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ELECTIONS, RHETORIC, AND POLICY: COMPARING THE RISE OF FAR-RIGHT
NATIONALISM IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract

Western Europe and the United States have both seen an increase in the number of elected officials who represent the far-right ideologically. In this paper, I investigate the reasons behind the rise of far-right nationalist parties, as well as the impacts it has on policy and implications for international relations. To do this, I compared recent election results from Western Europe and the US, the populist rhetoric used by these parties and their candidates, and the subsequent changes in immigration and trade policy due to far-right politicians enacting their agenda. Through this comparison, I concluded first that the elections in Western Europe show a shift in favoring far-right nationalist parties, while in the US, the Republican Party as a whole has shifted further to the right due to the Tea Party movement. Western Europe's populist rhetoric targets asylum-seekers, while in the US the rhetoric is largely anti-Latino in addition to being anti-Muslim. Both regions have their respective anti-establishment elements as well. For policy results, we see this shift in far-right nationalism manifest in stringent immigration and asylum laws, specifically in France and Austria, as well as Britain leaving the EU in 2016. For the US, the border wall, repealing DACA, the travel ban, and pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership are all examples of Trump carrying out a far-right nationalist agenda. Through this comparison, I conclude that there is a global trend shifting away from a globalist, neoliberal world to a more protectionist, nationalist world. This trend will have impacts on the movement of people and goods across the globe.

Introduction

A political phenomenon has been taking place across many parts of the globe, especially among Western societies. The phenomenon is a large increase in support for far-right nationalist parties and politicians across Western Europe and the United States. Voters are electing a new crop of politicians to represent them, and they have a very different platform and agenda compared to their predecessors. The US has elected a president publicly endorsed by far-right political groups, white nationalists, and neo-Nazis (Oppenheim 2017), while some European nations have seen as much as 35% of their Parliament replaced by far-right members (BBC 2016), but why? Understanding this shift in the political climate throughout Western Europe and the United States has implications not only for domestic national policies, but for the international arena as well. The research question that I hope to answer through this paper is: Why is far-right nationalism on the rise in Western societies, and how are the causes and effects of this rise similar or different between Western Europe and the United States?

To answer this question, I will compare the changing election patterns across Western Europe and US that illustrate an increased favorability towards far-right nationalist candidates, the rhetoric used by these candidates and their parties, and policy outcomes that have resulted from this surge in nationalism. I will begin by providing a brief background on the issue, definitions of important concepts, and an explanation of my method and comparison criteria. Next I will examine the Western European case—election results and the realignment of political party strengths, rhetoric used by far-right parties and their members, and subsequent policy changes. I will then do the same for the case of the United States. After examining the Western European and US cases, I will provide an analysis of the similarities and differences between the two, as well as posit some implications for what this may mean in the context of international relations.

Background, Definitions, and Method

While many European and US ethno-nationalist groups have been around for decades, a new salience has appeared around these party's beliefs. This newfound popularity can be attributed to opposition to neoliberalism and demographic changes, anxieties associated with terrorism, and perceived corruption or non-representativeness of the EU and US governance systems (Pazzanese 2017). All of these things have generated some level of anxiety among particularly white, native-born populations and a perceived status loss amongst them, which then makes both nationalist and populist claims—and especially nationalist-populist claims—more resonant and more salient than they had been in the past. Fueled by skepticism of the political elite and opposition to immigration and globalization, far-right political parties are gaining support across Europe and the United States.

To fully understand the causes, effects, and implications of a rise in far-right nationalism, there are a few key concepts that must be defined. The first is nationalism, and in particular, ethno-nationalism. Unlike liberal or civic nationalism, which considers all people who live within a country's borders as part of the nation regardless of their ethnic, racial, or religious origins, ethno-nationalism is defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, faith, and ethnic ancestry (Muller 2008). When modern states began to form in Europe after World War II, political boundaries largely coincided with the respective ethnolinguistic boundaries of Western Europe. For substantial stretches of US history, only people of English origin, or those who were Protestant, white, or hailed from northern Europe were believed to be true Americans. When referring to nationalism in this paper, I am referring to the shared ethno-nationalist identity among members of each respective nation-state that draws a distinction between a cohesive "us" and an identifiable "them." This "us/them" dichotomy is what right-wing populist parties draw upon to construct distinct boundaries and create "Otherness."

