likely to express xenophobic attitudes than independent voters on the left. This indicates that independent voters

⁹ Odds Ratios are reported in Table 17 Appendix 3: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement Odds Ratios

are picking up on the cues of Radical Right and Conservative parties' negative views towards immigration. Further, independent voters with a left leaning self-placement are more likely than independent voters with a right leaning self-placement to welcome immigrants with different cultural backgrounds.

The results indicate that voters who are xenophobic are more likely to be older than non-xenophobic individuals. This is in line with previous research which indicates older individuals are more likely to be xenophobic. Religious individuals are significantly more likely to place themselves to the left than secular respondents.

There is no statistical difference among men and women about xenophobia. Satisfaction with the economy and being unemployed recently for longer than 3 months does not affect a respondent's level of xenophobia. The effect of economic fortunes will be explored more in the following chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the link between membership in a political party and attitudes toward immigration's cultural influence. The results of Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two indicate that independent voters are more likely than partisan voters to hold negative attitudes towards immigrants of a different culture and race. Social identity posits this effect is due to a stronger sense of loss over the national identity among independent voters than partisans. I posit that partisan voters are more likely to view members of their party as their in-group whereas independent voters focus on the national identity.

The Radical Right party family is not the only party family that is attempting to own the issue of immigration. As noted previously experts identified one Conservative party and one Green party where immigration is one of the three most important issues. The Radical Right

parties are successful in owning the issue among most other states. As expected, voters on the right are more likely to have anti-immigrant and xenophobic values. This would indicate that the voters are picking up on party cues on the right.

Satisfaction with the economy was not a significant predictor of xenophobia or negative attitudes toward immigrants of a different culture. This relationship will be explored further in Chapter Four. Group threat theory anticipates that individual with negative attitudes toward the economy are more likely to have negative attitudes towards immigration. This questions will be further explored to determine whether this is indeed true and if partisans or independent voters are more susceptible to the economic aspects of immigration.

Table 9: Most Important Issue by Party Family

Family	Most Important Issue	Second Most Important	Third Most Important
Radical Right	Immigration 8/14 (57%)	Anti-Elite Rhetoric; Immigration; Multiculturalism; Nationalism 3/14 (21%)	Anti-Elite Rhetoric 4/14 (29%)
Conservative	Public Services vs Taxes 9/12 (66%)	Deregulation 4/12 (33%)	Corruption; Deregulation; Nationalism; Redistribution; State Intervention 2/12 (17%)
Liberal	Public Services vs Taxes 14/20 (70%)	Deregulation 6/20 (30%)	EU Integration 4/20 (20%)
Christian Democrat	Public Services vs Taxes 8/9 (89%)	Redistribution 3/9 (33%)	EU Integration; State Intervention; Urban vs Rural 2/9 (22%)
Socialist	Public Services vs Taxes 13/18 (72%)	Redistribution 9/18 (50%)	State Intervention 7/18 (39%)
Radical Left	Redistribution 13/20 (65%)	Public Services vs Taxes 8/20 (40%)	State Intervention 6/20 (33%)
Green	Environment 11/14 (79%)	Redistribution 5/14 (36%)	Public Services vs Taxes 3/14 (21%)

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey Data 2014

Table 10: Cultural Influence of Immigrants

	Immigrants Influence on the Country's Culture
Party Member	-.203* (.086)
Unemployed>3 Months	-.04 (.054)
Level of Education	-.134 (.094)
Age	.008*** (.002)
Male	.005 (.151)
Citizen	.918*** (.155)
Religious	.346* (.151)
Pweight	.118 (.116)
Pseudo R2	0.0127
N	100,916

Data Source: European Social Survey Round 1-5 (2002-2012)

Cell entries are ordered logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: *p<=.05, **p<=.01, ***p<=.001

NOTE: Immigration's influence on culture is coded 1 (Enriched) to 11 (Undermined)

Table 11: Xenophobic Attitudes

	Level of Xenophobia
Party Member	-.123** (.056)
Immigrants are Bad for Country	.526*** (.027)
Unemployed>3 Months	.006 (.037)
Level of Education	-.049 (.026)
Age	.011*** (.002)
Male	.007 (.036)
Citizen	.122 (.107)
Religious	.36** (.136)
Pweight	-.135 (.078)
Chi Square	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.1475
N	99,357

Data Source: European Social Survey Round 1-5 (2002-2012)

Cell entries are ordered logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

NOTE: Xenophobia is coded: 1 Many Immigrants; 2 Some Immigrants; 3 Few Immigrants; 4 No Immigrants

Table 12: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement

	Xenophobia
Right Self-Placement	.092*** (.015)
Immigrants Make the Country Worse	.520*** (.027)
Satisfied with Economy	-.103 (.053)
Unemployed >3 Months	.031 (.043)
Level of Education	-.051 (.028)
Age	.011*** (.002)
Male	-.003 (.035)
Religiosity	.309* (.141)
Citizen	.075 (.102)
Pweight	-.127 (.083)
Pseudo R2	0.1512
Chi Square	0.000
N	82,676

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

NOTE: Xenophobia is coded 1 (Many Immigrants) to 4 (No Immigrants)

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Chapter 4: Immigrants are Stealing Our Jobs!

In this chapter, I discuss the influence of the economy on perceptions of immigration for partisans and independents. Party competition is traditionally based on the economic left/right spectrum. In times of scarcity, such as an economic crisis group membership becomes important as people desire to view their group as superior to other perceived inferior groups. This chapter utilizes the assumptions of realistic conflict theory that when a group perceives threats to their resources or status they develop negative attitudes toward other competing groups. I argue that partisans ought to follow insights from realistic group conflict theory, identifying with their party rather than the nation-state. Partisans will only perceive threats from immigration when their economic interests as a group are challenged.

This issue is especially pertinent given the increasing number of non-citizens residing within Western European countries, with the exception of Greece. Table 13 displays the percentage of individuals who are not citizens counted in the population of each state. 2006 was the earliest year that data was available. These numbers do not include the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers within each country.

[Insert Table 13: Percent of without Citizenship]

Threat is defined in this analysis as the “negative consequences related to the arrival and presence of immigrants in a receiving society” (Green & Staerklé, 2013, 864). Material interests such as jobs are competitive because there is a finite amount of jobs in an economy. Individuals who are threatened are likely to view the economy in terms of a zero-sum game; the more immigrants who are employed in an economy, the fewer jobs available for native citizens. I expect that independent voters are more likely to be threatened by the economic impacts of immigration because they do not have a partisan lens to mediate the negative stereotypes of

immigration. Partisans attitudes toward immigration are shaped by the party, further they are likely to perceive competition in the labor market in ideological terms rather than individual competition.

Economics in Western Europe

As discussed in the previous section, understanding the state of the national economy plays a role in whether groups will perceive economic threat from increased immigration. State level economic factors are important predictors of attitudes toward immigrants. Since 2000, average unemployment in Western Europe increased by 2 percentage points going from 6.7% of the labor force in 2000 to 8.16% in 2017 (“World Development Indicators | DataBank,” 2018). Data on Western Europe is noted in Table 14: Unemployment as a Percent of the Labor Force. The height of average unemployment reached 11.44% in 2013 (“World Development Indicators | DataBank,” 2018). Most countries in Western Europe experienced at least one year where their unemployment was above average with few exceptions¹⁰. Southern Europe has a history of high unemployment.

