



GPSG Working Paper #31

Mapping the far-right vote in the European electoral arena: The Greek far-right in cross-national perspective

Evgenia (Jenny) Eleni Mavropoulou¹

Abstract

The working paper in question is concerned with the electoral performance of far-right parties in the 2014 European Parliamentary elections by aiming to interpret the aspects of this vote through the interrelationship between the demand-side and supply-side explanations. Even though the case of Golden Dawn could be examined as a single case-study due to the contribution of multi-dimensional factors, nevertheless we are interested in investigating it across a comparative perspective. On the one hand, through the demand-side approximations we examine to what extent a range of socioeconomic issues affected the electoral dynamic of the far-right parties in the latest European elections. Simultaneously, our target focuses on the external supply-side developments in terms of how the positions of mainstream parties across several ideological aspects and the subsequent configuration of party competition create electoral opportunities for the far-right parties. The findings reveal that we should take into consideration both the demand-side and supply-side account in order to apprehend the factors that determine the swift of the electorate towards the far-right spectrum. Through the analysis we discuss how the bidirectional relationship between the demand and supply-side framework in conjunction with a range of additional control variables contribute to the interpretation of the electoral behaviour of the far-right voter in the recent European elections.

Keywords: far-right, European Parliamentary elections, demand-side and supply-side explanations

Introduction

Since 2008, Europe has been facing a multilevel crisis with economic, social and political features. The growing doubt towards the European edifice in conjunction with the outburst of the global financial and the recent refugee crisis have contributed to the further strengthening of the anti-establishment party current throughout the ideological spectrum. The outcome of

* Ph.D. Student of Political Science, Department of Political Science and History, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens. Email: j.mavropoulou@panteion.gr / tzenimavr_21@hotmail.com

the 2014 European Parliament elections has been arousing the research interest of scholars, since it was accompanied by the ascent of Eurosceptic anti-establishment forces with either left-wing or right-wing ideological properties and the consequent rearrangement of party systems' traditional structures. The electoral accomplishments of anti-establishment and in some cases anti-system parties could not be evaluated as a flash phenomenon and could not be exclusively attributed to the fact that European elections appertain to the framework of second-order elections. Reif and Schmitt (1980) suggested that the European electoral arena tend to create fertile ground for the political emergence and the electoral reinforcement of new, smaller and marginal parties and subsequently entail the partial electoral shrinkage of governing parties as voters are susceptible to communicate their warning, punishment or protest towards the political establishment. However, the 2014 European elections could be considered as a particular European electoral process since the outcome reflected the upcoming transformative directions of European party systems. To illustrate that, first-order elections that have been taking place after the 2014 European elections in every single EU member-state have not been accompanied by the political normality and the restoration of party equilibrium. The above ascertainment confirms the permanent and ingrained presence of anti-establishment and in some instances anti-system trends in the central stage of contemporary party systems.

The latest European elections could be perceived as the milder continuation of party systems' redirection as observed more profoundly in Greece due to the double-earthquake national elections of 2012 (Voulgaris and Nikolakopoulos 2014) which implied the horizontal ascent of SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left), the downward collapse of the traditional bipartisanship between the centre-left PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) and the centre-right ND (New Democracy), the parliamentary entrance of new parties and particularly of Golden Dawn derived from the extremist right spectrum. Therefore, by concentrating on the 2014 European elections we could agree that the Greek party system, compared to other European party systems, did not face the unanticipated victory of a left-wing anti-establishment party, namely SYRIZA, and the unexpected further electoral reinforcement of the neo-fascist Golden Dawn. However, the apparent redirection of most of European party system's structures, accompanied particularly by the electoral accomplishments of anti-establishment parties and the partial electoral weakening of mainstream parties, was confirmed through the latest European electoral process. On the one hand, Northern and Central Europe faced the electoral victories of Danish People's Party, UKIP (UK Independence Party) and Front National, while we could not disregard the electoral successes of FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria), AFD (Alternative for Germany) and Jobbik in Central and Eastern Europe respectively. On the other hand, in the European South, except for the cases of SYRIZA and Golden Dawn, the populist Five Star Movement and Podemos, derived from the left-wing anti-establishment spectrum, drew the attention via their remarkable electoral performance.

The 2014 European elections were conducted amid a multilevel crisis with financial, socio-cultural, political and European implications that affected not only the susceptible political system of Greece. The primary goal of this working paper aims to focus on the Eurosceptic far-right spectrum in order to investigate and explain the frame of the vote for these parties as the electoral presence of the far-right party family could not be interpreted as a circumstantial and single dimensional phenomenon due to the onset of the financial crisis. Whilst a considerable number of scholars tend to concentrate mainly on the demand-side perspectives for the explanation of far-right parties' electoral success, in this working paper we proceed a step further by not attributing their rise exclusively to grievances (Golder 2016) that tend to activate the social demand and the electoral availability of voters towards the right-wing spectrum. Our research purpose will be to examine in parallel the macro-level

developments in conjunction with the context of party competition, in order to approach the determinants that effectuate the political survival and the electoral rise of the far-right party family. Even though the Greek aspect of the far-right spectrum could be perceived as a significant research instance, our purpose is to include the foresaid case-study in the comparative European framework.

In the next section, we conceptualize the hypothetical expectations pertaining to how the interplay between the demand and supply-side context (Mudde 2007) underpins the interpretation of the vote for far-right parties. Consequently, we describe the formulation of the research design, the variables and data sources used for this comparative working paper. The following part discusses the results, and the closing section presents a range of conclusive thoughts as regards the electoral performance of far-right parties in the 2014 European elections.

Theoretical expectations and formulation of hypotheses

Demand-side explanations

More generally, far-right parties have appeared in three different waves in post-war Europe (von Beyme 1988), a framing that permits to explore the ideological variations of the far right-wing spectrum throughout this period. Supplementary, the wavy course of the far-right phenomenon contributes to the clarification of the aspects of its electoral efficiency. To illustrate that, on the one hand, the first wave of neo-fascist movements remained electorally marginal and the second wave was associated with the substantial emergence of new far-right parties. On the other hand, the upraising of the third wave has been accompanied by the gradual electoral rise of the populist radical right-wing party pole, which has been assuming properties of an electoral take-off for some party cases notably during the last years and irrespectively of the order of elections as we observe particularly after the 2014 European elections.

