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Radical Right Ideologies and Foreign Policy Preference: Attitudes towards Russia, China, and the USA in EU Member States

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ABSTRACT

How and why do supporters of radical right-wing ideologies deviate from the general population in their opinion on foreign powers? Evidence from surveys suggests that “anti-cosmopolitan” stances predict more negative views of both the US and China simultaneously. This qualifies the idea of a new “cold war” between these states, in which EU citizens pick their sides. Centrist and especially centre-right party support predict more positive attitudes towards the US, but they dissipate further to the right, to the point that voters of parties like Alternative for Germany prefer China (pre-covid-19). However, the strongest and most consistent relationship is between support or tolerance for radical right parties and the favourable perception of Russia. This holds even for most Central and Eastern European states, although to a lesser degree than in Western Europe. The difference in favourability is so drastic that it reverses expected international trade preferences, such that the more protectionist radical right voters favour economic ties with a foreign country (Russia) more than does the general population. The voters are receptive to Russia’s consistent “anti-cosmopolitan” image, which taps rhetorically into socially right-wing views in EU member states, including ethno-nationalism and anti-immigration. If the ideological “cold war”-type tension exists at the individual level, the opposition is not between the US and China, but both countries and Russia.

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of “populist” movements in European Union Member States has strained the traditional alliances in the region. External pressure from countries such as Russia still promotes cooperation between liberal democracies and “illiberal democracies” dominated by populist parties. Yet domestically, populist challengers frequently promote revisionist takes on foreign policy. Their supporters appear to cluster far apart from the general population in their perceptions of actors such as the US, China, and Russia. For example, in Germany, both the right-wing *AfD* and the left-wing *Die Linke* are unusually positive about Russia’s role in international politics (Mudde 2016). Outside the EU, conservative Republicans were notably indifferent to allegations of Russian interference in US elections (Telhami 2017), even if they were hawkish on China (Gries and Crowson 2010). Thus, ideology and norms may play an increasingly prominent role in foreign policy attitudes, leading to fractionalisation in public opinion within countries that follow party polarisation. How and why do supporters of radical right-wing ideologies deviate from the general population in their views on foreign powers?

The paper attempts to identify the causes for that deviation, which may differ for the right and the left. Existing pre-covid-19 literature suggests that an “anti-globalisation” orientation is the best predictor for both anti-American and anti-China attitudes, and the two are highly correlated (Kim et al. 2016; Manfield and Mutz 2009). This stands in contrast to the now-defunct Cold War dichotomy, where opposition to one side meant greater support for the other (Chiozza 2009; Isernia 2007). But would the same conclusion hold for anti-Russian attitudes as well, seeing how Russia often tries to present itself as a force against globalisation? Could higher anti-US and anti-China sentiment predict lower anti-Russia sentiment? Will the centre-left and the centre-right be unusually hostile to Russia, or will they show the same positive pattern as for China (according to Kim et al.)?

The paper aims to assess the magnitude and direction of the effect of radical ideologies, especially the radical right, on foreign policy preferences. It will test two related hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: radical right-wing attitudes in the European Union lead to lower support for the United States and China, but higher support for Russia relative to centre-right and centre-left attitudes.

Hypothesis 2: non-radical centrist attitudes, whether right-wing or left-wing, lead to higher support for the US and China, but lower support for Russia.

“Anti-globalisation” may denote something different for the left and the right (Kriesi 2012). For the right, it may mean opposition to immigration and erosion of national prestige, whereas for the left it may be connected to transnational corporations, economic hegemony, and anti-imperialism. Such preferences may suggest unusual variation between the radical left and the radical right in their preference of the three countries, even if all of them differ from the general population in the same direction. The analysis may be complicated by cross-national comparisons. Some countries in Central and Eastern Europe may be prominent outliers due to their greater proximity to Russia—for example, even though Hungary and Poland both have right-wing populists in power, their relationship with Russia produces divergent attitudes. The paper primarily concentrates on Western Europe to prove its hypothesis, which could be qualified for former Communist Europe in further papers.