[Insert Table 14: Unemployment as a Percent of the Labor Force]

Unemployment hits youth the hardest. Spain, which has a history of high unemployment, saw unemployment soar after the financial crisis in 2008. In 2016, youth unemployment in Spain was a shocking 45.5% of individuals under 25 (Eavis, 2016). Youth unemployment leads to instability. Further, Spain serves a top recipient of asylum seekers and refugees. Spain is not alone in dealing with large influxes of refugees. Further complicating the unemployment crisis in

¹⁰ Exceptions include Denmark; Luxembourg; the Netherlands; Switzerland; and the United Kingdom.

the Mediterranean is the rate of debt and falling Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Debt in southern Europe is extremely high, the debt of Greece and Italy was 100% of their GDP in 2000 (Zamora-Kapoor & Collier, 2014). By the end of 2010, Greece's debt as a percent of GDP nearly reached 150% (Zamora-Kapoor & Collier, 2014). Portugal and Spain both had debt over 50% of their GDP at 88% and 51.7% in 2010 (Zamora-Kapoor & Collier, 2014). For context, Sweden's debt percentage of GDP is 33.8% in 2010 (Zamora-Kapoor & Collier, 2014). Government debt is an important aspect to consider for the state of the economy because the higher the debt, the fewer services a government can offer its citizens.

[Insert Table 15: GDP per Capita]

GDP is an important predictor of health of an economy. GDP increased throughout Western Europe from 2000 to 2016, which is the most recent data available ("World Development Indicators | DataBank," 2018) (World Bank). Looking closer at the data in Table 15 by decade, there is marked difference in GDP after 2008. GDP drops on average six thousand U.S. dollars from 2008 to 2009. Western European states did not recover prior to 2016. All states had lower GDP in 2016 than in 2008 ("World Development Indicators | DataBank," 2018). The downturn in the economy after 2008 is expected to lead to increased nationalist attitudes.

The economic prospects in Western Europe are not inspiring. Western European GDP per capita remains below the financial crisis of 2008 levels in all but three countries (UK; Ireland and Germany). Unemployment recovered to an average of 8%, but remains high throughout southern Europe. High unemployment and lowered GDP per capita is expected to put pressure on citizen's perceptions of the economy.

Literature on Threat

As discussed in the previous chapter, social identity theory taps into a perceived difference between a respondents group and the perceived “other”. As expected, partisans are less likely to be xenophobic than independent voters, because partisan’s identity is not in direct conflict with immigration. On the contrary, independent voters are more likely to be xenophobic as they identify stronger with the nation state which is challenged by immigrants of a different race. Differences in race/culture are considered symbolic threat. These symbolic threats manifest themselves in antagonism toward the other.

In contrast to social identity theory which focuses on individual perceptions of threat based on perceived membership in a group, realistic conflict theory focuses on the real competitive threat the dominant group faces from a perceived subordinate group (Blalock, 1967). At its core, group conflict theory is a scarcity based theory stating that competition between groups increases when resources are low, such as high unemployment or an economic recession. Realistic conflict theory assumes that conflict occurs at the group level. Partisans are less likely to feel economic pressure from immigration than independents because their economic perceptions are based on the party line rather than perceived pressure from immigrants.

Economic threats can be categorized as a realistic threat. Introduction of immigrants is often perceived as a threat to a groups’ ability to be employed. High rates of unemployment in Europe after the 2008 recession are likely to produce increased conflict between citizens and immigrants. While economic issues affect both partisans and independents equally, the locus of conflict is expected to vary for each group. I expect partisans to view all others as competition for scarce resources; whereas, independent voters will focus on immigrants as competition for

jobs. Economic threats are aligned with realistic group conflict because there is a conflict over tangible things.

Group conflict theory emerged as a way to understand how racial groups position and define themselves against each other (Blumer, 1958). Threats exist because resources are understood to be a zero-sum game (Sherif, Harvey, Hood., & Sherif, 1969). There are a limited amount of resources to go around, the amount that each group receives effects the amount available for a competing group. Jobs are often perceived as a finite resource. When unemployment increases, perceived threat increases. In times of resource disparity tension between groups is expected to rise (Molina, Tropp, & Goode, 2016). Tensions between immigrants and citizens increase when competition for resources is understood in economic terms. Inherently this is a group process, led by a prominent figure in the media or community with the prestige or authority to characterize an opposing group (Blumer 1958). The party serves as a lens to shape partisan views in this manner.

Despite the fact that individuals are the ones perceiving threats, people do not actually perceive threat until their in-group is threatened (Quillian, 1995). Groups within close proximity to each other ought to be in conflict with each other over competition for scarce resources (Hawley, 2011, p. 405). Economic threat manifests when a dominant group views itself as competing with an “inferior” group for jobs or when a group blames a perceived subordinate group for the state of the economy (Quillan 1995). Individuals do not perceive of the conflict as between individuals, but rather perceive conflict between their group and an inferior other. The locus of conflict is expected to be at the group level rather than the individual. This would be indicated by group concerns having an influence on attitudes toward immigration.

Most previous research focuses on how citizens perceive of immigrants as an economic threat (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; L. McLaren & Johnson, 2007; i.e. Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). Competition in the job market leads to conflict between groups because jobs are perceived as a finite resource. As the number of immigrants is perceived to increase, there is perceived pressure on the job market to accommodate both immigrants and citizens. Realistic group conflict theory argues that not only jobs, but all resources such as the social safety network, are not available to all groups in a sufficient manner (Esses et al., 2001). These material interests trigger economic competition. When the economy is bad, individuals perceive increased competition over material resources.

This would explain previous research which finds mixed support for self-interested economic concerns and negative perceptions of immigration (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). When evaluating job security, Malhotra, Margalit, and Mo, found that individuals who were less certain about their job security were less likely to favor increased immigration by Americans with similar job skills (2013). Further, restrictions on immigration policy are favored by low-skilled U.S. workers (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). Survey research indicates that individuals are more likely to favor high-skilled immigrants over low-skilled immigrants (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010). Labor market variables continue to play an important role in preference formation regarding immigrants (Mayda, 2006). Personal economics are important to understanding individual's attitudes towards immigrants.

Although, evidence suggests that individual economics shape attitudes toward immigration, there is an equally strong line of research that indicates societal economic variables contribute to shaping attitudes regarding immigration. Beliefs about the state of the economy and fear of taxes are strong indicators of anti-immigration; whereas, personal circumstances play an

insignificant role (Citrin, Green, Muste, & Wong, 1997). Further, there is little evidence that skill level plays a role in attitude formation (Wilkes, Guppy, & Farris, 2008). This has been upheld in both Canada and Western Europe. Research in Western Europe suggests that individual satisfaction with personal finances is not a significant predictor of negative attitudes regarding immigrants (Sides & Citrin, 2007). Perceptions of the state level economics are strongly correlated with preferences regarding immigration (L. McLaren & Johnson, 2007). The lack of consensus in economic factors explaining attitudes towards immigration needs to be further explored. Group level dynamics need to be further explored for a clearer understanding of how economics shape attitudes toward immigration.