The concepts of populism and right-wing populism are also important to define for the purpose of this paper. The central narrative of populism is the juxtaposition of a corrupt political

class, elite, or establishment against “the people,” whose sole authentic voice the populist party claims to defend (Greven 2016). Modern right-wing populism adds a second antagonism of “us versus them” to this narrative, as well as employs tactics of negative political communication such as a blatant rejection of political correctness, and the use of emotional appeals and personal insults. Based on each country’s respective definition of “the people” as culturally homogenous, right-wing populists juxtapose their national identity and common interests with the identity and interests of “others,” usually minorities such as migrants and asylum seekers, who are supposedly favored by the corrupt elites. Other tenants of modern far-right populism include favoring protectionist policies as opposed to neoliberal policies, xenophobia over tolerance of multiculturalism, and traditional values over progressive values (Inglehart and Norris 2016). When far-right populist parties employ tactics that draw on ethno-nationalist sentiments, the result is the phenomenon of modern far-right nationalism.

To compare the rise of far-right nationalism in Western Europe and the United States, I will be utilizing the comparative case study method using three criteria of comparison. A comparative case study analyzes and synthesizes the similarities, differences and patterns across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal in a way that produces knowledge that is easier to generalize about causal questions. The first criteria is comparing the measurable phenomenon itself—the election of right-wing candidates and the realignment of political party strengths—in order to see the respective rise in the prevalence of nationalism across both regions. Next is comparing the cause of this phenomenon, which I argue is due to the populist rhetoric of far-right political parties resonating with the disenfranchised members of the population who view their elevated status in society as threatened. Lastly, I will compare the impact of this phenomenon—the policy changes that have occurred as a result of the rise of far-right nationalism. These comparisons will hopefully result in new and meaningful insights into the causes, effects, and impacts of the rise in far-right nationalism across Western Europe and the United States.

The Case of Western Europe

Amid a migrant crisis, sluggish economic growth, and growing disillusionment with the European Union, far-right parties—some long standing, others newly formed—have been achieving electoral success in a number of European nations (New York Times 2016). The 2016 elections were quite telling, and unveiled this paradigm shift across Europe. The Netherlands' anti-European Union, anti-Islam "Party for Freedom," Greece's neo-fascist party "Golden Dawn," Hungary's anti-immigration and economic protectionist party "Jobbik," and Slovakia's anti-Roma party "Our Slovakia" are only a few examples of far-right parties that have achieved significant electoral success within the last two years. Even in Germany, where shame over the Nazis has long provided resistance to the pull of nationalism, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has broken into the mainstream. Combining euroscepticism with a conservative social issue agenda, the AfD mainly capitalized on the neglecting of these matters by the liberal party and the Christian democrats, and now has representation in 10 of the country's 16 state parliaments (Shuster, 2016).

Many political observers view Marine Le Pen's National Front (FN) as the biggest nationalist challenge to Europe's liberal democratic traditions. The FN was established in 1972, and its founders and sympathizers included former Nazi collaborators and members of the wartime collaborationist Vichy regime (New York Times 2016). The FN won 6.8 million votes in regional elections in 2015, but lost in two target regions after the Socialists pulled out and urged supporters to back Nicolas Sarkozy's conservatives (BBC 2016). Le Pen received 34% of the vote for president in 2017, twice as much as her father received in 2002. Her anti-globalization platform was popular in places where deindustrialization has driven high poverty and unemployment (Aisch 2017).

Austria's Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) or Freedom Party has also recently gained prominence. The party was founded in 1955, and promotes an anti-EU and anti-immigrant agenda (Graven 2016). The FPÖ candidate Norbert Hofer emerged as the clear front-runner in the first

round of the 2016 presidential election, garnering 35% of the vote (New York Times 2016). He lost in the first runoff against Alexander Van der Bellen, an economics professor and former Green Party leader, by only 0.6 percentage points or 30,000 votes. The party challenged the results of the presidential runoff election, citing “numerous irregularities and failures” in the counting of votes. After a repeat of the runoff election, Van der Bellen won a decisive victory by 6.6 percentage points. Hofer had campaigned on strengthening the country’s borders and its army, limiting benefits for immigrants, and favoring Austrians in the job market. On the social front, one of the party’s policy points is “Yes to families rather than gender madness.” The FPÖ, whose motto is “Austria first,” currently holds 40 of the 183 seats in the National Council.