Proceeding to the elaboration of our hypotheses, which are balanced between the social demand and political supply-side interaction, the first set of expectations are dedicated to the macro-level developments of the demand-side explanations. Even though the electoral accomplishments of the far-right pole could also be linked to micro-level determinants related to the voters' expression of punishment or protest towards the mainstream political establishment (Mudde 2007; van der Brug et al. 2000), our research concentrates mainly on interpreting the macro-level perspectives (Ignazi 1992; Lubbers et al 2002). Through the examination of the macro-level approximations, which are associated with the consequences of modernization, the eventual onset of financial and political crisis or the escalating of immigration (Betz 1993; Eatwell 2003), it is argued that socio-cultural and socioeconomic changes tend to affect the decision of voters and electorally reinforce far-right parties. The acceleration of the process of globalization and modernization in conjunction with the impact of de-nationalisation has been contributing to the emergence of 'losers of modernization' (Betz 1993). The 'losers of modernization', who are not able to adjust to the new socioeconomic and socio-cultural conditions and feel threatened and insecure given these structural changes, are apt to the far-right rhetoric. Therefore, the 'losers of modernity' are in a continual competition with immigrants, since they attribute their economic and social uncertainty to the presence of immigrants. In this case, we expect that the effects of the contemporary multilevel European crisis have been decisively contributing to the electoral ascent of the right-wing party spectrum. More specifically, one of our primary goals will be to investigate the correlation between the salience of the issue of immigration and unemployment and the vote for far-right parties in the 2014 European elections. Right-wing

parties have always invested in the cultivation of an anti-immigrant ideological discourse (Arzheimer 2009), claiming that immigration implies among others a rise in unemployment levels. Hence, we formulate the following set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The more the voters raise the issue of immigration, the more likely they are to vote for far-right parties.

Hypothesis 2: The more the voters highlight the issue of unemployment, the more likely they are to vote for far-right parties.

Supply-side explanations

Subsequently, on the one hand, supply-side developments are associated with the internal parameters, which concern the ideology and the structures of party organisation (Mudde 2007). On the other hand, supply-side explanations are linked to external factors relating to political opportunities (Tarrow 1998). In this case, our research focuses on a specific aspect of the external supply-side perspectives, as the second set of our hypothetical approximations investigate the effect of the configuration of party competition on the vote for far-right parties. Scholarly research has demonstrated that the political emergence and the electoral ascent of far-right parties could be affected by the positions of mainstream parties across specific policy dimensions (Kitschelt and McGann 1995). Hence, our research will focus on the elaboration of how the established party spectrum contributes to the strengthening or weakening of the electoral presence of far-right parties. More specifically, a potential ideological convergence between centre-right and centre-left parties could imply either the creation of political and electoral opportunities for the far-right party spectrum (Abedi 2002) or the absence of this correlation (Norris 2005). As voters perceive the absence of ideological distinction among mainstream parties, they could express their protest by voting in favour of the far-right. Moreover, the adoption of a more centrist ideological platform (Var der Brug et. al 2005) by the traditional right in order to approach the median voter, could contribute to the electoral reinforcement of far-right parties or to their electoral shrinkage (Arzheimer and Carter 2006). In this case, far-right parties extend their political space and prevent the eventual ideological expropriation of their agenda by the mainstream right party.

In this working paper, our interest concentrates on the investigation of how the distance between mainstream parties (centre-right and centre-left) and the mean voter position across a range of policy dimensions could affect the vote for far-right parties. In other words, we are interested in examining if the divergence of mainstream from the mean voter position could contribute to the maximization of the electoral gains of far-right parties. Our model will be implemented in a two-dimensional framework in which we investigate the distance between mainstream parties and the mean voter position across the economic dimension of the redistribution of wealth and the socio-cultural one of immigration. It is argued that the transition to post-industrialism and the acceleration of the realignment process given the emergence of new divisions relating to the procedure of globalization and the attendant impact of denationalization have been contributing to the salience of the socio-cultural policy dimension (Inglehart 1997). Therefore, we posit the following set of complementary hypotheses, namely that:

Hypothesis 3: The further away from the voter centre-right parties (Christian Democrats/Conservatives) position themselves on immigration, the higher the chances that the voter will vote for a far-right party.

Hypothesis 4: The further away from the voter centre-left parties position themselves on the redistribution of the wealth, the higher the chances that the voter will vote for a far-right party.

Research Design and Data

This working paper in question aims to explain the vote for the far-right party family in the recent European Parliamentary elections by concentrating on the socioeconomic framework and the aspects of party competition. To measure the dependent variable, namely the vote for far-right parties, we use the 2014 European Election Study and specifically the post-electoral Voter study, and create a new variable in which we enclose exclusively the vote for the electorally powerful and EU parliamentary right-wing parties of every single member-state. Therefore, even though most far-right parties represent the populist radical right pole, we also incorporated two parties derived from the extremist right current, namely Jobbik and Golden Dawn, which are electorally the most influential parties of the far-right spectrum in Hungary and Greece respectively. More specifically, the parties included are *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ) in Austria; *Vlaams Belang* (VB) in Belgium; *Front National* (FN) in France; *Dansk Folkeparti* (DF) in Denmark; *True Finns* (PS) in Finland; *Alternative für Deutschland* (AFD) in Germany; *Χρυσή Αυγή*, in Greece (XA) , *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania* (LN) in Italy; *Patij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) in Netherlands; *Sverigedemokraterna* (SD) in Sweden; *United Kingdom Independence Party* (UKIP) in the United Kingdom, *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PIS) in Poland, *JOBBIK* in Hungary, *Nacionālā Apvienība* (LNNK) in Latvia, *ATAKA* in Bulgaria, *Partija Tvarka Ir Teisingumas*, (PTT) in Lithuania, *Slovenská národná strana* (SNS) in Slovakia.