The nature of inter-group conflict regarding economics, and perceived loss of power and prestige need to be shared within the group creating a concept of common fate (Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981). Partisanship is most closely tied to voters' attitudes regarding economic left/right placement. Partisans are more apt to fit into a world that is dominated traditionally by a one dimensional competition space compared to independents. According to group conflict theories, self-interest, and in particular a decrease in group finances without regard to a reference group, drives group cohesion, economic attitudes and influences vote choice (Kinder, Adams, & Gronke, 1989). This in turn, leads to expectations that societal economic factors are important in shaping group dynamics with regard to immigration.

Theory and Argument

Perceived scarce economic times, such as high unemployment, and increase in the immigrant population, etc. represent a threat to the dominant group's status according to realistic group conflict theory. It is important to understand how group identity influences perceptions of immigrants under conditions of realistic conflict. Economics are considered a realistic conflict

because they manifest as a competition between groups for a limited resource. Determining how group membership influences attitudes toward immigration during stressful economic times is the point of this chapter. Economic perceptions are closely tied to vote choice. I argue that partisans are less likely to feel economic pressure from immigration because the party acts as a filter for information regarding the economy.

Partisanship is closely tied to voters' attitudes regarding economic left/right placement. Partisans are more apt to fit into a world that is dominated traditionally by a one dimensional competition. Because partisans receive their economic cues from the party, they are less likely to perceive competition for jobs as an issue of immigration. Partisans are unlikely to be issue voters; however, when a new issue threatens their economic standards they turn to the party as a guide for understanding the world. According to group conflict theories, self-interest and in particular a decrease in group finances in regard to a reference group drives group cohesion (Green & Staerklé, 2013). Partisans' group awareness increases when economics are unstable; therefore, partisans are more likely to perceive economic threats as a competition between their world view and all others. Partisans believe that their party's interpretation of economic problems is the truth; therefore, they are less influenced by individual aspects of the economy. The locus of competition over jobs for partisans is not between partisans and immigrants; but rather between partisans and all other members of society. This leads to awareness of the party as a group in opposition to all of society. In this regard partisans are expected to perceive less economic stress from immigrants than independent voters.

Conversely independent voters perceive of the conflict between citizens and immigrants for competition over jobs and government services. Independent voters will place more emphasis on economics as an immigration issue and perceive economic issues as a statement about the

economy in general. I argue that during times of an economic crisis, independent voters are most likely to feel threatened by a loss of economic opportunities. This would result in higher levels of dissatisfaction amongst independents towards immigrants, when immigrants are perceived as an economic threat.

H1: Partisans are more likely than independents to perceive of immigrants as “good for the economy”.

Today, parties must adapt to new issues, without losing sight of their partisans, their in-group. Party leaders provide partisan cues to their loyal voters when their economic interests are threatened by increased immigration. In this manner, the party plays an important role, both in communicating when the group’s interests are threatened and responding to the threat with a new policy position. According to realistic conflict theory, a group leader is responsible to tell the group what they ought to be worrying about and when.

Left/Right Self-Placement

Partisan voters are expected to remain loyal partisans while independent voters shift into the newer issue oriented party system. As partisan ties erode, the prominence of issue voting is expected to increase. The importance of an issue to both the voter and the party is expected to coincide in order for the party to be truly representative. “Congruence on salient issues is more important than on less salient ones” (Dalton & Anderson, 2011). In an era of issue voting, parties must be able to convince both their partisan voters and independent voters that they are the party who will fix the problems identified by both groups. As discussed in the previous chapter, insights from issue ownership theory argue that in an era of declining partisanship, parties are strategically placing emphasis on new issues in order to draw independent voters to the party. New issues must be salient in order for perceived ownership to occur (Belanger & Meguid, 2008;

Walgrave & De Swert, 2007). Owning an issue provides voters with cues about party programs which serve as a shortcut for independent voters to evaluate parties during an election. The issue of immigration is increasingly prominent within Europe.

The issue of immigration remains one of the most important issues facing Europe according to large numbers of Europeans (“Standard Eurobarometer 88,” n.d.). Overall, 39% of Europeans viewed immigration as the most important issue above terrorism and the economy in fall of 2017. This represents a shift where security and economic issues were considered the most important. Issues regarding immigration remain highly salient in Western Europe. Parties must adopt positions on the issue of immigration in order to continually represent voters. As noted in the previous chapter, immigration or issues of nationalism were one of the most important issues for the Radical Right and Conservative party families indicating that these families are working towards ownership of immigration issues. Independent voters who believe that immigrants are harmful for the economy are expected to favor parties on the right.

H2: Right-leaning independent voters are more likely to view immigrants as a threat to the economy than left-leaning independent voters.

I argue that independent voters with negative perceptions of the economic benefits of immigrant’s are more likely to self-identify as right leaning individuals. Independent voters not only perceive of the economy as a zero-sum game where any jobs that immigrants get are jobs taken from citizens; but they are more likely to be influenced by new issues.

Data and Methods

Data for this chapter is again drawn from the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS began collecting data on Europeans attitudes in 2002, and continues to survey every two years (ESS). The ESS is ideal for tapping attitudes regarding immigration as it contains various

measures of public opinion towards immigration. Immigration questions addressed by the ESS include details about the economic consequences and social effects of immigration (Card, Dustman, & Preston, 2005). Attitudes regarding immigrant groups are also included in the ESS unlike other surveys. These unique attributes make it the ideal survey for this analysis.

The cross-national design of the survey allows for analysis on attitudes regarding immigration across various countries at once. As stated in previous chapters, I restrict the study to Western Europe because multiple studies indicate that Eastern European party systems are not as entrenched due to a lack of historical significance with democracy (Evans & Whitefield, 1993). Without a history of strong party attachment partisanship cannot be expected to influence voters in the same manner as in Western Europe.

As noted earlier in Chapter three, I utilize the methodological technique of clustering the standard errors on the variable of country. This allows me to account for within-group variance among countries. I use clustering to account for country effects across time. I cluster on the variable of country because every respondent would be effected by the changes within a country over time. When the economy is down, all individuals experience a slowed economy, not just one group. In elections years, all respondents are effected by the ensuing campaign. Clustering allows me to account for shifts in the distribution of different units over time.

Measures for Hypothesis One

The independent variable for Hypothesis One is whether a respondent is a *member of a political party*. Partisans are expected to be less influenced by external factors when forming opinions of immigrants. Because the party serves as a cognitive shortcut, partisans are insulated from potential economic threat of immigrants. Further, in a zero-sum game for economic opportunities, partisans are likely to perceive members of other parties as competitors for limited

resources not just immigrants. Parties continue to focus on issues of distribution; indicating that partisans remain focused on economic issues. As in previous analysis, partisanship is a dichotomous variable where respondents who are members of a political party are assigned a score of one and independent voters are assigned a score of zero.

