

FROM RISE TO RULE:
ON THE DYNAMICS OF RADICAL-RIGHT PARTIES IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

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Why have we seen such a dramatic rise of radical-right parties recently, and what have the consequences been? This dissertation traces the three main stages of the rising radical-right: first, how have they been succeeding in elections? Second, after winning election, why is their participation in government coalitions becoming more common? And third, what have the substantive effects of this government participation been on the quality and stability of liberal democracy?

I begin by examining the dynamics of the radical-right's electoral success in relation to the rising trend of publicly funding electoral campaigns at the national level. While public financing is often thought of as a way to "level the playing field" of elections, I argue that such policies have had unintended second-order consequences by disproportionately aiding the rise radical-right parties. I further demonstrate that this public funding policy severs the tie of radical-right performance to economic growth. This is a counter-intuitive result, as public campaign finance is often considered a priority of the left to restore power to the majority, and yet, it seems to aid those on the right fringes of the political spectrum.

Given this increased electoral success, chapter two investigates why these parties have found themselves in more and more governing coalitions recently. Until now, the literature was without a succinct explanation for why this is occurring—instead characterizing the trend as "politics as usual." I develop a new theory characterizing such moves as the co-optation of a growing political rival in an effort to minimize electoral threat. That is, as the radical platform rises in salience, and radical parties are more threatening to the electoral success of a moderate party, they will invite the party into their government, thereby staving off said threat.

Finally, I look at the impacts of said coalitions on liberal democracy. While many argue radical-right parties to be one of the largest contemporary threats to democracy, the evidence remains largely anecdotal. I empirically demonstrate that the implications of a growing radical-right are far more severe than previously assumed. Besides being the source of a potential for democratic breakdown when they take power, radical-right parties bring with them real decreases in the level of liberal democracy not only when holding executive control, but also as they merely participate in government coalitions. The specific effects differ depending on the type of power held. When holding the prime ministership, we see significant deteriorations to both institutional constraints on the executive and mass civil liberties. When limited to junior coalition-partner status, we only see the latter affected.

Overall, this dissertation aims to trace the three stages of the rising radical-right phenomenon. It begins with a study on how they win elections, moves to an analysis of their entrance into ruling coalitions, and ends with an investigation of the effects of this rise on liberal democracy.

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To my Nona, for always inspiring me.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout time, we have seen a dramatic increase in radical and populist parties globally. Those who once stood opposed to such parties have found themselves increasingly willing to form new partnerships. This is happening quickly, and with special vigor across Europe with regard to the radical-right specifically—for example: the *Sweden Democrats* in Sweden, *Danish People's Party* in Denmark, and the *National Front* in France are but a few instances of those who have seen large gains in popularity. In the latest German election, the *Alternative for Germany* gained 94 seats, enough to make them the largest opposition party. However, as is becoming clear, their participation is not limited to government opposition. Currently, radical-right parties serve in governing coalitions in seven European nations, and hold the prime minister's office in two.

The rise of these parties should be somewhat unsettling. In the aftermath of the European debt crisis, the Greek neo-Nazi party *Golden Dawn* saw a surge in popularity; last year its leaders were found guilty by a criminal court of running a criminal organization, while several party deputies were jailed for murder and attempted murder. Meanwhile in Eastern Europe the tenure of ruling parties like *Fidesz* and *Law and Justice* have brought with them major declines in the level of democracy in Hungary and Poland, respectively. Clearly, there is cause for concern. While some argue this trend has reached a peak, and is now on the decline, others warn the radical-right is here to stay.

As this trend manifests throughout time and space, the causes remain unclear. Why have we seen such an accelerated rise from what was long considered a “niche” and “fringe” party-family? How is it that other parties deem them acceptable partners and agree to rule in government alongside them? And, perhaps most importantly, what real effects has this worrisome trend brought with it in terms of democratic stability and the civil liberties of its

citizenry? Throughout this dissertation I shed some much-needed light on the dynamics of radical-right parties, demonstrate how they come to power, and importantly, illustrate the long-lasting effects of their rule on society.

Overall, I present three related pieces of research, one from each of the three phases of the rise of radical parties: (1) how they win elections, (2) how they enter into government, and finally (3) how their victory has far-reaching implications in the countries they rule. Through the next three chapters, I intend to analyze every stage of the radical-right phenomenon, from how they rise in popularity, transition to governing, and finally impact society. Scholars agree that the rise of these parties is the largest contemporary threat to liberal democracy. As such, given their current upward trend, this topic is especially important and topical.

I begin by analyzing the growing electoral success of these parties. Beginning with Jackman and Volpert (1996), the most basic rule radical-right studies has is this: they tend to excel in times of economic distress. The reasoning for this empirical relationship is somewhat straightforward: these parties thrive in protest (Powell Jr 1981). They build a name and a following for themselves by continuously decrying the prevailing conditions in their country. Clearly, such bemoaning is more likely to take hold when times are tough. It is rather hard to advocate such large-scale change to individuals who are doing quite well. Conversely, when the economy begins to stagnate, people want change. They look for a promise of something better, and importantly for these parties—they look for someone to blame. Enter the radical-right party, who is eager to make unrealistic promises, and more eager still to align blame squarely on the ruling elites and ethnic minorities (Rydgren 2018). In this way, one can characterize a poor economy as “pushing” voters towards the radical-right. This is incredibly important for radical-right parties, as they traditionally do quite poorly in terms of private donations, and thus struggle vis-à-vis mainstream parties with campaigning. Times of economic downturn, in this way, act almost as free advertising for these parties, providing an increased salience and audience for their platform they need not pay for.

What happens, I ask, if instead of waiting for a bad economy to “push” voters towards them, governments were unknowingly moving towards systems that more easily allowed radical-right parties to “pull” voters in their direction? Such is the basis of chapter one. I examine the rising trend of publicly funding electoral campaigns, and argue that this public campaign financing has had the unintended consequence of dramatically aiding radical-right parties. Further, I argue this aforementioned well-regarded finding tying radical performance to the economy only holds in cases of privately-funded elections. This comes about largely due to the fact that radical parties are severely disadvantaged in terms of private donations, as well as the propensity of public funds to erode incumbency advantage and dilute the voice of special interests. Interestingly, many advocates of publicly funding elections tend to be those on the left side of the political spectrum, who argue for these public financing provisions as a way to reallocate political power to the majority. Here, however, I find such provisions to be provide a poor return-on-investment for these advocates, in that such provisions have instead reallocated power to the political fringe of the ideological spectrum.

The recent trends in history, however, have not ended with the radical-right’s increased election to national legislature. Rather, they have also found themselves more and more in ruling coalitions, generally serving alongside another party to govern the nation and run cabinet ministries. This too is no longer rare, as radical-right parties have joined government coalitions in nearly half of European nations. This is truly striking, for it is here that significant change may be made. Here, one is able to have an influence on the direction and agenda of the government, and further, it is here where leadership over government ministries is executed.

And yet, to date all research regarding the radical-right in government has indicated this trend is “politics as usual,” and not altogether too surprising. I argue this is simply not the case. The theories of minimum winning coalitions (Riker 1962) and minimum connected winning coalitions (Axelrod 1970; de Swaan 1973), while incredibly informative, are simply not capable of explaining what we have seen transpire over the last several decades on their

own. We have witnessed parties who win an election and have options for more moderate, more ideologically close, less “costly” political partners still opt to form a coalition with a radical-right party despite most evidence on the topic telling us such a scenario would not happen.

In chapter two I formulate a new theory of coalition formation with radical-right parties. I borrow from the literature on authoritarian cooptation and develop a characterization of the coalition-building process that diverges from preexisting theories. Rather than a simple numbers game, I argue such processes represent something much more basic: fear. Such a move to join in partnership with a radical-right party can be best described as the cooptation of a growing political rival in an effort to minimize future electoral threat. That is, as the radical-right platform rises in salience, and radical parties are more threatening to the electoral success of a mainstream party, they will invite the party into their government, in an effort to stave off said threat. It does not matter how you measure this fear, whether in terms of prevailing economic conditions, immigration inflows, voter opinion on policy, or even simply based on how well similar radical parties are doing in nearby countries, the effect is the same. We are seeing radical-right parties enter into government not simply because of their ideology or policy proposals, and certainly not because of their worthiness as an effective government leader. Rather, this phenomenon is occurring due to the threat their newfound success poses to mainstream politicians.

After addressing how these parties get into parliament, and further how they find themselves in actual governing coalitions, the next question presents itself: “so what?” What happens to a country when these rising trends take hold? And similarly, how worried should we be? Such is the focus of the last chapter. While many have previously argued the answer to this question is that their impact is quite limited, due in no small part to their historically poor electoral performance, I again diverge in opinion. As the first two chapters show, these parties are finding ways to capitalize and become relevant policy-makers. They have taken advantage of public funds and found ways to win elections. They have taken advantage of

their opponents' feeling their threat, and bargained into positions of power. Why now should we assume this is where their story ends?

Much of our knowledge today regarding the radical-right's relationship with liberal democracy is centered on case studies in the few countries where the radical-right has won the prime ministership or presidency. This presents two problems. First, this of course makes an inherent assumption that radical-right parties can only negatively affect liberal democracy while controlling the head-of-government. Second, it is still unclear in which areas of democracy the radical-right's potential effects are most concentrated, even in these limited cases. In the third and final chapter, I attempt to right these wrongs.

I argue, first and foremost, radical-right parties *can* and *will* have significant impacts on democracy and repression, even if they simply find success as a junior coalition partner. Indeed, when we consider this possibility, and break away from the previous notion that democracy will only suffer if a radical-right party wins total control of the government, we see these effects to be far more dire than previously understood. In this chapter, I begin by analyzing the disaggregated effects radical-right parties have when they do indeed hold executive power in a country, and demonstrate the aspects of democracy most threatened by these governments. Beyond this, however, I illustrate the different, yet still significant, impacts these parties have been having even while limited as merely a junior coalition partner.

Taken together, these findings are stark. Mainstream parties seem to be allowing these radical-right opponents to serve with them in coalition due to the fact that they fear what their rise in popularity will do to their own seat-share. Once in, however, these radical parties again capitalize on their newly-found situation and begin a slow dismantling of liberal democracy itself.

Overall, my hope is that this dissertation provides important insight into each stage of the rising trend of radical-right parties in government. First, I focus on their initial election, and analyze how the recent policy trend of publicly funding elections have aided their rise. Second, I consider what happens after candidates from such parties get elected. How do they

take the next step and go from opposition party to ruling party, and what part do ruling mainstream parties play in this transition? And finally, I look at the substantive effects to liberal democracy when such a transition is taken, by disaggregating the effects radical-right parties are able to have on different aspects of democracy while in government, whether that includes the office of prime minister, or not. Taken together, I provide some much needed clarity on the dynamics of radical-right parties in Europe, all the way from rise to rule.

CHAPTER 1

PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FINANCING AND THE RISE OF RADICAL-RIGHT PARTIES

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the world has seen a quickening trend of rising extremism, for example: the *Sweden Democrats* in Sweden, *Danish People's Party* in Denmark, and the *National Front* in France have seen large gains in popularity. Recently, the *Alternative for Germany* gained 94 seats in the latest German election, enough to make them the largest opposition party. At the same time in Greece the neo-Nazi *Golden Dawn* party saw a surge in popularity, while the Greek parliament was for several years run by a coalition of the radical-left *Syriza* and the far-right *Independent Greeks* (extremists stick together, I suppose). More generally, in recent years we have seen radicalism rise throughout Europe and the Americas. There is even evidence of this trend in the United States, as some argue the election of right-populist candidate Donald Trump is a further example of rising extremism.

A growing literature has made great strides in explaining the myriad conditions that affect the popularity of the radical-right. This paper adds to this literature by investigating the effect of public campaign financing provisions on the ability of these parties to attract and maintain public support. While public financing is generally seen as “leveling the playing field” for all political parties, I argue it also has the (perhaps unintended) effect of easing

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the rise of the extreme-right.¹

Increasingly, public financing provisions are a policy supported largely by the political left (Dennis 1998) and are argued to be a mechanism to ensure more fair elections that increase the power of the majority vis-à-vis special interests and the wealthy (Esenberg 2010; Panagopoulos 2011). However, and rather counter-intuitively, these policies have largely unintended consequences. First, rather than provide a return for their left-wing supporters, public financing instead provides a large benefit to the right-wing. And further, rather than restore power to the majority, it reallocates power towards those on the radical-right fringe of the political spectrum.

First, I argue that, due to specific features of extreme-right parties and the precarious nature of their coalition of support, policies providing for the public funding of electoral campaigns will serve to disproportionately aid them, relative to other parties. Specifically, public monies will have a direct effect of increasing the vote-share of the radical-right. This largely comes about as the radical-right has a harder time remaining competitive, raising funds, and attracting a coalition of voters.

For example in 2016, the year before the surge in support of the *Alternative for Germany* (AfD), the AfD received over EUR 6 million in public funding, the highest as a percent of total revenue of any party in the Bundestaag (Deutscher Bundestag 2018). Many in the media questioned whether public funding would be exceptionally beneficial to the AfD, allowing them the means to go build a coalition of support from the general public.²

Beyond the direct effect, I find public financing severs the inherent ties between economic performance and extreme-right support. The literature on the extreme-right has found that economic downturn greatly aides their vote-share, while economic growth hurts

¹Throughout this paper I use the terms “extreme-right,” “far-right,” and “radical-right” interchangeably to refer to the general party group on the far-right of the political spectrum.

²See for example “Germany’s far-right party will get millions more in taxpayer cash” in CNN Money or “German far right’s vote surge means financial bonanza” in Politico EU.

it. However this appears to no longer be the case in publicly funded elections. For one, public money ensures a suitable stream of funds regardless of economic conditions (making the radical-right no longer dependent on a poor economy to increase the salience of their platform). And second, public funds drastically diminish incumbency advantage, whose effect is maximized during periods of economic growth.

Importantly, these same effects are not shared by extreme-left parties. Due to important and unique characteristics of far-right parties, public campaign financing seems to have a disproportionate and exclusive effect on them. Thus, this study contributes by furthering our understanding of the important and oft-ignored differences between the two ideological wings of extremism.

Interestingly, there has been very little research done in this area. Two somewhat related pieces of literature utilize very small sample sizes ($n = 2, n = 5$) made up only of US states. They analyze policies that introduce bias into their measurement, and further, they arrive at contradictory results. Importantly, no study has attempted to analyze this topic from a cross-national point of view. I examine this question by analyzing a dataset of twenty industrialized democracies over the past sixty-five years, employing a quantitative analysis of over 320 legislative elections.

This study goes a long way in helping to understand the dynamics of extremism, and perhaps why their support is more prevalent in Europe than elsewhere, given Europe's much higher prevalence of public financing in elections, which has been rising quickly over the last few decades.³

The question of why these parties are rising is not entirely clear, yet it is of great substantive importance. First, scholarly work has found their rise serves as a critical threat to modern liberal democracy and regime stability. Overwhelmingly, extreme-right candidates are "populist" not only in their rhetoric, but in their leadership styles. Populism on its own

³According to data from the Varieties of Democracy database.

has been characterized as one of the great threats to democracy (see for e.g. Muller 2016). Populists have been linked with eroding the constraints on executives (Houle and Kenny 2018), pushing countries into authoritarianism (Levitsky and Loxton 2012), and causing deep polarizations of society (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). Above all, there is a strong trend of populist leaders, once elected, subverting democratic institutions and consolidating power for themselves (see Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012).

Beyond the perils of populism, many have noted extreme-rightists' tendencies of inexperience in terms of policy-making, and of presiding over particularly unstable governments, with frequent mass rioting (Powell Jr 1981). Further, it is evident historically that extremism brings with it serious effects on personal, financial, and emotional health. Any insight in to what makes these possibilities a reality is worthy of careful study.

1.2 The Rise of Radical Parties Over Time

It is, no doubt, difficult to define any term that aims to encompass such a large group of separate political parties. Numerous scholars have directly pointed out this difficulty (see Mudde 1996). Many have noted the extreme-right's views on immigration, nationalism, anti-tolerance, and trade and defining characteristics. Others have noted their penchant for violence and anti-democratic tendencies. Overall, however, extreme-rightists tend to share an “anti-system” view of the government. That is, they seek not to simply change the composition of the government, but to change its very structure.

Many of these contemporary definitions follow from Sartori (1976), where he argues an anti-system party “would change, if it could, not the government, but the system of government.” While there are certainly non right-wing anti-system parties, right-wing parties that are also anti-system make up the “extreme right-wing” (see De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O'Rourke 2012), a term which includes both contemporary neofascist and right-populist parties (Golder 2003).

Given this definition, what do we know about their rise in popularity? The ex-

tant literature regarding support for the extreme-right can be broken down into two main approaches: that of the supply-side, and of the demand-side. The demand-side approach analyzes extremist vote-share as a function of citizens' desire to vote for such a party or candidate, while the supply-side looks instead to institutional features that allow such a rise to occur.

Ever since Jackman and Volpert (1996), a lasting and robust finding of the demand-side literature argues that decreased economic growth is a main vehicle for driving increased extreme-rightist support (Brückner and Grüner 2010; De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O'Rourke 2012; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch 2016). These works all suggest that as an economy worsens, we can expect public support for far-rightism to increase; thus, a healthily growing economy serves as an important deterrent against extremism.

This general causal story posits that extreme-rightists tend to blame foreigners, immigrants, minorities, and other "outsider" groups for the ills that exist in the country (Rydgren 2018). This scapegoating, of course, is much more prevalent in times of economic downturn when there exist poor conditions to blame on these "outsiders." In good times (i.e. during periods of economic growth) there are no ills for the "outsiders" to bear. Given that extreme-rightists are characterized as "anti-system," it is hard to build a convincing argument for voting against the current system (i.e. for an extreme-rightist) when you are well-off. Much in the same way incumbents perform better in good times (Hibbing and Alford 1981). In times of struggle, however, voting to change the current system has a much more compelling argument. Importantly, evidence suggests that these features are unique to extreme-right parties, and not general to niche-parties as-a-whole (Brückner and Grüner 2010; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch 2016).

Indeed, much research analyzing the linkage between the economy and the diffusion of populism and radical parties has found rich results. For example, Algan et al. (2017) find that increases in unemployment are strongly correlated with voting for non-mainstream parties, due largely to the economic insecurity felt by voters. Many others have found similar

results for populism in general and economic crisis (e.g. Guiso et al. 2017). In many cases, this result is described as a cultural backlash (Rodrik 2018), whereby the “losers” of development turn to other means of representation (Betz 1994). Much in the same way British citizens who lived in areas with high levels of imports were more likely to vote to exit the European Union (Colantone and Stanig 2018), a depressed economy incites fears of economic wellbeing, prompting those who have not benefitting from the changing global economy to fall out of support of the mainstream political parties, and instead find a champion of an alternative system. Increasingly, they have seen the radical right as this champion (Loch and Norocel 2015). More recently, this has been described as a problem of social integration, where those marginalized by society (in part by losing out on the benefits of modernization) feel animosity towards traditional political elites, and thus go looking for alternatives (Gidron and Hall 2020).

Beyond economic conditions, other factors shown to influence the demand of extreme-rightism include immigration (Arzheimer 2009; Golder 2003; Knigge 1998; Swank and Betz 2003), unemployment (Golder 2003), inequality (Han 2016), welfare provision (Swank and Betz 2003), and education (Mayer and Perrineau 1992). These studies all paint a similar picture: when people feel threatened—whether that be in terms of a bad economy, rising immigration, and so on—they become more likely to approve of more “extreme” manners to return to security.

Apart from citizen demand for extremism, the ability of the political system to transfer this demand into actual vote-share stands as a second major topic of study. The empirical implication along this avenue of work finds that the more permissive an election (that is, multipartyism, proportional systems, and low electoral thresholds), the higher the vote-share for extreme-right candidates (e.g. Jackman and Volpert 1996). The mechanism here is clear: high permissiveness eases the barriers of entry for radical-right parties. I argue that public financing can be added to this list of electoral permissiveness that aids right-extremism.

Before understanding why, it is important to understand the pressures public financ-

ing of elections exerts on electoral outcomes. While the topic of the macro-economy’s effect on extremism has largely been covered, the implication differing electoral regimes may have on extremists’ ability to gain support is lacking, especially in the sub-area of campaign finance. Several studies have found confounding results relating to public financing and extremism or polarization. One such study (Hall 2014) examines campaign finance in five US states, finding that public funding leads to increased candidate polarization and divergence. Generally, they argue public financing tends to ease the process of extreme candidates being elected in these states that have adopted public campaign finance. This is largely due to the erosion of incumbency advantage that usually serves as a barrier of entry to extreme challengers. Conversely, another study of two US States (Masket and Miller 2015) finds no difference between ideologies of those politicians elected from traditionally– or publicly–funded campaigns.

Not only have the two studies that have been done in this area arrived at differing results, they have focused solely on the United States, comparing a very small number of cases ($n = 2, n = 5$). Further, these studies suffer from a fault in research design. Two of the five US states included in these previous studies have only partial-funding of campaigns available from the public purse, thus attenuating whatever result we may expect to see, and reducing the true number of states with public financing being studied to a mere three. Additionally, and arguably more problematically, candidates in all these states may either opt-in or opt-out of public funding. This option inherently creates a large self-selection problem, biasing the presented results. Further, the focus on the United States also serves to ignore Europe, the region not only most affected by the recent surge in extremism, but also a much more prevalent source of public campaign funding.

More interestingly, some previous work has argued that public funding should actually serve to aid the more *dominant* parties in an election (Jones 1981), calling it a heavily biased policy aimed to protect incumbents (Winter and Bolton 1973). Thus, given the contrary results, limited samples, theoretical disagreement, and potentially biased research design, this puzzle of public financing’s effect on an election remains in the literature, and it is

therefore evident that more research is required on this topic. In the next section I develop a theory arguing that public financing will serve to disproportionately aid far-right parties, relative the mainstream and other niche parties.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

In general, it is hard for extremist candidates to be competitive. Indeed, in my own sample, extreme-right parties receive an average 4.13% of the vote in parliamentary elections, and only cross 15% of the vote-share in less than 1 in 10 elections. One reason for this is their noted difficulty in raising campaign funds relative more mainstream candidates (e.g. McCarthy, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Oklobdzija 2016). Not only does this lack of fundraising make mobilization and communication with voters difficult, but unlike mainstream parties who adjust their policy platform to reflect changes in public opinion, extreme-right parties (as well as other niche parties) do not, and in fact tend to fare worse when doing so (Adams et al. 2006).

This specifically puts extreme-right parties in an exceedingly precarious place. Not only is their platform too rigid to adjust to the prevailing public opinion, but they do not have the resources to build a coalition of support around this platform. Rather, their ability to attract an audience is dependent on an economic downturn. It is well-established that economic recession increases the support of extremist candidates, while economic prosperity serves as a deterrent against them. This comes about largely as issues included in the extremists' platform (the struggling economy) rise in salience as the economy worsens (e.g. Singer 2011). Ordinarily, a healthy economy reduces the salience of economic issues, limiting the audience of an extremist platform. Given the hardship these parties have at raising money, the decreased audience that comes with a healthy economy drastically hinders their ability to gain support from the electorate.

This effect may be magnified by the strategic considerations (e.g. Abramson et al. 2009) those who do share the extreme-right ideology make in deciding to vote for a more

competitive party, as a strong economy may serve to signal a lack of viability of extreme-right parties. Thus, some people may not be voting for the far-right not because of an ideological incongruence, or even an ignorance of their platform, but rather due to the perception of non-competitiveness (a sort-of collective action problem).

However, public financing allows an extreme-right party to overcome some of this barrier. It affords the party resources to spread their message (in the form of campaigning, advertising, mobilization, etc.), as they traditionally struggle from raising their own funds. Beyond spreading their platform, public financing erodes incumbency advantage, diminishing (and, in the case of full public financing: closing) the fundraising gap between incumbent and challenger (Mayer and Werner 2007; Miller 2008, 2011). This makes it easy for once-uncompetitive challengers to mount a successful campaign.

Along with an erosion of incumbency advantage, public financing severely dilutes the influence of special interest groups, simultaneously amplifying the power of the masses (Baron 1994; Hall 2014; Jones and Borris 1985; Malhotra 2008). For example, Baron (1994) argues candidate positioning is closer to the median-voter in publicly funded elections, as candidates are more independent from interest groups (which tend to be more moderate than individual voters).

Thus, I argue that public financing will have a direct impact in helping extreme-right parties by affording them funds they would not otherwise have, by eroding incumbency advantage, and by reducing advantages more moderate parties tend to have in the form of support from special interests. This effect follows from the extreme-right's difficulty in terms of fundraising, and that individuals (who are more ideologically extreme than interest groups) gain voice. This is especially important as radical-right voters tend to be more economically disadvantaged (Ignazi 2006; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Kitschelt and McGann 1997), and thus likely not able to donate significant amounts.

In addition to this direct relationship, I expect public financing to mediate the effect economic growth has on limiting extremist support. Beyond providing a mechanism for

message spreading, public financing’s effect of limiting incumbency advantage should serve to not only partially overcome the collective-action problem, but to allow the extreme-right to remain competitive even at higher levels of economic growth, as compared to an election with no public funding.

Historically the radical-right has not been very successful in terms of winning elections. This noted difficulty in building a coalition of support is mitigated when the nation economy begins to slow. In this case, rather than building a coalition by using their limited resources to mobilize, the failing economy greatly increases the salience of their platform, in effect delivering them an audience “for free.” Public funding, however, allows these parties to go out and spread their platform even when a struggling economy does not deliver them this audience. In other words, public financing makes their viability no longer conditional on economic downturn. Thus, even while their platform may not be as salient in a strong economy as it would otherwise in a poor economy, increased resources allow them the opportunity to spread their message, increase advertising throughput, and mobilize voters. In other words, where a poor economy serves to “push” voters to the extreme, public funding should allow extreme parties to “pull” voters to them.

Beyond this, it is important to note voters do not simply vote based on economic considerations. For example, experimental work (Dinas et al. 2019) has shown that similarly situated areas (i.e. with the same socio-economic profile) with differing experiences regarding the refugee crisis can lead to very different levels of far-right support. Or, take the election of Donald Trump, whose rise to power coincided with a strong US economy. But nonetheless, his abundant media coverage provided a strong mechanism for his platform to take hold (see for e.g. Wells et al. 2016). In this same way, public funding should provide an ample platform for the far-right, evoking a desire for the extreme platform, even in an economy which may not directly foster it.