Regarding the independent variables, for the first set of hypotheses that relate to the socioeconomic framework we use the Voter Study by recoding the variable ‘*What are the issues which make you vote in the recent European elections? Firstly?*’ and creating a new variable in which we include exclusively the issue of immigration and unemployment. The selection of this variable is not random, as our research purpose is to examine a variable that is inseparably and directly associated with the formulation of electoral behaviour and the final voting decision of the electorate. Our research focuses on the demand-side perspective by investigating how the electorate highlight the issue of immigration and unemployment and the level of correlation between the vote for far-right parties and the salience of these specified issues. Next, we assess the second set of assumptions, which examine the role of the supply-side context. By concentrating on the configuration of party competition, we measure the ideological distance between the electorally major mainstream parties and far-right parties and voters on a two-dimensional policy space, relevant to the issue of immigration and the redistribution of the wealth. In this case we use data derived from the Euro-manifesto Study and the Voter Study in order to detect the ideological placements of parties and voters across the socio-cultural (vertical axis) and socioeconomic dimension (horizontal axis). Given that the Euro-manifesto dataset presents limitations² (Krippendorff 2004; Budge et al. 2001) regarding the ideological positions for every single party, we proceed to the use of Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) to identify the ideological imprints of every single party-case. For the economic dimension, we use the question, ‘*Pro redistribution of wealth - no*

² The dataset of the Euro-manifesto Study does not provide the ideological positions of each party along the axis of the redistribution of wealth and the corresponding one of immigration. This leads to the emergence of research difficulties since the use of a non-single dataset, which is composed by the Euro-manifesto Study and the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys, might imply the partial redirection of the results.

redistribution of wealth’ and for the socio-cultural dimension the question ‘*No restrictive immigration policy-Pro restrictive immigration policy*’. The scale of both dimensions ranges from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ means fully in favour of the redistribution of wealth and the adoption of a non-restrictive immigration policy and ‘10’ means entirely opposed to the redistribution of wealth and to a favourable immigration policymaking stance. The measurement of the ideological distance is derived from the squared difference between parties’ mean placements and voters’ mean position across both policy dimensions³. Moreover, the incorporation of several additional control indicators of how the index of Euroscepticism, the effect of dissatisfaction against the political establishment and the strength of partisanship contribute to the interpretation of the vote for the right-wing party spectrum. This model concludes with the inclusion of several socio-demographic variables with a view to approaching the properties of the far-right voter’s electoral portrait in the 2014 European elections.

The analysis will be based on a quantitative methodological approach. Using a linear regression model, accompanied by two explanatory figures for every set of our hypotheses, we investigate how the interrelation between the demand and supply-side framework leads to the interpretation of the far-right vote.

Results and Discussion

The descriptive Figure 1, which accompanies the first set of hypotheses, presents the mean value of immigration and unemployment salience in conjunction with the vote for far-right parties across the member-states of the European Union. Moreover, the determinant of immigration, unlike unemployment, does not present an equable diffusion across the European territory. On the one hand, the issue of immigration is more salient in Malta and the countries of Northern Europe, such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Except for Malta, far-right parties in these countries had a remarkable electoral presence. Since the 2014 European elections were conducted under the multilevel effect of the financial crisis and several months before the onset of the refugee crisis, it is more than expected that the issue of immigration would present lower levels of salience in the countries that have been influenced economically by the Eurozone crisis, notably Greece and Italy. In other words, as the approaching European elections in 2019 will take place under the issue frame of the European migrant crisis, it would be interesting to identify the potential variation of the salience of the immigration issue wedded to the vote for far-right parties in the forenamed countries due to the determinant of being the main receiving countries of refugees. On the other hand, the salience of the unemployment issue is widespread across the European Union map confirming the fact that the 2014 European elections were conducted under the shadow of an economic uncertainty despite the fact that the countries of Northern Europe were not affected strongly and directly by the consequences of the financial recession relative to Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal) and Ireland. It has been argued that immigration and unemployment are interconnected, since far-right parties have been

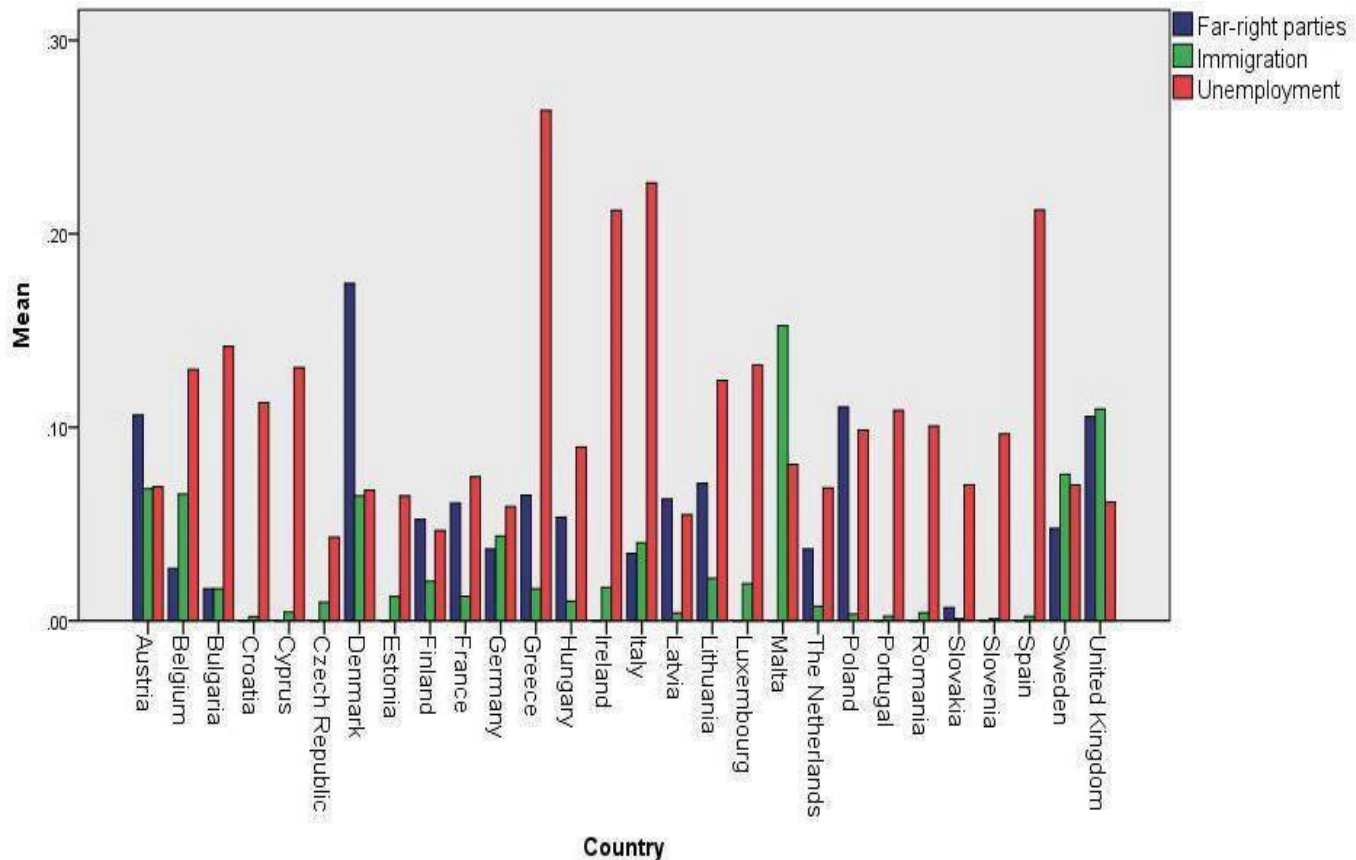
³ In order to calculate the distance between parties and voters, we proceeded to the following steps. First, we converted the 11-point scales – relating to the positions of voters (Voter Study) and the placements of parties that were derived from the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) across the dimension of immigration and the dimension of the redistribution of wealth– to 10-point scales as to assure the point similarity among our scales (the ideological positions of parties that were derived from the Euro-manifesto dataset were already measured on a 1-10 scale). By calculating the mean position of the centre-right, centre-left and far-right party groups across the dimension of immigration and the dimension of the redistribution of wealth, then we followed the same procedure in order to detect the mean voter position across these specified dimensions. The computation of the ideological distance arises through the squared difference between the mean voter position and the mean placement of each party family.