There are several right-wing populist actors who have changed the political landscape and influenced policies with limited electoral support. In the United Kingdom, the UK Independence Party (UKIP), founded in 1993, has been consistent in its anti-EU and anti-immigration message and is now profiting from changed public opinion (Greven 2016). Under the leadership of Nigel Farage, UKIP saw its biggest successes at the elections for the European parliament in 2014, receiving 27.5% of all votes cast and polling at 15% for support nationally (Goodwin 2015). The UKIP’s greatest impact on European politics was the success of the “leave” campaign that led to Britain leaving the European union in June of 2016. The “Brexit” was driven in large part by the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the UKIP, which has long called for Britain to close its borders (Shuster 2016). UKIP’s poll ratings peaked in June 2016 at 16%, but since the “leave” campaign’s success, has steadily declined and was at a mere 4% going into the 2017 general election (NewStatesman 2017).

The rhetoric that led to “Brexit” is similar to the rhetoric used by other far-right populist parties in that it aimed to insight anti-immigrant sentiments among the native population. The British public seemed unconvinced that life without the EU would make them freer or more prosperous. Academics were attacking the economic argument for leaving the EU, making stark warnings of a downturn if the UK pulled out. Then, the "leave" campaign shifted its focus to

immigration—specifically, how to bring it to a screeching halt. Polling had revealed that immigration was a key concern for many who were thinking of voting to leave the EU. Nearly 75% of prospective "leave" voters cited immigration as the most important issue in the referendum, at a time when migrants were coming to the UK at near-record levels (Hall 2016). The campaign arrived full-force in the form of a poster showing thousands of refugees crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border last year. The words "BREAKING POINT" were emblazoned across the picture, above a line that read: "We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders." UKIP party leader Nigel Farage defended it, saying its purpose "was to say that Europe isn't working." He added, "Something that's true can't be a scare" (Hall 2016).

Anti-immigrant rhetoric is consistent throughout prominent far-right party leaders. Geert Wilders, a Dutch far-right politician and founder of the Party for Freedom, claimed that "the failure to defend our own culture has turned immigration into the most dangerous threat that can be used against the West. Multiculturalism has made us so tolerant that we tolerate the intolerant. If Europe falls... it will fall because it foolishly believes that all cultures are equal and that, consequently, there is no reason why we should fight for our own culture in order to preserve it" (Wodak 2015). For France in particular, the Islamist attacks on Paris in January and November of 2015, in which nearly 150 people were murdered, raised alarm about jihadists taking advantage of Europe's open borders. When FN candidate Marine Le Pen announced her candidacy for president, she showed no sign of moderating her rhetoric as she claimed France was under the threat of two "totalitarianisms"—economic globalization and Islamic fundamentalism. Le Pen claimed that mass immigration caused by globalization left French people feeling "dispossessed" of their own country and allowed Islamic fundamentalism to settle on its territory (Farand 2017). She sighted prayers in the streets and the veil worn by Muslim women as threats to France's culture and values and that "no French person, no Republican and no women attached to their dignity could accept it." Supposedly running in the name of the people, Marine Le Pen reaffirmed the FN's anti-immigration, protectionist, anti-European Union and populist stance.

Despite Le Pen losing the presidency to Emmanuel Macron, the French National Assembly has passed a tough new immigration law that tightens the rules around asylum. The bill, passing by 228 votes to 139 with 24 abstentions, shortens asylum application deadlines, doubles the time for which illegal migrants can be detained, and introduces a one-year prison sentence for entering France illegally (BBC 2018). The deadline for filing asylum applications or appealing against a rejection have also changed, with claimants having 90 days to file an application as opposed to 120, and only two weeks to appeal against rejection. France's governing centrist party says the bill will speed up the process of claiming asylum, but opponents complained that migrants were being treated like criminals. The bill passed the French National Assembly on April 23, 2018, and will now be debated in the upper house in June.