Further, like in the previous hypothesis, it is important to note again that a poor economy serves to erode incumbency advantage (Erikson 1989; Kayser and Peress 2012),

benefiting those who are not incumbents (which extreme-rightists rarely are). In a good economy, conversely, incumbents tend to be rewarded, hurting those who are not already in office (again, extreme-rightists). Public financing, however, mitigates this incumbency advantage on its own, even at high levels of economic growth. Thus, given that public financing erodes incumbency advantage, and incumbency advantage is most prevalent during a strong economy, it follows that public financing should increase the competitiveness of the radical-right in times of economic prosperity.

In a way, public financing allows an extreme-right party to behave more like a mainstream party, receiving a suitable flow of contributions at all levels of economic growth, and thus able to compete beyond the condition of economic distress. Thus, my two hypotheses:

HYPOTHESIS 1: As public financing of political campaigns increases in a country, radical-right parties will see their vote-share grow.

HYPOTHESIS 2: As public financing of political campaigns increases in a country, the role economic growth plays in decreasing radical-right support will be mitigated.

In effect, there are two forces at work here: (1) a stable and uniform increase in funding, which should act to increase competitiveness at all levels of economic growth. (2) an erosion of a strong economy's inherent incumbency advantage, coupled with the ability of an extreme-rightist to maintain its audience irrespective of economic improvement.

Of course, it is wholly difficult to find direct evidence supporting these exact hypothesized causal mechanisms. For example, there may well be non-policy reasons for seeing these same results. The rise of the cartel party (Katz and Mair 1995), whereby mainstream parties utilize state resources to protect their own longterm survival, may also lead to a less direct mechanism through which the radical-right sees benefit from these public funding policies. As mainstream parties devise new strategies to ensure their own success, they simultaneously

provide their smaller challengers with more plausible claims of corruption and elite-serving behavior, creating an environment in which the radical-right’s cries of anti-elitism can better take hold (Katz and Mair 1995). Thus, as public financing policies are passed, they may incite backlash from voters who view these acts as self-serving or potentially corrupt, thus driving them to seek an alternative government in the radical-right, who often espouse anti-elite anti-corruption values (Zaslove 2004*b*; Ziller and Schübel 2015). Through the use of the ensuing case examples, I provide some support for the proposed causal mechanisms, but it is important to note there may be other forces at work as well.

1.3.1 *Why the Right?*

It may seem, at first read, that these two effects would work uniformly to aid all small/niche parties. However, I expect these two forces to disproportionately increase the vote-share of the radical-right, relative other parties for a few reasons. In terms of hypothesis one: it is known extremist parties have traditionally had a harder time raising money from donors. Extreme-right voters tend to be most economically disadvantaged (Ignazi 2006; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Kitschelt and McGann 1997), thus their voters are unable to contribute in large amounts. Therefore, guaranteed public funds should disproportionately aid them, as other parties would simply be able to raise the money anyway. Further, the far-right specifically performs much worse than the far-left in parliamentary elections.⁴ Thus, the erosion of incumbency advantage is much more beneficial to them.

Indeed, data from German party funding illustrates this well. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) was founded in 2013 as a center-right party focused almost solely on the abandonment of the Euro common-currency (Arzheimer 2015). At this time, they were not considered a radical-right party (Arzheimer 2015; Rooduijn et al. 2017), nor were they made up of particularly economically disadvantaged voters (Berbair, Lewandowsky, and Siri 2015). It was not until Frauke Petry ascended to the leadership and began realigning the party in

⁴In observed elections, the far-left receives on average 50% higher vote-share than the far-right.

2015 that it took on the radical-right characterization it is known for today.

Thus, the 2017 national election represents an important time in German politics, as it is the first federal election following their radical realignment. In this election, the average AfD voter was not so similar to the average mainstream voter, but rather mirrored the profile of radical-right voters throughout Europe (that is, those who feel they have been underserved by economic modernization) (Arzheimer and Berning 2019; Lux 2018).

Indeed, in the year prior to this election, government reports show the AfD was by far the least funded party campaigning. In 2016 the AfD raised a total of only EUR 15.6 million. Compare this to other German niche parties *Linke* (the German far-left) who raised nearly EUR 30 million, and the *Greens*, who raised over EUR 40 million (Deutscher Bundestag 2018).

Couple these numbers with the fact that, compared to all other German political parties the AfD was the most reliant on public sources for its funding (that is, government funding made up the highest percentage of total party revenue for the AfD, relative all other parties). Thus, it becomes clear that this really is a story of disproportionate help to the far-right, as they stand to gain the most from guaranteed funding from the public purse.

It is additionally important to note that the average far-right and far-left voter are quite different. The demographic profile of an extreme voter of the far-right differs with those on the far-left in important areas such as wealth, gender, employment status, and urban/rural residency (Rooduijn et al. 2017). Where far-right supporters tend to be less-educated than median-party voters, supporters of the far-left are actually *more* highly educated than median voters (Rooduijn et al. 2017; Visser et al. 2013). Thus, given different support bases, it is evident different factors should impact the rise of each party-family.

For example, left- and right-wing parties observe important differences with regard to group solidarity, with supporters of left-wing parties tending to exhibit much higher levels (Kiess and Trenz 2019). In turn, voters with higher levels of group solidarity are more likely to specifically vote for radical-left parties (Rooduijn et al. 2017). It is plausible, thus, that

left-wing parties are more able to invoke this value of group solidarity in a way to elicit increased small contributions from the masses, as research has shown left-wing parties have an advantage in terms of individual donations (Ponce and Scarrow 2011).

For hypothesis two, extreme-right parties tend to do well during economic recession, when their platform of economic issues (including unemployment, immigration, etc.) becomes more salient, allowing their message to gain a larger audience. Evidence suggests this is unique to the far-right, and not shared by other party types, namely the far-left (Brückner and Grüner 2010; Müller-Rommel 1998; Visser et al. 2013). Thus, it follows that public financing can only mediate the effect of the economy on the far-right, as there is no effect to mediate on the far-left.

I directly test these premises by re-running all main models presented to test the same effects on the radical-left (table A.1 in supplementary material). The results indicate these arguments are indeed unique to radical-right parties due to the unique characteristics of this party-family.

1.4 Data and Methodology

1.4.1 *Measurement*

I assess these hypotheses by testing a model of radical-right vote-share in lower-house legislative elections. Data on electoral outcomes come from Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch (2016). The sample covers historical election results in legislatures for 20 industrialized democracies.⁵ I utilize these electoral returns going back to 1950,⁶ for a total of $n = 328$

⁵The countries included are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

⁶For most of the sample, though due to data availability some countries enter the sample later.

elections.⁷ If two elections were held in the same year, the latter election was used. Each country in the sample ranges from 9–30 observed elections (mean = 16.4).

The definition used for categorizing a party as “extremist” follows from De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O’Rourke (2012), which itself is taken from Sartori’s definition (see section 2). This definition allows for the inclusion of not simply fascist and anti-democratic parties, but also the “new breed” of far-right nationalist parties. For example, far-right parties in Greece would include not only *Golden Dawn*, but also the newly created *Independent Greeks* (ANEL), among others. Beginning with the De Bromhead et al. (2012) coding, parties are tracked over time to include splinter groups that emerge. Further, country-specific sources are used to code new parties that are created after the sample. See Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch (2016) for a more extensive treatment of the coding and a list of country-specific sources.

Thus, in all models the dependent variable is the total vote-share won by extreme-right parties in a national election. An alternative may have been a party-level analysis, where the unit-of-analysis is party, and thus the dependent variable is vote-share each party receives in a national election. However, a national-level analysis is preferable to a party-level analysis for a few reasons. For one, the theoretical implications of this paper focus on the vote-shares of radical-right parties versus all other parties. However, a party-level model would instead compare votes for a *specific* radical-right party against all other alternatives (potentially including other radical-right parties)⁸. This type of analysis would examine individual party-choice, when in fact the quantity of interest is party-family choice. There are also several methodological concerns with such a model. For one, vote-shares of individual parties in a given election are not independently distributed, but rather rely on the vote-

⁷20 elections removed due to missing independent variables. See the supplementary material for a model on a multiple imputation dataset of all 348 elections.

⁸Thus, in any scenario where more than one far-right party is contesting an election, the substantive effect of the independent variables would be substantially downwardly biased.

Table 1.1: Ordinal Coding of Finance Laws

Level	Definition
0:	No public financing of elections
1:	Small/restricted amount of public financing
2:	Some public financing
3:	Campaigns are partly publicly financed
4:	Public financing makes up a significant share of campaign spending

shares received by other parties in that election.⁹ It is also unclear how such a specification would take into account new parties created within the sample (as well as mergers, splits, and so on). Finally, such a specification makes an empirical test of hypothesis two exceedingly difficult (outside of a potential three-way interaction term). Thus, I follow what has been the norm in the literature (e.g. Brückner and Grüner 2010; De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O’Rourke 2012; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch 2016; Golder 2003; Jackman and Volpert 1996; Swank and Betz 2003), and utilize total vote-share by all extreme-right parties in the election (that is, an aggregate of far-right vote in a given election).

The main independent variable of interest is the degree of public financing a country has adopted for its electoral system. This measure comes from the *Varieties of Democracy* database (version 6.2), hereafter “V-Dem.” This scale starts out as ordinal from 0–4, measured via expert surveys (no less than five country-experts code each country-year). See table 1.1 for the ordinal categories used. This measurement is then converted into an interval-level measurement through the V-Dem measurement tool, using Bayesian item response theory models (Pemstein et al. 2015). After this conversion, the new scaled variable has a range of $-1.81 - 4.06$.

Along with this measure of finance, I include an interaction term of Degree of Public Finance \times GDP Growth Rate. Such a term will demonstrate the conditional effect public

⁹For example, if party A gains votes, it means at least one other party must lose votes (i.e. all party-level votes in a given country always sum to 100).

finance and economic growth have on extreme-right success, allowing an empirical assessment of hypothesis two.

Given the vast effect the economy has on extremism, I include several variables to control for macro-economic conditions. First, I include GDP growth rate. As has been discussed, level of economic growth plays an important role in determining the level of success for extremist candidates. Second, I include inflation rate. Taken together, GDP growth and inflation tend to provide an adequate measure of overall economic conditions. I also add a control for government debt (as a %GDP), as high debt may serve as another factor raising the salience of economic issues, pushing the electorate towards conservative parties (Buhr 2013). This is especially vital given the European debt crisis that occurred during the time-period of the sample (further, I directly test for robustness to the debt crisis, see section 2.3).

Extreme-right party support coincides with electoral permissiveness, thus my final control measures the number of parties in parliament. A high number of parties tends to ease the entry of new parties into parliament (van Biezen and Rashkova 2014). Further, controlling for number of parties in the legislature gives additional power to the test of these hypotheses affording *disproportionate* benefit to extreme-right parties.

1.4.2 *Model*

Causal inference in determining the potential effects of a given policy (in this case public campaign financing) is complicated by a potential for bias caused by country take-up of that policy. It is possible, in other words, that some conflating factor increases the likelihood of a country to adopt public financing, and that that same factor also affects the level of extremism in a country.

Therefore, I opt to take advantage of V-Dem’s unique measurement of public financing as an interval-level measure, and analyze within-country variation across time.¹⁰ This is

¹⁰Though I present pooled and random-effects models in the supplementary material.

Table 1.2: Distribution of Finance Laws	
Level	Frequency (%)
0: None	26.2
1: Small/Restricted	9.8
2: Some	13.7
3: Partly	10.7
4: Significant	39.6
Frequency measured as a percent of country-years in the sample (ordinal-level measurement).	

conceptualized as a fixed-effects panel regression, with the unit of analysis of country-year measured at each country’s parliamentary election. Utilizing this measure of public financing allows even small changes in public financing schemes within a country to be quantified.

Indeed, public financing is not simply a static measure of a countries’ electoral system, but rather is dynamic over time. The fixed-effects approach allows all time invariant measures to be held constant, particularly useful for a study such as this where history, culture, and institutions all have a large role to play in influencing both supply-side (obstacles of extremist entry) and demand-side (citizens’ extremist predispositions) factors of extreme-right vote-share.

The data displays a large amount of variation, sufficient to warrant a time-series approach. Only one country in the sample, Switzerland, exhibits a constant level of public finance. The average standard deviation of degree of finance within a country is 1.1, where the overall measure across countries ranges from -1.81 to 4.06.

Further, there appears to be a moderate balance of levels of public financing spread throughout the sample, which provides strong data for robust estimates at all levels of public financing (nearly 70% of observations are concentrated at the extremes, which makes comparison between zero– and full–funding especially strong) See table 1.2 for the full distribution of laws within the sample (for presentation I present the distribution of the original ordinal-level measurement of campaign finance laws, however, in all models I utilize the interval-level measurement).

Studies have noted the problematic nature of using vote-share measurements in estimations of extremism. Namely, the problem that the data is left-censored at zero (Golder 2003; Jackman and Volpert 1996; Swank and Betz 2003). This creates issues, as there is no doubt *some* level of extremist support in every country. However, many elections in the sample (160 out of 328) show zero-percent of the vote-share going to extreme-right parties. These may be countries that (1) simply do not have extremist parties, (2) have an extremist base, yet due to strategic considerations they vote for another party, or (3) simply have too low a level of support to report. Therefore, I follow the widely-used practice of utilizing a Tobit maximum-likelihood estimator, left-censored at zero.¹¹

Tobit models, while largely intended for censored or truncated data, have been shown to be quite useful in overcoming this exact issue. Specifically, they provide a helpful application to overcome a ‘corner problem,’ that is when a dependent variable is continuously distributed for positive values of y , yet for a sizable proportion of observations $P(y_i = 0) > 0$ (Wooldridge 2010, 2012). For example, Wooldridge (2012) cites an example of estimating individual monthly expenditure on alcohol. He notes that several difficulties present themselves when using a model that ignores the censored nature of the data, and recommends the usefulness of a Tobit to correct them. The Tobit specification in this case takes into account the fact that a consequential portion of observations are clustered at the zero-bound. Additionally, Tobit models are very common in the literature on radical-party politics (De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O’Rourke 2012; Doležalová 2015; Golder 2003; Jackman and Volpert 1996; March and Rommerskirchen 2015; Swank and Betz 2003), and thus have the added benefit of additional comparability with a major share of the research done on the topic.

A Tobit specification, thus, should yield unbiased and consistent estimators in the

¹¹Though some note potential issues with fixed-effects Tobit models, Monte-Carlo simulation has shown it to be both unbiased and consistent with sufficient cluster sizes of around 8 (Greene 2004*a,b*). Cluster sizes in my sample range from 9 to 30, with a mean of 16.4. Thus, I argue there should be no concerns for this specification, especially compared to the alternatives of treating vote-share as uncensored in OLS, or the potential omitted variable bias in a non-fixed effects Tobit. Even still, the supplementary material contains alternative specifications and illustrates results are not conditional on model specification.

face of this concentration of values at zero. Yet given potential concerns, the main model is re-specified as a beta-regression. Beta-regression is a maximum-likelihood estimator which treats the dependent variable as a proportion, bounded between 0 and 1 (i.e. beta distributed), with parameters reported in terms of the mean of y (Ferrari and Cribari-Neto 2004). The Beta distribution, unfortunately, assumes a zero-probability for responses equal to zero.¹² Therein is the main benefit of the Tobit model, which not only assumes a positive probability density for zero-values, but assumes a non-negligible share of observations are in fact zero. Results remain nearly identical to the Tobit specification and are presented alongside the Tobit results in the next section.

1.4.3 *Time-trends*

While it may appear on its front that extremism in one country acts as a contagion, spreading across borders, this is not likely the case. Figure 1.1 shows the level of extremism over time within each sample country. There does not appear to be any strongly prevailing trends acting out across all countries over long periods of time. Peaks of extremism in one country (or even upward trends) do not correspond with peaks in another. As has been argued before (e.g. Arzheimer 2009), time-effects that are uniform across countries do not exist. Rather, any correlation found between countries is much more likely a result of countries reacting similarly to a global economic shock.

However, it is evident that trends of extremism may have lasting effects *within* a country. In many cases, level of public funding received by a party for an election is in-part determined by the vote-share received in the previous election. Therefore I include a lagged-dependent variable as a control (in this case, share of the vote won by extreme-right parties in the previous election).

Many warn of the possibility of introducing bias to a model containing both fixed-

¹²Given the existence of 0 values I follow Smithson and Verkuilen (2006) and transform values such that $y' = (y \times (n - 1) + 0.5)/n$.

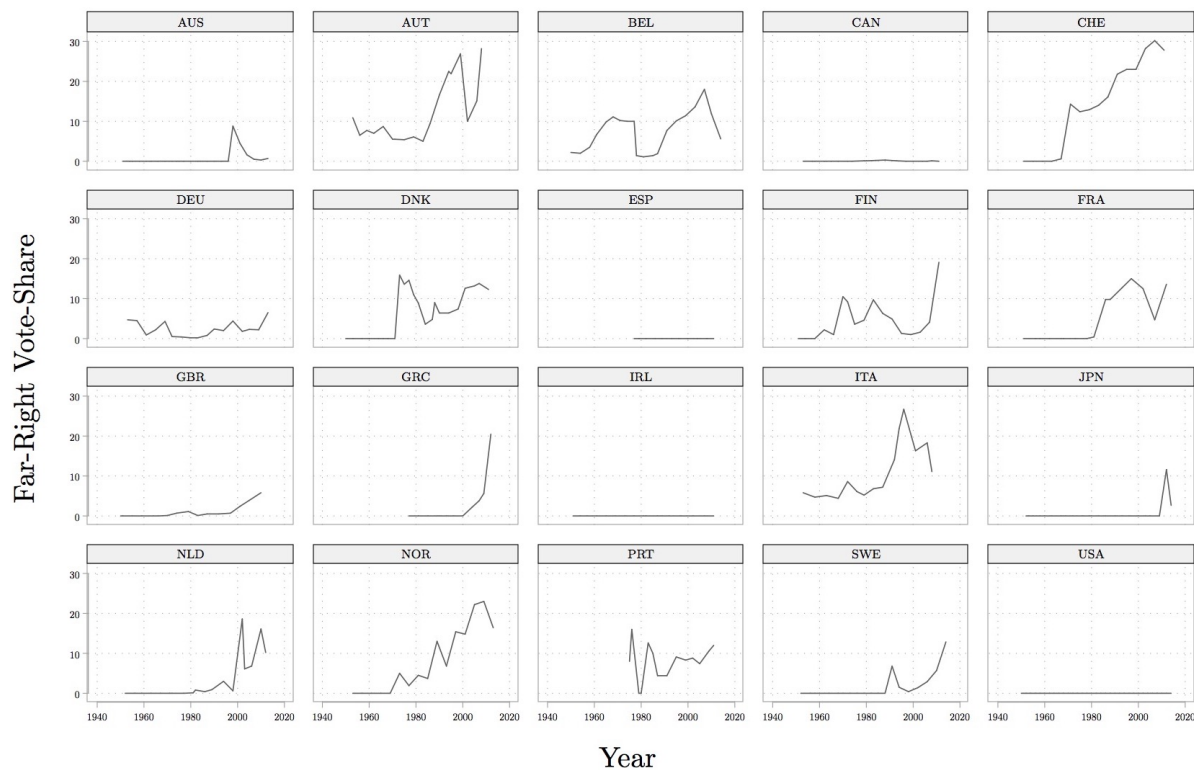


Figure 1.1: Extremism Over Time

effects and a lagged-dependent variable (Nickell 1981). In the robustness check section after I present results, I outline three alternative specifications used to test for such bias. First, I rerun the model as a pooled-tobit (i.e. omitting fixed-effects), second, omitting the lagged-dependent variable, and third, as a multi-level Tobit (that is, with random effects on countries). In all cases, the results remain materially unchanged from the ones presented below.

1.5 Results

Table 1.3 presents the results of the regression models. The first three columns present results from the Tobit regressions. Column one displays a baseline model without degree of public finance or its interaction with growth, while column two includes degree of public finance, but not the interaction with GDP growth. Finally column three presents the full model with the interactive effect. Meanwhile, the last two columns present results from the

Table 1.3: Results of Tobit and Beta Regressions

	Tobit			Beta	
	(1) right	(2) right	(3) right	(4) rightb	(5) rightb
Degree Public Finance		1.773*** (0.367)	1.287*** (0.320)	0.199*** (0.0459)	0.153*** (0.0469)
GDP Growth	-0.392* (0.189)	-0.316 (0.174)	-0.657*** (0.194)	-0.0461* (0.0189)	-0.0674*** (0.0170)
Inflation	-0.141 (0.0727)	-0.152* (0.0705)	-0.208* (0.0817)	-0.0324* (0.0150)	-0.0400** (0.0144)
# of Parties	0.128 (0.211)	-0.0792 (0.219)	-0.119 (0.215)	0.0290 (0.0386)	0.0213 (0.0371)
Government Debt	0.00152 (0.0199)	-0.0304* (0.0143)	-0.0331* (0.0142)	-0.00482** (0.00154)	-0.00538** (0.00178)
Lagged DV	0.801*** (0.0708)	0.708*** (0.101)	0.692*** (0.0946)	0.0794*** (0.0142)	0.0804*** (0.0142)
Degree Public Finance \times GDP Growth			0.208** (0.0689)		0.0210** (0.00810)
Constant	-3.718*** (1.091)	-3.885*** (1.085)	-2.613* (1.297)	-4.246*** (0.207)	-4.128*** (0.203)
Sigma	4.589*** (0.421)	4.381*** (0.406)	4.346*** (0.412)		
Scale				3.708*** (0.180)	3.733*** (0.181)
N	328	328	328	328	328
Pseudo R^2	0.277	0.299	0.302		
Log Pseudo-Likelihood	-537.6	-521.5	-518.8	1019.2	1021.3

Standard errors clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed test.

beta regression models. The results from the two specifications are virtually identical.¹³ In figures A.1 and A.2 of the supplementary material I present comparisons in the distribution of predicted values from both models. Given that the results are same, and the norm of the literature in utilizing Tobit specifications, the remaining discussion of results focuses on the

¹³Appearances in differences of coefficient magnitude are due to rescaling for the beta regression, substantively the results do not change (see figures A.1 and A.2 in the supplementary material).

Tobit models.

First, as previous findings suggest, GDP growth indeed has a negative and significant effect on radical-right vote-share.¹⁴ As an economy improves and grows at faster rates, extreme-right candidates see their vote-share diminished. Interestingly, GDP growth appears to lose the traditional level of significance when public finance is controlled for. However as a practical matter, the coefficient and standard error remain quite similar to the baseline model, and still maintains $p = 0.07$.

In the non-interactive model, degree of public financing has a positive and significant coefficient, providing support for hypothesis one that as public financing increases extreme-rightists can expect to see their vote-shares increase, as well. Figure 1.2 displays the average marginal effect of moving an election from the 5th-percentile of public financing (i.e. the value of the lowest 5% in the sample) to the 95th-percentile (i.e. the value of the highest 5% in the sample). Going from a very low level of public funding to a very high level of public funding takes an extreme-right party, on average, from roughly 2% of vote-share to over 6%, with all else remaining equal.¹⁵ This equates to an increase in vote-share of nearly 190%. This represents quite a large direct effect of public campaign funds. Before even taking into account the potential mitigation of the effect of the economy, adopting election public financing provisions will, on average, nearly triple the vote-share of extreme-right parties.

I turn now to the evidence for hypothesis two. Though a graphical interpretation is of more value, I note the positive and significant coefficient on the interaction term would seem to indicate that the negative effect of GDP growth is indeed mitigated as public financing increases. I examine this effect more clearly by interpreting the results via figures 1.3 and 1.4. Figure 1.3 displays the relationship between the economy and extreme-right vote share at different levels of public financing. Again, I use the 5th- and 95th-percentile as limits of

¹⁴I alternatively try including lags of GDP growth by up to three years, but the results remain unchanged.

¹⁵For a hypothetical country at mean levels of all control variables.

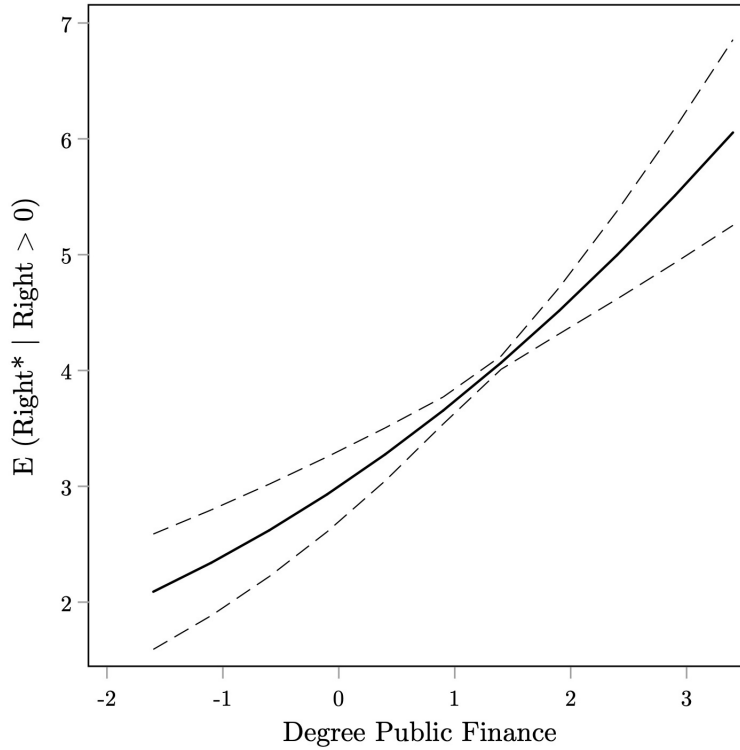


Figure 1.2: Marginal Effect of Public Financing

the simulation. The solid line indicates a hypothetical country with very low public financing (a value of -1.6), and shows the standard response found in the literature: as the economy grows at faster rates, extreme-rightism falls; as the economy contracts, conversely, extremism increases.

The dashed line, however, depicts the relationship between the economy and extreme-right vote-share for a hypothetical country with very high public financing (a value of 3.4). When the economy is weak (the left-side of the graph), extreme-right support is high in both countries (those with a high level of public financing, and those without). Due to the direct-effect of public financing (hypothesis one) the level is higher in the country with a high level of public financing. However, as the economy improves, extreme-right vote share decreases in cases where public financing is low. In cases where it is high, however, there is no significant difference in predicted vote-share at different levels of economic growth.