To identify those patterns and causal mechanisms, the paper analyses data from the Transatlantic Trends Survey (2014), Pew Global Attitudes Survey (2016), and the European Social Survey (2016). In theoretical terms, it emphasises the importance of perception, domestic actors, transnational movements, and ideational entrepreneurs (Keck and Sikkink 1998). It attempts to address a lacuna in the study of reactionary international relations (MacKay and LaRoche 2018) by introducing literature from the prominent, but domestically oriented field of radical right studies.

TERMINOLOGY

Literature on the radical right reveals significant disagreement on key terms and labels such as “radical right,” “far-right,” “extreme right,” “populist right,” “populist radical right,” “New Right,” “right-wing extremist,” “fascist,” “neo-Nazi,” “white nationalist,” “ethnic nationalist,” and

even “socially conservative.” This has been the situation throughout the existence of right-wing studies even within political science, let alone in other disciplines, and it is unlikely to change. Different researchers citing one another may refer to the same individual as “populist right,” “radical right,” “far-right,” etc. For example, the objection to the widespread term “populist right” suggests that populism is a rhetorical device rather than an ideology (even a “thin” one that needs to attach itself to another), so its use should be severely restricted (Rydgren 2017). Another example is the gradual fall of “extreme right” into disuse—it has been subsumed by the previously less popular “radical right” (Arzheimer 2018). “Populism” and “extremism” may be said to be descriptions of tactics rather than ideological content, at least insofar as uniform and differentiated xenophobia are concerned. Overall, the variation and conflation between the terms in the literature are so great and so widely acknowledged that the paper primarily distinguishes only the “radical” and “mainstream” right.

The *radical right* includes a broad range of ideologies that are to the right of centre-right on the issue of ethnic nationalism, such as immigration or the treatment of ethnic minorities. While not necessarily socially conservative, they are often opposed to the “cultural left” rhetorically. Though ethnic nationalism is often their core belief, they are not single-issue “anti-immigrant” ideologies (Rydgren 2017). Radical right attitudes could be operationalised as follows: (1) elevated support for anti-immigration measures; (2) highly elevated negative attitudes to an ethnic minority; (3) belief that immigration causes high crime; (4) high ethnic nationalism; (5) high aversion to left-wing ideologies or parties; (6) supports a figure or party commonly defined as radical right or equivalent by the literature. Inglehart and Norris (2016) offer a reasonable list of EU radical right parties, which they label “populist” as opposed to “cosmopolitan liberal,” based on the Chapel Hill Survey (Appendix—Figure 1). This paper uses their list to identify such parties.

Being high (or to the right) on *ethnic nationalism* means excluding some ethnic groups from the nation, especially if these groups are defined using immutable traits such as perceived biological ancestry. The degree of “rightness” is determined by the salience of ethnic nationalism to the individual, as well as the degree of immutability of chosen characteristics. Possible

operationalisation could include questions such as (1) “Members of the same nation must have shared biological ancestry” (high); (2) “Citizenship is not enough to define a person’s membership of my nation” (high); (3) “Hostility to other ethnicities disgusts me” (low). Some TTS questions tap into the idea of long-term ability to integrate. For example, “Q32b. Generally speaking, how well do you think that the children of immigrants, who were born in [COUNTRY], are integrating into [NATIONALITY] society?” However, such questions are often affected by social desirability bias, so it may be more reliable to simply examine parties.

The *mainstream right* ideologies support large established parties that are defined in the literature as conservative, often emphasising relatively socially conservative values and outwardly opposed to ethnic nationalism. The study uses “mainstream right” and “mainstream conservatives” interchangeably. *Social conservatism* denotes adherence to traditional values, family, religiosity, and hierarchies. More abstractly, it includes “respect for authority, in-group loyalty, and purity” (Graham and Haidt 2009).