The primary dependent variable of interest for Hypothesis One is a measure of whether the respondent views immigration as a threat to the nation's economy. This is an ordered variable asking respondents views on whether *immigration is good for the country's economy*¹¹. The original variable was on an eleven point scale from zero to eleven, where zero represented good and ten represented bad. For these analyses I reversed the order. A score of one indicates that a respondent believes immigrants are good for the economy and a score of eleven indicates that a respondent believes immigrants are bad for the economy. Hypothesis One, tests whether partisans are more likely to view immigrants as a threat to the economy than independent voters. If partisans are more insulated from the threat of immigration by their membership in a party, I expect the relationship between economic threat and partisanship to be negative. A negative relationship indicates that partisans are more likely to believe that immigrants benefit the economy.

Measures for Hypothesis Two

To test Hypothesis Two, a subset of respondents was created from only the independent voters. Hypothesis Two explores whether insights from issue ownership are valid in determining whether independents who are economically threatened are more likely to place themselves on

¹¹ Immigration bad or good for the country's economy

the right end of the left/right spectrum. The dependent variable for hypothesis two is economic threat. *Economically threatened Independents* are measured on a scale of zero to ten. One represents that an individual believes immigration is good for the country's economy¹². Eleven represents that a respondent views immigrants as bad for the country's economy. This direction of the variable was reversed from the original order for this analysis. This variable is the same recode of the original variable of *economic threat* utilized as a dependent variable in Hypothesis One.

The independent variable of interest for Hypothesis Two is an individuals' *left/right self-placement*. Given that most of the popular discourse about attitudes toward immigration and indeed a portion of scholarship relates to how people relate to immigration based on their placement on the left/right spectrum, a key dependent variable is placement on the left right scale. This is determined by asking respondents to place themselves along the eleven point scale, with respondents giving themselves a score of zero representing the most left and respondents with a score of ten representing the most right. Analyzing self-placement on the left-right scale allows us to understand whether independent voter's preferences make sense.

Economic Variables

When analyzing the economic threats of immigration, it is important to account for job security. This is important because previous analyses indicate that individuals who believe that immigrants threaten their economic position are more likely to hold antagonistic attitudes towards immigration (Malhotra, Margalit, Hyunjung Mo 2013). This is found to be true even of

¹² Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries (ESS - imgbeco)

individuals who are in high status jobs such as the technology sector (Malhotra, Margalit, Hyunjung Mo 2013). The ESS does not provide a direct measure for job security in every round. To combat this failing, I use a proxy variable created from individual's response about whether they experienced a period of *unemployment lasting greater than three months*¹³. Individuals who have not experienced unemployment lasting longer than 3 months received a score of zero. Respondents who experienced unemployment lasting longer than three months were given a score of one. Individuals who went without employment for three months or longer are expected to have less security in their jobs, than individuals who have not known prolonged unemployment. Using a proxy for job security over simple employment accounts for individuals who believe that immigration threatens their jobs regardless of wage or class (Harell, Soroka, Iyengar, & Valentino, 2012). In Hypothesis One, I expect that this variable will not be significant because group dynamics are driving respondent's perceptions of immigrant's effect on the job market. For Hypothesis Two, I expect that unemployment lasting longer than three months will be significant as independent voters do not have party-driven attitudes toward the economy.

The final economic variable utilized in both Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two is *satisfaction with the economy*¹⁴. Satisfaction with the economy is used to tap into individuals attitudes regarding the economy as a whole. Satisfaction with the economy is measured on a three point scale where individuals who are dissatisfied with the economy receive a score of one (originally 0-3); respondents who were neutral on the health of the economy received a score of 2 (originally 4-6); and individuals who responded that they believed the economy was good

¹³ "Have you ever been unemployed and seeking work for a period of more than three months?" uemp3m

¹⁴ "On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]." stfeco (ESS)

received a score of 3 (originally 7+)¹⁵. I expect that satisfaction with the economy decreases the likelihood that respondents view immigration as a threat to the economy.

Control Variables

A control variable for whether *immigration is generally supported*¹⁶ by the respondent is used in both Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two. Respondents were asked whether immigrants make the country worse or better. This variable is an ordered scale from one to eleven where a response is coded one if the individual believes that immigration will generally make the country better and eleven if the respondent believes that immigration will make the country worse. This variable is used to control for general attitudes regarding immigration. I expect that respondents who view immigration negatively are more likely to have a negative view of immigration's impact on the economy in both analyses. I expect that a belief that immigration is overall good for the economy would lead an individual to evaluate immigration's impact on the economy in a positive light.

The standard control variables are used in these analyses. Age is measured in years. The youngest respondent is 15 and the oldest respondent is 100+. I expect that older respondents are more likely to have negative attitudes of immigration's impact on the economy. Gender is coded as a dichotomous variable with male coded as one and female coded as zero. Previous studies indicate that men are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigrants' role in the

¹⁵ Satisfaction with the economy was recoded to a three point likert scale for clarity. An analysis was run with the full 11 point scale and there was no statistical difference between the results.

¹⁶ "Is [country] made a worse or better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?"
IMWBCNT (ESS)

economy. A positive relationship would indicate that men are more likely to believe immigrants are bad for the economy.

Citizens are expected to have a more negative attitude toward immigration than immigrants. Citizenship is a dichotomous variable where citizens are coded one, and non-citizens are coded zero. This would be indicated by a negative relationship. Religion is a dichotomous variable coded one if the respondents belongs to religious organization and zero if the respondent does not belong to a religious group.

Education is coded as highest levels of educational attainment. Respondents with less than lower secondary education received a score of one, lower secondary a score of two, upper secondary a score of three, post-secondary non-tertiary a score of four, and tertiary, a score of five. As education increases, I expect tolerance of immigrants to increase. This would be indicated by a negative relationship. The ESS recommends weighting analyses that combine more than one country to account for differences in population size. I use the recommended weighting variable to correct for differences in population size¹⁷.

Results and Discussion

Immigration: Economics

In times of scarcity, such as an economic crisis, group membership becomes important as people desire to view their group as superior to other perceived inferior groups. This analysis draws on the assumptions of realistic conflict theory that when a group perceives threats to their resources or status, they develop negative attitudes toward other competing groups. “The notion

¹⁷ Pweight=[Population size aged 15 years or older]/[(Net sample size in country)*10,000]

of realistic group conflict implies that hostility toward their ethnic or national groupings is a function of the perceived threats that these groups pose to the resources of one's own group" (L. M. McLaren, 2002, p. 557). Independents ought to follow insights from realistic group conflict theory, identifying with the national identity when their economic prospects are threatened. Independents are expected to interpret immigrants as a threat when their economic interests as a group are challenged. Conversely, partisans are expected to maintain positive views of the impact of immigration on the economy.