For example, look what happens when an economy transitions from shrinking at

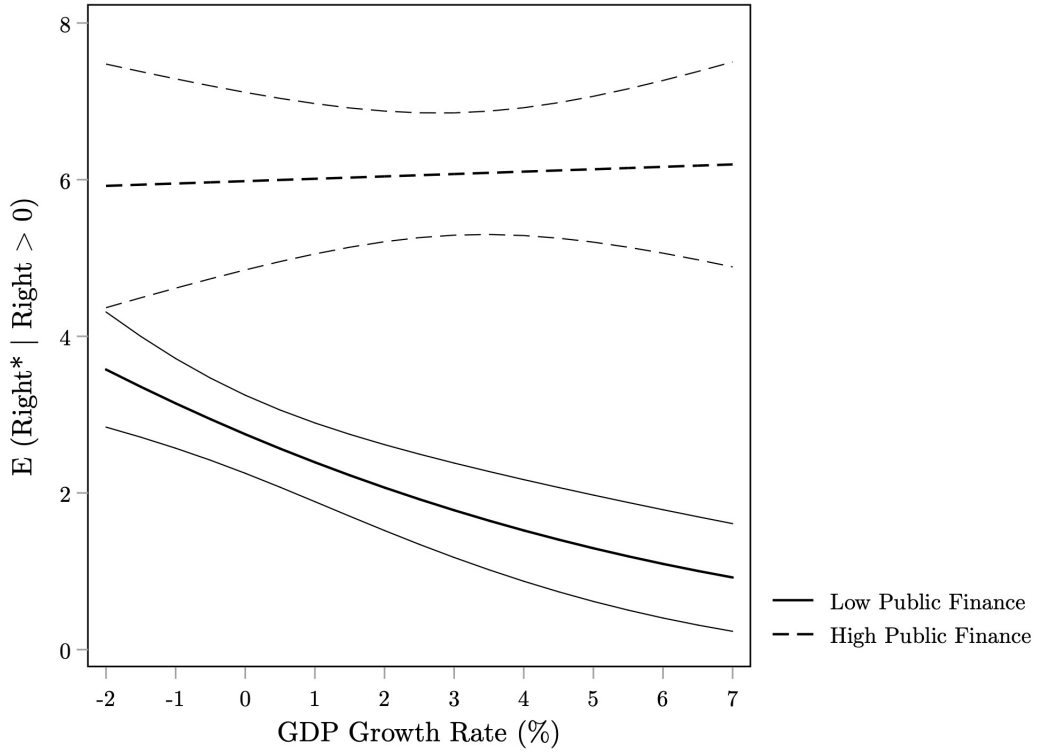


Figure 1.3: Conditional Effect of Economic Growth

2% annually to growing at 4%. In a country (with mean values for all control variables) with a low level of public financing, it is predicted that extreme-right vote-share will fall from just over 3.5% to roughly 1.5% (a nearly 60% decrease). In a country with high public financing, however, that same economic transition would have no effect in reducing extreme-right support. Thus, as hypothesized, there seems to be no effect on extreme-right vote-share as a country's economy rapidly expands, or as it goes into recession. Rather, extreme-rightists are able to maintain their higher level of support regardless of economic conditions.

I illustrate this more clearly in figure 1.4. This graph illustrates the changing marginal effect of growth (i.e. the Tobit coefficient) at different levels of public financing. It is clear that, at low levels of public finance, GDP growth has a significant and negative effect. As level of public financing increases, however, the negative effect is diminished. By the time public financing reaches 1.4 (roughly the 55th percentile), the effect of economic growth is

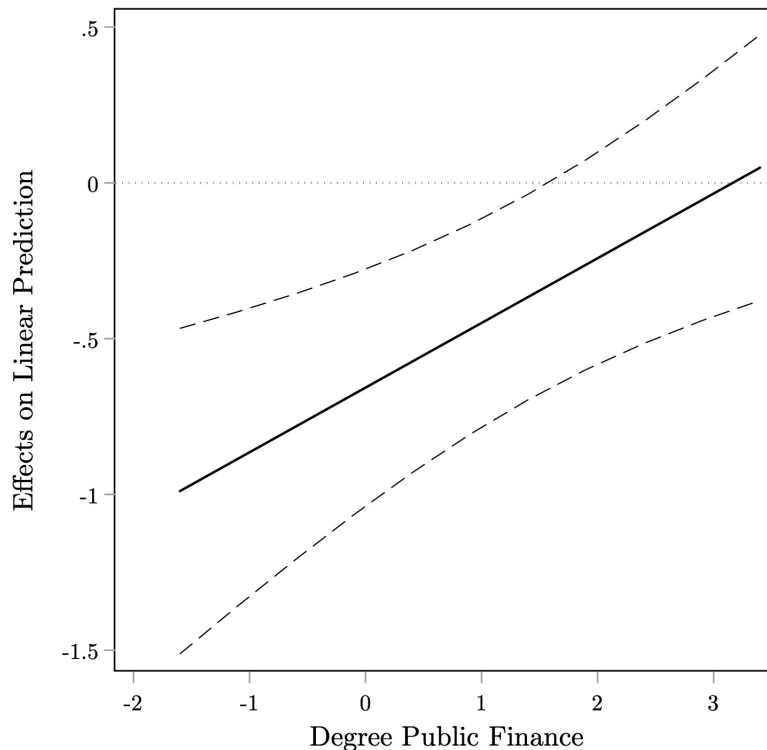


Figure 1.4: Effect of Finance on Marginal Effect of Growth

no longer significant as a predictor of far-right vote-share.

This is a rather counterintuitive result. Public campaign financing has increasingly become a rallying call for those on the political left,¹⁶ and is largely supported by more left-wing politicians (Dennis 1998). Further, voters and candidates call for public financing as a mechanism to restore power to the majority and ‘level the playing field’ (Esenberg 2010; Panagopoulos 2011) . That is, to take power out of the hands of elite and special interests, and return it to the citizenry. However, I illustrate these policies may actually be counterproductive to their cause for two reasons.

First, rather than helping the proponents of such measures (that is, the left), public financing actually has the unintended consequence of aiding radical-right parties. Due to the features of this party-family, public monies serve to disproportionately aide them. Their

¹⁶See, for example, the “The Government By the People Act” in the United States.

reliance on a poor economy, inability to alter their platform to attract voters, and difficulty raising funds and being competitive is key to their disproportional benefit of public funds at any level of economic growth. Thus, by promoting such measures, voters on the left may actually serve to weaken their power. Second, public financing does not simply reallocate power back to the majority. Rather, they allocate power toward the fringe of the electorate, by amplifying their voice, and continuously issuing a steady stream of cash even after much of the public loses interest in them.

1.5.1 *Robustness Checks*

I conduct several checks to ensure robustness of the specified model. First, as stated in footnote 11, several studies have noted potential complications with fixed-effects Tobit models. While, given the sizable unit-cluster sizes, this is not an issue in this case and preferable to alternative modeling strategies, I respecify the model (1) without fixed-effects (instead utilizing a pooled-tobit model), (2) without the lagged-vote share, and (3) as a multi-level Tobit model (with country random-effects). In the case of the pooled and random-effects model I add controls for proportional systems and electoral threshold (dummies for 1- 2- 3- and 4% thresholds). In all three cases, the results remain unchanged from the fixed-effects Tobit presented in this paper. The interaction term in the pooled-model does appear to lose traditional levels of significance, but a substantive and graphical interpretation of the result ensures there is no existent difference. This, coupled with the evidence from Greene (2004*a,b*), see footnote 11, as well as the beta regression re-specifications, should lead to great confidence with the Tobit results.

In every one of these models, both the original and the re-specifications, 20 elections were omitted by listwise deletion due to missing data in the control variables. I impute these missing values by multiple imputation with AMELIA II and re-run the main model on the full sample of 348 elections (rather than the 328 previously). Again in this case, the results are unaltered and remain robust.

I utilize this multiple imputation dataset and test robustness against the inclusion of

several additional control variables thought to have contributed to the recent rise in extremism. Namely, I include controls for unemployment, immigration, and economic inequality. Beyond potentially contributing to rises in extremism, inequality is especially important as a robustness test. It is possible that a change in public financing is not entirely exogenous, as assumed. Rises in inequality may increase calls for adoption of public financing (to restore power to the majority). This same rise in inequality may drive up support for the extreme-right.

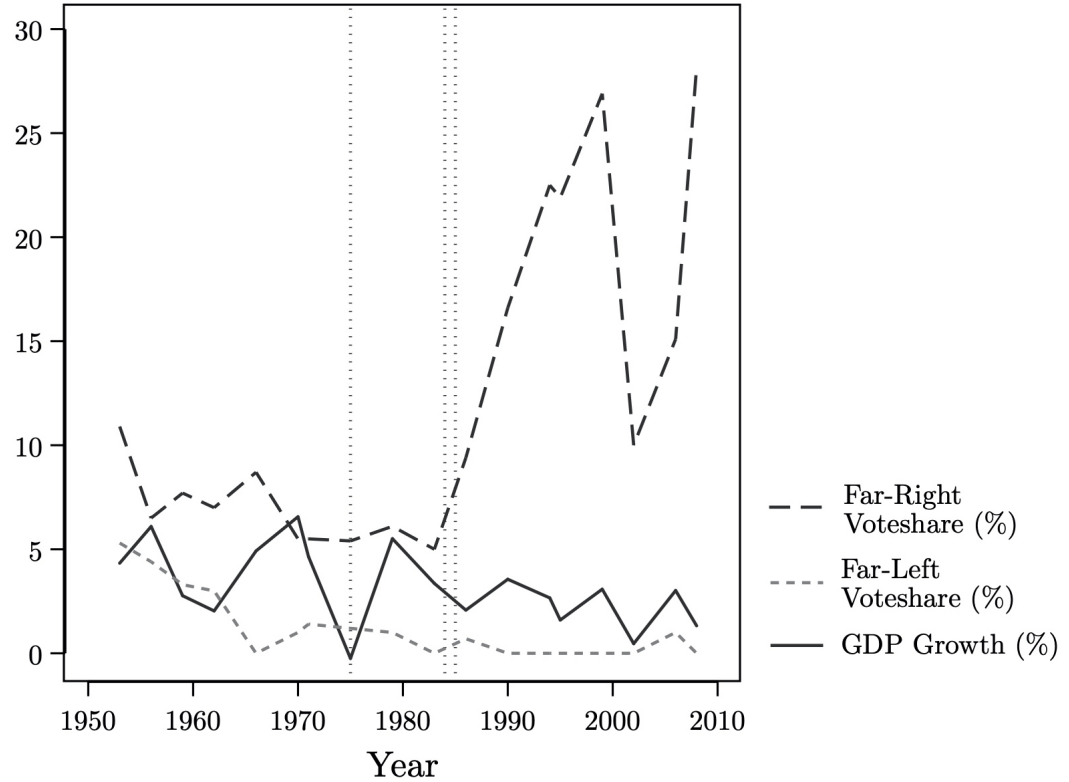
However, in all cases the interpretation of the results do not change. That is, in every case, public financing has a significant direct effect and serves to mitigate the effect of economic growth on extreme-right vote-share. I report the results of all these alternative models and describe the procedures in more detail in the supplementary material (tables A.2 and A.3).

Next, to ensure results are not being driven by outliers, I re-run the fixed-effects Tobit model with several additional specifications. First, I re-run the model while omitting extreme values of the DV and main IV. I run three such specifications: (1) omitting observations above the 95th percentile of vote-share for extreme-right candidates, (2) omitting observations above the 95th percentile of economic growth, and (3) omitting observations below the 5th percentile of economic growth. Second, I jackknife the model, running it 328 times, each time with one election dropped. Finally, to ensure results are not being driven by recent events like the European debt crisis, I (1) drop all observations post-2007, and (2) drop the four countries most effected by the crisis (Portugal, Italy, Spain, and Greece).

The results of these re-specifications for outlier sensitivity are reported in table A.4 of the supplementary material. In all cases, the results remain robust and unchanged.

1.6 Motivating Case: Austria

Extremism has seen a puzzling trend in recent history. Take Austria as an example. Austria dramatically raised their level of public financing throughout the 1970s and 1980s.



Note: Vertical dashed lines refer to passage of public campaign finance laws (1975, 1984, 1985).

Figure 1.5: Results in Austrian Elections

In 1970 they sat in the bottom 25th-percentile for public funds, at the same time, radical-right parties in Austria routinely received around 6% of vote-share. By the end of the 1970s Austria's level of public financing had jumped up to the top 25th-percentile. This was largely due to the passage of the *Federal Law on the Activities, Financing and Campaigns of Political Parties of 1975*, which granted public funding to any Austrian political party with either 5 seats in the National Council or at least 1% of vote-share in a national election (Greco 2011; National Council of Austria 1975). Further changes in the early 1980s¹⁷ increased the level of public funding in Austria to an even higher degree.

By 1990 extreme-rightists were receiving well over 15% of the vote-share, more than double their pre-public financing average. After the election of 1999, the extreme-right

¹⁷The *Federal Act on Public Funding for Political Education and Media Information of 1984* and the *Parliamentary Groups Funding Act of 1985* (Greco 2011).

Freedom Party (who throughout the time-sample have met both conditions of the 1975 law) became the second-largest party in parliament, joining in coalition with the more mainstream *Austria's People's Party*. Importantly, this all occurred while Austria saw a healthy economic growth rate of nearly 3% throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Figure 1.5 illustrates these changes over time. The dashed line shows vote-share of radical-right parties in Austrian national elections. The vertical lines depict the mentioned changes in Austrian public financing laws, while the solid line depicts changes in GDP for reference. The visualization makes it clear: Austria's far-right took off just after the rapid expansion of their public financing scheme, allowing them to reach new heights, even while the economy grew comfortably. For comparison, the third line shows far-left vote-share over the same time period, making it clear that this result is wholly unique to the far-right party family.

The large dip in 2002 is due to the backlash faced by the *Freedom Party* after they entered in to a governing coalition (as tends to happen to radical-right parties when they must transition from protester to governor). However, they quickly recovered and even re-entered into the government coalition following the 2017 election.

The Austrian example paints the picture of a general trend: public financing disproportionately helps far-right parties. Austria is but a single example of a recent growth in radical-rightism worldwide. I argue some of this was made possible by public financing of political campaigns; the results of several statistical models support this conclusion.

1.7 Conclusion

Extreme-right parties have been shown to fare worse in terms of raising funds compared to their mainstream counterparts. This difficulty in fundraising makes it harder for them to remain competitive in elections, unless economic downturn increases the salience of their platform, delivering them an audience they need not pay for. Imagine instead an extreme-right party was guaranteed funding, regardless of economic conditions. I argue that this would serve to disproportionately aid them relative their competition, affording them a

larger popular vote-share, while making their success no longer contingent on poor economic conditions.

Through a quantitative analysis of over 320 legislative elections in advanced democracies I find that, even after accounting for economic conditions, electoral permissiveness, and a host of other important factors, the degree of electoral public financing plays a significant role in predicting the level of extremist support. In fact, a country transitioning from a very low level of public funding to a significant level of public funding is estimated to nearly triple the vote-share of extreme-right parties. Such an impact is not just significant in the statistical sense, it is of a significantly large and important magnitude.

This is an interesting and counterintuitive result. Often, public financing provisions are advocated by those on the left, and labeled a mechanism to restore power to the “average citizen.” However, these policies have been demonstrated to have largely unintended consequences. First, rather than provide a return for their left-wing supporters, public financing instead provides a large benefit to the right-wing. And further, rather than restore power to the majority, they reallocate power towards those on the fringes (that is, to the extreme-rightists).

The radical-right has been correlated with increased executive turnover, increased cabinet defections, and higher levels of mass rioting (Powell Jr 1981). They are often made up of inexperienced politicians and preside over particularly unstable times. Their rise to power is often seen as a great threat to democracy and regime stability, as they tend to erode democratic checks on the executive, and often-times engender executive takeovers. Take *Golden Dawn*, a recently popular far-right party in Greece. Nikolaos Michaloliakos, the founder and longtime leader of the party, is currently on trial (with several of his deputies) for leading a “criminal organization,” charges that were filed after the party was implicated in the murder of a liberal rapper, as well as the numerous attacks and murders of immigrants.¹⁸

¹⁸See “Greece Crackdown: Golden Dawn Leader Michaloliakos Charged” in the BBC.

Though they have remained largely uncompetitive in elections over time, parties of the extreme-right have been noted to have profound influence on politics, even while losing. Increased success of the radical-right, for example, has tended to lead mainstream parties to adopt more anti-immigrant policies (Abou-Chadi 2016). Look, for example, at Mark Rutte and the Dutch *People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy* changing rhetoric regarding immigrants during the 2017 election as the far-right *Party for Freedom* led the polls.¹⁹

Beyond these stark implications, understanding the determinants of their rise to power is a particularly important task of political science, capable of shedding much light on the inner workings of government, elections, the economy, and the interplay between them. These results do just that, by adding a new finding to the list of the determinants of extremism, and importantly, changing our understanding of the effect of economic growth on limiting radical-right support.

¹⁹For e.g., “Dutch PM Tells Immigrants: Act Normal or Go Away” in The Washington Post.

CHAPTER 2

COALITION AS COOPTATION: THE RADICAL-RIGHT'S ENTRANCE TO GOVERNMENT

2.1 Introduction

Following the 2017 Austrian National Council elections, the *Austrian People's Party* opted to enter into coalition with the radical-right *Freedom Party of Austria* for the second time in almost twenty years. Yet, according to data from the Chapel Hill Survey, the *People's Party* was ideologically closer to the *Social Democratic Party of Austria*. Additionally, the two had been serving in a coalition together for over a decade, and their combined seat-share would have been nearly identical to the Freedom Party/People's Party coalition. Our existent theories of coalition building provide little leverage on their own in understanding such an outcome. In fact prior to the election, research on coalition formation specifically mentioned the low likelihood of a Freedom Party/People's Party coalition (Nyhuis and Plescia 2017), especially compared to a continuation of the incumbent Social Democratic/People's Party partnership.

The inclusion of radical-right parties in coalitions is noteworthy and surprising as there are high costs to the moderate party for joining forces with a radical partner. For one, there will likely be a backlash from betrayed voters (see for e.g. "Austria: Protests in Vienna Over Far-Right in Coalition" in the BBC) who balk at the idea of their moderate party uniting with such extreme partners. Second, are costs relating to governing. Radical parties are typically rather inexperienced governors, and will very likely hurt the performance of the remaining coalition partner. Third, there are international costs, as allies fear a potential threat to

liberal democracy. In the aftermath of the first Freedom Party/People’s Party coalition of 1999, Austria immediately faced economic sanctions and reduced communications from European allies (Meret 2010), with the EU proclaiming that “the admission of the FPÖ into a coalition government legitimizes the extreme right in Europe.”

Why then, did the People’s Party opt to instead invite the Freedom Party into coalition in 2017, given the dramatic backlash the country faced the first time? This is not a phenomenon unique to Austria, but rather is illustrative of a trend becoming more and more common. While radical parties¹ tend to receive a small minority of votes, their presence in coalitions is becoming much more common. Since 1990, far-right parties in Europe have served in coalitions in 14 countries, yet held the Prime Ministership in only three. As of now, research on the radical-right has not treated their inclusion in governing coalitions as running counter to any current theories of coalition bargaining. However, recent events show this assumption to be untenable.

In this paper I explore the conditions under which mainstream parties invite a radical-right party into a coalition. Much of the literature on coalition formation has characterized this formation process spatially, as picking partners closest to you in ideological space (Maravall 2010). Yet these theories have been unsuccessful in comprehensively explaining recent events on their own. I introduce a novel theory which argues a crucial missing element to these understandings of coalition formation involves the desire of mainstream parties to co-opt their radical rivals. When radical parties pose no real electoral threat there is little reason to pay them any attention. If however they begin rising in popularity, and start posing a real threat, inviting them into coalition may become less costly than allowing them to continue on as a political opponent. First, this serves to assure voters that the major parties are aware of their discontent, and are taking the issues seriously. Second, as radical parties can largely be characterized as protest parties, their time in opposition is spent

¹Throughout this paper I use the terms “radical-right” and “far-right” interchangeably.

railing against the current government and dominant parties. Once they become part of the government however, the protesting seems to stop, and the radicals' growing damage to the existent powers is diminished.

Utilizing evidence from over 200 European coalitions, I find that as the radical party's platform rises in salience—that is, as conditions are prime for their imminent rise in support—they are much more likely to be included in a country's governing coalition, regardless of their seat-share in parliament and ideological incongruence to the ruling party. This evidence demonstrates current theories of coalition building do not tell the full story. Where, clearly, literature has already shown that rising platform salience serves to increase the seat-share of these parties—this paper demonstrates the effects are far more serious. I show that, even given very low representation, a radical-right party is quite likely to enter government as national conditions change to give their platform high salience.

2.2 Coalition Formation in Europe

Much work has been done on the determinants of coalition building in parliamentary democracies. Generally, the literature can be broken down into two main paradigms: office-seeking (concerned with gaining political power) and policy-seeking (concerned with enacting policy change). Thus, the two most important factors in predicting coalition formation are seat-share and ideological positioning (Müller and Strøm 2003). The office-seeking theory argues some politicians simply have a goal of getting into office. Riker (1962) argues that politicians will form minimum winning coalitions, a coalition which passes the threshold for a majority, but by as small a margin as possible. This gives the coalition a majority control of government, but divides the rewards of maintaining control amongst the fewest office-holders, thus maximizing the reward. Work has shown however, that simple office-seeking approaches have not been well empirically supported (see for e.g. Müller and Strøm 2003). Rather, it is apparent that party ideology must be considered, as well.

Thus, many in the literature advanced policy-seeking theories of coalition formation.

Axelrod (1970) and de Swaan (1973) add ideological constraints to the minimum winning coalition theory of formation, changing our conception to instead a minimum *connected* winning coalition. In this way, coalition formation is often understood spatially, describing parties as ideologically placed on a left-right dimension, where coalition formation depends on the euclidean distance between parties (Maravall 2010). This is due to the simple fact that parties are not simply interested in forming coalitions to hold majority power, but have actual policy preferences as well, and thus will form coalitions with parties that have similar policy preferences (Budge and Laver 1993). This process puts radical-right parties in an extremely precarious position, as the more extreme a party's ideological position, the less likely it is to enter government (Döring and Hellström 2013). This too follows from spatial models of coalition building, as median parties tend to have a dictatorial role in coalition formation, they can always choose a more moderate coalition partner who will demand less policy concessions in return for their support (see for e.g. Bolleyer 2007).

This makes the growing trend of radical parties serving as coalition partners run counter to what previous theories have believed. A median party will almost always have an option of a more moderate coalition partner, who will demand less in terms of policy compromise. Beyond this fact, there are impactful costs to be borne for picking a radical partner, which I outline below.

2.2.1 *The Costs of Radical Parties in Coalition Government*

Aside from the dramatically disproportionate balance of power in terms of negotiating, such partnerships remain so surprising due to the strong threats that exist for both the mainstream and radical partners. These threats can be broken down into two main categories: domestic and international threats.

In terms of domestic threats, strong costs exist for the mainstream partner. It is likely moderate party voters will feel betrayed by the inclusion of such an ideologically incongruent party in government. It is evident, for example, that coalition formation is influenced in part by voters' preferences for preferable ruling partners (Debus and Müller 2013; Falcó-Gimeno

2012), and likewise, that vote-choice is partially determined by prospective ideas on possible emergent coalitions (Bowler, Karp, and Donovan 2010; Herrmann 2014). Thus, parties should expect some sort of a backlash when these preferences are ignored.

Further, radical parties tend to be very inexperienced governors. They are generally characterized as “protest parties,” thus their transition into a governing party brings with it many difficulties a mainstream party will have to endure. Their governance is correlated with high levels of executive turnover, and an elevated rate of cabinet defections (Powell Jr 1981), both likely unwanted by their governing partner. Take for instance the aforementioned 1999 coalition of the radical-right *Freedom Party of Austria* (FPÖ) and the moderate *Austrian People’s Party* (ÖVP). Problems relating to the transition from protestor to governor led to party infighting, organizational troubles, and other setbacks for the party (Luther 2007; Meret 2010). Cabinet defections set in as several prominent FPÖ ministers resigned, and a new election was called in 2002. By the time the election occurred, support for the FPÖ had plummeted 65%, leading to their lowest seat-share in nearly 20 years.

Finally, there are clear international costs to the government when a party on the radical fringes joins a coalition. Largely, this is due to radical parties’ tenuous relationship with liberal democracy. Much work has shown how big of a threat radical parties, who tend to be quite populist in nature (see Rooduijn and Akkerman 2015), are to liberal democracy (Houle and Kenny 2018; Kendall-Taylor and Frantz 2016). As international partners and IGOs have a clear interest in maintaining democracy, it is evident some costs may be borne by governments who form with the inclusion of a radical party. Yet again, this is exactly what transpired in Austria. Following the 1999 inclusion of the FPÖ in government, the European Union initiated sanctions against Austria, as all member-states cut off non-formal communication (Luther 2007; Meret 2010).

In sum, existing literature suggests coalitions partnerships with radical-right parties should be very unlikely. Yet, this is exactly what has been transpiring lately. Why would mainstream parties agree to form these coalitions given the difficulties that would present

themselves? It is easier to understand the calculus for the radical party. For one, entering into coalition aids in granting legitimacy, and likewise helps remove the so-called stigma of being merely a ‘protest party’ (Dunphy and Bale 2011). However, for the moderate party, the reasoning is much less clear.

And yet, previous literature that has dived in to this question has concluded that this is simply a process of “politics as usual,” with existing theories of coalition building capable of explaining this ongoing phenomenon (e.g. De Lange 2012). This, however, no longer appears to be the case. Rather, we see time and time again that the major theories of coalition building alone are incapable of explaining many contemporary government outcomes. There is a motivation of these moderate parties to utilize coalition building as a tool of cooptation. The aforementioned oddities of recent history are explained comprehensively when this motivation is taken into consideration alongside previous theories of coalition formation.

2.3 Radical Cooptation

This study offers a new logic for understanding the trend of mainstream-right and radical-right coalition partnership, borrowing in a way from the literature on authoritarian government’s cooptation of political rivals by their admittance to national legislature. With no doubt mainstream parties have taken notice of the recent rise in radical-right success. Mainstream parties have begun changing their behavior to remain competitive against the growing threat, altering policy positions (Abou-Chadi and Krause 2018; Williams and Ishiyama 2018) and emphasizing different issues (Abou-Chadi 2016). Indeed, it is apparent the radical-right has grown immensely as a political threat in recent history, and center-right parties in particular are most vulnerable to this threat (Akkerman 2012).

