

Right-Wing Populism and the Rise of Internationalism in Europe

Nina Obermeier
Cornell University

October 23, 2021

Rise of Populist Radical Right (PRR)

Right-wing populism is surging on both sides of the Atlantic - here's why

November 25, 2015



The Conversation, November 25, 2015

Rise of Populist Radical Right (PRR)

Right-wing populism is surging on both sides of the Atlantic - here's why

November 6, 2015 • 10:00 AM



The Conversation, November 25, 2015

In Spain, Far-Right Populists Rise On Anti-Separatist Sentiment

February 19, 2019 • 1:42 PM

1:04 MINUTES

4-Minute Listen

PLAY

STOP



NPR, February 19, 2019

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In Spain, Far-Right Populists Rise On Anti-Separatist Sentiment

February 19, 2019 • 1:44 PM

1:02:44 (39:50)

4-Minute Listen

4:00



NPR, February 19, 2019

'Italians first': how the populist right became Italy's dominant force



The Guardian, December 1, 2018

Rise of Populist Radical Right (PRR)

Right-wing populism is surging on both sides of the Atlantic - here's why

November 6, 2015 1:44 PM GMT



The Conversation, November 25, 2015

In Spain, Far-Right Populists Rise On Anti-Separatist Sentiment

November 6, 2015 1:44 PM GMT

1:24:30 (MP3)



NPR, February 19, 2019

Far-right populist Jair Bolsonaro wins divisive Brazil presidential election

November 26, 2018 7:01 AM EST

By Associated Press and Reuters Staff

Ex-army captain campaigned on harsh law-and-order platform



Wall Street Journal, October 28, 2018

'Italians first': how the populist right became Italy's dominant force



The Guardian, December 1, 2018

Backlash against Globalization?

Why There's a Globalization Backlash

Economic inequalities, political uncertainties and cultural anxiety are side effects of globalization; what does its future hold?

By The Conversation Nov 29, 2016, at 12:04 p.m.



The Conversation, November 29, 2016

GALLERIES

- Subscribers
Richard C. Anderson (2)
- Members
Patrick (1)
- Pages
The Week in Conversation (1)

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- Subscribers: Richard Ganssman, Jack B...
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Brexit was a backlash against globalisation - the poorest are being left behind everywhere

Deborah Doane

Neoliberal and free market economics have left the poor behind. We need to spend less time worrying about development and more about politics and power.



The Guardian, June 26, 2016

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GALLERIES

- Subscribers: Richard Cawston on Quora
- News: What's the deal with the UK?
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- Jobs: The Week in Conversation

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Rising Euroscepticism 'poses existential threat to EU'

Man tipped for European commission president job says Brexit has shown political leaders the risks of failing anti-EU sentiment



The Guardian, March 3, 2017

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GALLERIES

- Sublime: Richard Dawkins on Brexit
- News: What's Behind the 'No' Vote
- News: What's Behind the 'No' Vote
- Just: The Week in Conversation