While the conceptual difference between the radical and the mainstream right is clear, it may be far more nebulous in practice in terms of political behaviour, which may be driven more by party organisation than ideology. Insofar as anti-China, anti-US, and anti-Russia attitudes are correlated with a guarded attitude towards all other countries, both the radical right and the mainstream right might show considerable negativity. Most literature supports the proposition that even the mainstream right show higher xenophobia relative to the general population. For instance, only 4% of supporters of the distinctly mainstream right Conservative Party in the UK gave the response “allow many to come and live here” to a question about non-European immigrants, compared to 12% nationally and 1% for the more radical UKIP (B40, ESS 2016). The official positions of parties may not fully reflect the views of their likely supporters, so approaches such as studying manifestos may be less applicable.

RELATED RESEARCH

Anti-US and anti-China attitudes

The study of anti-American attitudes and their sources has been a lively field at the intersection of international relations and political behaviour, rooted in the politics of the Cold War (Katzenstein 2007). Until the end of the Cold War, the pattern across the world and Western Europe has been that of a dichotomy: greater antipathy towards the US correlated positively with support for the Soviet Union. The radical right was at times more positive towards the USSR than the general population, seeing the communist power as more cooperative and less domineering counter to American hegemony (Isernia 2007). In a way, they were engaged in “balancing,” however uninfluential such domestic actors were for actual foreign policy decision-making. Meanwhile, the radical left may have supported the USSR for its ideological content, international aid, and because of official ties.

Though the US became hegemonic for two decades after the demise of the USSR, the swift rise of China as an authoritarian challenger could potentially fuel a new Cold War. This may lead to a similar Cold War dichotomy in which favourable attitudes to the US mean aversion to China, and vice versa. Kim, Meunier, and Nyiri (2016) convincingly disprove this hypothesis, which they dub “yin and yank.” Instead, they propose that opposition or support for the two superpowers is driven by attitudes towards economic globalisation. People who do not see themselves as beneficiaries of globalisation perceive both countries negatively, seemingly without regard for their ideological image. As their study shows, the centre-left seem to be uninterested in the authoritarian practices of China, except when it is an excuse to attack their economic dominance. That appears to be the case even for highly charged accounts such as *The Economist's*, which they cite to illustrate their thesis (“Buying Up the World: The Coming Wave of Chinese Takeovers,” “Facing Up to China,” “The Dangers of a Rising China”). This is consistent with the evidence that the “losers” of globalisation are more opposed to free trade in general (Mansfield and Mutz 2009).

Kim et al. argue that anti-China attitudes in the EU will continue to grow because of China's spurt of economic involvement in the region. The implicit conclusion of the article, however, is that China's ideology and otherness do not matter and do not put it at odds with the US in the mind of the public. Thus, old ideologically driven Cold War patterns are a thing of the past. Negativity towards both countries is driven by the same factor, which is an anti-cosmopolitan attitude. Pre-covid-19, that may be the case for China, the US, and the EU, but not necessarily for Russia.

Gries and Crowson (2010) apparently confirm the findings of Kim et al.: "Based on our surveys, we find that partisanship does indeed impact American views of China. Self-reported 'conservatives' perceive significantly greater threat in China's rise, hold more negative views of the Chinese government, exhibit more prejudice towards the Chinese people, and advocate a much tougher U.S. China policy than self-reported 'liberals' do. Republicans perceive significantly greater threat from China and advocate tougher China policies than Democrats do, but party affiliation has a lesser impact on prejudice scores. Regression analyses reveals that education, gender, and age each has an impact on American views of China, but that impact is negligible compared to partisanship." More recently, Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats to see Russia as an ally (14% to 7%), and twice as unlikely to see it as a foe (29% to 55%) (Telhami 2017). Furthermore, Republicans are more positively disposed to Vladimir Putin than Democrats (25% to 9% favourable). Albeit the data are for different years, they nevertheless highlight that attitudes towards foreign powers are contingent on ideology, not on a broad economic attitude. The data also call attention to the fact that the same ideology may lead to different attitudes towards China and Russia, which is a novel development—until 2016, the partisan split in attitudes towards Russia was minor, and Republicans were slightly more hostile to it (Kyle 2017).