Importantly, the radical party thrives as a protest party (Mayer and Perrineau 1992). Characterized as ‘anti-system’ (De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O’Rourke 2012; Jackman and Volpert 1996; Mudde 2006; Sartori 1976), they make a name for themselves by railing against the system of government, dominant parties, and national conditions. Understand-

ably, this is not ideal for mainstream parties, who rely on the current government system, and the people's trust in said system, to maintain power. This 'anti-system' rhetoric takes hold as voters of the radical-right view themselves as 'forgotten': they were left out of the monetary spoils of modernization (Betz 1994), and increasingly feel left out of society at-large (Gidron and Hall 2020). As a result, they take hold in the radical-right's promise as an alternative to the mainstream political elites (Loch and Norocel 2015). Thus, by engaging and agreeing to work with these radical parties, moderate parties may well be signaling to voters that (1) they hear them, but (2) you do not need to abandon us for them, as we can all get along and work together. In this way, rising discontent in a voter for the current state of affairs may slow once they see their government incorporating these alternative ideas. This, of course is helpful to moderate parties as it prevents voters from fleeing them in favor of a radical-right party.

Beyond simply trying to provide a signal to voters, moderate parties are likely inviting these opponents into a coalition to stop the barrage of attacks. It is much harder for a radical party to criticize so vehemently the government administration when it is itself a member of said administration. What was once a source of such criticism and electoral threat is disarmed in government and forced to tone down their critiques and focus only on reasonably doable policy proposals (Heinisch 2003). Thus, I argue mainstream parties are strategically inviting a radical opponent into coalition with them as a method of cooptation to minimize the potential for electoral threat. In Finland, for example, the largest party *Centre's* decision to include the radical-right *Finns Party* was largely viewed as a move to minimize the threat of the far-right, with *The Guardian* referring to the remaining parties leaders' agreement that this was the best option, lest they allow them to "gain ground in opposition,"² while the *Economist* simultaneously characterized *Centre's* move as an effort

²"Far Right Set to Enter Government Coalition in Finland." 2015. *The Guardian*.

to “tame” the *Finns Party*.³

In sum, only when the costs associated with such a coalition (that is, the backlash they will face) are outweighed by the costs of allowing them to continue their barrage of attacks in opposition will they be invited into coalition. This happens when the national conditions are ripe for the radical platform to take hold, and voters are more persuaded by their platform. In this case, the threat posed by the radical-right far outweighs the potential costs for a backlash. For one, high platform salience increases the potential for a flight of voters from the moderate party to the radical party. For two, this salience increases the audience to the radical-right’s decrying of the current governing system, and those in control of it. Thus, my ultimate expectation: as the salience of the radical-right platform (which I define in the succeeding section) increases, the probability of seeing a radical-right party enter a governing coalition will also increase, even while their seat-share is unchanged.

2.3.1 *Coalition Invitation and Acceptance*

Up until now, the process of the radical right’s entry to government has been characterized as one-sided. Yet, this is not the real-world case. While the larger partner generally “invites” the smaller to form a coalition (Lees 2001), it is not simply that a government is formed once the moderate party extends such an invitation to a radical party. Rather, there is a necessary second step: said radical party must accept the moderate’s offer.

First, why would a radical party have any interest in serving in such a coalition, given they are the ones who pay some of the aforementioned costs? For one, serving in a government affords them some form of legitimacy they did not have (Dunphy and Bale 2011). As simply a protest party, it may be hard for radical parties to make the case to voters that they are able to govern effectively. In government however, they gain a kind of ‘official’ status. It is evident that they are now seen by a mainstream, large political party as a worthy partner, capable of being trusted to oversee government ministries on their own.

³“The Right-Wing Finns Party Does Well in Finland’s Election.” 2019. *The Economist*.

Second, like any party, radical parties are policy-seeking. That is, they do not simply seek to hold political office, rather they seek to implement the policies they advocate. Nikolaos Michalolakos, leader of the radical-right *Golden Dawn* in Greece once exclaimed at a rally, “No. We are not after just some parliamentary seats. We are after battles like the one in Thermopylae,” claiming their party is not simply after “securing some high posts.” No doubt, it is easier to implement change from a place of power. Along with policy-seeking motivations, vote-seeking behavior is especially important to small parties, as they must pay close attention to their vote-share vis-a-vis electoral thresholds that exist (Bolleyer 2007). Entry to government, and the increase in legitimacy that comes with it, may be seen as a way to make their impact on policy more visible, and expand their electoral base.

Thus, for the radical party, the benefits of joining a government coalition can be thought of as constant. Unlike for the mainstream partner, they are not a function of the salience of their platform. Rather, they simply exist as a forum to garner the party more legitimacy and help them effect the policy change they desire. It would be hard for the small junior-partner of a coalition to be similarly strategic. For one, they are almost never the first-actor, but rather have to be invited (Lees 2001). Second, there is a nearly insurmountable power-balance dynamic in the coalition bargaining process whereby the large party holds all the cards (Bolleyer 2007). The small party only gets what the large party wants to provide. Thus, it seems a fair assumption to make that the calculus for a radical party remains fairly constant: accept an invitation to join a coalition, as the benefits almost always outweigh the costs. Conceptualized as a formal game: the dominant strategy for the moderate party depends on the salience of the radical platform, whereas for the radical party, the dominant strategy does not change.

If this assumption remains unconvincing, it is important to note that such an erroneous assumption would only lead to modeling biases if the radical party’s decision to accept a coalition offer is correlated with the salience of their platform, otherwise the error would be randomly distributed and thus can be safely ignored. It seems unlikely that such a corre-

lation exists. Yet if it were, it would almost certainly be the case of an inverse relationship whereby the radical party may be less likely to accept an invitation in the context of high salience of their platform. It is possible, perhaps, that when the radical platform is more salient the party may well want to “go it alone,” remain in opposition and hope for a chance to form a majority government of their own in a subsequent election. In this case, however, the methodology outlined in the following section would actually lead to conservative estimates, failing to account for the coalition invitations that were in fact denied.

The only potential problem, thus, for treating such a bargaining process as one-sided rests on the potential of radical parties to be more likely to accept an invitation when their platform is more salient. Yet, this intuitively makes little sense, and there does not appear to be any apparent theoretical reason to expect such a relationship. Thus, given these realities, it seems entirely reasonable to treat the benefits for a radical party of entering into a coalition with a moderate party to be constant, whereas for a moderate party entering into coalition with a radical party is instead partly a function of the threat the radical party poses on the moderate’s future electoral standing.

2.4 Measuring Platform Salience

Giving this new theory regarding coalition probability and platform salience, the next step is not an easy one. How do we operationalize the platform salience of the radical-right? A major feature of radical-right parties is that they tend to find relevance as the national economy declines (Brückner and Grüner 2010; De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O’Rourke 2012; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch 2016; Jackman and Volpert 1996). That is, in times of economic growth, radical support is greatly limited. As the economy worsens, however, and becomes much more salient to voters (Singer 2011), the very tenants of the radical platform (immigration, unemployment) become much more persuasive to voters, and thus, the radical party becomes much more threatening to the mainstream politicians. Even while some scholars refute the correlation between economic decline and radical-right success, it

is the case that these periods of recession provide a greater opportunity for radical-right parties to experience a performance surge, as support for moderate parties and incumbents falters (see for e.g. Downes and Loveless 2018). Thus, as radical parties have similar influence over policy whether inside or outside of office (Duncan 2010), the strategic response is to invite them into coalition where they are no longer able to criticize the government, build a following of opposition voters, and further threaten the incumbent party system.

Thus, my first expectation is that, holding seat-share constant, a radical-right party is much more likely to find itself in a governing coalition in times of economic downturn, when they pose a bigger threat to mainstream politics due to the enhanced salience of their platform, and voters increased disposition to vote for them.

HYPOTHESIS 1: As the economy slows in a country, the far-right is more likely to enter government, even as their seat-share remains constant.

Beyond economic growth, radical parties are characterized by their nativism (Mudde 2007). That is, their belief that their home nation should be made up only of members of the native group. Thus, anti-immigration policy tends to be the main focus of most of these parties (Knigge 1998), with the overwhelming majority of radical-right voters supporting them due to anti-immigration considerations (Akkerman 2012; Arzheimer 2018; Van Der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000). Centre-right parties no doubt have caught on to this immigration connection. In fact, novel work has shown far-right success has driven moderate parties to adopt more anti-immigration policy stances (Abou-Chadi and Krause 2018). And yet, their shifting of policy positions is not enough to completely stave off the threat. In fact, a more restrictive ‘immigration climate’ (i.e. when more parties in a given country have more anti-immigration policy preferences) still leads to a growth in support for radical-right parties (Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002). In other words, merely changing policy positions to remain competitive is simply not enough. Previous work has uncovered direct

links between macro-level measures of foreign inflows and issue salience (e.g. Dennison 2020; Hatton 2021). Hatton (2021) finds that increases in both immigration flows and asylum flows serve to increase the salience of the immigration issue. That is, as inflows increase, citizens are much more likely to hold the opinion that immigration is the most important threat facing the country. Thus, as is the case in a poor economy, mainstream parties will likely see increases in foreign inflows as a signal of a potential future rise in popularity of the radical-right. Given that they cannot simply change their policy positions to remain electorally secure, in response to this threat I expect them to invite a radical-party to join them in coalition to (1) appear to be taking the issue seriously to voters, and (2) to stave off the electoral threat of said radical party remaining in opposition where it may criticize and continue to decry the current political system's handling of the issue.

HYPOTHESIS 2: As foreign inflows grow in a country, the far-right is more likely to enter government, even as their seat-share remains constant.

Indeed, I have opted to operationalize this threat by looking at the national-level conditions during the time of coalition formation. This may seem a rather indirect test. It may be, for example, that these conditions do not constitute a direct link to salience of the radical platform (though work like Hatton 2021 suggests they do). Yet, using a more direct measure of the popularity of the radical-right is problematic. For example, the most obvious choice of such a measure would simply be the vote-share won by these parties. Yet, vote-share and seat-share tend to be nearly perfectly correlated. Given the simple fact that parties are more likely to enter government as their seat-share grows, such a measure is inappropriate. Rather, the main contribution and originality of this cooptation theory rests on the fact that, given *the same* representation in the legislature, a radical-right party is more likely to enter a governing coalition due to the *future threat* they impose to the dominant party system. Thus, a more abstract measure of this threat is required.

Literature on radical-right parties has found contextual factors (i.e. the supply-side factors) to be immensely important in radical-right support (e.g. Arzheimer and Berning 2019), and further found that center-right parties likely recognize the benefit conditions like economic crisis brings to the radical-right, and thus the threat it brings them (Downes and Loveless 2018). Using these macro-level measures of radical-right popularity allow for an approximation of the threat mainstream parties are feeling, while side-stepping any methodological concern that our independent variable may have direct effects (i.e. effects not related to mainstream party threat) on the dependent variable.

Still, to ensure robustness, following the presentation of the main results based on these contextual variables, I provide two additional studies that alternatively test the cooptation theory. First, I utilize survey data from Europe and show that as opinions towards immigrants become more hostile, a radical-right party is more likely to be included in a governing coalition. Second, I utilize spatial data and measure domestic threat as the success of radical-right parties in a given countries' neighbors. In both cases, the implication of the results remain unchanged from the main methodology presented.

2.5 Data and Methodology

In this section I outline the empirical strategies used to test this theory of cooptation. I identify parties that qualify as “radical” via Rooduijn et al. (2019). Their own definition for parties of the radical-right follows from Mudde (2007), who identifies two basic characteristics: radical-right parties are nativist and authoritarian. That is, they believe (1) their country should be ethnically homogenous, consisting only of people of the native group, and (2) laws are strictly enforced, with any transgression greatly penalized. Parties identified by Rooduijn et al. (2019) are coded for all of Europe dating back to 1989 by country-experts and have been peer-reviewed by over 80 scholars of radical and populist parties.

I code every governing coalition for 30 European countries as to whether or not they include a radical-right party for the time-period of 1989–2018. This totals 449 cabinets

coded over the sample, of which roughly 12% include a radical-right party. Given that the quantity of interest is the probability a radical-right party enters government, I only include elections where these parties won at least one seat in the legislature, leaving 254 observations. Observations thus are at the country-year level, yet only years where a cabinet turnover exists are included. Changes in cabinets are identified by the ParlGov dataset (Döring and Manow 2019), and defined as any time either (1) any party membership in the governing coalition changes, (2) the prime minister changes, or (3) any parliamentary election occurs. Table 2.1 includes a list of all countries and their respective number of coalitions included (both the total number of coalitions coded, and the number of coalitions where radical-right parties (RRP) won at least one seat). The table also displays the number of governing coalitions that include a radical-right party, the average seat-share won by radical-right parties, and the number of radical-right prime ministers who have led the country. In sum, fourteen of the included countries have separately experienced the inclusion of a radical-right party in government, and in all but three countries, they have served exclusively as junior partners.

To test hypothesis one, I include a measure of GDP growth (%) in a country. Previous work has shown long-term economic growth is more likely to have an effect on radical-right success than the rate of change in one given year (e.g. De Bromhead, Eichengreen, and O’Rourke 2012). In this way, it is likely mainstream party leaders will be more threatened by a sustained economic recession than a sudden slow-down. Thus, I follow these findings and use a three-year moving average of economic growth (that is, the mean growth rate over the preceding three years)⁴. Beyond being more theoretically relevant, this has the added methodological benefit of reducing outlier sensitivity. This is especially important in an unbalanced panel such as this, where observations come every few years only when a cabinet turns over. I expect, therefore, greater long-run decreases in GDP to be correlated with a higher probability of a governing coalition including a radical-right party.

⁴This is calculated as $(1/3)[(gdp_{t0} - gdp_{t-3})/gdp_{t-3}]$. I alternatively use the calculation $(growth_{t0} + growth_{t-1} + growth_{t-2})/3$ and the results remain the same.

Table 2.1: Coalitions in Europe: 1989-2018

Country	Total Coalitions	Coalitions w/ RRP in Parl	Coalitions w/ RRP in Govt	Avg. RRP Seat-Share	RRP Prime Ministers
Austria	14	14	5	0.21	0
Belgium	15	15	0	0.09	0
Bulgaria	15	8	1	0.06	0
Switzerland	8	8	7	0.27	0
Cyprus	14	1	0	0.00	0
Czechia	18	7	0	0.03	0
Germany	9	2	0	0.03	0
Denmark	13	13	0	0.12	0
Spain	11	0	0	0.00	0
Estonia	16	10	2	0.05	0
Finland	16	16	1	0.08	0
France	21	4	0	0.00	0
United Kingdom	10	2	0	0.00	0
Greece	18	10	1	0.03	0
Croatia	12	12	0	0.03	0
Hungary	12	10	5	0.23	3
Ireland	11	0	0	0.00	0
Iceland	14	0	0	0.00	0
Italy	21	21	5	0.10	0
Lithuania	19	8	0	0.01	0
Luxembourg	9	0	0	0.00	0
Latvia	25	5	2	0.02	0
Netherlands	14	10	0	0.06	0
Norway	12	12	3	0.15	0
Poland	22	17	5	0.17	5
Portugal	10	0	0	0.00	0
Romania	25	13	1	0.07	0
Slovakia	18	15	8	0.11	0
Slovenia	17	17	6	0.23	2
Sweden	10	4	0	0.04	0
Total	449	254	52	0.07	10

Note: "total" value for average seat-share refers to overall mean.

For hypothesis two, there are several possibilities in terms of operationalization. Many have noted that recent anti-immigration sentiment is due to the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe (e.g. Arzheimer and Berning 2019), with exposure to the refugee crisis shown to be a driver in radical-right support (Dinas et al. 2019). Thus I choose to test the second hypothesis by utilizing a measure of asylum inflows, as others have done (Swank and Betz 2003), normalized as a percent of total population. This measure, on top of being most theoretically relevant, also suffers least from missing data problems that often arise when utilizing immigration data.

I include a host of controls in these tests. First, it is clear that as the radical platform rises in salience, they are likely to win more seats, and that greater seat-share in turn has a direct effect on the probability of entering government. Thus, the first control measures the seat-share of radical-right parties in the election that led to the coalition. My hypotheses argue that radical-right parties will be more likely to enter government when their platform is more salient, and therefore more threatening to mainstream parties. This of course must be the case even given constant seat-share. It is also evident that institutional factors have a large role to play (Müller and Strøm 2003), and as such I include a control for whether the country is a parliamentary or presidential system, and a measure of the effective number of parties in the parliament. Additionally important is the level of democracy in the country, thus I include the country's level of democracy (from Polity) as a control. I also include the country's GDP per capita (logged).

Finally, given the important work on minimum connected winning coalitions (Axelrod 1970; de Swaan 1973), it is evident that parties whom are ideologically closer together are more likely to form a coalition with each other. To account for this, I include a measure of the difference in left-right ideology between the majority coalition party (i.e. the party that ends up holding the prime ministership) and the radical-right party contesting the election. If more than one radical-party contests an election, I utilize the seat-share weighted average of their ideological scores, that is their seat-share as a proportion of total radical-right seat-share (see equation 2.1). Ideology measures for parties come from Döring and Hellström (2013).⁵ Each party's ideology is measured on a 0-10 scale, where higher numbers indicate further rightist ideology. Thus, the ideological range for election e between radical-right party $r \in R$ and election winner g is given by equation 2.1.

⁵The measures from Döring and Hellström (2013) themselves are taken from Benoit and Laver (2006); Castles and Mair (1984); Huber and Inglehart (1995); and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

$$\text{Ideological Range}_e = \left[\sum_{r=1}^R \frac{V_{r,e}}{V_{R,e}} \times I_{r,e} \right] - I_{g,e} \quad (2.1)$$

Where I is party ideology, V is vote-share, e refers to the election index, g is the party that held the prime ministership following the election, r is a specific radical-right party contesting the election, and R all radical-right parties contesting an election.

The modeling strategy takes the form of multilevel probit regression, conceptualized as coalitions nested within countries. Thus, I allow for country random-intercepts. I include cubic-restricted time splines, to account for temporal trends in the popularity of radical-parties. Finally, given missing data in the controls, I rerun the model utilizing multiple imputation to impute missing data.

2.6 Results

Table 2.2 presents results from the multilevel probit regressions. Column one presents a simple model with no controls other than radical-right seat-share, column two presents the full model, while column three presents the same model utilizing a multiple imputation (MI) dataset. Utilizing the MI data increases the number of coalitions analyzed from 163 to 255. As there are not any significant differences between the two, I focus the rest of the interpretation of results on the original specification. Year cubic restricted splines are omitted from the table for presentation, but are included in all models.

First, we see as expected that a radical-right party is much more likely to enter a coalition as its seat-share increases. Indeed, the average seat-share of a radical-right party in coalition tops 24% (compared to just 13% when out of government). Similarly, the closer ideologically the radical-right party is to the prime minister's party, the more likely they are to form a coalition. In this case, the average ideological distance of the two when they do form a coalition successfully is less than half (1.14) of the distance when a coalition is not

Table 2.2: Results from Multi-level Probit Regressions

	Right Coalition (1)	Right Coalition (2)	Right Coalition (MI) (3)
GDP Growth	−18.205** (6.450)	−19.692* (9.587)	−13.654* (6.659)
Asylum Inflows	2.586* (1.271)	5.026* (2.552)	5.194* (2.116)
Ideological Range		−0.647* (0.289)	−0.473** (0.151)
Radical-Right Seat-share	7.977*** (1.954)	17.431** (6.760)	9.734*** (2.907)
Effective Number of Parties		−0.054 (0.327)	0.144 (0.155)
Parliamentary System		−0.782 (1.547)	0.508 (0.622)
GDP Per Capita (Logged)		−1.362 (1.627)	−1.136 (0.794)
Polity		−0.248 (0.511)	0.119 (0.246)
Constant	−2.716*** (0.578)	10.954 (14.898)	5.836 (6.863)
Country-Level Variance	0.776	7.528	.
Observations	182	163	255
Log Likelihood	−63.263	−41.950	.
Akaike Inf. Crit.	142.525	109.901	.

Standard errors appear in parentheses. Year cubic splines omitted. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001, two tailed test.

formed (2.37).

I turn now to evidence for hypothesis one, that even as seat-share and ideological distance are accounted for, a radical-right party is more likely to join the governing coalition as economic conditions deteriorate. This hypothesis is supported by the data. I calculate substantive effects of GDP growth by randomly simulating 1000 draws of model coefficients based on their variance. I simulate along a GDP growth rate sequence of −6% to 6%, and hold all other variables at their observed values. Results of the simulation are displayed in figure 2.1. Overall, a one standard deviation change in GDP growth corresponds with a

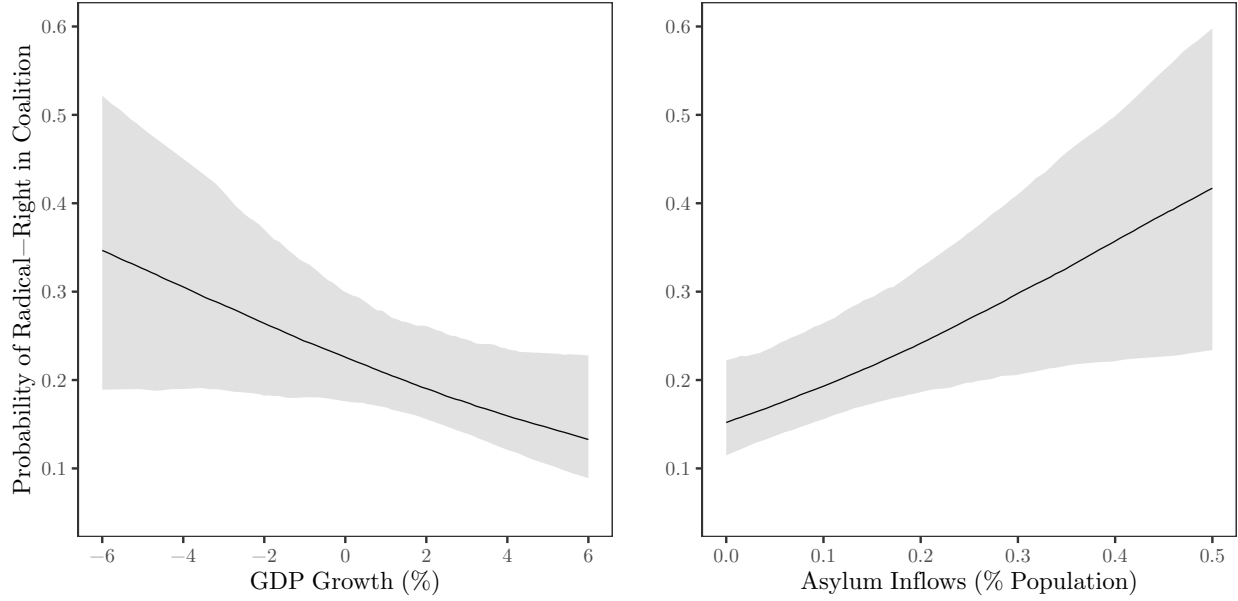


Figure 2.1: Substantive Effects on $P(\text{Radical-Right in Government})$

nearly seven percentage-point change in the probability of a radical-right party in coalition.⁶ More generally, going from a very strong economy (growing at average 6% annually) to very poor economic conditions (contracting at an average rate of 6% annually) nearly triples the probability of a radical-right entering a coalition, from 12% to 33%.

Hypothesis two sees support as well. As the inflows of asylum seekers increase, radical-right parties are significantly more likely to enter government. Similar to economic growth, a one standard deviation increase in asylum inflows corresponds to a roughly six percentage-point increase in the probability of a radical-right party in coalition. Here, a general transition from zero asylum seekers to a high rate of 0.5% of population increases their probability of entering government from roughly 15% to over 41%. These results are illustrated in figure 2.1, simulations were conducted in the same manner as previously described.

Importantly, we see these results as the context of the election are held constant. That is, such dramatic increases in the probability of a radical-right party's inclusion in coalition

⁶The marginal effect is calculated for a one standard deviation increase in the IV centered about its median value.

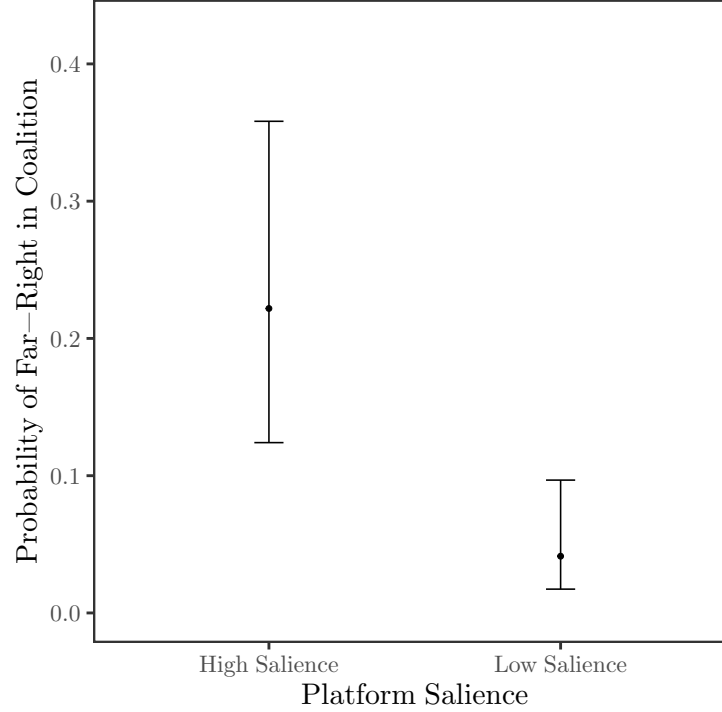


Figure 2.2: Effect of Joint Platform Saliency With Very Low Seat-Share

transpire even as seat-share and ideological distance are controlled for. The overall average seat-share of a radical-right party throughout the sample is nearly 13%. That number jumps to 24% when looking at coalitions with a radical-right partner. I ask then, is platform saliency alone enough to increase the probability of their entry into government with a very low seat-share? Thus, I compute one more simulation, this time holding seat-share constant at a very low 5%. I simulate a realistic scenario: the simultaneous increase of asylum inflows and decrease of economic growth, conditions fairly typical of many European countries during the debt crisis. I dub the radical platform to be of “low saliency” when immigration is low and GDP growth high, and conversely of “high saliency” when immigration is high and GDP growth low. I utilize the 10th- and 90th-percentiles of GDP growth and immigration for the limits of this simulation. Results are displayed in figure 2.2.