France isn't the only country passing stringent immigration laws. Austria passed one of the most restrictive immigration bills in Europe in December of 2017. Heinz-Christian Strache, chairman of the Freedom Party (FPÖ), agreed to a deal from Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's to state unequivocally that Austria would not try to secede from the EU or drop the euro and subscribe to traditional center-right policies like keeping down the national debt. In exchange for going along with Kurz on the economy and on Europe, he received the foreign minister's post, meaning the Freedom Party now has an exclusive hold on immigration policy (Bershidsky 2017). The legislation that emerged as a result of this deal draws a clear line between immigration and asylum. The former is supposed to be merit-based, in line with Austria's labor market needs, while asylum rights are inscribed in international law. Asylum seekers should now be prepared to give up their mobile phones for analysis to determine their travel routes and, where necessary, their identity. If a positive identification can't be made, as was the case with many new arrivals during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, the new government intends to refuse asylum. It also plans to confiscate any cash asylum-seekers might be carrying and put it toward the cost of their settlement. Any help they receive should only be in kind. Individual accommodations should be ruled out, and medical confidentiality should be waived for diseases deemed important for the

settlement process. Any asylum seekers convicted of crimes are to be deported, and deportation appeals procedures are generally to be curtailed.

The government program contains a special subchapter on fighting "political Islam," defined as the rejection of Austrian values and social norms in favor of secular "Islamization" of society. It includes a ban on foreign funding for religious organizations and strict control over the curriculum of Islamic schools and kindergartens, as well as what's being preached in mosques (Bershidsky 2017). Only time will tell what the result of this legislation will be. Time has already shown some results of the "Brexit" referendum of 2016. As mentioned earlier, "Brexit" was driven in large part by the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the UKIP, but the impact of the referendum is largely economic. The actual event of Britain exiting the EU is likely to occur in early 2019. Leaving the EU will mean withdrawing from the EU's supranational political institutions and will lead to the erection of new barriers to the exchange of goods, services, and people with the remaining 27 member states (Sampson 2017). More broadly, Brexit raises questions about the future stability of the EU and the extent to which further globalization is inevitable. The main conclusion drawn by Sampson and other scholars is that Brexit will make the United Kingdom poorer than it would otherwise have been because it will lead to new barriers to trade and migration between the UK and the European Union. There is considerable uncertainty over how large the costs of Brexit will be, with plausible estimates ranging between 1 and 10 percent of UK per capita income. However, the social impacts of Brexit were quickly apparent, with hate crimes surging by 42% in England and Wales immediately following the vote (Stone 2016). A total of 3,076 incidents were recorded across the country between June 16th and June 30th.

When investigating the case of Western Europe, we see that various far-right parties with similar founding principles have gained prominence in recent elections, likely due to their right-wing populist rhetoric resonating with certain white, ethno-nationalist populations. The result has been an increase in extreme immigration policy across the board, as well as anti-globalization efforts in the form of Britain leaving the EU. I will now lay out the case of the United States, and

then compare the two on the basis of their elections, rhetoric, and policy in regards to rising nationalism.

The Case of the United States

The American two party system with its winner-take all elections has been mostly immune to third party challenges, at least since today's Republican party replaced the Whig Party in the 1860s. The Populist Party of the 1890s was successful in influencing the national agenda, but was subsequently absorbed into the Democratic Party, moving the party further to the left. As Donald Trump has risen in popularity among the Republican party, right-wing populism has taken hold of the US in the modern age. Intra-party populism is not a new phenomenon; in fact, the Republican party has for decades more or less embraced tenets of the "us versus them" narrative. This alone did not make the Republican Party a populist party. However, the rise of the Tea Party movement, embittered with the Obama presidency, alleged bail-outs of African-American and Latino debtors, the national debt, Obamacare, and the Republican establishment, have profoundly changed the American political landscape in a populist fashion (Greven 2016).