Research by Kim et al. says little about "populist" radical right politics, only mentioning them in passing, in spite of the glaring connection between the attitudes it highlights and the "populist" momentum. "Anti-globalisation" attitudes are politically salient in two ways: firstly, they speak to the "populist," "anti-elitist" element; secondly, they appeal to the ideological right-wing element (whether nationalist or conservative). The radical right often highlights the first

element to increase mainstream appeal and counter-accusations of racism. For instance, in a prominent 2018 address at the Oxford Union, Steve Bannon castigated ethnic nationalism as folly while extolling protectionism and opposition to the “Davos class.” On the other hand, “globalism” is not merely disliked for its ambiguous economic impact, but also its more straightforward ideological content. These come together in issues such as migration, which can be framed simultaneously as an economic threat to regular people, a threat to national sovereignty and the ability to control borders, and the continuity of a nation as representative of the ethnic majority (e.g., radical right “great replacement” rhetoric).

This paper largely agrees with the conclusions of Kim et al. with regards to anti-US and anti-China sentiment. However, the “Cold War” relationship that it disproves for these two countries may be still applicable as an explanation for attitudes towards other countries. Russia is possibly the most prominent and powerful international actor that presents itself as a challenger to the ideological rather than the economic *status quo*. Other states with similarly revisionist aim, such as Iran or Venezuela, are both less visible and influential in the EU for historical reasons. Moreover, such states are likely seen as dissimilar to Europe. Meanwhile, Russia is traditionally regarded by the radical right as part of some common whole with Europe and North America, even if not the West. To use examples from the extreme fringe, Russians are typically included into the more controversial radical right international movements (e.g., *Blood & Honour* or *Stormfront*), and were considered part of the “white world” by historical racial theorists such as Madison Grant or Lothrop Stoddard (Stoddard 1920). “Old right” fascist-derived parties in Ignazi’s (1992) classification would likely subscribe to that perception. Thus, “anti-globalist” and ethnic nationalist attitudes may lead to anti-US, anti-China, and anti-EU, but pro-Russia views among Western Europeans and North Americans, though the scope of this likely phenomenon remains unclear until investigated empirically.

Russia’s Relationship with the Radical Right

Despite the Soviet communist ideology, the ties between the Western European radical right and Russia have been prominent even before the collapse of the USSR. Individual ideational

entrepreneurs from the USSR, such as people involved in founding the nationalist *Pamyat* in 1980, attempted to cultivate ties with the Western European radical right, most notably Le Pen's *National Front* (Laruelle 2018). They relied on ties with the Russian émigré community, which was notable for its anti-Communist but pro-Russian attitudes. Historical literature suggests that this has been the case throughout the twentieth century for various countries, including pre-war Germany (Kellogg 2008). Laruelle (2018) also highlights the nationalist component within the Soviet administration, which grew increasingly prominent over time. Thus, Russia or the Russians were often seen as potential allies for the Western European nationalist radical right even when they were apparently connected with communism. The ties with the North American radical right were weaker and mostly rooted in anti-Communism, but they have been expanding lately (Shekhovtsov 2017). Still, the transparent parts of the relationship remain relatively marginal and limited to activities such as book publishing.

Post-Cold War developments have contributed to a decline in attention to Russia and its role in international affairs. However, its recent assertion of its significance as a revisionist force coincided with a domestic ideological shift and a change in rhetoric. In Tsygankov's (2016) classification, it could be said to have moved from a more "statist" towards a more "civilisationist" period, at least rhetorically. The attempt to appeal to Western European radical right movements, whether done for "realpolitik" or ideological reasons, has proven to be successful. Russia tends to present itself rhetorically as an isolationist power only interested in its sphere of influence and not aiming in changing domestic politics outside it, in contrast to the liberal internationalist current in the US. However, it has been repeatedly accused of "meddling" in elections and supporting certain parties (mainly radical right such as FPÖ), as well as trying to turn public opinion against centre-left forces.