Overall, the change in platform saliency increases the probability of a radical-right coalition from 4% to 23% (a nearly 6x increase in probability). This is a truly striking

change, especially given the high probability of radical-right entry into government given such a low seat-share of only 5%. I argue that such a pattern is transpiring in the real world as moderate parties are feeling more and more threatened by the rises in salience of the radical-right platform. Rather than allow them to continue to gain ground and turn voters against them in opposition, moderate parties strategically invite them into coalition as a way to co-opt them, and decrease the level of threat they pose.

2.6.1 *Additional Direct Tests*

One may argue that the preceding tests are rather indirect. While I argue this is in fact beneficial, and necessary due to the nature of the question, here I provide additional, more direct tests of my theory for robustness. Namely, I respecify the tests of the cooptation theory utilizing both survey data overtime, and spatial data from the European continent. In both tests, the results remain significant and show evidence for the fact that moderate party utilize coalition building as a way to co-opt radical parties.

One option for a more direct test of this hypothesis is to utilize survey data. Rather than measure the salience (and thus threat) of a radical-right party via the contextual factors of a nation, one could instead simply measure the degree to which voters hold opinions in line with the radical-right platform. Most scholars of radical-right parties agree that the largest motivator of a vote for these parties are concerns of immigration (Akkerman 2012; Arzheimer 2018; Van Der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000). Evidence suggests a large component of this is due to “ideational concerns,” or that immigration is a threat to national identity and culture (Golder 2003). Thus, as a more direct measure of radical-right platform salience I utilize a question from the European Social Survey (ESS) that asks respondents to rank on a scale from 0 to 10 whether immigration makes their country a better (10) or worse (0) place to live.

I utilize all nine rounds of the ESS for a time period of 2002-2018. I code any response under five as “hostile” and any response above five “not hostile.” Observations are then collapsed (incorporating respondent probability weights) to arrive at a country-

year level measure of the population’s feelings towards immigrants (i.e. the proportion of citizens who believe immigration makes their nation a worse place to live). Because the ESS is conducted biannually in even-number years, I use linear interpolation to estimate values for coalitions that were formed in odd-number years. This leaves 80 coalition observations for the 16 year time period. Otherwise, all controls remain the same as the main models presented. Given the very small sample size, I also indicate statistical significance at the $P < 0.10$ level. Indeed, even seat-share of the party is only significant at such a level. Results are presented in column 1 of table 2.3. While the proportion of people with hostile views to immigration is only significant at the $P < 0.10$, a first-difference test indicates a change from the 25th-percentile to the 75th-percentile is significant at the $P < 0.05$ level.

Second, I measure threat to mainstream parties via a spatial voting data. It is likely that political elites view the rise of the radical-right around them as a premonition of potential changes coming to them. While it is still unclear if any direct diffusion exists, radical-right success does seem to come in “waves,” and is likely due to similar external shocks (economy, immigration) affecting neighbors similarly (Arzheimer 2009; Bichay 2020). Thus, I argue we may measure the threat faced by political elites by measuring the success of radical-right parties in nations close by. For each year a coalition was formed in each nation, I calculate the average share of seats held by radical-right parties in the legislatures of countries that share a border with that nation.⁷ The results for this test also yield significant results.

I simulate the substantive effects from these tests in the same manner as previously described. In terms of public opinion, a nations’ electorate shifting opinion on immigration from very welcoming to very hostile has dramatic effects on the probability of a radical-right coalition. Going from the tenth-percentile (0.48) to the ninetieth-percentile (0.75) roughly triples the probability of their inclusion from 11% to 37%. We see similar results in terms of radical-right proximity. A country surrounded by neighbors with no radical-right

⁷I define two countries as sharing a border if the minimum distance between them is less than twenty kilometers.

Table 2.3: Results of Direct Tests

	Right Coalition (1)	Right Coalition (2)
Immigration Hostility	9.020 [†] (5.451)	
Neighbor Radical-Right		4.808* (2.369)
Ideological Range	-0.603* (0.259)	-0.244** (0.093)
Radical-Right Seat-Share	5.898 [†] (3.060)	6.684*** (1.796)
Effective Number of Parties	-0.161 (0.232)	0.055 (0.141)
Parliamentary System	-0.902 (1.357)	-0.253 (0.657)
GDP Per Capita (Logged)	0.785 (0.895)	0.081 (0.597)
Polity	4.791 [†] (2.534)	-0.006 (0.239)
Constant	-67.375 [†] (34.809)	-2.830 (4.823)
Observations	80	193
Log Likelihood	-18.419	-56.057
Akaike Inf. Crit.	60.838	136.113

Standard errors appear in parentheses. Year cubic splines omitted.

[†]p<0.1, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001, two-tailed test

representation has a relatively low chance of seeing a radical-right party enter government, roughly 11%. By the time the surrounding area sees an average seat-share of 20% (the 90th-percentile), that probability more than doubles to 26%.

These tests paint the same picture as before. When conditions lead to the far-right imposing a great threat on mainstream parties, those parties are much more likely to invite them into a governing coalition, even as their seat-share does not change. This holds true regardless of how we measure “threat:” either as the contextual factors in a nation are ripe for the radical-right, as public opinion begins to line up with the radical platform, or even

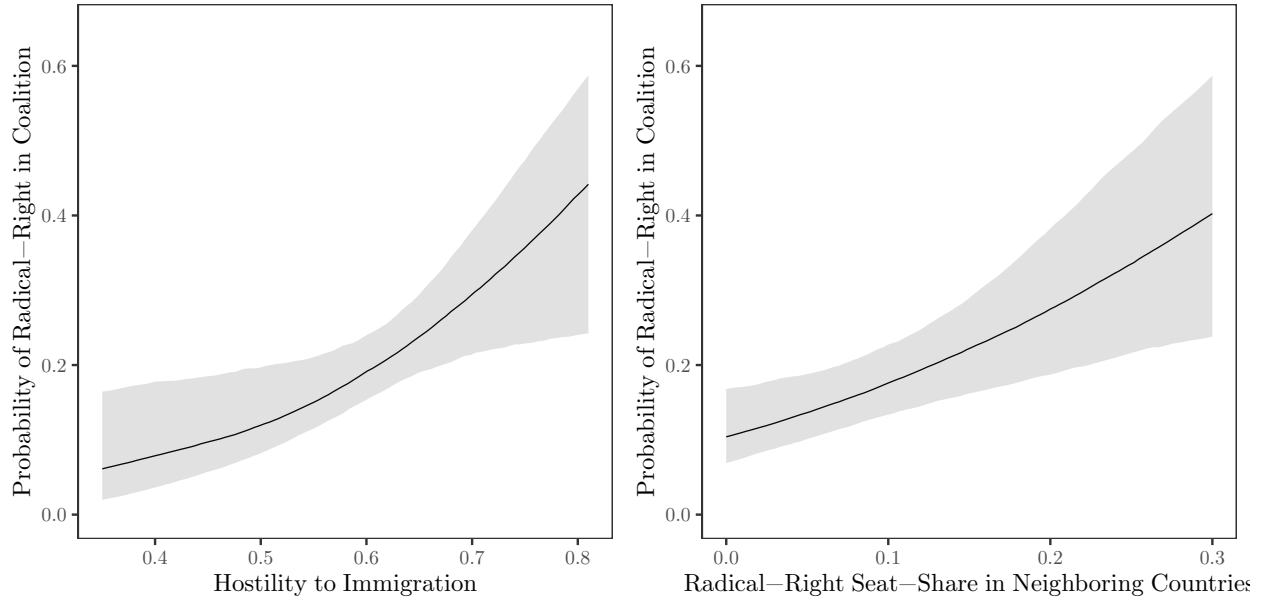


Figure 2.3: Substantive Effects on $P(\text{Radical-Right in Government})$

as party leaders see the radical-right grow in nearby countries. However you measure it, the implication is clear: as the radical-right's threat grows, so too does the probability of inviting them into coalition.

2.7 Comparing Out-of-Sample Prediction of Different Theories

Finally, I test the usefulness of this new theory—that is, is there any predictive power gained by not only accounting for minimum winning coalitions (MWC) and minimum connected winning coalitions (MCWC), but for taking into account this cooptation hypothesis, alongside them? To test this, I build three models, each representing one theory of coalition formation. Each model is run on a random sample of 75% of my original data. I then utilize out-of-sample prediction by predicting values for the remaining 25% of the data. I then compare predictive power of each of these models and show that accounting for the cooptation hypothesis leads to more accurate predictions.

The MWC theory implies that the most likely coalitions are those that (1) gain at least 50% of seats, and (2) remain as close to 50% as possible (Laver 1974; Riker 1962).

Table 2.4: Summary of Out-of-Sample Prediction

	Main IV(s) Included	Area Under ROC	Area Under PR
Minimum Winning	Distance to minimum winning coalition	0.670	0.533
Minimum Connected Winning	Distance to minimum winning coalition, Ideological Range	0.710	0.556
Cooptation Theory	Distance to minimum winning coalition, Ideological Range, GDP Growth, Asylum Inflows	0.732	0.628

Thus, to base predictions on this theory I construct a variable that measures how close to a perfect MWC the radical-right party would provide the winning party.⁸ This is calculated as the absolute value of the two parties seat-share subtracted by one more than half the total number of seats in the legislature, see equation 2.2. In other words, the number of seats away from an ideal MWC seat-share of one-half plus one.

$$\text{Distance to MWC} = \left| [S_g + S_r] - \left[\frac{S_{tot}}{2} + 1 \right] \right| \quad (2.2)$$

Where S is seat share, g is the party that held the prime ministership following the election, r is a specific radical-right party contesting the election, and S_{tot} the total number of seats in legislature.

Alternatively, the MCWC theory argues party ideology matters (Axelrod 1970; de Swaan 1973). Thus, for this theory I add in the *Ideology Range* variable, which measures the difference in ideology between the winning party and the radical-right party (see equation 2.1). Finally, to test the cooptation theory, I retain the distance and ideology variables, but add in GDP growth and asylum inflows as predictors of radical-right coalitions. In all three models the same controls from the previous analysis are included, including year splines and country-level random intercepts. I use these three models to calculate probabilities for the

⁸In the rare instance of more than one radical-right party competing I utilize the seat-share of the larger party.

inclusion of a radical-right party in coalition. The accuracy of these models' predictions is assessed in table 2.4.

I first present areas under the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve. ROC curves plot a binary model's true-positive rate of prediction against its false positive rate, with higher values (closer to 1) indicate better classification power of a model. However, many argue that precision-recall (PR) curves, which instead plots a binary model's positive predictive value against its true positive rate, are more appropriate for assessing the usefulness of a classifier when the phenomena in question is relatively low-frequency (e.g. Saito and Rehmsmeier 2015). As before, values closer to 1 indicate higher classification power. I present both metrics for all three models in table 2.4.

As expected, the inclusion of ideology (going from MWC to MCWC) leads to large increases in predictive power, as the area under the ROC curve increases by 6%, while the area under the PR curve increases by just over 4%. Meanwhile, subsequently including the cooptation variables similarly leads to an increase in predictive performance. ROC and PR both increased by roughly 3% and 13%, respectively, demonstrating that the salience of the radical-right platform is an important predictor coalition outcome. In support of this, we see that the model representing the cooptation theory is a much better predictor than either of the models that represent the preexisting theories alone. Clearly, when it comes to radical-right parties' inclusion in coalitions, the process is not simply "business as usual," but rather is predicated on an alternative mechanism not included in previous theories. Overall, the cooptation model provides a 18% increase in predictive power over the MWC model, and a 13% increase over that of the MCWC, in terms of area under the PR curve.

Substantively, we see this difference in useful ways. Take, for instance, the 2015 Finnish election of which I previously spoke. The simple MWC model calculates a 14.0% chance of radical-right inclusion, where the MCWC model gives a slightly higher 17.0%

chance of inclusion.⁹ Meanwhile, the full model taking mainstream threat into account calculates a 72.4% chance of radical-right’s participation in government. This is quite a meaningful difference, illustrating how important it is to take such cooptation into account when considering the coalition that may emerge in the aftermath of a national election.

2.8 Conclusion

These results have demonstrated that as mainstream parties begin to feel the “threat” of a rising radical-right competitor, they are more likely to invite that competitor to join them in a governing coalition. This shows our prior understanding of coalition formation was incomplete. Whereby previously large moderate parties were thought to pick the smallest ideologically close party as a partner (minimum connected winning coalition), this does not tell the whole story. Rather, in many cases we see moderate parties picking partners with quite distant ideologies. It is clear that this is not simply a decision of ideological proximity. Further, it implies the consequences of increasing platform salience of the radical-right are much more impactful than previously assumed. While it is clear that literature has already shown increasing radical-right platform salience will lead to higher vote-shares for radical-right parties, these results demonstrate that they are much more likely to enter a government coalition, as well. Crucially, this is true even while their seat-share (1) does not change and (2) is limited to a very low level.

Indeed, there is much more involved in the calculus of government formation than previous theories of coalition formation have considered. The question is not as simple as previously thought, but rather a process of weighing costs and benefits. There will be costs to forming a government with a radical party, as history shows. Allies are scared by the threat, voters are angered by the betrayal, and a potential for governmental instability

⁹For these case calculations, I rely on in-sample prediction, or the full models trained on all available data.

increases. And yet, when the radical platform rises in salience, the benefits outweigh these costs. For one, governments send a signal to voters that they take these issues seriously, and are interested in working with radical-right parties to solve them. Second, in government the radical party is no longer able to focus all their time and energy on criticizing the dominant party structure. They no longer get to sit by and protest, but rather must attempt to govern. For the radical party, this offers legitimacy, for the moderate it offers insurance. Even as seat-share of the radical party remains constant, as conditions favoring their platform arise (poor economy, high immigration), they are much more likely to enter government, as the moderate party looks to quell a growing electoral threat.

There is evidence of this mechanism working. Following the Finnish election of 2015, the *Centre party* formed a governing coalition with the radical-right *Finns Party*. Many in the media then characterized this move as a way to attenuate their recent growth in popularity, while some called it an effort to “tame” them. “Taming” a radical-right party by inviting them into coalition is similarly how the ÖVP–FPÖ partnership following the Austrian election of 1999 has been described, as some noticed the FPÖ’s abandonment of many radical proposals, adoption of neo-liberal economic policies, and a newfound commitment to democratic values after entering government (Minkenberg 2001).

Substantively, these dynamics have far reaching effects on government. Coalitions made up of ideologically diverse partners tend to not last nearly as long as ideological homogenous ones (Axelrod 1970; de Swaan 1973), in part due to the fact that radical parties have a measurable impact increasing government instability (Powell Jr 1981). Overall, the characteristics that allow them to gain popularity in opposition serve to doom them once in office, and these problems tend to be greatly exacerbated when radical parties serve in coalition with more mainstream partners (Duncan 2010; Heinisch 2003).

Still, given our previous understanding of coalition bargaining, it seems strange to see so many moderate parties agreeing to form governments with such radical partners, especially given the high costs associated with such a move, both to the party and nation as-a-whole.

In explaining the logic underlying the inclusion of radical parties in governing coalitions, this study sheds light on this recent trend that has been transpiring across Europe. The rise of radical parties in governing coalitions suggests that cases such as Austria and Finland are not aberrations, but rather indicative of a new calculus mainstream parties utilize to pick their ruling partners.

Interestingly, once it's all said and done, mainstream conservative parties have generally been the largest beneficiaries of such processes (Heinisch 2003), generally emerging as an option to provide capable governing alone and an agenda similar, yet more reasonable, than the radical-right party's agenda that had been so high in demand. Where these partnerships once seemed so strange, once taking into account the threat faced by these parties, and the ability to quell this threat by forming a strategic partnership, it seems moderate parties know exactly what they are doing.

CHAPTER 3

RADICAL-RIGHT PARTIES AND THE DETERIORATION OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

3.1 Introduction

After winning power in Hungary in 2010, Prime Minister Viktor Orban did not waste time consolidating power. Beginning with the once-independent judiciary, he and his deputies moved quickly to usurp authority across the country, including the media, government bureaucracy, and the process of free and fair elections. Many of the constitutional changes adopted in 2013 eroded institutional rule-of-law, and vastly increased the powers of the executive (Urbiniati 2019). Beyond institutional changes, the Orban government has greatly curtailed civil liberties, causing great harms to freedom of speech and association. This trend is not new, but rather a common characteristic of radical-right parties: when they win power, liberal democracy may be jeopardized (see for e.g. Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). In Poland, for example, the radical-right *Law and Justice* party moved even quicker to usurp control with leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, no doubt inspired by Orban, exclaiming “we will have Budapest in Warsaw.”¹ Changes in Poland included collapses of judicial independence and press freedom, and attacks on electoral fairness (Sadurski 2018).

Yet, the damage a radical-right party inflicts on democratic quality on average is not well known. Much of the work looking at such relationships and processes remains anecdotal, relying on democratic backsliding in one or few case studies. The reasoning for

¹See “Poland’s new government finds a model in Orban’s Hungary” (2016) by Buckley and Foy in *Financial Times*.

this, of course, rests with the fact that radical-right parties have not led many governments. Since 1990, only a handful of European countries have seen prime ministers from radical-right parties, and all have experienced some level of democratic backsliding in the aftermath of their elections (Bugarič 2015; Cianetti, Dawson, and Hanley 2018). Outside of these cases, many have argued radical-right parties have been limited in terms of impact on the quality of liberal democracy (De Lange and Akkerman 2012). This of course, is largely due to their lack of electoral success, as Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012) argue, it is hard for such parties to inflict democracy while not holding executive power.

Yet, radical-right parties can indeed have prolific influences on the state of internal politics. For one, they have an indirect effect by changing the political landscape. As these parties grow in success and influence, the salient issues of domestic politics begin to change; in many cases this includes increased attention paid to immigration and national institutions. Second, by winning seats and joining coalitions they directly affect politics by influencing the national agenda and taking control of cabinet ministries.

In this paper, I argue the literature on the radical-right has dramatically underestimated the effects of these parties. This argument rests on two points. One, looking only at aggregate, or high-level indices of democracy has missed many of the smaller, disaggregated effects these parties have while in power. There is no clear picture as to which aspects of democracy are most effected, and to what degree we should expect to see declines. And two, by only looking at cases where radical-right parties have won the prime ministership (or presidency),² we miss their potential effect while in a governing coalition. The later point rests on my argument that we will see decreases in several metrics of liberal democracy not just when a radical-right party wins executive power, but even as it increases representation in a governing coalition. It is, I argue, simply the case that these effects are (1) different than

²Though I commonly refer to the executive as “prime minister,” it is not the case that I exclude or do not expect similar results in presidential systems. Rather, within this sample it is simply the case that Cyprus is the only nation that qualifies as a purely presidential system. I discuss this more in the methodology section.

the effect of radical prime ministers, and (2) not known as they have been under-analyzed in the literature. Such analysis of coalitions rather than merely prime ministers allows us to dramatically increase the number of governments in consideration; while radical-right parties have only held the prime ministership in few countries, they have participated in governing coalitions in nearly half of Europe. A large-N quantitative analysis of them allows us to move on beyond specific case analysis—which, no doubt have been extremely helpful and insightful—and allow for a more in-depth analysis of more incremental disaggregated changes over time.

I examine 30 European countries since 1989 and analyze the disaggregated effects of both radical-right prime ministers, and radical-right representation in governing coalitions on several metrics of liberal democracy and civil liberties. I argue that liberal democracy can be broke into two domains: “institutional rule-of-law” and “mass civil liberties.” I expect that, due to practical constraints and the decision-making calculus of the party, we will only see institutional rule-of-law harmed in the cases of radical-right prime ministers. This is in line with what others have previously argued on the topic of the real impacts of these parties. However, I argue we should indeed see mass civil liberties negatively affected in cases not only where the radical-right serve as prime minister, but also as they serve as mere junior coalition partners. This premise has yet to be empirically scrutinized. Overall, I find support for both these arguments. While the mere inclusion of a radical-right party in government may not lead to the severe democratic backsliding seen in the more pronounced cases like Hungary and Poland, their inclusion does lead to increased levels of repression in arenas such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and academic freedom.

Beyond this dichotomy, I also find the areas most affected by radical-right prime minsters tend to be those regarding elites and institutional constraints to executive power. This makes sense, as radical parties tend to be highly populist in nature, and focus much of their electoral rhetoric on ridding the country of the “corrupt elite,” while promising to return power to the masses. Even still, their reign of power does bring smaller, yet still

significant, negative changes to mass civil liberties and freedoms.

The assumption that radical-right parties cannot do damage unless they control the government has led to a severe underestimation of their true threat to liberal democracy. By ignoring cases where they enter into a government coalition and thus exert control over government ministries, we have looked past the true threat they pose. Take, for example, the sweeping changes the far-right *Alliance for the Future of Austria* was able to make regarding asylum law while holding the Ministry of Justice under Chancellor Schüssel. Rather, this paper contributes to the literature in two ways. First, by disaggregating and quantifying the actual real-world effect radical-right parties have had on liberal democracy in Europe. And second, by demonstrating the far-reaching effects radical-right parties have on society through their mere participation in national government.

3.2 The Influence of Radical-Right Parties

Much discussion has centered on the limited impact of radical-right parties in the legislature. (Mudde 2013*b*). As a party generally relegated to the opposition, and in limited cases junior coalition partners, it has been hard for them to acquire power most consider needed to influence real change. Yet, at the same time, it is clear we have seen far-reaching impacts of their rise.

One of the most researched impacts of their rise, for example, rests on their influence in changing immigration laws (Abou-Chadi 2016; Abou-Chadi and Krause 2018). The rise of radical-right parties has been shown to cause moderate-right parties to significantly alter their policy positions regarding immigration, adopting more restrictive preferences. Thus, on the one hand these parties clearly are able to have an *indirect* effect on domestic politics, by forcing those who are in power to move towards them in terms of policy preferences. Yet, several cases have shown them to have a clear *direct* effect on policy as well, even while cut-off from majority power. For example, in 2005 the *Alliance for the Future of Austria* (BZÖ) entered into Austria's governing coalition. While in power, the BZÖ was given control

over the powerful Ministry of Justice and pushed through many changes to Austria’s asylum law, making deportations easier, legalizing force-feeding, and making it easier to criminally prosecute lawyers and NGOs who aimed to help asylum seekers (Fallend 2012).

These parties’ rise also changes the issues that are at the forefront of political debate, often forcing their mainstream opponents to emphasize different issues in order to remain competitive (Abou-Chadi 2016). Oftentimes, these issues include structural reforms, minority rights, law and order, and the democratic process itself (De Lange and Akkerman 2012). These specific issues, of course, are at the forefront of liberal democracy. Thus, in this way radical-right parties are able to exert their newly-found influence in a way to dramatically change the conversation of domestic politics. They are able to bring the issues of their agenda to the forefront and force mainstream parties to engage in dialogue with them.

Thus, it is clear that even outside of office radical-right parties have found a way to sway politics in the countries they operate in. And further, they clearly are able to have influence on policy while serving as minority coalition partners. In the next section I examine then radical-right’s relationship with democracy, then present a theory joining these two ideas together, and test for their effects on democracy and repression when they see increased electoral success, both inside and outside the office of prime minister.

3.2.1 *The Radical-Right and Liberal Democracy*

Radical-right parties have a troubled history with liberal democracy. It is the very characteristics that make a party “radical” that stand directly opposed to the notion of liberal democracy (Mudde 2007). Importantly, it is not that these parties wish to do away with the democratic system altogether,³ but rather that the guiding principals of the party family are simply incompatible with the core tenants of *liberal* democracy. Generally, we can see this characterization manifest in two distinct ways: the parties’ relationship with

³Such parties who do remain opposed to democracy itself are considered “extreme-right,” rather than “radical-right.”

institutional rule-of-law, and with mass civil liberties.

Institutionally, the radical-right's incompatibility with liberal democracy can be first seen by examining their rhetoric. Radical-right parties exhibit quite an extensive overlap with populist parties. Of the parties in Europe classified as "far-right," for example, over 75% are also considered populist (Rooduijn et al. 2019). Along with their populist rhetoric and leadership, radical-right parties tend to be very anti-pluralist in nature (Muller 2016; Rydgren 2017). This means they tend to espouse the belief that they are the only ones capable of legitimate rule, and they alone can fix the "ills" facing the nation. Take for example, President Erdoğan speaking of his *Justice and Development* party, claiming "We are the people. Who are you?" (Muller 2016), or President Trump, speaking on terrorism in 2016, arguing "I am your voice, I alone can fix it."⁴

This of course is at odds with liberal democracy, which requires pluralism. Indeed, much of the threat causing fear among scholars of the radical-right rest on their historic tendency to erode institutional rule-of-law and constraints on their executive power. While such actions pose a serious threat to liberal democracy, at the same time we have not seen radical-right parties push for an outright abandonment of democracy. Rather, much of radical-right populist rhetoric focuses on taking power away from the corrupt elite and the "out-groups" and rightfully returning it to the masses (Muller 2016), or to the "real people." This fine line can be seen by examining the Belgian *Vlaams Belang* (VB) party. While claiming to be a party staunchly in support of democracy, the VB also supports institutional reforms aimed at consolidating the power of the executive, eliminating Belgian provinces, and abolishing the upper house of the Belgian National Parliament (De Lange and Akkerman 2012).

Problematically, there are cases which show this incongruence to extend beyond mere rhetoric. Take, for example, Erdogan's recent actions in Turkey, considered as leading to

⁴See "I Alone Can Fix It" (2016) by Yoni Appelbaum in *The Atlantic*.

a breakdown of democracy. His constitutional changes dramatically increased the power of the executive and abolished the office of prime minister. Even still, these changes did little to affect voting rights in Turkey (in fact, the changes were enacted via a popular referendum). This may seem a subtle difference, but it is an important one. The rhetoric of these parties is often categorized as anti-pluralist (Muller 2016), with both voters and candidates believing that their party is the only one capable of solving the nation's current problems. As Muller argues, when these parties demonstrate values counter to democracy, the people simply believe this is being done for their own benefit (them, being the voters, the only "true people").