Data from the 2016 American National Election Study allows us to offer a multifaceted profile of white voters who voted for Donald Trump. While demographics are an element, voting in the 2016 election was more immediately and decisively associated with attitudes than with demographics (Smith and Hanley 2018). The decisive reason that white, male, older, and less educated voters were disproportionately pro-Trump is that they shared his prejudices and wanted domineering, aggressive leaders more often than other voters did. There were eight attitudes found that predict Trump support: conservative identification; support for domineering leaders; fundamentalism; prejudice against immigrants, African Americans, Muslims, and women; and pessimism about the economy (Smith and Hanley 2018). Overall, what we see is that a spectrum of attitudes inspired pro-Trump voting, and that many of these attitudes are particularly common among older, less educated, and male voters.

Trump owes his success to the fact that he tailored his rhetoric to the wishes of these voters. At the outset of the Republican primaries there were 17 candidates, none of which sounded anything like Trump. Not one promised to stifle dissent, crush evil, build walls, or ban Muslim immigrants with anything resembling Trump's hubris. Republican voters, choosing between a paradigm-shifting candidate and a cast of extras, chose the candidate that promised to "Make America Great Again." The factor that solidified that choice was a preference for a domineering and intolerant leader who would put their prejudices into practice. Strong Trump supporters are significantly more likely than others to allege anti-white discrimination. The wish for a domineering and impolitic leader coalesces here with the wish for a reversal of what his base perceives as an inverted moral and racial order (Smith and Hanley 2018).

The rhetoric that resonated with Trump voters, as stated earlier, was populist in nature and drew on anti-immigrant and anti-establishment sentiments. One of the most memorable quotes from Donald Trump came when he announced his run for the Republican nomination for president in June of 2015—setting the tone for an unpredictable and polarizing campaign. "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best [...] They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with them. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Newsday 2016). Donald Trump's appeal to fascist ideology and policy considerations took a more blatant and dangerous turn when he released a statement calling for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" (Giroux 2016). Trump qualified his racist appeal to voters' fears by stating that such a ban is necessary "until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on," referring to the influx of refugees from Africa and the Middle East. This comment was followed up by Trump telling CNN's Anderson Cooper that he thinks Islam "hates us" when asked if he thinks Islam is at war with the West (Newsday 2016).

This rhetoric has resonated with white supremacist, fascist, and neo-Nazi groups within the US. David Duke, former KKK grand wizard, spoke out at the alt-right and neo-Nazi rally in

Charlottesville, Virginia in August of 2017. “We are determined to take our country back,” Duke said, calling it a “turning point.” “We are going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump. That’s what we believed in. That’s why we voted for Donald Trump, because he said he’s going to take our country back” (Nelson 2017). Trump’s lack of condemnation of these white supremacist rallies has been critiqued as support for their message and pandering to the extreme wing of his base (O’Brien 2017). The casual racism, sexism, and xenophobia that Trump has embedded into his vocabulary has further contributed to the polarizing divide of the American people and the legitimization of extreme alt-right and white supremacist groups. This isn’t the only type of rhetoric that he has employed. His anti-establishment rhetoric has resonated with the less extreme wing of his base, appealing to the former blue-collar middle class and disenfranchised sectors of the population. Trump set himself apart by being an outsider, promising to “drain the swamp” of the political elite in Washington, and to put “America first” (Overby 2017). This nationalist-populist rhetoric is a large contributor to Trump’s victory in the 2016 election, and has manifested itself in new immigration and economic policy.

Policies that have arisen after the advent of Donald Trump include the Mexico border wall, repealing of DACA, the travel ban, and pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Congress has approved \$1.6 billion for 100 miles of new and replacement border wall, but has not approved funding for Trump’s proposed 2,000 mile wall (Allyn 2018). He tweeted in September of 2017 that the wall was already under construction in the form of new renovations to old and existing fences, and will continue to be built. Customs and Border Patrol unveiled eight prototypes of various materials that President Trump visited in March. He will supposedly pick the one he likes best. The total cost of the border wall is estimated to be \$25 billion dollars, and it doesn’t look like Mexico is going to pay for it (Mark 2018).