This perceived interference focusing on radical ideologies has been a distinct current in policy research. HWAG 2018 only considers domestically oriented prominent channels (Channel One Russia, Russia-1, and NTV) rather than any internationally oriented outlets (such as RT or Sputnik). However, the rhetoric can be assumed to be magnified for the latter. Topics highlighted in the Russian media are presented from perspectives that mostly coincide with those promoted

by the European “populist” radical right. For example, the refugee crisis has been a major current, especially in covering Germany. The weakness and undesirability of the EU as a supranational union (“Europe falls apart”) is another component. The EU is associated with unwanted “social engineering,” such as promoting acceptance of LGBTQ or multiculturalism. These issues are key discourses for the radical right—for example, they mostly summarise the narrative of *Alternative für Deutschland* after its switch away from the financial crisis in Greece. The emphasis on “social engineering” as a source of problems with the modern world is a major point in radical right politics, while coordinating opposition to it is an incentive to build international ties (MacKay and LaRoche 2018).

Domestically, these topics may be aimed at ensuring support for the Russian government by highlighting poor living conditions in the EU. Internationally, they may be aimed at destabilising the EU and its ideological narrative of “European values.” It is unclear to what degree this rhetoric is driven by ideological considerations. Laruelle (2018) suggests that Russian leadership would have preferred to cooperate with mainstream rather than radical right parties, and it is only an alliance of convenience. She highlights the eagerness of Russia to engage with the “populist” left as well, such as *Die Linke* in Germany, so long as they are willing to improve Russia’s image and hamstring Russia’s competitors. Thus, the academic view tends to highlight the deliberate, non-ideological, aggressive “soft power” view of Russian right-wing rhetoric. Rather than being reflective of any ideational concerns like liberal international relations, it is seen as purely tactical, aimed at destabilising the opponent.

Indeed, the academic emphasis usually falls on the well-established authoritarian rather than the newly right-wing aspect of Russia. This follows a pattern wherein governments engaged in a shift from centre-right to the radical right is said to be engaged in democratic backsliding rather than a shift to the right (Scheppele 2018; Kelemen 2017). In this view, the Hungarian *Jobbik* is genuinely radical right, while the more prominent *Fidesz* is simply using that rhetoric strategically. Arguably, such “contagion” is the actual aim of the radical right rather than centre-right “co-optation” aimed at weakening the radical right. Right-wing rhetoric is seen as an excuse to demolish constraints on the state, such as constitutional courts—thus, it is driven more by a

desire to consolidate domestic power rather than by opposition to the ideological impact of such institutions.

The two views on the ideological origins of Russia's interference have significant implications for the perception of Russia. Is it merely trying to undermine the EU and the US by its right-wing rhetoric, or is it a genuine ideological supporter of these views, like the EU is for liberal democratic values? An individual's view on these two extremes is likely to define their view of Russia. However, even if a respondent believes Russia's right-wing efforts to be mostly disingenuous and opportunistic, it does not preclude them from still supporting it for tactical reasons if the respondent supports the ideology that benefits from it.

Contribution to Literature

Though there is an extremely rich literature on the radical right (Arzheimer 2018), it seldom deals with international relations. Rather, it is mostly interested in political behaviour and predicting correlates of support for radical right parties, whether ethnic nationalism, conservative social attitudes, economic woes, decline in status, or other factors. The literature says little about the foreign policy preferences of radical right supporters, even though it is a commonly discussed topic in the public sphere. In general, international relations theory largely forgets about "reactionary" forces, even though it has distinct right-wing origins—for example, the notable *Foreign Affairs* was founded as *The Journal of Race Development* (Vitalis 2015). Even the recent spurt in the interest for the radical right and Russia (Laruelle 2018; Shekhovtsov 2017) tends to focus on archival research or analytical narratives in the study of the international dimension of the radical right. The project aims to address this gap, which may be useful for radical right studies, international relations, and regional research on Western and Eastern Europe as well as Russia's foreign relations.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this paper is to test H_1 and establish the causal mechanisms for it:

Hypothesis 1 (H_1): radical right-wing attitudes (Independent Variable) in the European Union lead to lower support for the United States and China, but higher support for Russia (Dependent Variables) relative to centrist attitudes.