Partisans do not define their status in terms of the national identity therefore they will perceive of immigrants as beneficial for the economy. According to realistic group conflict theory, conflict is interest based occurring when groups feel that their status is threatened. Groups compete over scarce resources such as jobs; when the dominant group perceives a threat to the economy, it emphasizes the group mentality, for independents this will heighten out-group threat. The dependent variable in this analysis is whether the respondent perceives the impact of immigration as good or bad for the country's economy. The main explanatory variable of interest is membership in a political party. This analysis uses an ordered logit model to test hypothesis one. The results are displayed in Table 16: Economic Perception of Immigrants.

[Insert Table 16: Economic Perception of Immigrants]

As indicated in Table 16¹⁸, the relationship between partisanship and the belief that immigrants are bad for the economy is negative. This indicates that partisans are more likely to view immigrants as good for the economy than independent voters. Partisanship mediates the

¹⁸ Odds Ratios are reported in the Appendix, Table 21 Appendix 4: Economic Perception of Immigrants Odds Ratios.

effect of immigrant's economic threat. Partisans receive their cues from party leaders, any group competition is likely to exist between the party and all others as opposed to citizen and non-citizen for partisans.

Independent voters are more likely to perceive immigrants as a threat to the economy. Independent voter's lack of ties to a party makes them more prone to negative perceptions of the economic impact of immigrants. The results of Hypothesis One indicate that independent voters view economic competition as between citizens and non-citizens. This zero-sum game mentality leads to a negative view of immigration.

Consistent with previous research, perceptions of the economy have a significant impact on feelings of whether immigrants are a negative impact or positive force in the economy. This relationship is negative indicating respondents who believe that the economy is good are more likely to believe that immigrants are beneficial to the economy. This indicates that overall economic perceptions influence attitudes toward immigration.

Whether a respondent has ever been unemployed for three months or longer, is also a significant predictor of a respondent's attitude toward immigrants' influence on the economy. Individuals who have been unemployed for three months or longer at some point in their career are more likely to have negative perceptions of immigrants' influence on the economy than individuals with consistent employment histories. The relationship between personal circumstances and attitudes towards immigration need to be further explored.

As expected, a respondents overall view of whether immigration is good or bad is indicative of their belief that immigrants are good or bad for the economy. Individuals who believe that immigrants are a benefit to the country should not view immigrants as a benefit for the economy.

Oddly, non-citizens are more likely to believe that immigrants are a threat to the economy. This relationship is negative which indicates that non-citizens are more likely to view immigrants as a threat to the economy. A likely explanation is that as the immigrant population grows, immigrants feel increased competition for jobs. This explanation should be explored in more detail in future research.

Contrary to previous research, younger individuals are more likely to believe that immigrants have a negative impact on the economy than older individuals. This could be explained by the high numbers of youth unemployment among Western Europe. Countries such as Spain and Italy reached record youth unemployment in 2010 year (New York Times). Younger individuals may see immigrants as direct threat for entry level positions.

The relationship between an individual's religious affiliation and attitude regarding immigration's impact on the economy is negative. This means that secular individuals are more likely to believe that immigrants are a benefit for the economy than religious individuals. There is no significant relationship between educational attainment and the belief that immigrants are a negative impact on the economy.

Independents Self-Placement

Independents are more likely than partisans to be issue voters. Given the salience of immigration in Western Europe, independents are exposed to a variety of descriptions of immigration. Without a partisan lens independent voters must rely on party brands to communicate party policies. When a party raises the salience of an issue, they can link their party's reputation with the issue in the minds of independent voters. I would expect this to manifest as increased right placement for independents who perceive economic threat from immigration.

As noted previously independents are more likely than partisans to perceive of immigration as a threat to the country. I argue that right leaning individuals are more likely to perceive high levels of threat from immigration. This analysis uses ordered logit as self-placement is scored from left (0) to right (10) to test Hypothesis Two. The results are displayed in Table 17: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement.

[Insert Table 17: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement]

As expected, independent voters left/right self-placement affects their perceptions of immigrants in the economic influence. The positive relationship indicates that independents with a right leaning self-placement are more likely to have a negative perception of immigration's influence on the economy. The right end of the spectrum is associated with the Radical Right and Conservative party family. These parties are attracting voters with negative attitudes toward immigration, as expected. The results indicate that parties on the right are effectively owning the anti-immigration stance. The predicted probabilities for the extreme left and extreme right are displayed graphically in Figure 6: Independent's Attitude toward Immigrants Economic Influence by Left/Right Self-Placement. As shown in Figure 6, individuals who perceive that immigrants are good for the economy are more likely to place themselves on the left end of the left/right spectrum. Respondents who have negative perceptions of immigrant's role in the economy are more likely to have right leaning self-placement.

[Insert Figure 6: Independent's Attitude toward Immigrants Economic Influence by Left/Right Self-Placement]

The left end of the spectrum is associated with the Radical Left, Socialist and Green parties. The center is associated with the Liberal and Christian Democratic parties. Respondents on the left end of the spectrum are more likely to view immigrants as a benefit for the economy.

Figure 6 displays left/right self-placement with lines indicating the predicted probability of a respondent falling into each category based on their belief that immigrants benefit the economy. Respondents who believe that immigrants benefit the economy are more likely to place themselves on the left end of the spectrum. Respondents who believe that immigrants are threatening are more likely to identify on the right. There is no discernable difference between individuals who place themselves at a five on the left/right scale on whether they view immigrants as good or bad for the economy.

In general respondents who view immigration as a negative impact on the country as a whole are more likely to self-identify with the right end of the spectrum. This indicates that parties on the right are effectively communicating their negative stances regarding immigration. The Radical Right is successful in owning the issue of immigration and communicating its stances to independent voters.

As an individual's satisfaction with the economy increases, they are more likely to place themselves on the right end of the left/right spectrum. Parties on the right are associated with economics. Parties on the left focus more on redistribution and public services. Individuals with less job security, as measured by a period of time of unemployment over three months, are more likely to believe that immigrants are a threat to the economy. These individuals are more likely to feel that immigrants are threat to their jobs than individuals with more job security.

As expected, older individuals are more likely to identify with the right end of the spectrum. Men are more likely to view immigration as a negative for the economy than women. This is in line with previous research. Religious individuals are more likely to believe that immigrants threaten the economy than non-religious individuals. Level of education is not significant predictor of independents' belief that immigrants threaten the economy.

The results indicate that independent voters with concerns regarding the impact of immigration on the economy, are receiving cues from the right leaning parties regarding anti-immigrant stances. The right is effectively owning the issue.

Conclusion

Attitudes toward immigration are influenced by group dynamics. This study indicates that partisanship remains a powerful predictor of attitudes regarding economic immigration. Partisans are more likely than independents to view immigration as a positive impact on the economy. This is due to the party acting as a reference group for partisans. Independent voters do not have a party as a reference group. They are more likely to view immigrants as competition for limited economic resources, including jobs. Insights from realistic conflict theory explain this dynamic.