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The Guardian, June 26, 2016

Immigration backlash is on the rise in Europe

Joseph Stiglitz, Alexis Koroteyev and Stephanie Jean-Berry April 23, 2014

Updated 10:42 a.m. ET March 29, 2014



USA Today, March 31, 2014

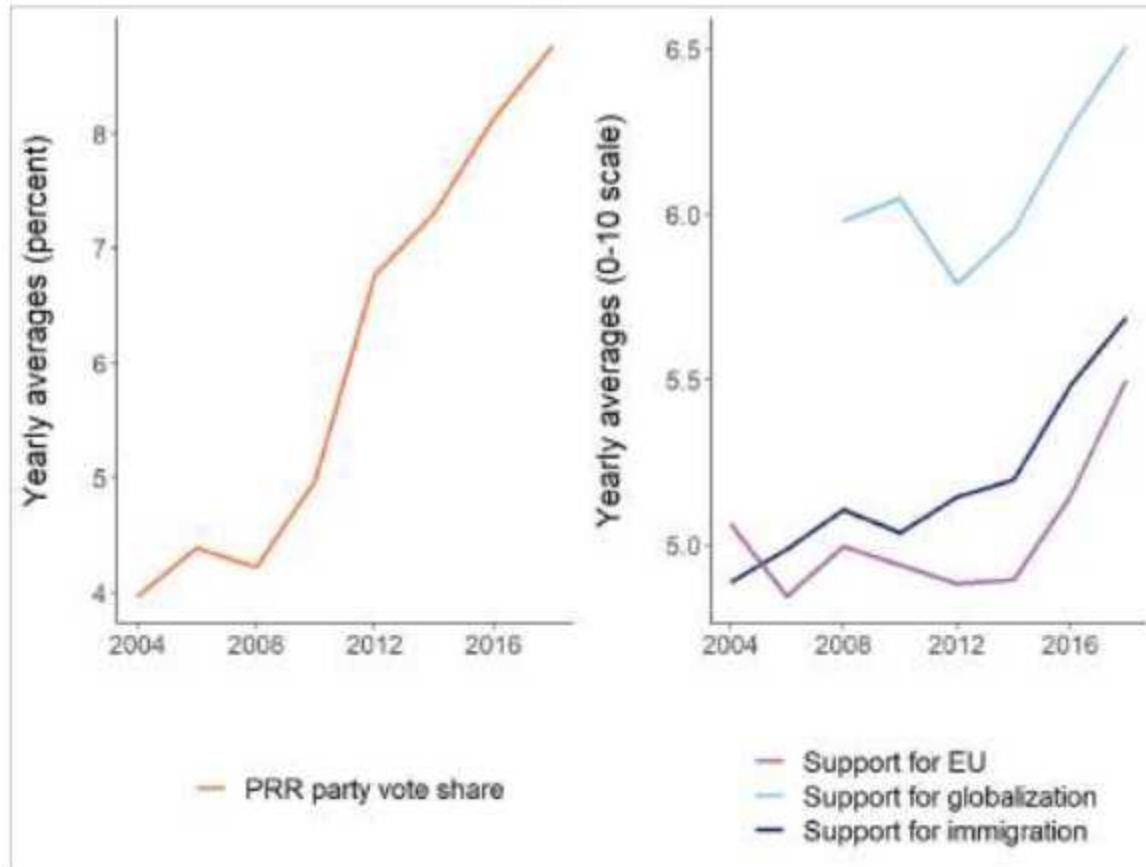
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The Guardian, March 3, 2017

Backlash against Globalization?



Countries included: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK

Research Question

What explains the increase in **public support for international economic integration** alongside the growing vote share for populist radical right parties?

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Limitations:

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- Assumption that anti-internationalism and support for PRR go hand in hand

Argument: PRR Parties in Public Discourse

- Depoliticization of international economic integration by mainstream parties

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- PRR parties as **dominant actors** in public discourse on international economic integration

Argument: Increasing Prominence of PRR Parties Affects Discourse

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- Crises bring PRR parties to greater prominence
 - Greater public awareness of PRR parties' **anti-internationalism** and their **right-wing extremism**

Argument: Anti-Internationalism as Extremism

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Anti-internationalism linked to right-wing extremism → change in attitudes

- Strong social norms exist against right-wing extremism
- Social psychological mechanism: individuals change attitudes and behavior to avoid being perceived as violating social norms (Crandall et al. 2002; Zitek and Hebl 2007; Walker et al. 2015)
- Individuals who care more about adherence to social norms than anti-internationalism become **more internationalist** as a **rejection of right-wing extremism**

Hypotheses

H1: Support for international economic integration will increase as anti-internationalism is linked more closely to right-wing extremism in public discourse.

H2: This effect will be larger in countries where PRR parties are the primary political actors promoting anti-internationalism.

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- Unexpected event during survey design: murder of UK MP Jo Cox in June 2016

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- Unexpected shock that concentrated association between **anti-internationalism** and **right-wing extremism** in public discourse

**Jo Cox 'died for her views', her
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Nazi regalia discovered at house of Jo
Cox killing suspect

Research Design

- Event study: murder of UK MP Jo Cox in June 2016
- Unexpected shock that concentrated association between **anti-internationalism** and **right-wing extremism** in public discourse
- Timing of British Election Study (BES) allows me to compare responses collected immediately prior to the murder to those collected immediately afterwards