According to Kim et al. (2016), hostility to globalisation leads to anti-US and anti-China attitudes. Since Russia positions itself as an anti-globalisation force, it is reasonable to assume that anti-globalisation attitudes may lead to lower anti-Russia attitudes in select countries, especially in Western Europe. Anti-globalisation attitudes are a key component in radical right movements, people who hold such attitudes may be unusually hostile towards the US and China and unusually friendly towards Russia.

This paper identifies four ideological groups: the radical right, the centre-right, the centre-left, and the radical left. It is primarily interested in studying the radical right rather than the radical left. Kim et al. describe the typical person who supports both the US and China as follows: “The proponents of openness, who might also be called ‘Cosmopolitans,’ are confident about their place in the world, focus on the benefits brought by globalisation, and do not worry that their national sovereignty is being attacked, neither by European integration nor by existing or rising hegemony.” This appears to portray people who would support centre-right or centre-left parties. It is likely that the former are somewhat more pro-US: for instance, Kim et al. suggest that people with “conservative” ideological views are more supportive of the US.

However, they do not define “conservative.” It could mean traditional conservative views such as the emphasis on family, the status quo, religion, and economic views rather than anything that could be identified as distinctly radical right-wing (for instance, ethnic nationalism). For example, Meijers and Zaslove (2021) distinguish between “traditional/liberal lifestyle” and “nativism” when discussing the right. Someone who votes for the Conservative Party or the

Christian Democratic Union while being a strong “Cosmopolitan” is unlikely to hold radical right-wing views. Indeed, such support is more likely to come from an economically left-wing, socially “populist” respondents—that is, radical right parties in the upper left quadrant in the Chapel Hill Survey scheme (Norris and Inglehart 2016). This leads to an auxiliary hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): centrist attitudes, whether right-wing or left-wing, will lead to higher support for the US and China, but lower support for Russia.

This hypothesis relates to Isernia’s (2007) conclusion about the diverse ideological sources of anti-Americanism, depending on the Western European country surveys. For example, in Cold War West Germany and the UK, right-wingers were less likely to be anti-American than centrists or left-wingers. Meanwhile, in Italy, both right-wingers and left-wingers were notably anti-American, compared to the centre. It is possible that the source for that divergence is that the Italian right had more radical than conservative elements at that time, which roughly corresponded to the particularly violent “Years of Lead” (1960s to the early 1980s)—a period characterised by prominent clashes between the radical left and right in Italy. Ignazi (1992) highlights the lingering importance of the “old right” (fascism-related parties such as MSI) in Italy at the time. Attitudes towards modern Russia with its ideologically right-wing image may therefore be unusually positive among political forces like the Italian right in Cold War Europe. Meanwhile, forces that resemble Cold War centrist and mainstream right parties would remain unusually pro-US, moderately pro-China, and anti-Russia.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

Differentiating between attitudes

Anti-Americanism has been studied in much greater detail than anti-China or anti-Russia sentiment. Kim et al. mostly assess a straightforward positive or negative attitude towards countries whilst Isernia was more thorough. For instance, he highlighted different emotions connected with the US and the multifaceted, ambiguous nature of anti-American attitudes: “I will demonstrate that anti-Americanism is a multidimensional construct reflecting feelings,

beliefs, and policy attitudes. That is, it contains both emotional and cognitive elements.” (Isernia 2007). However, the questions in TTS primarily deal with generalised attitudes rather than strategic considerations, at least for countries other than the US. Unlike Isernia’s earlier indicators, they say far less about strategic preferences, which might be the factor driving up support for China or Russia among anti-Americanists. A “spontaneous realist” respondent would be eager to enter balancing coalitions with countries they find distasteful, hostile, or threatening at a personal level, provided that this alliance is seen as strategically beneficial. Given the pessimistic, protectionist, and nationalist propensities of people with “anti-globalisation” views, especially the populists, they likely yearn for this type of *realpolitik* (MacKay and LaRoche 2018). Willingness to work with a country the respondent, in fact, dislikes seem different from affinity.