cultivating a narrative through which the rise of unemployment is attributed to migration (Golder 2003). Nevertheless, the descriptive Figure 1 does not reveal sufficiently the confirmation of the foresaid triptych particularly in the countries of Southern Europe. Hence, as a future research step, it would be interesting to investigate the further endogeneity of this relationship by examining how the number of immigrants in conjunction with the level of unemployment could create fertile ground for far-right parties. It has been empirically shown that the effect of immigration is mediated through unemployment, although this evidence is confirmed particularly for the extreme right party component and not for the entire far-right party family (Georgiadou et al 2018). Therefore, further research should focus more on the internal variation within the far-right party spectrum by examining the countries of Northern and Southern Europe in order to investigate if the issue combination between immigration and unemployment could present differentiations of significance not only along the far-right party environment but also from first-order elections to second-order European elections. More specifically, by consulting the descriptive Figure 1, we observe that the heightened salience of unemployment particularly in the European South is not associated with the electoral rise of far-right parties except for the case of Golden Dawn in Greece. The outcome of the 2014 European elections was accompanied by the electoral ascent of radical left-wing parties in the countries of Southern Europe, since they cultivated an anti-austerity discourse of ‘resistance’ against the international actors that were involved in dealing with the financial crisis (IMF, ECB and EC) (Halikiopoulou 2014). Therefore, we could assume the existence of a stronger correlation between the vote for radical left-wing parties and the salience of the unemployment issue, even though the above ascertainment requires additional empirical evidence.

Focusing more extensively on the Greek case-study and attempting to transfer the model of the vote for Golden Dawn and the salience of the immigration and unemployment issue to the post-2014 period, we would hypothesize that a wider range of voters would highlight the immigration issue due to the effect of the refugee crisis. The fact that Golden Dawn does not differentiate between refugees and migrants makes this speculation more valid. However, by consulting the findings of the Eurobarometer surveys⁴ which coincide roughly with the results of our research, we ascertain, on the one hand, that the flash-salience of the importance of the immigration issue that took place in 2015 was accompanied by the gradual attenuation of this issue starting from 2016; on the other hand, the stake of unemployment presents high levels of issue-importance confirming the continuous economic uncertainty of the Greek public opinion. It would be interesting from a research perspective to investigate which issues will contribute to the electoral mobilization of voters on the occasion of the 2019 European elections in order to ascertain to what extent Golden Dawn will manage to convert the salience of the immigration and unemployment issues into votes.

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/General/index>

Figure 1. Graphical presentation of the mean value of the far-right vote and the salience of immigration and unemployment issue across the EU member-states in the 2014 European elections.



Source: Schmitt, Hermann; Hobolt, Sara B.; Popa, Sebastian A.; Teperoglou, Eftichia; European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Monitoring Unit (2016): European Parliament Election Study 2014, Voter Study, First Post-Election Survey. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne.

By concentrating on the evaluation of our hypothetical approximations, our main findings are summarized in Table 1, where we observe that the R Squared measure presents a low value of 18.8%. In other words, 18.8% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables (Lewis-Beck et al. 2004). More specifically, the first section of this table displays the dependence of the far-right vote on the macro-level perspectives of the demand-side context and the concerns of party competition relevant to the external aspect of the supply-side framework. This model concludes with the exposition of the correlation between the vote for far-right parties and a range of additional control variables. By evaluating the results of the linear regression analysis, we confirm the verification of the first set of hypotheses (hypothesis 1 and 2), since we identify a strong and positive correlation between the vote for far-right parties and the salience of the immigration and unemployment issue. We ascertain the existence of a stronger statistical relationship between the immigration indicator and the vote towards the far-right party spectrum – an outcome which verifies that far-right voters tend to be mobilized largely by the traditional and most publicized issue of the far right-wing ideological ownership. As we have already briefly discussed, it would be interesting from a comparative research perspective to have identified to what extent the remarkable salience of the unemployment issue across the

European territory had been converted into votes in favour of the left-wing aspect of the anti-establishment spectrum, particularly in the party systems of Southern Europe.

Table 1. Linear regression model assessing determinants of voting in favour of far-right parties in the 2014 European Elections.

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	Std.				
	B	Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	-.075	.010		-7.283	.000
Demand Side					
Saliency of Issues					
Immigration	.332	.010	.274	33.585	.000
Unemployment	.057	.007	.068	8.278	.000
Supply side					
Distances of party positions					
Distance immigration FR	-.062	.010	-.064	-6.028	.000
Distance immigration CR	.035	.017	.022	2.026	.043
Distance immigration CL	.120	.017	.079	7.035	.000
Distance redistribution FR	-.002	.022	-.001	-.079	.937
Distance redistribution CR	-.052	.013	-.038	-4.063	.000
Distance redistribution CL	.035	.015	.021	2.289	.022
Additional control variables					
Reason to vote:					
Dissatisfaction	.192	.010	.162	19.839	.000
Index of Euroscepticism	.015	.001	.099	11.525	.000
Socio-demographic variables					
Sex					

Reference category: Female

Male	.031	.004	.063	7.728	.000
------	------	------	------	-------	-------------

Age

Reference category: 65+

16-24	-.024	.012	-.026	-2.020	.043
25-34	-.016	.009	-.022	-1.770	.077
35-44	-.006	.009	-.009	-.696	.486
45-54	-.003	.009	-.005	-.385	.700
55-64	-.006	.007	-.008	-.774	.439