Another agenda item that targets Latino immigration is the Republicans’ push to repeal the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The DACA program was formed through executive action by former President Barack Obama in 2012 and allowed minors who

came to the US illegally to be protected from immediate deportation. While DACA protects unauthorized immigrants from all over the world, 79.4% of recipients are from Mexico, and 94% are from Mexico or Central or South America (Lopez and Krogstad 2017). Trump has proposed to phase out the program, and the U.S. government is not accepting new DACA applications and stopped accepting renewal applications in October. Late last year, Trump and top Democrats were reportedly working together to stop these “dreamers” from being deported, however, a group of Republicans are making good on their threat to attempt to force an immigration floor vote in the House. Early in May of 2018, a discharge petition—a procedural maneuver that can bring legislation to the House floor if it is signed by a majority of House members regardless of whether it has moved through committee—began garnering signatures. If the petition were to pick up enough supporters, it would set up a floor debate on four different immigration measures as early as June (Kopan 2018).

Further related to immigration, Trump enacted his travel ban executive order under the caption, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.” The order banned entry into the United States of nationals from seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (Moore 2017). When Trump first proposed a Muslim ban in 2015, there was backlash from the legal community. Rudy Giuliani warned him that a global ban based on religion would be overturned by the federal courts on constitutional grounds. However, a regional ban, based on the concept of imminent danger to the US rather than on religious affiliation, would withstand constitutional scrutiny. The problem with the “imminent danger” defense is that there is no causal relation between the danger posed by nationals from these banned countries and the incidents of so-called Islamic terrorism in the United States (Moore 2017). The president signed the executive order on January 27th, with nationwide protests beginning January 28th. Despite numerous judges in multiple states blocking parts of the order, Trump continued to promise a new and improved travel ban to circumvent judicial opposition (Almasy and Simon 2017).

On the trade and globalization front, Trump withdrew the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) by executive order in one of his first acts as president. In a memorandum written to the United States Trade Representative, President Trump stated that it was his intention to deal “directly with individual countries on a one- on -one (or bilateral) basis in negotiating future trade deals” (Trump 2017). The rationale for doing so was to promote American industry, protect American workers, and raise American wages. Trump signaled his readiness to reopen trade talks if he could get a "better deal" for the United States (Fernandez 2018). TPP is only one example of new protectionist policies to come out of the Trump Administration.

When investigating the case of the United States, we see that the Republican party has gained the support of vocally far-right, white nationalist, and extremist groups. We also see that besides these groups, those who voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 elections shared, above all else, his prejudices, and were mostly from the older, white, male demographic. Trump’s far-right populist rhetoric resonated with these groups, and with Trump’s election, has resulted in new immigration and economic policy. I will now compare and contrast the case of the United States with that of Western Europe.

Discussion: Comparison and Analysis

After explaining the cases of Western Europe and the United States in regards to the rise of far-right nationalism, many comparisons can be drawn. First, for elections, Western Europe showed an increased favorability of far-right nationalist parties, while in the US, there was increased favorability for the Republican Party which has shifted further to the right due to the Tea Party and other populist movements. Since the US has the two-party system, it is more difficult to compare the rise in “political parties” between the United States and Europe. We can say that both cases showed a new salience around the far-right stance on immigration and the economy, calling for immigration reform and protectionist policies. However, comparing the demographics of who voted for far-right politicians would shed more light on the similarities and

differences between elections. The demographics of those who voted for these candidates differ slightly in some respects.

While Trump voters were more likely to be older, those who voted for Marine Le Pen and the National Front were much younger. She received almost half of the 18-24 year old vote, and only 20% of the vote from those 65 and older (Kentish 2017). This shows that there may be a generational gap between the far-right nationalists of Europe versus those in the US. Additionally, though Trump claimed to represent working-class citizens and the middle class, Trump voters had above-average wages, low exposure to immigrant workers, and under 10% of them work in production (Smith and Hanley 2018). In contrast, Marine Le Pen secured the vote of 63% of manual workers (Kentish 2017). Austria's Norbert Hofer was also almost fully supported by manual workers, receiving 90% of their vote (BBC 2016). Though demographics differ in certain areas, the most consistent demographic to vote for these candidates were white males and manual workers across both regions. Only after writing my paper did I discover that the comparison of elections would be improved if I focused more on the demographics of both regions rather than characterizing the parties themselves. Further research could explicitly compare the voter demographics of far-right supporters across Europe and the United States.