Realistic conflict theory dictates that perceived competition between groups will lead to animosity. I argued in this chapter that economics are the ideal political conflict to apply insights from realistic conflict theory. The number of jobs in an economy is a zero-sum game, for each job that a member of a competing group fills, a job is no longer available for an individual's group. Increased immigration exacerbates the economic tensions within society. Partisans are less likely to feel this friction as a result of immigration, because the party acts as a buffer. Partisans are more likely to view competition for economic resources as competition between the party's position on the economy and all other members of society. Independent voters are more likely to view immigration as negative for the economy due to their belief that immigrants challenge the ability of citizens to obtain jobs. Independents in effect are more likely to believe that immigrants are taking away jobs, while partisans are more likely to believe that anyone can take away jobs.

This study found evidence that partisans are less anti-immigrant than independents. Independent voters are more likely to be issues voters which would lead to the salience of immigration impacting their perceived realistic conflict between citizens and immigrants. To determine if this was the case, I tested whether independents with negative attitudes towards immigrant's impact on the economy had a right leaning self-placement. Parties on the right are more anti-immigrant than parties on the left. The radical right and conservative parties are the most likely to expound negative views of immigration. The results from hypothesis Two indicate that this relationship exists. Independents voters with a right leaning self-placement are more likely to harbor a belief that immigrants are bad for the economy. The further right an individual placed themselves, the more likely they were to have a negative attitude toward immigrants.

Future research needs to explore how beliefs in the impact of immigration on the economy interacts with group dynamics. While partisanship is a predictor of positive beliefs of immigration's impact on the economy, other group dynamics may be at play. This study found that partisanship mediates the view that immigration is a negative for the economy and other memberships need to be explored further like age and religious affiliation. This study was unable to further test for the impact of contact theory due to data constraints. It is possible that interactions with immigrants on a daily basis would impact a respondent's attitude regarding the economic benefits of immigration.

Figure 6: Independent's Attitude toward Immigrants Economic Influence by Left/Right Self-Placement

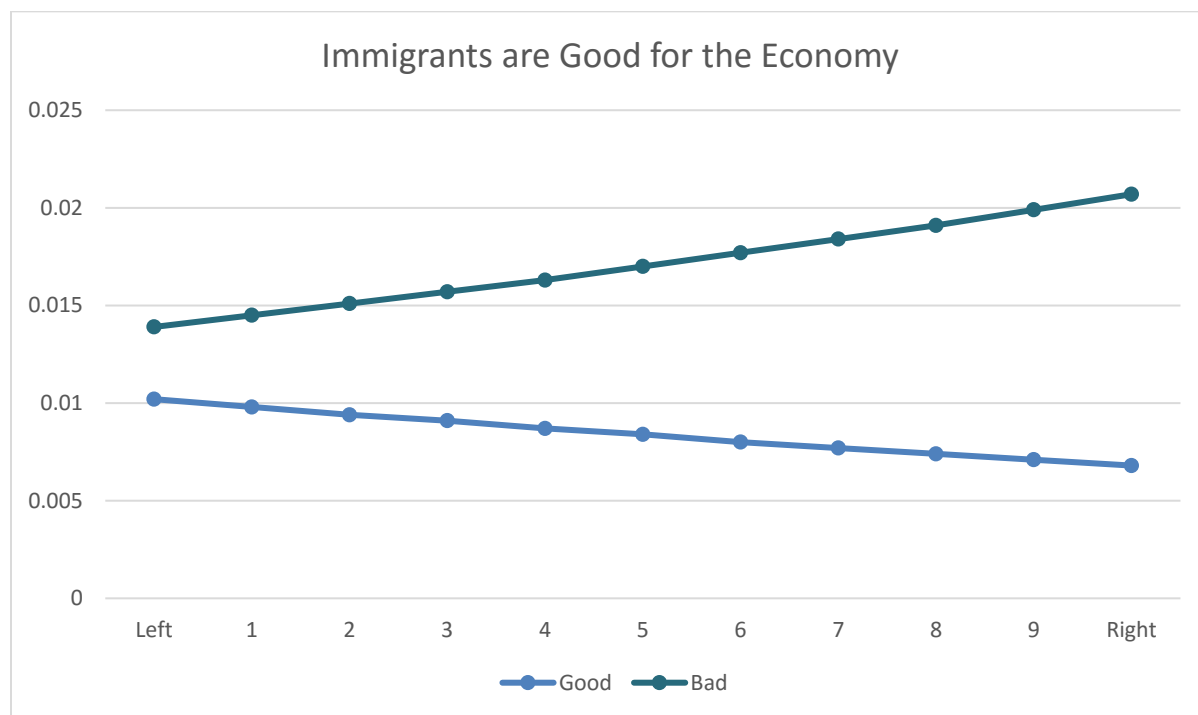


Table 13: Percent of Population without Citizenship

Country	2006 Percent	2016 Percent	Change
Belgium	9%	12%	3%
Denmark	5%	8%	3%
Germany	8%	11%	3%
Ireland	10%	12%	2%
Greece	8%	7%	-1%
Spain	9%	10%	1%
France	6%	7%	1%
Italy	5%	8%	3%
Cyprus	15%	16%	1%
Luxembourg	41%	47%	6%
Netherlands	4%	5%	1%
Austria	9%	14%	5%
Portugal	3%	4%	1%
Finland	2%	4%	2%
Sweden	5%	8%	3%
UK	6%	9%	3%

Note: Data from Eurostat - Population and Demographics

Non-Citizen percent calculated from Total Population divided by Non-Citizen Population

Table 14: Unemployment as a Percent of the Labor Force

Country Name	2002	2006	2010	2016	Average
Belgium	6.90	8.20	8.30	7.80	7.63
Denmark	4.30	3.90	7.50	6.20	5.58
Finland	10.40	7.70	8.40	8.80	8.77
Germany	8.50	10.20	7.00	4.10	7.27
Ireland	4.20	4.40	13.90	7.90	8.00
Luxembourg	2.60	4.70	4.40	6.30	4.67
France	9.20	8.90	9.30	10.10	9.39
Greece	10.00	9.00	12.70	23.50	15.37
Italy	9.20	6.80	8.40	11.70	9.38
Netherlands	2.60	3.90	4.40	6.00	4.51
Portugal	4.50	7.60	10.80	11.10	9.29
Switzerland	2.90	4.00	4.50	4.60	3.96
United Kingdom	5.00	5.40	7.80	4.80	5.86
Sweden	5.00	7.10	8.60	7.00	6.94
Spain	11.10	8.50	19.90	19.60	16.02
Cyprus	3.30	4.50	6.30	13.00	7.85
Average	6.23	6.55	8.89	9.53	8.16

Note: Data from World Bank

Table 15: GDP per Capita

Country Name	2002	2006	2010	2014	Change	
					2000 to 2010	2010 to 2016
Belgium	25052	38852	44380	47379	21173	-3109
Denmark	33229	52027	58041	62549	27298	-4463
Finland	26834	41121	46202	49915	21949	-2801
Germany	25205	36448	41786	48043	18067	376
Cyprus	16372	27170	30818	27401	16146	-7277
France	24275	36545	40703	42955	18238	-3846
Greece	14110	24801	26918	21761	14875	-9027
Italy	22197	33411	35849	35397	15798	-5188
Portugal	12882	19821	22539	22078	11036	-2701
Ireland	32540	54307	48672	55899	22430	15504
United Kingdom	29786	44252	38893	46783	10911	1474
Sweden	29572	46256	52076	59180	22793	-231
Spain	17020	28483	30737	29623	16060	-4120
Luxembourg	52931	89740	104965	119225	56229	-4227
Netherlands	28817	44454	50338	52157	24417	-4700
Average	26055	41179	44861	48023	21161	-2289

Note: Data from World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.