Educational level

Reference category: Higher Education

Education

Primary Education	-.005	.007	-.008	-.834	.404
Secondary Education	.009	.005	.017	1.767	.077

Profession

Reference category: Retired	.010	.009	.010	1.025	.305
Self-employed	-.003	.009	-.004	-.313	.755
Managers	.012	.009	.015	1.352	.177
Other white collars	.013	.008	.019	1.565	.118
Manual workers	.007	.011	.005	.588	.557
House person	.004	.010	.005	.431	.666
Unemployed	.011	.013	.010	.797	.426
Students	.011	.005	.020	2.256	.024

Strength of Partisanship

Reference category: Very

close

Fairly close	.005	.005	.009	.989	.323
Merely a sympathiser	.053	.010	.055	5.237	.000

N=13129

R Squared= .188

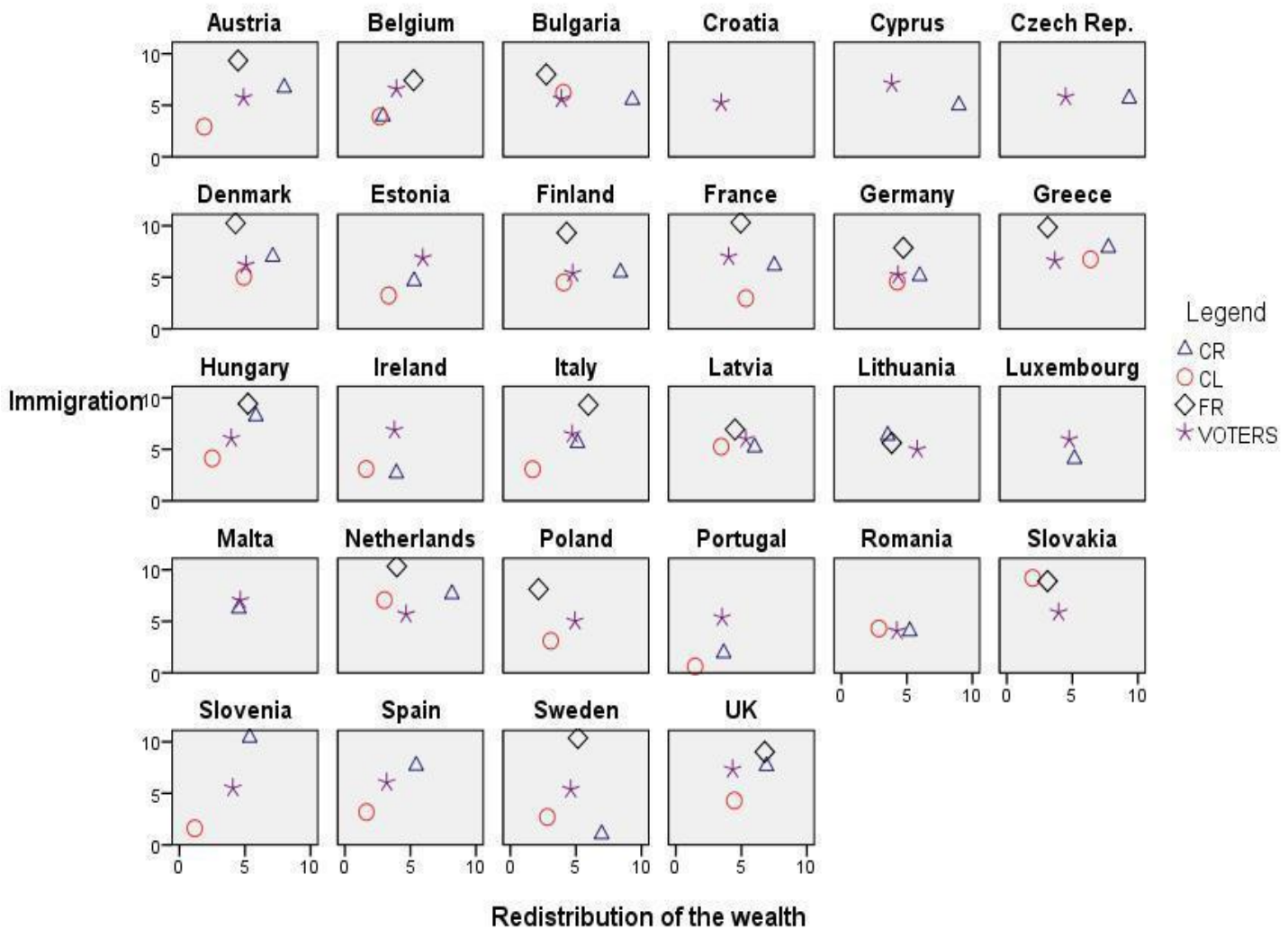
a. Dependent Variable: Vote for Far-right parties (1=yes, 0=no)

By consulting the coefficients table, when the observed p-value ('Sig.' abbreviation) is less than 0.05 (bold parameters), then the results, derived from the correlation between the dependent and independent variables are statistically significant.

Source: Schmitt, Hermann, Daniela Braun, Sebastian A. Popa, Slava Mikhaylov, and Felix Dwinger. 2016. European Parliament Election Study 2014, Euromanifesto Study. GESIS Data Archive and Ryan Bakker, and Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Schmitt, Hermann; Hobolt, Sara B.; Popa, Sebastian A.; Teperoglou, Eftichia; European Parliament, Directorate - General for Communication, Public Monitoring Unit (2016): European Parliament Election Study 2014, Voter Study, First Post-Election Survey. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne.

The following network of scatterplot charts (Figure 2) displays the positions of the electorally major centre-right, centre-left and far-right parties in conjunction with the views of the mean voter on the socio-cultural axis of immigration and the socioeconomic axis of the redistribution of wealth. To illustrate that, we observe that most of the far-right parties present a similar anti-immigrant position across the vertical dimension. Regarding the horizontal axis, far-right parties seem to adopt either pro-redistribution positions or are located on the median placement of the socioeconomic dimension, apart from UKIP, which is entirely opposed to the redistribution of wealth. Centre-right parties express their opposition to the redistribution of wealth and tend to adopt median or pro-restrictive immigration positions, particularly in the cases of the United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary and Slovenia. Centre-left parties summarize similar pro-redistribution positions. However, centre-left parties seem to adopt stricter immigration views in some country-cases namely in Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Slovakia. Voters present similar and centrist positions on both policy dimensions.