Other evaluations can be made when comparing why these candidates were favored. Both European and US candidates utilized populist rhetoric that resonated with a part of the population that felt disenfranchised and forgotten. This rhetoric was anti-immigrant, anti-establishment, and anti-globalization in nature. In Europe, this rhetoric mostly targeted asylum-seekers and was sparked by the refugee crisis of 2015. In the United States, the most prevalent anti-immigrant rhetoric targeted those from the Latino community, and mostly those from Mexico specifically. However, both regions experienced anti-Muslim rhetoric from right-wing politicians, both appealing to citizens' fears of terrorism and Islamization. Both regions utilized similar phrases to draw upon nationalist sentiments on immigration. The notion that "the people" had to "take back"

their country from outsiders was seen across the board; most explicitly in Britain's "leave" campaign, but also within Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump's rhetoric.

Anti-establishment rhetoric manifested in Western Europe as anti-European Union, while in the US it is focused on Washington and the federal government. We do not see the same level of disdain for the federal government of European nations. Trump's promise to "drain the swamp" and lock Hillary Clinton up appeased those voters who were tired of the D.C. elite. Anti-globalization rhetoric wasn't as prevalent in Western Europe as it was in the US. Trump's slogan was "Make America Great Again," and he proposed he would do so by putting America first. Austria's Freedom party did have an "Austria First" motto, however, this is not as prevalent across all of Western Europe. It seems that both regions utilize far-right populist rhetoric in the same ways, but tailor their message to fit their people, culture, and circumstance.

The rhetoric spouted by far-right European and US politicians has materialized in new policies. In France and Austria, new stringent asylum laws were passed to keep out the foreigners that did not fit into their homogeneous culture. Both of these laws targeted refugees; the most vulnerable migrant population. Many of these refugees were Muslim, and anxieties about terrorism contributed to these harsh policies being enacted. In the US, both the border wall and the rollback of DACA targeted Latino immigration. The rationale for Latino and Mexican based racism lies in the illegal drug and criminal narrative that Trump's campaign upheld. The travel ban was enacted as a guise for a Muslim ban, and was also associated with anxieties over terrorism. Though the nature of these policies are different, it is fair to say that when right-wing politicians with nationalist agendas have power in government, the result is an increase in stringent immigration policies.

Economic policies were also evaluated in this paper. The UKIP's "leave" campaign and subsequent "Brexit" is a manifestation of anti-EU and anti-globalization sentiment in Western Europe. Though the vote was close, Nigel Farage and the UKIP managed to convince over 50% of the voters in the UK to agree to leave the European Union. The rhetoric used to achieve this

was populist and heavily anti-immigrant, though the impacts of this decision will largely be economic. Pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership was Trump's way of protecting America's interests and making it so the US is "winning" again. Pulling out of the Paris Agreement and enacting tariffs on China are just two other examples of economic protectionist policies from Trump's agenda. The trend here is that both regions are looking inward economically, and are moving towards isolationism and protectionism.

Overall, we see that both Western Europe and the US have elected more far-right nationalist leaders for many of the same reasons. The population that views themselves as the "rightful" occupants of each given country is opposed to an influx of immigrants, and they feel as if the previous administrations failed to address their concerns. Prejudice towards Muslims is seen throughout both regions, with anti-Latino prejudice permeating the United States. Politicians capitalized on these prejudices by tailoring their rhetoric to appeal to those who hold them. Once in power, these politicians enacted stringent immigration policies and economically protectionist policies to placate their base.

With this rise in nationalism, both Western Europe and the United States have moved further to the right ideologically to be more in line with their respective ethno-nationalist trends. Besides lending legitimacy to white supremacist and white nationalist groups, and therefore inciting high levels of polarization within the populations of both regions domestically, this reveals a larger trend—a global shift away from globalization, neoliberalism, and cosmopolitanism, and towards protectionism, isolationism, and nationalism. With more and more nations favoring harsh immigration policies and economic protectionism, this shift will likely have severe impacts on the movement of people and goods across borders in the near future. The nature of foreign policy is likely to change. Further research should be done into how this shift towards nationalism will affect migrant populations and the global economy.

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