In Kim et al., the explanation of control variables such as cultural proximity is not entirely satisfactory. To measure that parameter, they employ responses to questions they summarise as follows: “The EU and China have enough common values/interests” (and likewise for the US). Firstly, a respondent may acknowledge that the governments of the EU and US share common values, but if the individual is not a “Cosmopolitan,” they will probably disapprove of such values. That is, the respondent may see it as a factual statement—they may be opposed to those shared values and bemoan cooperation between two similarly malign actors. Just because an alliance is to be expected does not mean it is desirable. Alternatively, by “values” respondents may mean other identities—for example, membership in a Huntingtonian “civilisation” (such as “the West”). This substantially confounds any analysis, even though it does not interfere with the formal results. Importantly, such proximity in formal values may be a source of aversion. e.g., it is possible that the Bush administration was so disliked by left-wing “anti-globalisation” forces in the EU because of its incongruence with its declared principles of dedication to peace. Cultural proximity might influence opinion volatility instead of sympathy, so that the perception of a country depends on the domestic developments scrutinised from abroad.

Secondly, it is unclear which set of values is being assessed, a particularly important question given growing partisanship in the US. Does it denote the perceived values of the current ruling party and president? However, even with Donald Trump as the head of state, it is unlikely

that the radical right would perceive the role of the US as a whole in positive light—rather, he is more of a mitigating factor and a possible source of change. Furthermore, “positive” and “negative” attitudes need to be disaggregated into several categories. These may include the desirability of world leadership, attitude towards current heads of state, the perception of threat coming from a country, whether it is a benign force on the international arena, and whether the respondent wants their country to be more like the other country.

For instance, Kim et al. highlight France’s strong anti-China stances. However, a later iteration of TTS asks the following question: “Q1d. How desirable is it that China exerts strong leadership in world affairs?”, which yields very different picture from Table 5 in Kim et al. France remained unusually fearful of China’s economic role (65% “Threat” in 2013, similar to TTS 2010—still the most in the EU). For the question about leadership, France was hardly particularly extreme (Table 1). Overall, desirable leadership and positive attitudes do tend to correlate, but the correlation varies heavily by country (Table 2). Often, the correlation is unexpectedly weak, perhaps because signalling an unfavourable attitude towards a country may be seen as disagreeable or xenophobic. Indeed, on TTS (but not the more recent Pew GAS), supporters of radical parties tend to express less favourable attitudes towards all three foreign countries, as well as the EU.

Table 1: How desirable is it that China exerts strong leadership in world affairs? Country views (TTS 2013)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Desirable</i>		<i>Undesirable</i>		<i>Total</i>
UK	217	51.06%	208	48.94%	425
Netherlands	205	42.44%	278	57.56%	483
Portugal	173	36.42%	302	63.58%	475
Sweden	158	33.47%	314	66.53%	472
Germany	163	32.86%	333	67.14%	496
Romania	129	29.72%	305	70.28%	434
France	131	26.79%	358	73.21%	489
Italy	119	25.00%	357	75.00%	476
Poland	88	20.37%	344	79.63%	432
Slovakia	83	17.44%	393	82.56%	476
Spain	66	14.10%	402	85.90%	468

Table 2: Correlation between favourable attitudes to a country and desire for its leadership in world affairs (TTS 2014)

	US	Russia	China
Germany	.19	.10	.40
Italy	.33	.15	.05
Spain	.12	.26	.24
Greece	.03	.26	.23
France	.28	.27	-.02
Poland	.29	.27	.31
Netherlands	.15	.28	.33
UK	.27	.38	.37
Portugal	.31	.45	.25
Sweden	.48	.56	.43

p < .05, except in correlations below .1 (no relationship)

Russian attitudes towards China as a possible ally in global affairs are a powerful illustration to the major flaw of conflating attitudes and values (as well as economic perceptions) with foreign policy preferences. According to both TTS and other polls, Russians view the PRC as a desirable ally. 39% said that Russia should cooperate with India and China (TTS 2014)—in a different poll, 70% said their attitude to PRC was either “very positive” or “generally positive” (Levada 2018). At the same time, they also view the PRC as a major threat to their state and even nation. Xenophobia towards people of Chinese ethnic background is extremely high—the Chinese share the highest position with the Roma (Levada 2018), far above groups whose countries are viewed as rivals (e.g., Americans or Ukrainians). Thus, attitudes to PRC are simultaneously extremely positive and negative, depending on the aspect. This scheme might capture some of the far-right populist perceptions of China, especially given that countries such as Hungary are quite pro-PRC (TTS 2014). They may fear China as an ascendant non-Western civilisation but welcome the ability to trade with no penalties for illiberal attitudes.