Figure 2. Scatterplots charts presenting the positions of parties and voters on the dimension of immigration and the redistribution of the wealth in the 2014 European elections⁵.



Source: Schmitt, Hermann, Daniela Braun, Sebastian A. Popa, Slava Mikhaylov, and Felix Dwinger. 2016. European Parliament Election Study 2014, Euromanifesto Study. GESIS Data Archive and Ryan Bakker, and Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Vachudova. 2015. "2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey." Version 2015.1. Available on chesdata.eu. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

⁵ The scale of both axes ranges from 1 to 10, where '1' means fully in favour of the redistribution of wealth and the adoption of a non-restrictive immigration policy and '10' means entirely opposed to the redistribution of wealth and to a favourable immigration policymaking stance.

Proceeding to the assessment of the second set of hypotheses (hypothesis 3 and 4), which concern the interaction between the configuration of party competition and the vote for far-right parties (table 1), we ascertain the verification of both assumptions. Specifically, in the case of the third hypothesis, we observe that the greater the distance between both mainstream parties and voters on the dimension of immigration, the more likely voters are to vote in favour of far-right parties. In other words, the weakness of mainstream parties to converge towards voters, who adopt more centrist positions across both policy dimension (descriptive figure 2), contributes to the creation of electoral opportunities for the far-right spectrum. It is worth noting that the distance of centre-left parties from voters on immigration is even more statistically significant than the one of centre-right parties. The adoption of pro-immigrant positions by the centre-left parties could be interpreted by working-class voters as support in favour of their competitors in the labour market. In the case of far-right parties, it seems that the greater the distance between far-right parties and voters on the dimension of immigration, the less likely voters are to vote in favour of far-right parties, since voters tend to adopt a more centrist position and far-right parties support the implementation of a restrictive immigration policy. Far-right parties could not approach strategically the median voter, as the advocacy of a non-centrist policy agenda signals electoral gains for far-right parties (Ezrow 2005). In other words, even though the median voter presents centrist positions, far-right parties are traditionally surrounded by non-centrist ideological positions, in order to preserve their '*raison d'être*' and their issue-credibility (Spoon 2011), namely the agenda of immigration. Regarding the final hypothesis, which concerns the distance between parties and voters on the redistribution of wealth, it is argued that the greater the distance between centre-left parties and voters across the dimension of the redistribution of wealth, due to the abandonment of a centrist economic policymaking, the more likely the voters are to vote in favour of far-right parties. On the other hand, the larger the distance between centre-right parties and voters on the axle of the redistribution of wealth, the less likely the voters are to vote in favour of far-right parties. Even though this finding requires further empirical investigation, we could explain the above ascertainment through the switch of most of the centre-right parties towards an opposed policymaking stance across the dimension of the redistribution of wealth (descriptive figure 2). Therefore, the adoption of non-redistributive policies by the centre-right parties, a fact that could also imply the non-socioeconomic favour of minorities, could partially restrict the electoral potentiality of far-right parties.

Our model concludes with the investigation of additional control variables. More specifically, we observe the existence of a positive correlation between the far-right vote and the dissatisfaction of voters, namely the aspect that concerns the negative assessment of governmental handling. Since during the 2014 European electoral campaign far-right parties and particularly the populist radical right party current invested in the adoption of a hard-Eurosceptic agenda in conjunction with an anti-globalization narrative in order to avoid a direct anti-immigration rhetoric (Brack 2015), we find a strong statistical relationship between the vote for far-right parties and the index of Euroscepticism. Far-right voters tend to empathize with the opposition against the perspectives of the European edifice and this finding contributes empirically towards this direction. Concluding with the evaluation of socio-demographic variables, we ascertain the insignificant impact of these factors on the rise of far-right parties. It is confirmed, that men are more likely than women to vote for far-right parties. The youngest age group between 16 and 24 years, is less likely to support the far right-wing parties compared to the older age groups. Moreover, 'fairly close partisans' are more likely to vote for far-right parties than 'very close partisans'. In this case, given the limitation of the statistical significance of the socio-demographic variables we are unable to

confirm the characteristics of the traditional electoral identity of the far-right supporter over time.

Conclusion

The recent European elections could be perceived as evidence that party systems have entered a period of transformation which has been taking place since the post-1970s. The decline of traditional social cleavages in conjunction with the emergence of new social issues as regards the consequences of globalization and Europeanization have led voters into a realignment process, a fact that implies the political emergence and survival of anti-establishment parties with either a right-wing or a left-wing slant. Voters passing through a dealignment procedure are more susceptible to abandon politically and electorally mainstream parties in order to support new parties. Therefore, the consequences of the multilevel European crisis did not cause but contributed decisively to the further redirection of party systems' traditional structures. By concentrating our interest on the case of far-right parties, we could agree that the onset of the financial crisis did not exclusively provoke but contributed to the further political consolidation and electoral reinforcement of the far-right party spectrum. Even in the case of Greece, we could not overlook the fact that the appearance of Golden Dawn had already taken place in the 2010 local elections and did not emerge suddenly in the double-earthquake elections of 2012, in the throes of the debt crisis. In other words, the far-right phenomenon should be assessed as a deep-rooted and not a circumstantial aspect of the contemporary party systems since over the last four decades it has been presenting a continuity and an apparent flexibility along every single electoral process.

Building on existing knowledge, the scope of this working paper was to explain comparatively the vote for far-right parties both in a case-by-case and in a methodological context. The findings referred above indicate that the complementary relationship between the social demand and political supply-side account contributes to the interpretation regarding the aspects of the vote for far-right parties. One of the main goals of this paper was to investigate the impact of socioeconomic and socio-cultural conditions relating to the issue of unemployment and immigration on the electoral presence of the far-right party spectrum, since demand-side explanations possess a deterministic role in the approximation of the far-right phenomenon. On the other hand, research should not neglect the effect of the supply-side context on the explanation of the far-right vote. According to our findings, the configuration of party competition as regards to how far away or close from the voter mainstream parties position themselves across the policy dimensions of immigration and the redistribution of wealth, seems to contribute to the eventual complication or facilitation of the electoral performance of far-right parties.

Future studies should continue to invest methodologically on the interplay between the demand and supply-side context with a view to approaching the far-right phenomenon. In the case of the demand-side perspective, the future research concern should focus more systematically on how the effect of cross-national contextual level factors (i.e. related to the number of immigrants and the level of unemployment) could contribute to the mobilization of the electorate towards the far-right spectrum. Furthermore, the comparative investigation of party competition between first and second order elections in conjunction with the inclusion of more policy dimensions, which are associated with the issue of the European Union, could provide inferences regarding the deeper and extensive explanation of the determinants that compose the framework of the far-right vote.