Research Design

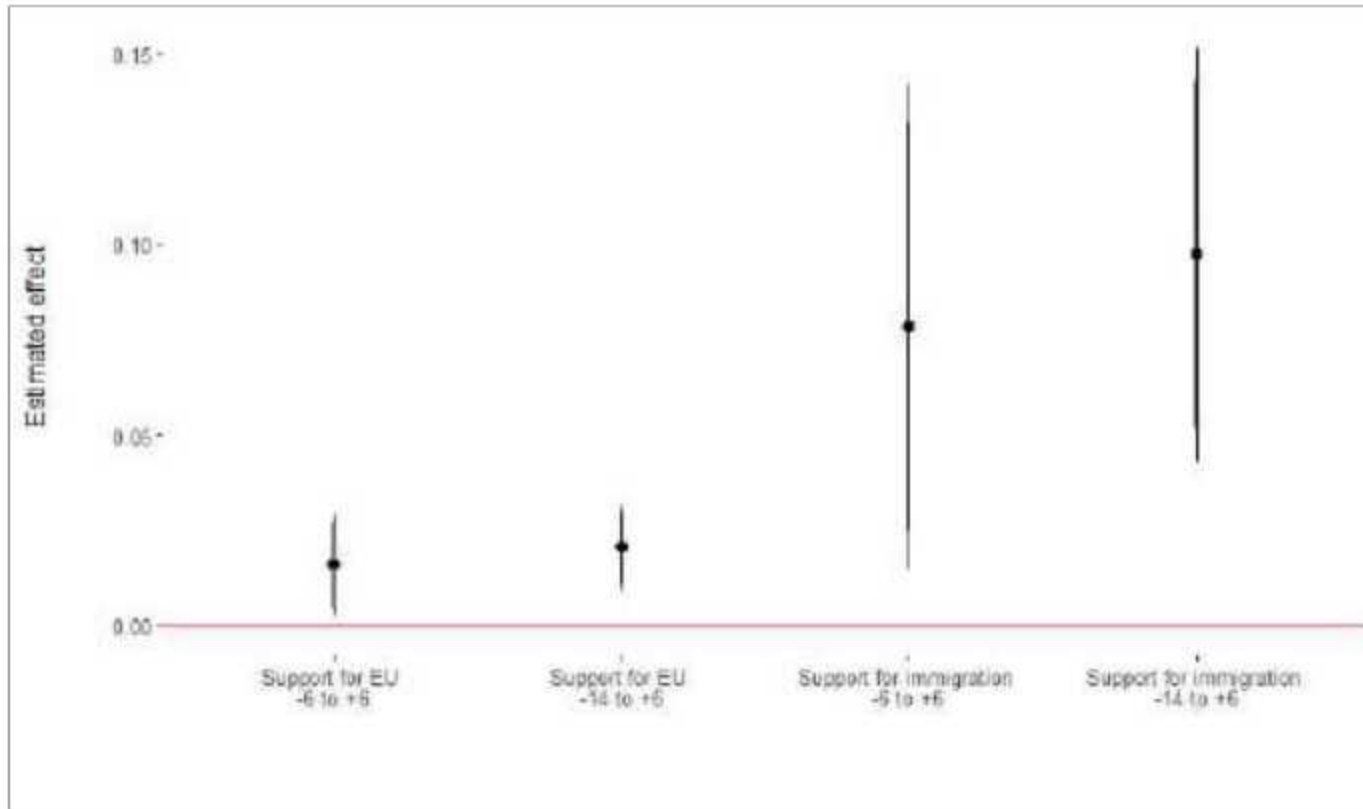
- BES Internet Panel waves 7-8 (14 April - 4 May 2016 and 6 May - 22 June 2016)

Research Design

- BES Internet Panel waves 7-8 (14 April - 4 May 2016 and 6 May - 22 June 2016)
- Can compare both the difference in attitudes between respondents interviewed just before and just after the murder and the difference in the wave-on-wave **change** in attitudes

Results

Estimated effect on wave-on-wave change in support for EU and immigration



Testing Assumptions

- Estimated effect on support for EU and immigration
- Google trends analysis
- Balance tests
- Trends in support over time
- Placebo-in-time analysis
- Placebo outcome analysis
- Non-response analysis
- Placebo-in-time analysis for change

Cross-National Analysis of Media and Survey Data

- Created a measure of association between Euroskepticism and right-wing extremism in media discourse in 8 Western European countries (Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, UK) from 2000 to 2019

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- Machine learning to classify remaining articles (> 1 million)
- Euroskepticism-extremism link: % of articles classified as linking Euroskepticism to right-wing extremism

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- Merged media analysis data with Eurobarometer survey data to explore whether higher levels of association between Euroskepticism and right-wing extremism linked to greater support for EU

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- Merged media analysis data with Eurobarometer survey data to explore whether higher levels of association between Euroskepticism and right-wing extremism linked to greater support for EU
 - Stronger Euroskepticism-extremism link associated with higher support for EU

Conclusion

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- Findings from study of Jo Cox's murder suggest changes in discourse have causal effect on internationalism
- Findings from cross-national analysis suggest generalizable correlation between discourse and internationalism over time

Conclusion: Implications

- Findings suggest the existence of a stabilizing mechanism → resilience of the liberal international economic order in the face of backlash

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- Caveat: stabilizing mechanism is dependent on public discourse

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- Findings suggest the existence of a stabilizing mechanism → resilience of the liberal international economic order in the face of backlash
- Caveat: stabilizing mechanism is dependent on public discourse
- Mainstream parties' accommodation of PRR parties could break the link between anti-internationalism and right-wing extremism

Thank you!

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