Similarly, we can see evidence of the radical-right having an equally tenuous relationship with mass civil liberties. Liberal democracy requires people of all different beliefs, positions, and backgrounds to matter equally in the democratic process. Rather, radical-right parties seek to exclude those who do not line up with their idea of morality or support their own party. Again, the *Vlaams Belang* in Belgium is illustrative of this. In several party publications the VB has openly shown hostility toward ideas of gender equality (Vlaams Blok 2004b) and referred to the idea of multiculturalism as a "mistake" (Vlaams Blok 2004a).

Clearly, one of the biggest groups these parties seek to exclude are immigrants (Bar-On 2018; Mudde 2007). Radical-right candidates tend to blame immigrants as the scapegoats to their nations problems, and argue for strict controls of their intake (Zaslove 2004b). Overwhelmingly, this anti-immigrant rhetoric has manifested as islamophobia (Kallis 2018), with radical-right parties such as the Dutch *Party for Freedom*, the German *Alternative for Germany*, and Greece's *Golden Dawn* paying much attention to anti-islamic rhetoric. Recently, for example, several leaders of *Golden Dawn* were found guilty of numerous criminal charges in Greece, including attempted murder for the violent assault of a group of Egyptian fishermen in the port of Piraeus. Xenophobia to this end has by itself been characterized as completely averse to liberal democracy (Betz 2005).

Along with this, radical-right parties have historically proven perfectly capable of

deteriorating the basic rights of certain segments of society, arguing such action to be congruent with the general-will of the majority. In other words, claiming the restriction of rights of minorities and other 'out-groups' are democratic as doing so lines up with the desire of the majority (see for e.g. Mudde 2013a). For instance, changes made in Hungary in 2013 by radical-right *Fidesz* limited freedoms of speech, religion, association, and voting, among other basic rights, for many of what they perceive as 'out-groups' (Urbinati 2019), describing these moves as a “natural” use of the “authority it received in democratic elections.”⁵

3.3 Radical-Right Impact on Liberal Democracy

Given what we already know, that (1) radical-right parties are able to have real effects while in government, and (2) they have a troubled (to say the least) relationship with liberal democracy, what do we know about the real-world impacts of radical-right parties regarding liberal democracy specifically? Indeed, many have argued that their effects are, above all, “limited” (see for e.g. De Lange and Akkerman 2012; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012), largely an artifact of their limited electoral success and tendency to, when successful, serve only as *junior* coalition members (Fallend 2012). On its face, this may seem promising. In 2013, Mudde (2013b) argued the observed impacts of the radical-right were hopeful, as no country had fallen to “illiberal democracy” due to their influence. There are however countries certainly moving in that direction today, with Hungary and Poland among the most clear examples (Cianetti, Dawson, and Hanley 2018; Huber and Schimpf 2017; Moder 2019), where radical-right rule has led to an undermining of checks and balances and a dramatic increase in the power of the executive.

It is clear, at least in Europe, that the potential for a broad relationship between radical-right rule and the slow underpinning of liberal democracy exists in more widespread fashion than previous literature has let on. Beyond the aforementioned cases of Hungary

⁵Gergely Gulyas, *Fidesz* deputy leader, quoted in the BBC.

and Poland, even as a radical-right party is constrained to junior-partner status in a ruling coalition, it is quite likely we should see small, yet persistent, changes in the many metrics of liberal democracy available. Even-still, no large-scale disaggregated evidence to this point exists. Rather, most evidence remains quite anecdotal and limited in nature. It is clear, at least, that the fear such a relationship exists is certainly real. When the radical-right *Freedom Party of Austria* entered into government coalition in 1999, the European Union initiated sanctions against the country, while the rest of EU member-states unanimously cutoff communication (Meret 2010). This, of course, occurred even as the Freedom Party was merely a *junior* coalition partner.

And yet, virtually all studies focusing on the impacts to democracy of these parties have focused exclusively on the fairly rare case of a majority radical-right government (or, the case where the head-of-government is of the radical-right). Yet, as has become apparent, both the minority coalition partner and the minister given the relevant cabinet portfolio have influence over policy enactment and agenda-setting (Laver and Shepsle 1996; Martin and Vanberg 2011). We have seen this very reality play out in Austria, as mentioned with regard to immigration and asylum law in the case of the BZÖ rule of the Ministry of Justice. Interestingly, it seems the Ministry of Justice is one of the most common ministries for a radical-right junior coalition member to be given, second only to Defense (Bichay 2021). Thus, it is possible we may see important impacts on liberal democracy not only when the radical-right hold executive power, but also as it is a part of government (i.e. a member of the ruling coalition). Kenny (2020), for example, finds persistent negative effects of populists as minority coalition partners in terms of press freedom, censorship and bias, harassment of journalists, and freedom of expression in Asia and Latin America. I consider both possibilities in the succeeding empirical tests.

That being said, it is certain that radical-right prime ministers and radical-right coalition partners would exert differing levels of influence on changes in democracy. Thus, I break the potential effects these parties may have into two components: institutional rule-of-

law, and civil liberty. This disambiguation is a logical extension of the premise that liberal democracy is by its nature institutional, or minimalist, democracy, with the added components of acknowledgment and respect for crosscutting cleavages, toleration for conflict and opposition, equal protection under the law for all, and a protection of minority rights (see for e.g. Pappas 2019). This disambiguation further echoes work such as Kaltwasser (2012), who adopts Dahl's (1971) bifurcation of democracy into contestation and inclusiveness, noting populism may harm the former while aiding the latter. This work, of course, differs in that it first focuses on populism writ-large, and not radical-right parties generally, and second considers only their introduction into the political landscape, and not the case of them rising to a position of political rule. While these categories of rule-of-law and civil liberties that I propose are not a perfect match for Dahl's categorization, they do provide a better empirical avenue for testing the proposed mechanisms in that (1) they offer categories of potential change that more closely align with the sorts of declines in democracy that have been experienced in Europe recently, and (2) provide, as I discuss below, categories that represent changes a party would be interested in implementing only while holding executive power in the first domain, or would have an interest in altering even if simply confined to junior coalition status in the second.

Perhaps more straightforward of these domains is the institutional rule-of-law. In this case, the theoretical expectation is that radical-right parties bring with them decreases in the level of constraints on executive power. As anti-pluralists, radical-right politicians increasingly view their rule as the only avenue of success for the country. As the "true voice" of the "true people" they fully advocate to be the sole method to enact this true will into policy ends. Such was the theme of Viktor Orbán's now infamous speech on a new "illiberal democracy," where he enumerated policy goals that had not been met by previous liberal democratic regimes while noting to Hungarians that "a trending topic in thinking is understanding systems that are not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies, maybe not even democracies." He rounds out the speech by referring to the principle of all citizens

being awarding an equal vote in elections as an “absurd situation” and delivering a utopian image of what could be possible under his illiberal rule.

In this case, however, I only expect to see effects when the actual office of prime minister is held by the radical-right. For one, these are clearly more large-scale changes requiring much more political capital, not to mention simply more political power, in order to enact. It is unlikely, as others have argued (e.g. Mudde 2013*b*), to visualize a way for a junior coalition partner to posture themselves into a position of such influence. Further, it is unclear in the first place why a radical-right party would have any interest in eroding constraints on executive power at a time when it does not hold executive power. Such actions would only seem to further cut them off from their desired policy platform.

Theoretically, this implies that as radical-right prime ministers win power, we should see persistent negative effects to the fairness of elections, as well as more direct judicial and legislative constraints to their rule. Erdogan in Turkey, Orban in Hungary, and the *Law and Justice* party in Poland are the most visible examples of this (e.g. Kaufman and Haggard 2019; Sadurski 2018). If this is truly a common theme of the radical-right rule at-large, we should expect to see gradual changes over time in the aggregate in cases where they come to power. Thus, I first test the following hypotheses:

HYPOTHESIS 1: Radical-right prime ministers are negatively associated with the freedom and fairness of elections.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Radical-right prime ministers are negatively associated with legislative and judicial constraints on the executive.

Further, many note the radical-right’s tendency to despise and distrust the media (Ellinas 2018). Donald Trump made famous the phrase “fake news” with regard to mainstream journalists, calling them the “enemy of the people.” In general, the radical-right

tends to hold the belief that the mainstream media is dishonest, corrupt, elitist, and unconcerned with the common people (see for e.g. Bhat and Chadha 2020; Figenschou and Ihlebæk 2019). This has, in many cases led to them creating their own media outlets as a source of alternative, more favorable information. In places where they come to power, it follows that we may see a slow undermining of press freedom, and an increase in media censorship and bias (as media networks are pressured to support the regime, and alternative networks are created for the purpose of supporting the incumbent government). Thus, I next test the following hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 3: Radical-right prime ministers are negatively associated with freedom of the press.

Beyond the radical-right's effects to the institutional rule-of-law, are their impacts related to civil liberties. Anecdotally, many case studies have noted repressive policies pursued and enacted by radical-right parties in power (e.g. Minkenberg 2001; Urbinati 2019). Examples include clamping down on immigration (Zaslove 2004a), eliminating rights of asylum seekers (Fallend 2012), ethnocentrism (Kallis 2018), and attacks on freedom of speech, expression, and free association (Urbinati 2019). In many cases, these widespread changes were pursued even as radical-right parties were simply coalition partners. Whereas the deterioration of rule-of-law can be described as eliminating institutional constraints to power, the deterioration of civil liberties can best be summed up as both the elimination of mass constraints to power, and an effort to return society to its traditional form—that is, one made up of only the native population with high levels of law and order (Mudde 2007). Mass constraints, unlike institutional constraints, are equally salient whether inside or outside of sole executive power. Further, these changes aiming to return to a traditional society do not represent creating an avenue for enacting the radical-right's policy platform, rather, these changes *are* the radical-right's policy platform. Thus it follows these effects should exist even as the radical-right party is merely a coalition partner.

In this way it follows that, in the aggregate as radical-right parties rise to power we should see persistent decreases in civil liberties and increases in the deterioration of freedoms like expression, speech, and intellectual freedom as the radical-right tries to silence those who would do them harm and implement its vision for traditional society. At the same time, we should expect to see crackdowns on “out-group” populations that are not part of this vision. These effects, unlike institutional constraints, should exist also in cases with a radical-right party in coalition, even if they do not hold the prime ministership. Thus, I also test the following hypotheses:

HYPOTHESIS 4: Radical-right prime ministers *and* coalition partners are negatively associated with the civil liberties of the population.

HYPOTHESIS 5: Radical-right prime ministers *and* coalition partners are positively associated with repression of societal “out-groups.”

Why should we expect such drastic measures from the radical-right? As Mudde (2004) notes regarding populists in general, their “opponents are not just people with different priorities and values, they are evil!” The radical-right does not view opponents as simply people with differing beliefs, but rather as part of the problem. They view themselves as the only path forward for the country, and have increasingly been willing to adopt radical means to ensure this path takes hold. Beyond this, these hypotheses are based on the case knowledge we have from radical-right’s time in government. These expectations are not simply based on their populist rhetoric—but on the real outcomes observed when they win elections. Unfortunately, as of now, that limited case knowledge is all we have. In the next section I outline a large-scale quantitative analysis of 30 European countries over time to (1) demonstrate these effects are indeed widespread and common to the entire region, and (2) disentangle the various ways democracy may deteriorate when they come to power.

3.4 Data and Modeling Strategy

I utilize definitions of radical-right parties from Rooduijn et al. (2019). This classification itself is taken from Mudde (2007), who argues radical-right parties are those that believe both (1) the nation should be made up of only the native ethnic-group, and (2) strong punishment must exist for violations to law and order. The sample includes 31 European countries since 1989, and has been peer-reviewed by over 80 country experts. I code all governing coalitions in these 31 countries since 1989 for whether they had (1) a radical-right prime minister, and (2) a radical-right party in the governing coalition. This leaves 851 country-year observations, of which 20 have a radical-right prime minister, and 107 have at least a radical-right party in coalition government.

I utilize several measures from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset to measure changes in liberal democracy (for robustness, I utilize measures from alternative sources in the appendix and results do not change). To test hypothesis one (freedom and fairness of elections) I draw on V-Dem’s “clean elections index” which itself is based on a bayesian factor analysis of the following components: election monitoring body’s autonomy and capacity, quality of voter registry, prevalence of vote buying, voting irregularities, government intimidation, electoral violence, as well as the expert’s overall opinion of the freedom and fairness of the national election. It is measured on an interval scale that ranges from 0–1, with higher numbers indicating fairer elections.

To test hypotheses two, I use V-Dem’s measures of legislative and judicial constraints on the executive. The legislative constraints variable is comprised of the following measures: (1) the legislature’s ability to question the executive branch, (2) the likelihood of an official investigation by the legislature into unethical/unconstitutional executive conduct, (3) the likelihood of an official investigation by someone other than the legislature into unethical/unconstitutional executive conduct, and (4) the ability of the opposition to provide government oversight and investigations. Meanwhile, the measure of judicial constraints in-

cludes: (1) the degree to which the executive respects the constitution, (2) the executive’s compliance with court rulings, and (3) the independence of the court’s decision making. These measures are also based on bayesian factor analysis and are scaled on a 0–1 interval, where higher numbers indicate more independence.

No appropriate index exists to test the hypothesis related to freedom of the press, thus I rely on several variables. My hypothesis posits that, first, the government will view the media as a constraint to its continued rule, and will thus attempt to increase censorship of the media. To test this, I utilize a question from V-Dem which asks country experts to what extent the government “directly or indirectly attempt[s] to censor the print or broadcast media.” As journalists are censored and pressured by the government, and more friendly government media sources are created, we should also expect to see an outright tilt in coverage more friendly to the incumbent regime. Thus I also include as DVs measures of the media’s bias against opposition candidates, and the number of media outlets that routinely criticize the government. These three media variables are all measured on an ordinal scale by at least five country-experts, before being converted to an interval level measure via a Bayesian item response theory model (see Pemstein et al. 2015). In all cases, higher values refer to more press freedom.

Next, I introduce the variables used to test the civil liberties hypothesis. While V-Dem does compute an individual liberty index, which includes important measures such as equality before the law and freedom of religion, it also includes such measures as political torture and killing. While the former are very likely to be correlated with radical-right rule, the latter almost certainly are not (though I note that radical-right rule is indeed a significant indicator of this index, even-still). Thus I instead opt to use the raw measures themselves. To test for a deterioration of freedom of speech, I utilize V-Dem’s measure of “freedom of discussion,” which measures the extent to which men are able to engage in private or public discussion of politics (they offer the same measure for women separately, but results are identical for either measure).

Along with this, academic freedom is also commonly seen as a threat to radical parties, as universities traditionally, like the media, provide oversight on the mechanics of government. Take for example, the Hungarian government’s moves against Central European University in 2017 (Enyedi 2018). Thus I include a measure of academic freedom in my tests of civil liberties. As radical-right parties tend to be islamophobic and ethnocentric, I also test for their effect on religious freedom and ability to practice without discrimination. Finally, I test for effects on access to justice. This index measures the ability to which men are able to seek fair legal recourse if the government violates their rights, without risking their own safety or rights (again, the same variable exists for women separately, but results are identical). All of these measures utilize the same Bayesian item response theory modeling discussed above, and in each case higher values indicate higher levels of civil liberty.

Lastly I test hypothesis 5, which argues societal “out-groups” will be repressed by radical-right governments. To test this I again draw on V-Dem and utilize their “equal protection index.” This Bayesian factor analysis index measures the extent to which certain groups of society enjoy equal rights and freedoms, are allowed to participate, and are not threatened by other societal groups. It incorporates measures of the difference in civil liberties between the rich and the poor as well as differing ethnic groups.

I include a standard host of controls in all models. To control for prevailing economic conditions I include a log of GDP per capita. I also include Gini coefficient to measure inequality within the country, as inequality has been shown to influence radical-right success (Han 2016), and may well an effect on civil liberties, certainly those pertaining to the repression of out-groups. I include a control for parliamentary systems, as leadership and coalition dynamics differ in presidential and semi-presidential systems. Indeed Cyprus is the only presidential system in the sample, and has never experienced a radical-right party in coalition. Yet, this variable—as defined by the Database of Political Institutions (Scartascini, Cruz, and Keefer 2018)—also includes semi-presidential systems, which may similarly have divergent baselines in terms of radical success.

I also control for whether the country can be classified as an autocracy (defined as those with a Polity score of less than seven), as the baseline levels regarding repression, rule of law, and civil liberties are clearly very different in an autocracy. Finally, given the myriad historical, cultural, and institutional factors that have been shown to effect radical-right success I opt to include country fixed-effects, allowing instead an analysis of within-country changes over time.

All models are conceptualized as lagged dependent-variable regressions, as level of democracy within a country is clearly a dynamic process. Further, it is quite possible nations with lower rule-of-law or civil liberties are more susceptible to the rise of the radical-right in the first place. This changes our interpretation of the results from the effect of the radical-right on *level* of democracy, to their effect on *changes* in democracy, arguably more theoretically relevant, as well. I note there is a strong possibility of introducing bias to a model containing both fixed-effects and a lagged-dependent variable (Nickell 1981). In this case, however, the bias is towards more conservative estimation. In other words, this methodology leads to a quite cautious test of the potential effects on my dependent variable with respect to my independent variables. This makes the potential finding of strong effects particularly interesting in this regard. For robustness I respecify all main models as random-effects models instead, that is with coalitions nested in countries. The results remain materially unchanged, and if anything, show even stronger effects—especially in the case of radical-right junior coalitions. I also specify models that utilize fixed-effects with no lagged dependent variable, here too we see stronger effects. However, as I view the fixed-effects lagged dependent variable specification as the more methodologically appropriate choice, I continue with this strategy.

I first test models where the main independent variable of interest is a dichotomous measure of whether executive power was held by a radical-right party (that is, a radical-right prime minister). Next, following the theory that radical-right parties are able to exert influence as mere partners in government, I run models on the same set of dependent variables

utilizing instead an independent variable measuring the percent of coalition seats held by the radical-right party, as a percent of total coalition seat-share, see equation 3.1. All models include robust standard errors clustered by country.

$$\text{Radical-Right Government Seat-Share} = \frac{S_r}{S_r + S_g} \quad (3.1)$$

Where S is seat-share, r is the radical-right coalition partner, and g are all other coalition parties.

I utilize this seat-share measure rather than a simple dichotomous measure of whether the radical-right party is in coalition as their influence within government grows as they make up a larger share of government seats, and control more government ministries (Browne and Franklin 1973; Gamson 1961). It would be problematic, for example, to equate Greece’s 2009 cabinet where the radical-right *Popular Orthodox Rally* held just over 5% seat-share and one cabinet post with the 2017 Austrian coalition where the *Freedom Party of Austria* won 45% of the government seat-share and several cabinet posts.

3.5 Results

I first discuss results related to the effect of a radical-right prime minister on institutional rule-of-law. These results are presented in table 3.1. Columns 1–3 present results on the effect on free and fair elections, as well as judicial and legislative constraints on the executive. Interestingly, it appears that while radical-right rule significantly deteriorates legislative and judicial rule on executive constraints, it has no discernible effect on the freedom and fairness of elections. This may intuitively make sense. Much of the radical-rights’ populist rhetoric focuses on taking power away from the corrupt elite and rightfully returning it to the masses (Muller 2016). In this way, it is not necessarily that they openly advocate removing people from the decision making process. Rather, their anti-democratic efforts seemed to be more concerned with removing constraints to their rule, once democratically

Table 3.1: Effect of a Radical-Right Prime Minister on Institutional Rule-of-Law

	Free/Fair Elections	Judicial Constraints	Legislative Constraints	Media Censorship	Media Critical of Govt	Media Bias Against Opp
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Radical-Right PM	-0.033 (0.025)	-0.036*** (0.009)	-0.049* (0.024)	-0.666*** (0.127)	-0.388*** (0.031)	-0.285** (0.104)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.009 (0.007)	0.002 (0.003)	0.018** (0.006)	-0.024 (0.042)	-0.032 (0.035)	-0.073 (0.038)
Autocracy	-0.029 (0.023)	0.023 (0.022)	0.045 (0.027)	0.025 (0.192)	-0.019 (0.032)	0.044 (0.123)
Gini	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.015 (0.012)	0.008 (0.010)	0.006 (0.009)
Parliamentary	0.027 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.023** (0.009)	-0.064 (0.065)	-0.114** (0.042)	-0.113 (0.082)
Lagged DV	0.235 (0.152)	0.764*** (0.104)	0.501*** (0.105)	0.690*** (0.083)	0.766*** (0.076)	0.665*** (0.058)
Constant	0.552*** (0.109)	0.149 (0.118)	0.216* (0.095)	0.723 (0.451)	0.750 (0.384)	1.398*** (0.422)
Observations	738	738	738	738	738	738
R ²	0.933	0.950	0.929	0.906	0.908	0.832
Adjusted R ²	0.930	0.947	0.925	0.901	0.904	0.824

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3.2: Predicted Values of Institutional Rule-of-Law

	Non-Radical-Right	Radical-Right	1-Year Difference	4-Year Difference
Free/Fair Elections	0.93	0.90	-0.03	-0.13
Judicial Constraints	0.91	0.87	-0.04	-0.14
Legislative Constraints	0.87	0.82	-0.05	-0.19
Media Censorship	2.54	1.87	-0.67	-2.66
Media Critical of Govt	2.27	1.88	-0.39	-1.55
Media Bias Against Opposition	2.10	1.81	-0.29	-1.14

elected. Meanwhile, columns 4–6 display results of radical-right prime ministers on press freedom. Here too we see persistent negative effects associated with radical-right rule. We see significant increases in media censorship, as well as decreases in critiques of the incumbent government, and a concurrent increase in anti-opposition bias.

To calculate the substantive effect of these measures, I estimate their predicted values for both radical-right and non-radical-right prime ministers. They are displayed in table 3.2. All other variables are held at their mean or median value, thus as simulations of democratic quality for both radical-right and non-radical-right countries begin at the same value, and the previous year’s respective level is controlled for, these simulations show the difference after *a single year* of radical-right rule (see for e.g. Houle and Kenny 2018). In the final column of table 3.2 I present the estimated change after a four-year term of radical-right rule. In every case, four years of radical-right rule is associated with at least a one standard deviation decrease in institutional rule-of law; in the case of press freedom the effects are larger than two standard deviations.

I turn next to analyzing the effect of radical-right prime ministers on civil liberties and repression. The results of these models is displayed in table 3.3. As before, radical-right prime ministers have a significant negative effect while in power. Each year the radical-right holds executive power sees an associated decrease in freedom of speech, religion, academia, access to justice, and a decrease in equal protection and civil liberties of societal “out-groups.” While the effect on speech does not appear significant at traditional levels, it does maintain $p = 0.051$. As before, in table 3.4 I present simulated effects of annual and four-year changes in these measures when the radical-right is in power.

The results here are more varied. A four-year term of radical-right rule is associated with a larger than one standard deviation decrease in both freedom of speech and religion, a two standard deviation decrease in academic freedom, a roughly one-third standard deviation decrease in access to justice, and a decrease in equal protection of out-groups of roughly two-thirds of a standard deviation.

Overall, it seems radical-right prime minister’s have the starkest effect on judicial and legislative constraints on their power, freedom of the press, and academic freedom. These variables, likely no coincidence, represent the “elite” of the country. The rest of government, the media, and academics are those most likely to criticize radical-right candidates, and

Table 3.3: Effect of a Radical-Right Prime Minister on Civil Liberties

	Freedom of Speech (1)	Religious Freedom (2)	Academic Freedom (3)	Access to Justice (4)	Equal Protection for Out-Groups (5)
Radical-Right PM	-0.156 (0.080)	-0.166** (0.056)	-0.386** (0.149)	-0.060*** (0.016)	-0.009** (0.004)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.008 (0.044)	-0.039 (0.028)	-0.030 (0.041)	-0.027 (0.022)	-0.001 (0.002)
Autocracy	0.139 (0.168)	-0.070 (0.145)	0.090 (0.135)	-0.019 (0.053)	0.005 (0.005)
Gini	-0.014 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.006)	0.007 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.006)	0.0002 (0.001)
Parliamentary	-0.088 (0.047)	-0.033 (0.045)	-0.130 (0.097)	-0.180 (0.123)	-0.007 (0.004)
Lagged DV	0.781*** (0.041)	0.786*** (0.041)	0.774*** (0.043)	0.832*** (0.062)	0.807*** (0.040)
Constant	0.956** (0.294)	1.146*** (0.221)	0.862** (0.294)	1.046** (0.318)	0.202*** (0.045)
Observations	738	738	738	738	738
R ²	0.889	0.919	0.899	0.970	0.962
Adjusted R ²	0.884	0.915	0.894	0.969	0.960

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3.4: Predicted Values of Civil Liberties

	Non-Radical-Right	Radical-Right	1-Year Difference	4-Year Difference
Speech	2.54	2.39	-0.16	-0.62
Religion	1.93	1.76	-0.17	-0.67
Academic	2.64	2.26	-0.39	-1.55
Justice	2.70	2.64	-0.06	-0.24
Equal Protection	0.92	0.91	-0.01	-0.04

those most likely to stand as barriers to their continued power. It has been noted many times over in the literature that the radical-right, and populist rhetoric at-large, focuses on the need to reclaim power from the corrupt elite, and return it to the “rightful majority” (Muller 2016). Thus, while we do see smaller, persistent negative effects on the civil liberties of those they do not consider to be the “rightful majority,” the effects on those who they

view as the “corrupt elite” appear to be much more pronounced.

3.5.1 *Effects of Radical-Right Coalitions*

In this section, I run models on the same dependent variables as above, this time looking at the effect of radical-right parties in coalition government. Given their ability to affect change on policies while merely in a government coalition, it follows that they may indeed have profound effects on the quality of liberal democracy, as well. However, due to both practical constraints, and the will and preferences of the party, I argue we will only see real changes for mass civil liberties, and not institutional constraints. The dependent variable in these cases, again, is the share of government seats held by the radical-right party. Crucially, in these models I add a control for whether the radical party holds the prime ministership, as the argument suggests they should effects negative effects to democracy even when outside of executive power. The results of radical-right coalition on institutional rule of law are presented in table 3.5. As expected, the results do not hold. In general, it appears the radical-right is unable to affect institutional rule-of-law of a country when they remain relegated to junior coalition-partner status. Only media bias seems to suffer from radical-right parties in coalition.