About the Author

Evgenia (Jenny) Mavropoulou is a PhD Student at the Department of Political Science and History of the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences and a Scientific Associate of the Centre for Political Research. Her thesis aims to consider the vote for anti-establishment parties by concentrating on the European elections from 2004 until 2019 and highlighting the division between Northern and Southern Europe. She has graduated with Distinction from the University of Essex (MA in Political Science) and Panteion University (BA in Political Science and History). Her main research interests lie in Comparative European Politics, Comparative Populism, Western Far-right Politics, Euroscepticism and Electoral Behaviour by focusing on the field of second-order elections.

References

Abedi, A. (2002). "Challenges to established parties: The effects of party system features on the electoral fortunes of antipolitical-establishment parties", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp.551–583.

Arzheimer, K. (2009). "Contextual Factors and the Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe, 1980-2002", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 53, No. 2, pp.259-275.

Arzheimer, K., and Carter, E., (2006). "Political opportunity structures and right-wing extremist party success", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp.419–443.

Betz, H.-G. (1993). "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right -Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp.413-27.

Betz, H.-G. (1994). *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. London: MacMillan.

Brack, N. (2015). "Radical and Populist Eurosceptic Parties at the 2014 European Elections: A Storm in a Teacup?", *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, No. 2, pp.7-17.

Budge, I., Klingemann, H.-D., Volkens, A., Bara, J. and Tanenbaum, E. (2001). *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments, 1945–1998*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eatwell, R. (2003). Ten Theories of the Extreme Right. In: Merkl, Peter H. / Weinberg, Leonard (eds.): *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd revised edition, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 45-70.

Ezrow, L. (2005). "Are moderate parties rewarded in multiparty systems? A pooled analysis of Western European elections, 1984–1998", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 44, pp.881–898.

Georgiadou, V., and Rori, L., and Roumanias, C., (2018). "Mapping the European far right in the 21st century: A meso-level analysis", *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 54, pp.103-115.

- Golder, M. (2016). "Far Right Parties in Europe", *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp.477-497.
- Golder, M. (2003). "Explaining variation in the electoral success of extreme right parties in western Europe", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4, pp432–466.
- Halikiopoulou, D. (2014). Radical left-wing Euroscepticism in the 2014 elections: a cross - European comparison. In: Is Europe afraid of Europe? An Assessment of the result of the 2014 European Elections. *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies / Karamanlis Foundation*, Athens, pp. 112-126.
- Ignazi, P. (1992). "The Silent Counter-Revolution. Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right - Wing Parties in Europe", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 22, pp. 3-34.
- Inglehart, R. (1977). *The Silent Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kitschelt, H., and McGann, A., (1995). *The Radical Right in Western Europe. A comparative analysis*, USA: University of Michigan Press.
- Kriesi, H., Grande E., and Lachat R., et al. (2008). *West European politics in the age of globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., and Futing Liao, T., (2004). *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lubbers, M., and Gijsberts, M., and Scheepers, P., (2002). "Extreme Right-Wing Voting in Western Europe", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 41, pp345–378.
- Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (2005). *Radical Right: Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reif, K., and Schmitt. H., (1980). "Nine Second Order National Elections – A conceptual framework for the analysis of European elections results", *European Journal of Political Research*, No. 8, pp3-44
- Rydgren, J. (2007). "The Sociology of the Radical Right", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp.241-262.
- Spoon, J-J. (2011). *Political Survival of Small Parties in Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Tarrow, S. (1998). *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

van der Brug, W., and Fennema, M., and Tillie, J., (2005). “Why some anti-immigrant parties fail and others succeed: A two-step model of aggregate electoral support”, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp.537–573.

van der Brug, W., and Fennema, M., and Tillie, J., (2000). “Anti-Immigrant Parties in Europe: Ideological or Protest Vote?”, *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp.77-102.

von Beyme, K. (1988). “Right-wing extremism in post-war Europe”, *West European Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp.1-18.

Voulgaris, Y., and Nikolakopoulos, I., (2014). *2012 Ο Διπλός Εκλογικός Σεισμός* [2012 The Double Earthquake Elections]. Athens: Themelio.

Data sources

Schmitt, Hermann; Hobolt, Sara B.; Popa, Sebastian A.; Teperoglou, Eftichia; European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Monitoring Unit (2016): European Parliament Election Study 2014, Voter Study, First Post-Election Survey. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5160 Data file Version 4.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.12628

Schmitt, Hermann, Daniela Braun, Sebastian A. Popa, Slava Mikhaylov, and Felix Dwinger. 2016. European Parliament Election Study 2014, Euromanifesto Study. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5162 Data File Version 1. 0. 0, doi:10.4232/1. 5162

Ryan Bakker, Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Vachudova. 2015. “2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey.” Version 2015.1. Available on chesdata.eu. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

APPENDIX

Table A.1. List of included centre-right, centre-left and far-right parties

Countries	Centre-Right Parties	Centre-Left Parties	Far-right Parties
Sweden	Moderata Samlingspartiet (Moderate Coalition Party)	Sverige Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti (Social Democrats)	Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden Democrats)
Denmark	Det Konservative Folkeparti (Conservative People’s Party)	Socialdemokraterne (Social Democrats)	Dansk Folkeparti

			<i>(Danish People's Party)</i>
Finland	Kansallinen Kokoomus <i>(National Coalition Party)</i>	Suomen Sosiaalidemokraattinen Puolue <i>(Social Democratic Party of Finland)</i>	Perussuomalaiset <i>(True Finns)</i>
Belgium	Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams <i>(Christian Democrats & Flemish)</i>	Parti Socialiste <i>(Socialist Party)</i>	Vlaams Belang <i>(Flemish Interest)</i>
The Netherlands	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie <i>(People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)</i>	Partij van de Arbeid/Europese Sociaaldemocraten <i>(Labour Party)</i>	Partij voor de Vrijheid <i>(Party for Freedom)</i>
Luxembourg	Chreschtlich Sozial Vollekspartei Christian Social People's Party	Letzebuergesch Sozialistesche Arbechterpartei Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party	No Far-right party
France	Union pour un Mouvement Populaire <i>(Union for a Popular Movement)</i>	Parti Socialiste - Parti Radical de Gauche <i>(Socialist Party - Radical Party of the Left)</i>	Front National <i>(National Front)</i>
Italy	Forza Italia <i>(Go Italy)</i>	Partito Democratico <i>(Democratic Party)</i>	Lega Nord <i>(Northern League)</i>
Spain	Partido Popular <i>(People's Party)</i>	Partido Socialista Obrero Español + Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya <i>(Spanish Socialist Workers' Party + Party of the Socialists of Catalonia)</i>	No Far-right party
Greece	Nea Dimokratia <i>(New Democracy)</i>	Elia Dimokratiki Parataxi <i>(Olive Tree)</i>	Laikos Syndesmos - Chrysi Avgi <i>(People's Association - Golden Dawn)</i>