Table 16: Economic Perception of Immigrants

	Perceive Immigrants are Bad for the Economy
Party Member	-.226** (.072)
Immigrants Make Country Worse	.702*** (.024)
Satisfied with Economy	-.238*** (.073)
Unemployed >3 Months	.073* (.031)
Level of Education	-.031 (.022)
Age	-.002** (.001)
Male	-.269*** (.021)
Religiosity	-.118* (.054)
Citizen	.594*** (.082)
Pweight	-.063 (.065)
Pseudo R2	0.1322
N	97,166

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

NOTE: Immigrants influence on the Economy is coded 0 (Good) 11 (Bad)

Table 17: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement

	Immigrants are Bad for Economy
Right Self-Placement	.041*** (.01)
Immigrants Make the Country Worse	.700*** (.024)
Satisfied with Economy	-.253*** (.07)
Unemployed >3 Months	.078** (.031)
Level of Education	-.033 (.023)
Age	-.003*** (.001)
Male	-.281*** (.021)
Religiosity	-.141** (.052)
Citizen	.502*** (.088)
Pweight	-.061 (.065)
Pseudo R2	0.1309
Chi Square	
N	82,446

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are logistic coefficients and standard errors

Significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

NOTE: Immigrants are bad for Economy is coded 1 (Good) to 11 (Bad)

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Chapter 5: Conclusion

This dissertation expands the literature on group dynamics in particular how partisans and independents behave in the era of issue voting. With the increasing prominence of hot button issues in the political climate, it is important to evaluate the role that new issues play in the party system. This dissertation adds to the voting behavior literature by investigating how new issues, in this case immigration, are influenced by group membership in a political party. As new issues rise and become prominent politically, independent voters are more likely than partisans to reevaluate which party they prefer based on their perception of the salient issues of the day. Partisans are expected to be insulated from the larger effects of new issues.

Newer issues do not fit neatly into the traditional left/right uni-dimensional political space; rather they exist on a second dimension that is perpendicular to it. Issues such as immigration, European integration, and environmentalism challenge traditional party ties because they were not neatly absorbed by the uni-dimensional political space. Traditional mainstream parties must perform a delicate balancing act between appealing to loyal partisans and choosing which new issues to engage and/or ignore to attract independent voters. Evaluating how this process affects voters and partisans similarly in an era of changing partisanship was a final goal of this project.

Why Immigration?

The focus of this dissertation is on immigration because it surpassed niche issue status and became a hot button issue within the mainstream consciousness. The topic of immigration appeals to voters as both a cultural and an economic issue. Further, it taps both the authoritarian/liberty divide and the economic left/right divisions within Western European politics. As a hot button issue, the topic of immigration can appeal to a wide variety of attitudes.

Slight cultural differences perceived between the native and foreign born population can become a salient voting issue when parties capitalize on perceived threats.

Difference between Partisans and Independent Voters

In an era of declining partisanship, this project sought to answer whether partisanship was still a meaningful identity. I found that partisans remain closer to parties than independents. This is important because if partisans and independents both felt equally close to parties, then the concept of a partisan would be irrelevant. Future research should focus on whether independent voters who are extremely close to a political party behave similar to partisans. Independent voters who identify as extremely close to the party may behave in the same manner as partisans.

Throughout this dissertation I found that partisanship was a predictor of attitudes regarding immigration. Partisans are less likely than independent voters to be influenced by anti-immigrant sentiment. The partisan schema acts as a protecting viewpoint for partisan voters. New issues are less able to penetrate partisan attitudes. This indicates that the partisan identity provides voters with an alternate identity that is not threatened by increased immigration.

Culture, Immigration and Identity

It is human nature to try to classify groups of people, often this is done by comparison to ourselves and our own groups. According to social identity theory, a minimum of perceived difference is required to split groups into an 'us and them' dichotomy. This mentality manifests itself as in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. Independent voters are likely to perceive members of their nation-state as their in-group and immigrants as members of the out-group. Cultural and social differences are easy to perceive and do not require manipulation. This is congruent with the minimal threat paradigm; independent voters only need to perceive that there are differences between themselves and immigrants rather than a catastrophic event where

immigrants are labeled as the scapegoat. Perceived threats to the national culture from immigration can quickly influence independents.

Partisanship serves as a protective barrier against anti-immigrant sentiment. This is indicated by independent voters having higher levels of animosity towards immigrant's cultural and economic influence. Partisan respondents had more moderate views of immigration's influence in the economy.

Age

Older individuals are more likely to believe that immigration threatens the country's cultural life. However, economically not so much. In contrast to expectations older individuals are less likely to be threatened by competition over jobs between immigrants. I expect that is this due to high levels of youth unemployment. Older individuals are either in higher status jobs or less likely to be looking for a job.

Xenophobia

Independent voters are more likely to express xenophobic sentiments than partisans. Cultural threat from increased immigration leads to increased pressure on the national culture. Independent voter's national identity is challenged by increases in immigration from those with a different cultural background. This manifests itself in antagonism towards immigrants.

Economics, Immigration and Identity

Immigration is not expected to be as prominent an issue for partisans as for independent voters particularly when immigration remains a predominantly social or cultural issue. According to realistic group conflict theory, conflict is more likely when a group's interest is threatened. Groups compete over scarce resources such as jobs; when the dominant group perceives a threat to the economy, it emphasizes the group mentality, for partisans this group

identity will be the party. Independent voters are expected to evaluate the economic impacts of immigration in the in-group/out-group mentality described by group conflict theory. Partisans are expected to look to party leaders in times of crisis or when hot button issues become prominent for cues about attitudes. Independents evaluate threat against the nation-state from immigration; whereas, partisans are equally likely to perceive economic conflict in terms of their own partisan interest.

Left-Right Scale for Independents

This project explored whether independent voters who express xenophobia place themselves further right on the left-right scale. This taps into whether new issues translate into issue placement. Independent voters on the right were more likely than those on the left to harbor xenophobic sentiment. I found that independent voters on the right are more likely to believe immigrants are bad for the economy and are more likely to be xenophobic than independent voters on the left.

Future Research

This dissertation relied on insights from issue ownership theory. The issue of immigration is perfect to test the insights of issue ownership theory because it does not fit along the traditional left/right spectrum. Issue ownership theory focuses on how issues are owned by political parties. In competition for voters, political parties emphasize select issues. Asking voters for the most important issue is one indicator of whether a hot button issue is actually prominent among the public. Better measures for group identity are necessary to further this research. Future research should include direct measures of respondent identity.