Indeed, this may make sense regarding constraints to power. For one, these are largely more large-scale changes requiring much more executive power to enact. It is unlikely a junior partner of any kind would be able to have such influence. Further, it is entirely unclear why a radical-right party would have any interest in eroding constraints on executive power at a time when it does not hold said executive power. Thus, the only real result we see during their time in coalition is a significant increase of media bias against political rivals, with a four-year change larger than one standard deviation. This intuitively could make sense as well, as while in office radical-right politicians may wield more influence in stopping negative stories while also having more incentive and resources to set up favorable media outlets of their own.

Finally, I present results on the effect of radical-right coalitions on civil liberties. The

Table 3.5: Effect of a Radical-Right Coalition on Institutional Rule-of-Law

	Free/Fair Elections	Judicial Constraints	Legislative Constraints	Media Censorship	Media Critical of Govt	Media Bias Against Opp
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rad-Right Govt Seat	−0.039 (0.034)	−0.019 (0.018)	−0.062 (0.043)	−0.535 (0.372)	−0.101 (0.147)	−0.570* (0.286)
Radical-Right PM	−0.013 (0.021)	−0.026 (0.014)	−0.017 (0.024)	−0.396* (0.180)	−0.337*** (0.089)	0.005 (0.141)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.010 (0.007)	0.002 (0.003)	0.020** (0.006)	−0.012 (0.043)	−0.030 (0.036)	−0.060 (0.038)
Autocracy	−0.029 (0.023)	0.023 (0.022)	0.045 (0.027)	0.025 (0.189)	−0.019 (0.032)	0.046 (0.122)
Gini	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.013 (0.012)	0.007 (0.010)	0.003 (0.009)
Parliamentary	0.027 (0.023)	−0.012 (0.008)	−0.023* (0.009)	−0.065 (0.065)	−0.114** (0.043)	−0.115 (0.090)
Lagged DV	0.234 (0.152)	0.761*** (0.105)	0.496*** (0.104)	0.686*** (0.083)	0.765*** (0.076)	0.664*** (0.057)
Constant	0.550*** (0.109)	0.149 (0.119)	0.214* (0.096)	0.681 (0.465)	0.742 (0.389)	1.354** (0.426)
Observations	738	738	738	738	738	738
R ²	0.934	0.950	0.930	0.907	0.908	0.834
Adjusted R ²	0.930	0.947	0.926	0.902	0.904	0.825

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

results of these models are displayed in table 3.6. This time, as with radical prime ministers, we see significant negative effects. Aside from equal protection of social-groups, radical-right parties in coalition are associated with significant decreases to mass civil rights, even as the party of the prime minister is controlled for. Table 3.7 presents the predicted values and changes for these metrics. In this case, I analyze the first-difference change from no radical-right party in cabinet, to the case of a radical-right party with 30% of the government seat-share (note, this implies their overall parliamentary seat-share is still much lower). A four-year term of radical-right coalition is associated with nearly a 3/4 standard deviation

Table 3.6: Effect of a Radical-Right Coalition on Civil Liberties

	Freedom of Speech	Religious Freedom	Academic Freedom	Access to Justice	Equal Protection for Out-Groups
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Rad-Right Govt Seat	-0.290* (0.121)	-0.373* (0.151)	-0.585* (0.229)	-0.200* (0.100)	-0.003 (0.007)
Radical-Right PM	-0.010 (0.104)	0.020 (0.073)	-0.094 (0.161)	0.042 (0.052)	-0.008* (0.003)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.015 (0.044)	-0.030 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.038)	-0.023 (0.022)	-0.001 (0.002)
Autocracy	0.137 (0.169)	-0.077 (0.145)	0.091 (0.134)	-0.019 (0.052)	0.005 (0.005)
Gini	-0.015 (0.011)	-0.013* (0.005)	0.005 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.006)	0.0002 (0.001)
Parliamentary	-0.090* (0.043)	-0.031 (0.045)	-0.128 (0.097)	-0.180 (0.122)	-0.007 (0.004)
Lagged DV	0.777*** (0.040)	0.774*** (0.045)	0.765*** (0.044)	0.830*** (0.062)	0.807*** (0.040)
Constant	0.942** (0.299)	1.134*** (0.216)	0.810** (0.276)	1.035** (0.323)	0.202*** (0.045)
Observations	738	738	738	738	738
R ²	0.890	0.920	0.900	0.970	0.962
Adjusted R ²	0.884	0.916	0.895	0.969	0.960

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3.7: Predicted Values of Civil Liberties

	Non-Radical-Right	Radical-Right	1-Year Difference	4-Year Difference
Speech	2.55	2.47	-0.09	-0.35
Religion	1.94	1.83	-0.11	-0.45
Academic	2.66	2.49	-0.18	-0.70
Justice	2.71	2.65	-0.06	-0.24
Equal Protection	0.92	0.92	-0.00	-0.00

decrease in freedom of speech, and a roughly one standard deviation decrease in freedom of religion and academic freedom. Meanwhile, access to justice sees a 1/3 standard deviation decrease, while there again is no effect on equal protections.

While these changes are, naturally, smaller than the effects exhibited during the term

of a radical-right prime minister, it is consequential to note the stark effects these parties are able to have by merely joining a government coalition. It is not the case, as previously thought, that the effect of the radical-right on liberal democracy is limited by their relegation as junior members. Rather, they are able to wield their influence and control of government ministries to bring with them real deterioration to the level of liberal democracy within their country.

Thus, in sum, we see strong evidence for hypotheses 2–3. While the freedom-and-fairness of elections does not appear to be hurt by the radical-right’s ascension to prime minister (hypothesis 1), we do see important deterioration of the constraints to their power, namely through harms to judicial and legislative checks on power, as well as press freedom. We also see strong support for hypothesis 4. While the radical-right in coalition government is not strong enough to alter these institutional constraints, they do seem to have significant effects on civil liberties in the country. This is likely due to their increased influence as a cabinet party, and newfound authority in leading certain ministries. Finally, hypothesis 5 receives mixed support. While radical-right prime ministers do seem to harm the equal protection of societal “out-groups,” mere radical-right coalitions do not.

3.5.2 *Robustness Checks*

I conduct several tests to ensure results are robust to various specifications. First, there may be concerns as to the utilization of V-Dem’s indicators, which rely on the responses of country-experts. Though each case is reviewed by no less than five experts, and these responses are then used in Bayesian IRT models to arrive at a robust country-year interval level measure, I use alternative measures to ensure models are not sensitive to this specification. Namely, I first utilize the World Bank’s Rule-of-Law estimate from their Worldwide Governance dataset. This measure takes into account the degree to which the contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts abide by the laws. Results remain robust in terms of the effect of radical-right prime ministers and coalition seat-share. In terms of civil liberties, I rely on Freedom House’s civil liberties measure. While this measure

includes metrics such as press freedom and independence of the judiciary (characteristics of institutional rule-of-law, rather than civil liberties), many of the metrics do indeed refer to freedoms of speech, assembly, expression, as well as academic freedom. In terms of both the World Bank and Freedom House measures, results remain largely unchanged from the main models. The results of these alternative dependent variable models are presented in table B.1 of the appendix

Next, the extrapolation to calculate the estimated change in democracy for a four-year term of radical-right rule in the preceding sections crucially relies on the assumption that the effect of a radical-right government is linear and constant over time. I directly test this by rerunning the preceding models with an alternative dependent variable. Instead of a dichotomous measure for whether a radical-right prime minister is in office, I instead use a measure of the number of years the radical-right prime minister has been in office (i.e. a 1 their first year, 2 their second year, and so on). I include a square of this variable to allow the possibility of nonlinear effects. Importantly, these models do not include lagged dependent variables. The results are displayed in figure B.1 in the appendix. I confirm that (1) the results do seem to be linear over time, and (2) the calculated effects of a four-year term roughly match those presented above.

Additionally, there may well be concerns that, due to the low number of countries that do experience a radical-right prime minister, results may be driven by one or a few observations. I note first that while only a handful of cases (20 country-year observations) do experience radical-right executive rule, it is not simply the case of periods of uninterrupted rule. Rather it is common for periods of radical-right rule, followed by periods of moderate rule, followed again by another period of radical rule. This is beneficial in identifying a model seeking to analyze within-country changes over time. Even still, in the appendix I provide two major robustness tests to ensure results are not driven by only one country.

First, I perform a clustered jackknife for each main model. That is, I re-run every model 30 times, each time omitting one country. I plot the distribution of parameter esti-

mates of the radical-right prime minister variable in the appendix figure B.2 for institutional rule-of-law models, and figure B.3 for civil liberties models. Overall, the results appear quite stable. Only in the case of effects to free and fair elections (which already was insignificant in the main model) and equal protection under the law does a parameter from the jackknife approach 0. In other words, radical-right prime minister is always a meaningful predictor of level of democracy (with exception to the two aforementioned variables) in every case, regardless of which country is dropped from the sample. Second, I present full model outputs on both institutional rule-of-law and civil liberties in the cases where Poland and Hungary are dropped, as these are the most prominent cases of radical-right executive control, and make up the vast majority of positive observations. Results are displayed in tables B.2 – B.5 of the appendix and indicate results are not driven by one case.

Finally, I address concerns of endogeneity. That is, the possibility that some nations were already on the path to a deterioration of democracy, and that this very path is in turn what led them to radical-right rule. While this is addressed in part by the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable, I adopt a second strategy here to ensure robustness. I follow Houle and Kenny (2018) and employ a quasi-experimental discontinuity design to test for the difference in democracy where a radical-right candidate won, compared to the case where they *almost* won. I adopt Houle and Kenny’s definition and define the case of almost winning as those where the radical-right party received over 20% of vote-share in the election leading to the coalition. While certainly not a quintessential regression discontinuity design, this sheds some additional light on whether there is something unique about radical rule that harms democracy, or rather if the effects seen are simply symptoms of the greater systemic conditions that may endogenously bring a higher probability of radical-right rule, as well. Table 3.8 displays the results of the quasi-experiment with regard to institutional rule-of-law, while table 3.9 presents the same with regard to civil liberties. For each measure, the case where the radical-right candidate actually won is correlated with a lower level of democracy. In each case this difference is significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

Table 3.8: Institutional Rule-of-Law, Radical-Right and *Almost* Radical-Right Regimes

	Free/Fair Elections	Judicial Constraints	Legislative Constraints	Media Censorship	Media Crit. of Govt	Media Bias Against Opp
Almost Radical-Right	0.95	0.95	0.91	2.97	2.38	2.35
Radical-Right	0.88	0.83	0.79	1.13	0.93	1.05
Difference	-0.07***	-0.12***	-0.13***	-1.84***	-1.45***	-1.30***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Table 3.9: Civil Liberties, Radical-Right and *Almost* Radical-Right Regimes

	Freedom of Speech	Religious Freedom	Academic Freedom	Access to Justice	Equal Protection for Out-Groups
Almost Radical-Right	2.60	2.02	2.84	2.87	0.94
Radical-Right	2.03	1.54	1.61	1.82	0.87
Difference	-0.56***	-0.48***	-1.23***	-1.05***	-0.07***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

I further conduct this discontinuity test looking at cases where radical candidates were excessively popular but did not join the government coalition compared to cases where they did enter a coalition. These differences with regard to civil liberties are presented in table 3.10. Again, we see significant negative differences, indicating it indeed is the effect of their participation into government, and not endogenous conditions of the nation, driving these results.

Table 3.10: Civil Liberties, Radical-Right and *Almost* Radical-Right Coalitions

	Freedom of Speech	Religious Freedom	Academic Freedom	Access to Justice	Equal Protection for Out-Groups
Almost Radical-Right	2.60	2.18	2.90	2.86	0.94
Radical-Right	2.48	1.79	2.42	2.49	0.91
Difference	-0.12*	-0.39***	-0.48***	-0.38***	-0.03***

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

3.6 Conclusion

Much discussion of the last decade has focused on the major threats posed by radical-right parties and candidates. While many scholars consider them to be one of the largest contemporary threats to liberal democracy, this threat has yet to be empirically quantified.

Much of our knowledge, until now, has relied on limited case studies in the few nations they have risen to take control of executive power. Overall, these results paint a clear picture. Radical-right parties do indeed exhibit negative effects to liberal democracy when in office. It is a persistent effect we see throughout Europe over time; as a country sees a radical-right party come to power, we can expect liberal democracy to suffer in several ways. With the utilization of disaggregated measures, we are able to see exactly where these effects are more prevalent.

In this paper, I operationalize liberal democracy as existing in two distinct domains: institutional rule-of-law, and mass civil liberties. This disaggregation allows for an approach to separate the effects of cases where the radical-right holds the prime ministership, as compared to cases where they serve as junior coalition partners. I first argue and find that radical-right parties only have real impacts to institutional rule-of-law when serving as prime minister. This makes sense, as (1) these are generally large-scale changes that require a large amount of power and influence to enact, and (2) it follows that candidates would only have an interest in eliminating executive constraints when they hold executive power. Even still, while prime minister the effect the radical-right has is stark. Namely, while a radical-right prime minister's four-year term has no discernible effect on electoral freedom, it is associated with large decreases in legislative and judicial constraints on the executive, and even larger decreases in terms of press freedom.

This intuitively makes sense. Much of the radical-right's often populist rhetoric focuses on taking power away from the corrupt elite and rightfully returning it to the general masses (Muller 2016). In this way, where they generally are considered "anti-democratic" (e.g. Mudde 1996), it is not necessarily that they openly advocate removing people from the decision making processes. Rather, their anti-democratic efforts seem to be far more concerned with removing constraints to their own political rule, once democratically elected. After all, in order to be in a position to affect change, they must first operate within the status quo of democracy. As Muller (2016) argues, when these parties demonstrate values

counter to democracy, the people simply believe this is being done for their own benefit (them being their voters, the only “true people”). Perhaps it makes sense, then, that the bulk of the radical-right’s impact on liberal democracy occurs in the realm of disrespecting constraints to their power, as these constraints inherently exist only in a world where the radical-right is already in power. This also explains the lack of effect in terms of radical coalitions on these institutional constraints.

In terms of mass civil liberties, however, the calculus is different. Rather, these represent true policy preferences of the radical-right, whether in a position of executive power or not. In one sense they are changes that bring the society more in line with their vision of morality. In the other, they represent constraints to their power that exist even when out of power, in terms of those who would criticize them and provide a “check” on their behavior. These also represent changes that are, in a sense, “easier” to make, and do not require the level of power that comes with outright executive control. While a junior coalition member, the BZÖ in Austria was able to make widespread changes to the justice and immigration system, for example. Thus, it follows that we should see a deterioration of mass civil liberties both when the radical-right holds the prime ministership, but also (if to a lesser degree) when they serve as mere coalition partners.

In a disconcerting way, this is exactly what I find. Radical-right parties are correlated with a deterioration of the quality of civil liberties even while merely *junior* coalition partners. While work has been done quantifying the effect they have on social policy as coalition partners, no work has been offered to quantify their impact on liberal democracy while in such a position. I find that for a standard four-year term in office, a transition from no radical-right coalition partner, to a coalition where the radical-right holds 30% of government seats is associated with sizable decreases in freedom of speech, freedom of religion, academic freedom, and access to justice.

Clearly, it seems the impact of the recent rise of the radical-right has brought with it implications much starker than previously understood. Future work would be well served to

examine the altering ways in which radical-right parties are (1) able to find themselves in a ruling coalition, and (2) the extent of their ability to impact policy at-large while there.

CONCLUSION

“Both the far-right and the nationalists have their own strategy that is clear and timeless. The division of society, the targeting of particular social groups, the cultivation of fear, the invocation of a national grandeur, where only the chosen ones can fit.”

Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of Greece, 2018
(while in governing coalition with right-populist and nationalist party *Independent Greeks*)

When thinking about radical-right parties in recent history, three key questions come to bear. First, why are they getting elected? Second, once elected do they spend their time in opposition, or do they find themselves participating in government—and if so, how? And third, what have the real effects of this rise in popularity been, specifically to the durability and stability of liberal democracy? These three questions have guided the research of this dissertation.

In each chapter, I endeavor to contribute to one of these questions. In the first, I analyze the growing electoral success these parties have seen. I contend that no small part of their election has been due to the rising trend in Europe of providing public funding for electoral campaigns. Indeed, I find that publicly funding elections has served to disproportionately aid parties of the radical-right. On average, following the adoption of public campaign financing, countries see roughly a tripling in the vote-share won by the radical-right. Further, and interestingly, in countries with public financing provisions, we no longer see the well-defined rule whereby radical-right success is dependent on economic growth. Rather, public funding grants the parties resources to mobilize a base of support, regardless of prevailing economic conditions. These results are surprising and counterintuitive, as public financing provisions are generally a cause supported by those on the political left of the ideological spectrum.

Second, I delve into the question of what happens when elected. More and more lately, it seems these parties are not confined to only serving in opposition. Rather, in nearly half of European countries, they have been invited to serve in parliamentary coalitions alongside a more moderate party. Where research to date has argued nothing abnormal is going on, I contend that this phenomenon is striking, and that current theories of parliamentary coalition building are unable to explain this trend. Utilizing cross-national, survey, and spatial data, I demonstrate that mainstream parties are utilizing coalition partnership in response to the threat they feel of allowing radical-right parties to continue in opposition and hurt their future probability of electoral success. This theory borrows from the literature on authoritarian cooptation and contends that coalition partnership is less costly than a radical-right rival in times when the radical-right platform is high in salience, and thus the threat they impose the highest.

Finally, I shine some much needed light on the third question, which asks what the actual effects of this rise and rule has been. To date, most research agrees that while the threat is high, the actual effects have been small. This, problematically, is due to a faulty premise that radical-right parties have little influence when serving as a junior coalition partner. Rather, I argue that when mainstream parties invite the radical-right to serve alongside them due to the threat they pose, we may see significant effects to the quality of liberal democracy in the country. Somewhat disconcerting, this is exactly what I find. While the effects are not the same as when the prime minister is themselves a member of the radical-right, radical-right junior coalition members do indeed have a profound negative effect on the civil liberties of the citizens they come to rule.

In the introduction of this dissertation, I ask if the growing trend of radical-right success is, as some occasionally call it, on the decline, or rather if they are here to stay. The radical-right, I fear, is a global phenomenon that is here to stay. Many in the media take advantage of a single election where a once-popular radical-right party sees support dwindle, and asks an unanswerable question, “is this a sign of the coming end of their popularity?”

Sadly, the answer is likely always a resounding “no.”

Following the Austrian 1999 election, which saw the *Freedom Party of Austria* receive record-high votes, leading to their entrance into the governing coalition, their support plummeted. In the next election their vote-share collapsed by 65%, leading to their worst election result since the 1980s. Again, in the subsequent election that followed, their support remained stagnant. By 2017, however, they rebounded, matched their initial 1999 result in terms of vote-share, and reentered a governing coalition. This, it seems, is the new normal, and the radical-right is not going anywhere. Rather, they have become like any mainstream party-family; while their support may ebb and flow in the short-term, they are forever a consequential player in modern politics.

In many cases, steps have been taken to attenuate this growing trend. In the late 1980s, Belgium responded to the growing radical-right *Vlaams Blok* by introducing a *cordon sanitaire* around the party. The term *cordon sanitaire* originated in the early 1800s as a reference to a fortified border set up to prevent infectious disease pandemics from spreading across national borders. The Belgians applied the term to describe mainstream parties’ agreement to refuse cooperation with radical-right opponents. Since then, similar agreements have been entered into in Germany against the *Alternative for Germany*, and in the Netherlands against the *Party for Freedom*, among other examples. Yet, in effect, these agreements are simply words that parties are very willing to break if need be. As the currently ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shown, borders set up to stop spread will eventually fail. In 2020, the ruling *Christian Democrats* in Germany cooperated with the *Alternative for Germany* to remove a regional prime minister and replace him with a more favorable candidate. Such agreement was referred to as a political “earthquake” in Germany and described as an action having “torn up” the cordons.⁶ Indeed, in many cases politicians find themselves having to make partners with these parties they promised to isolate.

⁶See “Far-right party becomes German regional kingmaker” in the *Financial Times* by Guy Chazan (2020).

The quote that precedes these concluding remarks was made by the then-prime minister of Greece Alexis Tsipras in 2018, warning of the rise of right-populist and nationalist parties. Prime Minister Tsipras did not even need a new election to go back on his word and partner-up with his once sworn enemy; he made this statement *while already* in a coalition with them. Such is the reality of politicians’ seeming willingness to work with partners they once vehemently criticized. Cas Mudde, similarly, has noted that in much of Europe these parties are now considered *Koalitionsfähig*, or “acceptable coalition partners.”⁷

As I show in the last chapter, the effects of this rise have been stark. Clearly, in the few cases where the radical-right has found itself in the prime minister’s office, a decaying of institutional checks on power was always imminent. Starker still, however, is the fact that deep repercussions on civil liberties and basic human rights are felt even as they merely enter government as a junior coalition member. Such was the importance of the *cordon sanitaire*. And yet, as I show in chapter two, mainstream parties seem very willing to work with such radical partners and jeopardize democracy—not for any noble reason or to pass important legislation—but simply because they are scared of losing their own power.

Thus is the importance of deepening our understanding of the dynamics of these parties. Where I focus much of this dissertation on understanding their electoral rise, it is imperative to know, above all else, that this rise has occurred, they are here, and they are not going anywhere.

⁷See “Nativism is driving the far-right surge in Europe—and it is here to stay” by Cas Mudde in *The Guardian* (2019).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1

To illustrate whether or not the argued effects are indeed unique to the far-right, I re-run all presented models on far-left parties. The sample, included variables, and coding of parties are all identical to models presented in the main paper.⁸ The models are presented in table A.1. As expected, results indicate that there is no evidence of an effect of public financing on far-left success, neither directly or in terms of a mediation on economic growth (further, as others have found, there does not appear to be any effect of economic growth itself on far-left success). Rather, the effects of public financing are, due to distinct party-family characteristics, unique to the far-right.

Table A.2 displays results for alternative specifications of the presented models. Column 1 is simply the main model presented in the paper. Column 2 omits the lagged-DV while column 3 omits fixed-effects, and instead runs a pooled-tobit. In this specification I add controls for PR systems, as well as electoral thresholds (I omit threshold dummies from the table for space). Column 4 re-specifies the model as a random-effects multilevel Tobit. Again, in this specification I include controls for electoral threshold and PR systems. In all three models, degree of public financing has a positive and significant effect on vote-share of the extreme right. Further, the interaction term remains in the hypothesized direction in all specifications as well, and graphical interpretations show the same effect holds as demonstrated previously (even in model 3, the coefficient is significant at the $p < 0.10$).

Next, in column 1 of table A.3 I re-run the main fixed-effects Tobit model from

⁸With the exception that “Lagged Vote-Share” now refers to *far-left* vote-share in the previous election

Table A.1: Results on Far-Left vote-Share

	(1) left	(2) left	(3) left
Degree Public Finance		0.0992 (0.401)	-0.224 (0.514)
GDP Growth	0.0223 (0.205)	0.0309 (0.191)	-0.0895 (0.167)
Inflation	0.126 (0.0710)	0.127 (0.0703)	0.115 (0.0598)
# Parties	-0.0904 (0.143)	-0.104 (0.128)	-0.147 (0.138)
Government Debt	-0.0136 (0.0166)	-0.0147 (0.0159)	-0.0172 (0.0142)
Lagged Vote-Share	-0.168** (0.0598)	-0.170** (0.0599)	-0.179** (0.0628)
Degree Public Finance \times GDP Growth			0.122 (0.126)
Constant	-6.632*** (1.579)	-6.632*** (1.577)	-6.087*** (1.269)
Sigma	3.757*** (0.490)	3.755*** (0.489)	3.723*** (0.469)
N	328	328	328
pseudo R^2	0.262	0.262	0.265
Log Pseudo-Likelihood	-736.0	-735.9	-733.5

Standard errors clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed test.

Table A.2: Results of Alternative Specifications

	Tobit			Multilevel Tobit
	(1) right	(2) right	(3) right	(4) right
Degree Public Finance	1.287*** (0.320)	1.937*** (0.565)	0.950* (0.428)	1.446*** (0.401)
GDP Growth	-0.657*** (0.194)	-1.248*** (0.307)	-0.421* (0.185)	-0.634** (0.238)
Inflation	-0.208* (0.0817)	-0.363** (0.134)	-0.0969 (0.0693)	-0.208* (0.0812)
# Parties	-0.119 (0.215)	0.265 (0.486)	0.192 (0.193)	-0.264 (0.155)
Government Debt	-0.0331* (0.0142)	-0.0385 (0.0295)	-0.00798 (0.0145)	-0.0324* (0.0137)
Lagged Vote-Share	0.692*** (0.0946)		0.903*** (0.0830)	0.664*** (0.106)
Degree Public Finance \times GDP Growth	0.208** (0.0689)	0.375*** (0.110)	0.120 (0.0714)	0.184* (0.0890)
Fixed-Effects?	Yes	Yes	No	Random
PR System			1.691 (1.569)	-0.505 (3.000)
Other Controls?			Threshold	Threshold
Constant	-2.613* (1.297)	-3.490 (1.799)	-3.696* (1.861)	1.338 (2.0609)
Sigma	4.346*** (0.412)	5.574*** (0.582)	4.575*** (0.501)	
Country-Level Variance				19.43 (12.28)
N	328	348	296	296
Pseudo R^2	0.302	0.247	0.231	
Log Pseudo-Likelihood	-518.8	-580.6	-465.6	-451.1

Standard errors clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects and threshold dummies (models 3 & 4) omitted for presentation. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed test.

the paper using multiple-imputation, rather than the default listwise-deletion. Multiple imputation is done through AMELIA II in R (see King et al. 1998). I compute 5 separate imputed datasets. Further, I include a squared time polynomial, and interact these with cross-sectional units, to allow time trends to behave differently across countries.⁹ Again, there appear to be no material differences between the models.

Columns 2-5 of table A.3 present results with additional control values. These test robustness against several variables argued to have contributed to the recent rise in extremism. Column 2 adds a control for percent of the population unemployed, column 3 adds a control for immigration, measured as the annual inflow of foreign-born population (in thousands of people).¹⁰ Column 4 includes a control for inequality, measured as the country's Gini coefficient. Finally, in column 5 I include all three controls together. Again, the results do not change in any of these cases (though interpreting interaction terms via statistical significance is not recommended, I note as a practical matter they all remain significant at the 0.1 level. More importantly, a graphical interpretation of results does not change.).