Portugal	Partido Social Democrata + Centro Democrático Social/Partido Popular <i>(Social Democratic Party + Democratic and Social Centre/People's Party)</i>	Partido Socialista Portuguesa <i>(Portuguese Socialist Party)</i>	No Far-right party
Cyprus	Dimokratikos Synagermos <i>(Democratic Rally)</i>	Dimokratikó Kómma <i>(Democratic Party)</i>	No Far-right party
Malta	Partit Nazzjonalista <i>(Nationalist Party)</i>	Partit Laburista <i>(Labour Party)</i>	No Far-right party
Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands <i>(Christian Democratic Union of Germany)</i>	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland <i>(Social Democratic Party of Germany)</i>	Alternative für Deutschland <i>(Alternative for Germany)</i>
Austria	Österreichische Volkspartei <i>(Austrian People's Party)</i>	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs <i>(Social Democratic Party of Austria)</i>	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs <i>(Freedom Party of Austria)</i>
UK	Conservative Party	Labour Party	United Kingdom Independence Party
Ireland	Gaelic Nation - Fine Gael	Irish Labour Party - Páirtí an Lucht Oibre	
Bulgaria	Grazhdani za Evropejsko Razvítie na <i>(Bulgaria Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria)</i>	Balgarska Socialisticheska Partija <i>(Bulgarian Socialist Party)</i>	Ataka <i>(Attack)</i>
Croatia	Right Coalition (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica + Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka + Hrvatska stranka prava Ante Starčević) <i>(Right Coalition Croatian Democratic Union + Croatian</i>	<i>(Socijaldemokratska Partija Hrvatske + Hrvatska Narodna Stranka – Liberalni Demokrati + Istarski Demokratski Sabor)</i> <i>(Left Coalition (Social Democratic Party of Croatia + Croatian</i>	No Far-right party

	<i>Peasant Party + Croatian Party of Rights Dr. Ante Starčević)</i>	<i>People's Party - Liberal Democrats + Istrian Democratic Assembly + Croatian Party of Pensioners)</i>	
Czech Rep.	TOP 09 + Starostové a nezávislí (<i>TOP 09 + Mayors and Independent</i>)	Česká strana sociálně demokratická (<i>Czech Social Democratic Party</i>)	No Far-right party
Estonia	Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit (<i>Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica</i>)	Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond (<i>Social Democratic Party</i>)	No Far-right party
Hungary	Fidesz Magyar Polgári Szövetség + Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (<i>Fidesz Hungarian Civic Union + Christian Democratic People's Party</i>)	Magyar Szocialista Párt (<i>Hungarian Socialist Party</i>)	Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (<i>Movement for a Better Hungary</i>)
Latvia	Partija Vienotība (<i>Unity Party</i>)	Saskaņa sociāldemokrātiskā partija (Saskanas Centrs) (<i>Harmony Social Democratic Party (Harmony Centre)</i>)	Nacionālā apvienība Visu Latvijai! - Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK National (<i>Alliance All for Latvia! - Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK</i>)
Lithuania	Tėvynės sąjunga - Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai (<i>Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats</i>)	Lietuvos socialdemokratų partija (<i>Lithuanian Social Democratic Party</i>)	Partija Tvarka ir teisingumas (<i>Order and Justice Party</i>)
Poland	Platforma Obywatelska (<i>Civic Platform</i>)	Koalicja Sojuszu Lewicy Demokratycznej i Unii Pracy (<i>Democratic Left Alliance - Labour Union</i>)	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (<i>Law and Justice</i>)

Romania	Partidul Național Liberal National (<i>Liberal Party</i>)	Partidul Social Democrat + Uniunea Națională pentru Progresul României + Partidul Conservator (<i>Social Democratic Party + Democratic and Social Centre + People's Party</i>)	No Far-right party
Slovakia	Kresťansko-demokratické hnutie (<i>Christian Democratic Movement</i>)	Smer - sociálna demokracia (<i>Direction - Social Democracy</i>)	Slovenská národná strana (<i>Slovak National Party</i>)
Slovenia	Slovenska demokratska stranka (<i>Slovenian Democratic Party</i>)	Socialnih demokratov (<i>Social Democrats</i>)	No Far-right party

Source: Schmitt, Hermann, Daniela Braun, Sebastian A. Popa, Slava Mikhaylov, and Felix Dwinger. 2016. European Parliament Election Study 2014, Euromanifesto Study. GESIS Data Archive and Ryan Bakker, and Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen

Table A.2. Electoral results of far-right parties in the 2014 European Parliament elections

Country	Party	Electoral result	Number of MEPs
Sweden	Sverigedemokraterna (<i>Sweden Democrats</i>)	9.7	2
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti (<i>Danish People's Party</i>)	26.6	4
Finland	Perussuomalaiset (<i>True Finns</i>)	12.9	2
Belgium	Vlaams Belang	4.1	1

	<i>(Flemish Interest)</i>		
The Netherlands	Partij voor de Vrijheid <i>(Party for Freedom)</i>	13.2	4
France	Front National <i>(National Front)</i>	24.85	24
Italy	Lega Nord <i>(Northern League)</i>	6.2	5
Greece	Laikos Syndesmos - Chrysi Avgi <i>(People's Association - Golden Dawn)</i>	9.4	3
Germany	Alternative für Deutschland <i>(Alternative for Germany)</i>	7.04	7
Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs <i>(Freedom Party of Austria)</i>	19.7	4
UK	United Kingdom Independence Party	26.6	24
Hungary	Jobbik Magyarorszáért Mozgalom <i>(Movement for a Better Hungary)</i>	14.7	3
Latvia	Nacionālā apvienība Visu Latvijai! -Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK National <i>(Alliance All for Latvia! - Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK)</i>	14.3	1
Lithuania	Partija Tvarka ir teisingumas <i>(Order and Justice Party)</i>	14.25	2
Poland	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość <i>(Law and Justice)</i>	31.8	19

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/election-results-2014.html>