Future research also needs to explore the link to parties in more detail. One assumption of this study is that it does not address representation on new issues. Future research should

include measures of individual respondent's assessments of parties and new issues. This study assumes that parties are representing their voters, but does not properly test whether this is the case.

There are various new issues evolving within Western European democracies, but not all of them make the transition from important issue to voting issue. In order to evaluate how new issues affect voter behavior, I used the topic of immigration because of its growing importance throughout Western Europe. By definition hot button issues must be salient issues.

Environmentalism was a new issue in the 1970s and 1980s while it gained in popularity in some parts of Western Europe; it was not equally successful everywhere despite Green parties being in the governing coalitions of several states. Knowing how issues appeal to different types of voters enables scholars to better understand voter preference.

Parties are competing along new issues. Meguid (2008) notes that Conservative parties are able to co-opt the issue of immigration in many Western European states. Radical Right parties are more likely to develop when political parties ignore the growing pressure of Radical Right issues (Meguid 2008). In Germany, the mainstream center-right parties were successful in capturing voters on the issue of immigration until the most recent election (Lancee and Pardos-Prado 2013). With right leaning issues dominating the political issue space the political left has begun to move right as well (Alonso and de Fonseca). These movements indicate that new social issues are changing the landscape of party competition.

Future research needs to delve deeper into these movements to determine whether the political system is moving in response to voters, or voters are moving in response to the political system. This dissertation was unable to capture which group moves first. Another area that future research needs to explore in more detail, is whether partisans or independents are in congruence

with parties. Given that partisanship is developed through socialization and inertia, how does the level of congruence differ between partisans and independent voters? This research should also explore, the make-up of niche parties and single issue voters. The Green movement began as a niche issue but has now developed into a traditional mass party (Adams, Haupt, and Stoll 2008). Discovering how congruence is influenced by salience is pivotal to this area of research. Congruence on salient issues is more important than on less salient ones” (Anderson 2011, 155).

Conclusion

As demonstrated in recent elections in the past two years, the issue of immigration is becoming a dominant issue. The recent Italian elections emphasized anti-immigrant rhetoric. Anti-immigrant rhetoric was a primary focus for the Northern League coalition (Hatewatch Staff 2018). Further, the center-right party shifted further right with a campaign slogan of “Italians First” (Hatewatch Staff 2018). Immigration was the dominant issue of the recent election. The largest share of the vote was won by coalitions on the right, the Northern League and the Five Star Movement (Populists vie for power after Italy vote 2018). Demonstrating that the issue of immigration is a prominent issue.

In France, Steve Bannon, formerly of the Trump administration, spoke at a party meeting for the National Front in early March. Bannon encouraged the assembled politicians to embrace the labels xenophobe; racist and nativist, calling for politicians to “[w]ear it as a badge of honor” (Nossiter 2018). The National Front has a long history with anti-immigrant rhetoric. Right wing parties are succeeding in normalizing anti-immigrant rhetoric. Anti-immigrant rhetoric is growing across Western Europe.

As the dynamics of Western European democracies continue to change it is important to consider how these dynamics are effecting group dynamics. Partisans are a smaller percentage of

the electorate, yet partisanship remains a significant group dynamic. Identification with a party provides individuals with a filter for new political information. This dissertation found that partisans are less likely than independents to view immigrants as a negative impact on the country, both economic and culturally. I argue that independent voters are influenced by salient issues because they do not have a partisans lens to filter new information. Further, independent voters with right leaning self-placement are more likely to have negative views of immigration. This indicates that independent voters are internalizing popular discourse.

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Appendix

Table 18 Appendix 1: Cultural Influence of Immigrants Odds Ratios

	Immigrants Influence on the Country's Culture
Party Member	-.816* (.070)
Unemployed>3 Months	-.961 (.053)
Level of Education	-.874 (.082)
Age	1.008*** (.002)
Male	1.005 (.045)
Citizen	2.504*** (.388)
Religious	1.414* (.213)
Pweight	1.125 (.130)
Pseudo R2	0.0127
N	100,916

Data Source: European Social Survey Round 1-5 (2002-2012)

Cell entries are odd ratios and standard errors

Significance: *p<=.05, **p<=.01, ***p<=.001

NOTE: Immigration's influence on culture is coded 1 (Enriched) to 11 (Undermined)

Table 19 Appendix 2: Xenophobia Odds Ratios

	Level of Xenophobia
Party Member	-.884 (.051)
Immigrants are Bad for Country	1.691*** (.027)
Unemployed>3 Months	1.005 (.037)
Level of Education	-.952 (.025)
Age	1.011*** (.002)
Male	1.007 (.036)
Citizen	1.12 (.121)
Religious	1.433** (.195)
Pweight	-.874 (.068)
Chi Square	0.000
Pseudo R2	0.475
N	99,357

Data Source: European Social Survey Round 1-5 (2002-2012)

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

NOTE: Xenophobia is coded: 1 Many Immigrants; 2 Some Immigrants; 3 Few Immigrants; 4 No Immigrants

Table 20 Appendix 3: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement Odds Ratios

	Xenophobia
Right Self-Placement	1.097*** (.016)
Immigrants Make the Country Worse	1.684*** (.047)
Satisfied with Economy	-.902 (.048)
Unemployed >3 Months	1.032 (.044)
Level of Education	-.951 (.026)
Age	1.01*** (.002)
Male	-.996 (.035)
Religiosity	1.362* (.192)
Citizen	1.079 (.110)
Pweight	-.880 (.073)
Pseudo R2	0.1512
Chi Square	0.000
N	82,676

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

NOTE: Xenophobia is coded 1 (Many Immigrants) to 4 (No Immigrants)

Table 21 Appendix 4: Economic Perception of Immigrants Odds Ratios

	Perceive Immigrants are Bad for the Economy
Party Member	-.798** (.057)
Immigrants Make Country Worse	2.017*** (.048)
Satisfied with Economy	-.788*** (.057)
Unemployed >3 Months	1.076* (.033)
Level of Education	-.969 (.021)
Age	-.998** (.001)
Male	-.764*** (.016)
Religiosity	-.889* (.048)
Citizen	1.724*** (.153)
Pweight	-.939 (.061)
Pseudo R2	0.1322
N	97,166

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

NOTE: Immigrants influence on the Economy is coded 0 (Good) 11 (Bad)

Table 22 Appendix 5: Independent Voters Left/Right Self-Placement Odds Ratios

	Immigrants are Bad for Economy
Right Self-Placement	1.041*** (.01)
Immigrants Make the Country Worse	2.014*** (.047)
Satisfied with Economy	-.777*** (.055)
Unemployed >3 Months	1.083* (.034)
Level of Education	-.966 (.022)
Age	-.997*** (.001)
Male	-.755*** (.016)
Religiosity	-.869** (.045)
Citizen	1.653*** (.147)
Pweight	-.941 (.061)
Pseudo R2	0.1310
N	82,244

Data Source: European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 (2002 – 2012)

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors

Significance: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

NOTE: Immigrants are bad for Economy is coded 1 (Good) to 11 (Bad)