The results in table A.4 report results of several specifications testing robustness for outlier sensitivity. The model specifications are as follows: model 1 omits observations at the top 5th percentile of radical-right vote; model 2 omits the bottom 5th percentile of economic growth, while model 3 omits the top 5th percentile of the same; model 4 presents a jackknife-1 model; model 5 omits countries hit hardest by the debt crisis (Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain); finally model 6 omits observations after the debt crisis begins (all elections post-2007). In all cases, the results remain materially unchanged from the main results presented. As before, where the interaction term appears to lose significance in the jackknife model, graphical interpretations of the results do not change.

Finally, figures A.1 and A.2 display comparative predictions from the Tobit and beta

⁹That is, the “intercs” option.

¹⁰I alternatively use measures of inflows of asylum seekers, and stock of foreign-born population (rather than inflows). The results are constant across all specifications.

Table A.3: Results of Fixed-Effects Tobit on Imputed Dataset

	(1) right	(2) right	(3) right	(4) right	(5) right
Degree Public Financing	1.413*** (0.374)	1.058** (0.383)	1.447*** (0.377)	1.261*** (0.369)	0.842* (0.393)
GDP Growth	-0.648*** (0.173)	-0.653*** (0.185)	-0.615*** (0.173)	-0.618*** (0.156)	-0.538** (0.166)
Inflation	-0.190 (0.0966)	-0.226 (0.129)	-0.173 (0.108)	-0.202* (0.0977)	-0.204 (0.163)
# Parties	0.0219 (0.236)	-0.0555 (0.283)	-0.00120 (0.227)	0.0157 (0.243)	-0.128 (0.287)
Government Debt	-0.0224 (0.0151)	-0.0188 (0.0249)	-0.0278 (0.0172)	-0.0241 (0.0158)	-0.0377 (0.0309)
Lagged Vote-Share	0.669*** (0.0861)	0.661*** (0.0833)	0.659*** (0.0901)	0.663*** (0.0847)	0.625*** (0.0850)
Degree Public Finance \times GDP Growth	0.141 (0.0816)	0.172* (0.0697)	0.136 (0.0803)	0.135 (0.0821)	0.162* (0.0687)
Unemployment		0.421 (0.247)			0.580* (0.243)
Immigration (thousands)			0.00284 (0.00448)		0.00812 (0.00427)
Inequality				-0.0846 (0.0619)	-0.102 (0.0628)
Constant	-3.185* (1.491)	-5.010** (1.856)	-3.524* (1.705)	-0.232 (2.441)	-3.153 (2.330)
Sigma	4.678*** (0.351)	4.582*** (0.338)	4.664*** (0.346)	4.672*** (0.347)	4.501*** (0.317)
N	348	348	348	348	348

Standard errors clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed test.

Table A.4: Results of Fixed-Effects Tobit for Outlier Sensitivity

	(1) right	(2) right	(3) right	(4) right	(5) right	(6) right
Degree Public Financing	1.389*** (0.292)	1.084** (0.410)	1.248*** (0.327)	1.287** (0.410)	1.290*** (0.320)	1.275*** (0.335)
GDP Growth	-0.543** (0.172)	-1.085*** (0.247)	-0.672** (0.203)	-0.657* (0.316)	-0.551* (0.217)	-0.634** (0.206)
Inflation	-0.195* (0.0752)	-0.239** (0.0917)	-0.195* (0.0793)	-0.208 (0.125)	-0.182 (0.112)	-0.198* (0.0845)
# Parties	-0.0292 (0.217)	-0.251 (0.209)	-0.110 (0.215)	-0.119 (0.194)	-0.0834 (0.251)	-0.171 (0.228)
Government Debt	-0.0468*** (0.0133)	-0.0422** (0.0160)	-0.0289* (0.0136)	-0.0331 (0.0187)	-0.0509*** (0.0135)	-0.0349* (0.0151)
Lagged Vote-Share	0.480*** (0.0806)	0.674*** (0.0895)	0.694*** (0.0953)	0.692*** (0.103)	0.754*** (0.0850)	0.695*** (0.102)
Degree Public Finance \times GDP Growth	0.180** (0.0624)	0.320*** (0.0933)	0.186** (0.0694)	0.208 (0.129)	0.226** (0.0754)	0.205* (0.0990)
Constant	-2.062* (0.967)	-0.524 (1.368)	-2.626* (1.297)	-2.613 (2.447)	-2.764 (1.582)	-2.347 (1.367)
Sigma	3.684*** (0.380)	4.328*** (0.415)	4.351*** (0.419)	4.346*** (0.401)	4.171*** (0.466)	4.232*** (0.415)
N	312	311	314	328	283	313
Pseudo R^2	0.297	0.303	0.298	0.302	0.316	0.307
Log Pseudo-Likelihood	-449.7	-487.1	-507.3	-518.8	-429.1	-481.9

Standard errors clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed test.

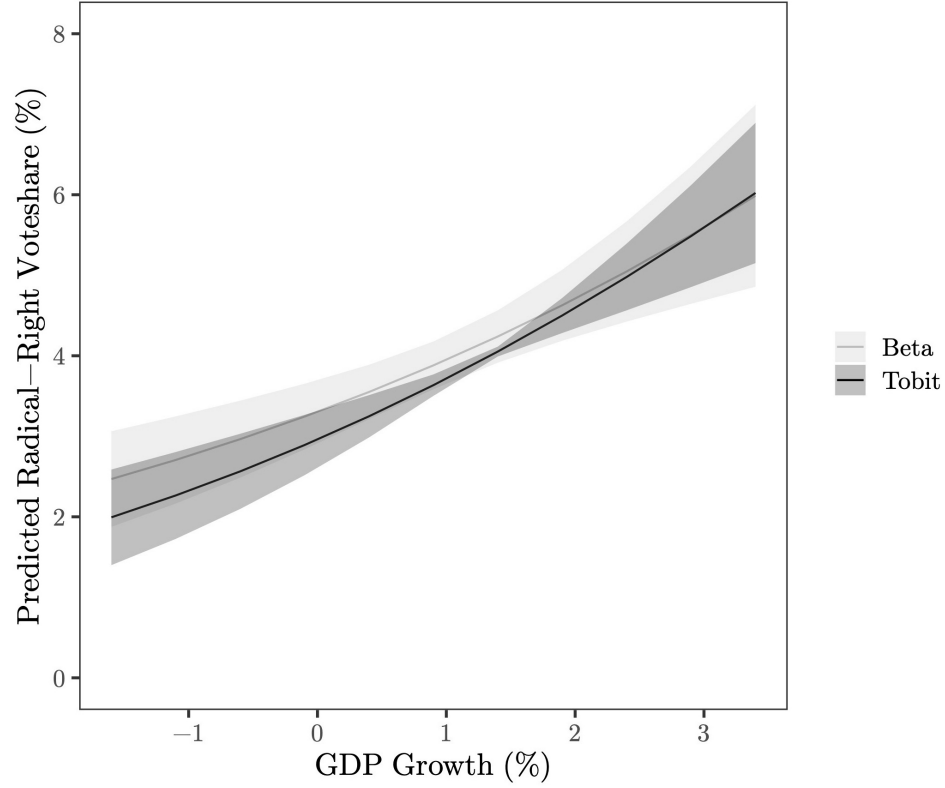


Figure A.1: Tobit vs. Beta Regression: Direct Effects

regression models. Figure A.1 presents predictions from the direct effect of public campaign finance, where the black line represents Tobit predictions while the grey represents the beta model. The predictions and confidence intervals are nearly identical between the two models.

Meanwhile, figure A.2 displays predictions of the interactive effect. Again, black represents the Tobit model, while grey indicates the beta. Further the dashed lines displays the relationship between GDP growth as vote-share at high levels of public financing, while the solid lines indicate the same at low levels of public financing. Again, the results are the same.

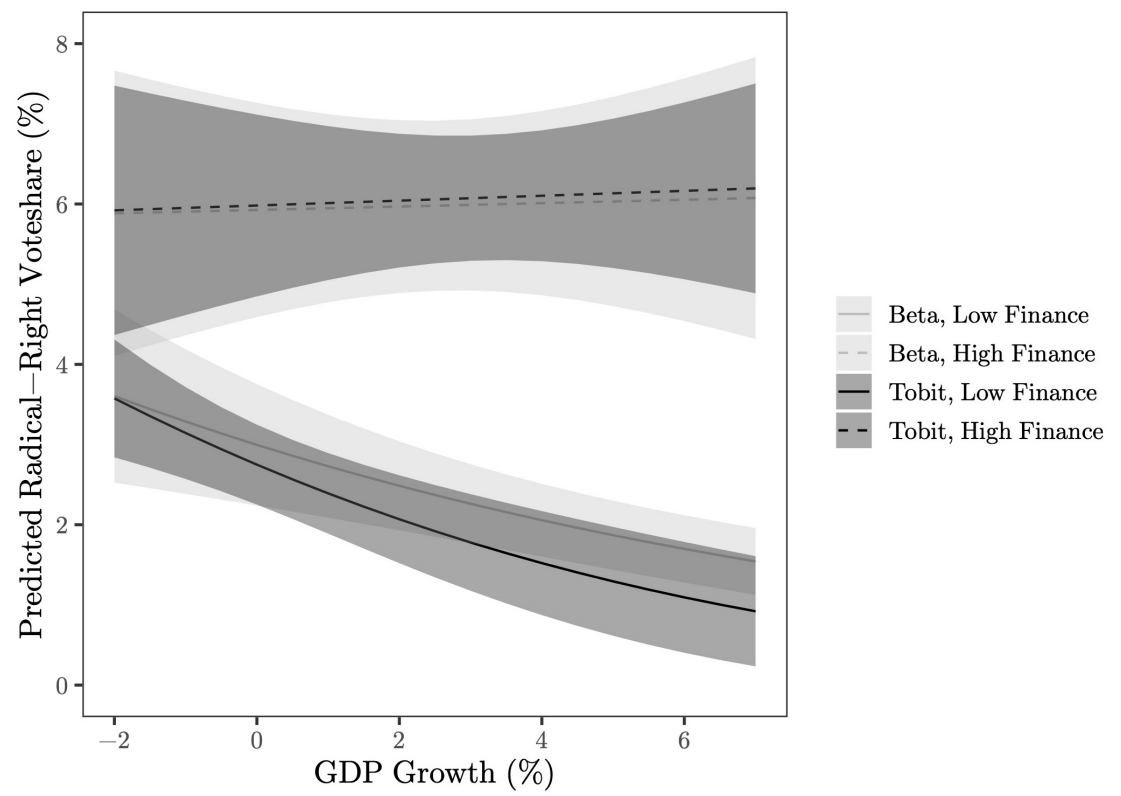


Figure A.2: Tobit vs. Beta Regression: Marginal Effects

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

Table B.1 Re-runs models using alternative dependent variables. Columns 1 and 2 present the effects of radical-right prime minister and coalition seat-share on the World Bank's rule-of-law indicator. Results remain robust to this dependent variable, in that radical-right prime ministers have a significant negative effect, while mere coalition membership does not. Columns 3 and 4 in turn rerun models using Freedom House's Civil Liberties measure. Results again are materially unchanged from the main models presented. The prime minister's effect on civil liberties is significant at the 1% level ($p = 0.07$), likely due in part to the lower number of observations, as Freedom House's disaggregated data begins is only available post-2006. Note, due to the decreased timeline, autocracy drops out of the model as no countries in the sample experienced a polity score below 7 during this more recent sample.

Table B.1: Models With Alternative DVs

	World Bank Rule-of-Law		Freedom House Civil Liberties	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Radical-Right PM	-0.089*** (0.022)	-0.054 (0.035)	-0.750 (0.414)	0.193 (0.459)
Rad-Right Govt Seat		-0.069 (0.061)		-1.872* (0.785)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.131*** (0.036)	0.132*** (0.035)	-0.975 (0.756)	-0.901 (0.758)
Gini	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.091 (0.082)	-0.082 (0.081)
Parliamentary	0.064 (0.006)	0.064*** (0.006)	1.153*** (0.100)	1.169*** (0.098)
Lagged DV	0.715*** (0.071)	0.712*** (0.071)	0.607*** (0.128)	0.591*** (0.127)
Constant	-0.654* (0.297)	-0.666* (0.291)	34.548** (11.414)	34.455** (11.419)
Observations	406	406	290	290
R ²	0.990	0.990	0.974	0.974
Adjusted R ²	0.989	0.989	0.971	0.971

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed- effects omitted for presentation.

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Figure B.1 below displays the substantive effects of radical-right prime ministers over time. These results are based on models where the main independent variable is the number of years in office.

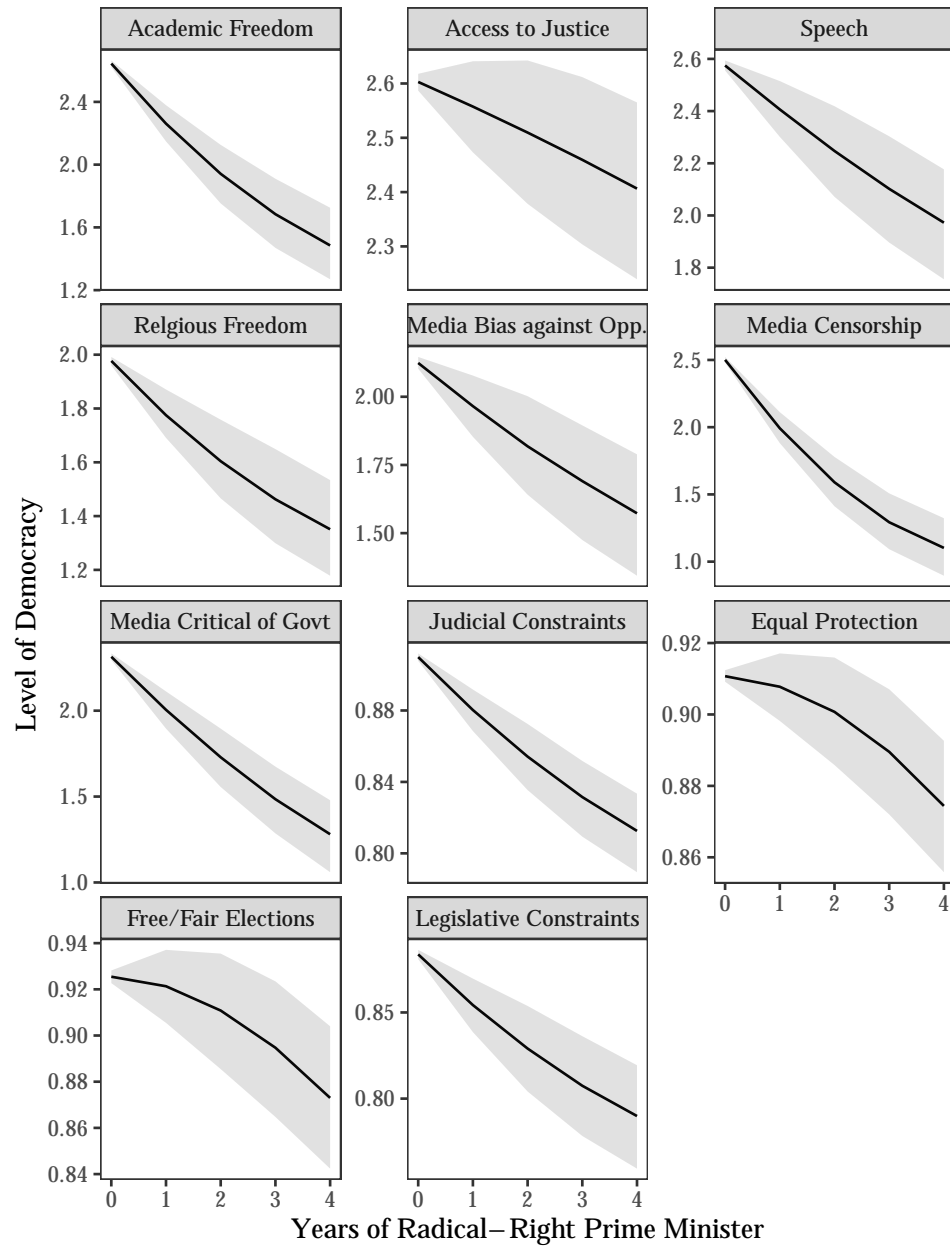


Figure B.1: Effect of Radical-Right Prime Minister Over Time

Figures B.2 and B.3 below plot the parameter distribution from a country-clustered jackknife procedure. The x-axis refers to the calculated coefficient of the radical-right prime minister variable, while the y-axis refers to the frequency of that parameter.

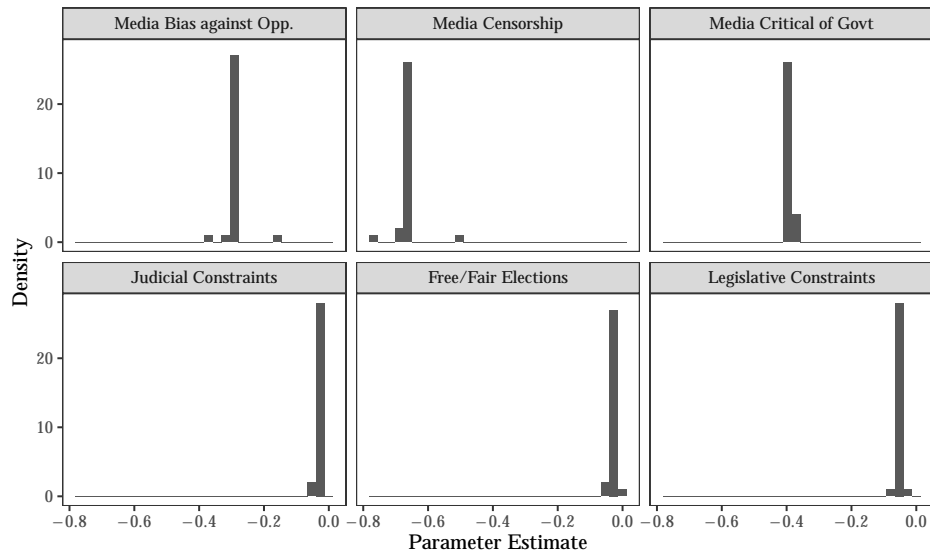


Figure B.2: Jackknife Prime Minister Parameter Estimates, Rule-of-Law

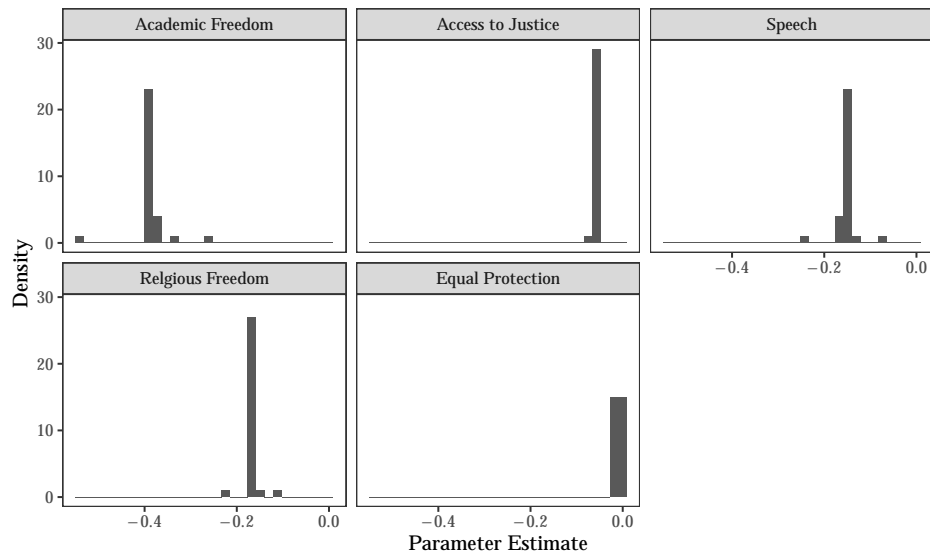


Figure B.3: Jackknife Prime Minister Parameter Estimates, Civil Liberties

Table B.2 presents the effects of a radical-right prime minister on institutional rule-of-law with Hungary omitted. Results largely remain unchanged.

Table B.2: Institutional Rule-of-Law, Hungary Omitted

	Free/Fair Elections	Judicial Constraints	Legislative Constraints	Media Censorship	Media Critical of Govt	Media Bias Against Opp
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Radical-Right PM	−0.001 (0.003)	−0.034** (0.012)	−0.017* (0.008)	−0.769*** (0.127)	−0.388*** (0.012)	−0.319* (0.161)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.011 (0.007)	0.002 (0.003)	0.019** (0.007)	−0.038 (0.041)	−0.035 (0.035)	−0.074 (0.038)
Autocracy	−0.028 (0.023)	0.024 (0.022)	0.043 (0.026)	0.027 (0.194)	−0.020 (0.031)	0.043 (0.123)
Gini	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.015 (0.012)	0.007 (0.010)	0.006 (0.009)
Parliamentary	0.026 (0.022)	−0.012 (0.008)	−0.023** (0.009)	−0.061 (0.061)	−0.110* (0.044)	−0.113 (0.083)
Lagged DV	0.221 (0.150)	0.767*** (0.109)	0.480*** (0.118)	0.709*** (0.085)	0.775*** (0.081)	0.665*** (0.058)
Constant	0.544*** (0.108)	0.146 (0.119)	0.226* (0.103)	0.810 (0.437)	0.778* (0.378)	1.401*** (0.425)
Observations	712	712	712	712	712	712
R ²	0.940	0.950	0.930	0.904	0.901	0.803
Adjusted R ²	0.937	0.947	0.926	0.899	0.896	0.794

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B.3 presents the effects of a radical-right prime minister on institutional rule-of-law with Poland omitted. Results remain largely unchanged. While radical-right prime minister appears to lose significance in regard to legislative constraints, as a practical matter both the coefficient and standard error are nearly the same as in the main model, and maintains $p < 0.1$.

Table B.3: Institutional Rule-of-Law, Poland Omitted

	Free/Fair Elections	Judicial Constraints	Legislative Constraints	Media Censorship	Media Critical of Govt	Media Bias Against Opp
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Radical-Right PM	-0.045 (0.031)	-0.026*** (0.005)	-0.047 (0.027)	-0.501*** (0.086)	-0.377*** (0.051)	-0.171*** (0.042)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.012 (0.007)	0.001 (0.004)	0.015 (0.007)	-0.039 (0.036)	-0.015 (0.031)	-0.080* (0.034)
Autocracy	-0.017 (0.016)	0.003 (0.008)	0.027* (0.013)	-0.135 (0.088)	-0.019 (0.032)	-0.062* (0.030)
Gini	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.015 (0.009)	0.004 (0.010)	0.004 (0.008)
Parliamentary	0.028 (0.023)	-0.013 (0.007)	-0.022 (0.011)	-0.075 (0.042)	-0.112* (0.045)	-0.105 (0.086)
Lagged DV	0.205 (0.152)	0.838*** (0.048)	0.619*** (0.078)	0.766*** (0.066)	0.777*** (0.079)	0.701*** (0.051)
Constant	0.554*** (0.116)	0.096 (0.072)	0.163* (0.066)	0.681 (0.387)	0.629 (0.389)	1.438*** (0.410)
Observations	711	711	711	711	711	711
R ²	0.937	0.967	0.946	0.928	0.913	0.845
Adjusted R ²	0.934	0.965	0.943	0.924	0.909	0.837

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B.4 presents the effects of a radical-right prime minister on civil liberties with Hungary omitted. Results again remain quite similar, with the exception that the effect on academic freedom is no longer significant, though the substantive size of the effect remains unchanged.

Table B.4: Civil Liberties, Hungary Omitted

	Freedom of Speech	Religious Freedom	Academic Freedom	Access to Justice	Equal Protection for Out-Groups
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Radical-Right PM	−0.133 (0.116)	−0.104* (0.043)	−0.344 (0.222)	−0.047** (0.016)	−0.004** (0.002)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.020 (0.044)	−0.038 (0.029)	−0.034 (0.042)	−0.028 (0.022)	−0.001 (0.002)
Autocracy	0.141 (0.166)	−0.065 (0.146)	0.088 (0.135)	−0.018 (0.053)	0.006 (0.005)
Gini	−0.016 (0.011)	−0.012* (0.006)	0.007 (0.010)	−0.002 (0.006)	0.0002 (0.001)
Parliamentary	−0.090* (0.045)	−0.035 (0.046)	−0.131 (0.097)	−0.183 (0.126)	−0.007 (0.004)
Lagged DV	0.778*** (0.041)	0.792*** (0.045)	0.780*** (0.041)	0.840*** (0.060)	0.801*** (0.045)
Constant	0.882** (0.298)	1.141*** (0.224)	0.891** (0.296)	1.032*** (0.311)	0.204*** (0.048)
Observations	712	712	712	712	712
R ²	0.892	0.921	0.896	0.970	0.962
Adjusted R ²	0.887	0.917	0.891	0.969	0.960

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B.5 presents the effects of a radical-right prime minister on civil liberties with Poland omitted. Results remain unchanged.

Table B.5: Civil Liberties, Poland Omitted

	Freedom of Speech	Religious Freedom	Academic Freedom	Access to Justice	Equal Protection for Out-Groups
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Radical-Right PM	−0.084 (0.065)	−0.154* (0.070)	−0.259* (0.131)	−0.056** (0.021)	−0.012*** (0.003)
log(GDP/Capita)	0.009 (0.040)	−0.044 (0.028)	−0.030 (0.038)	−0.026 (0.022)	−0.002 (0.002)
Autocracy	0.016 (0.078)	−0.177*** (0.041)	−0.029 (0.027)	−0.064** (0.023)	0.0005 (0.002)
Gini	−0.014 (0.009)	−0.009 (0.005)	0.006 (0.009)	−0.001 (0.006)	0.0004 (0.001)
Parliamentary	−0.090 (0.051)	−0.042 (0.049)	−0.147 (0.101)	−0.185 (0.127)	−0.007 (0.004)
Lagged DV	0.817*** (0.030)	0.811*** (0.035)	0.810*** (0.028)	0.842*** (0.059)	0.819*** (0.037)
Constant	0.836*** (0.247)	1.105*** (0.222)	0.801** (0.278)	0.994** (0.323)	0.192*** (0.043)
Observations	711	711	711	711	711
R ²	0.904	0.927	0.916	0.969	0.963
Adjusted R ²	0.899	0.924	0.912	0.968	0.961

Standard errors are clustered by country and appear in parentheses. Country fixed-effects omitted for presentation. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

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