Differentiating Between Attitudes to Countries and Their Population

Kim et al. are insufficiently careful in differentiating between countries and citizens. For example, the article claims that they “employ the set of questions about whether EU citizens see enough compatibility in the values and/or interests held by EU and Chinese citizens that make cooperation in the international arena feasible.” However, the question is quite different.

Instead, TTS phrased it as follows: “China and the EU have enough common values/interests to be able to cooperate on international affairs.” It is then reversed for the opposite answer. The question is clearly state-centric and says nothing about citizens whether PRC or EU citizens. Therein lies an important distinction: there may be a gap in attitudes towards the population of a country and the country as an international actor. This is a particularly salient point for the European radical right, which often combines strong disapproval of almost every major EU country leadership as well as the EU itself with an unusually positive attitude towards population. The overarching radical right attitude in progressive countries is the perception that they “would like to be more proud of the country than they are now” (Lubbers 2019).

Indeed, separation between the actions of a country and its citizens is paramount for an important distinction between the mainstream centre-right and the radical right. The centre-right, typically civic nationalists, strongly identify themselves and others with countries. If countries are perceived as political opponents, that is projected onto citizens. That is a common source of anti-Americanism around the world, wherein the actions of the American government give rise to negative stereotypes about American citizens (e.g., the Iraq War). By contrast, the radical right in its ethnic nationalist iteration is far less concerned with the actions of governments and is instead focused on perceived immutable ties between ethnicities. This tendency grows as they become more radicalised, to the point of producing “fascist internationals” that identify more strongly with race, pan-ethnicity, or ideology rather than ethnicity or country (e.g., the case of Russian radical right volunteers fighting for Ukraine). Both attitudes may produce hostile attitudes to the US and Russia, but in the case of the radical right, this will likely result in a growing separation between the perception of the state and citizens.

Differentiating Between Aspects of Globalization

Another major issue is the definition of globalisation, which can mean dramatically different threats to the radical right and left, even if they are united by aversion towards it. For example, the left will likely support less restrictive immigration laws (a manifestation of globalisation), while the right would vehemently oppose it. The right would be largely apathetic

or moderate about economic preferences and laissez-faire economics associated with the US (Arzheimer 2018), while the left would be strongly against it.

In the case of Kim et al., which aspects of globalisation do the PRC and the US represent that make the “Protectionists” so averse to them? Could those aspects be different for different “anti-globalisation” types? For example, the PRC has no explicit ideological agenda when it comes to foreign policy, whereas the US under Barack Obama featured a prominent normative component emphasising the promotion of liberal democracy around the world. The US is also associated with cultural globalisation, while the PRC is not. Russia’s “anti-globalism” mostly refers to issues such as sovereignty, nationalism, and social conservatism, so it can be predicted that right-wing “anti-globalists” would be notably more in favour of it than left-wing “anti-globalists.” This would highlight Russia’s growing right-wing and shrinking left-wing network of supporters in Western Europe and North America.

Potential Sources of Spuriousness

A notable problem with Kim et al. is that general pessimism may be a major potential source of spuriousness for relationship between their IV and DV. Could a person support anti-US and anti-China attitudes because they are simply generally prone to negative assessments, or at least to negative assessments of other states? As Kim et al. suggest, China means little to Europeans except as a new economic powerhouse and perhaps a challenger to generalised Western dominance. It does not have a well-defined ideological image except for domestic authoritarianism. It is not seen as interested in swaying European politics in any clear ideological direction except being more favourable to China in some way. This distinguishes it from Russia and the US, both of which are interested in “changing minds” on non-economic issues in a coherent direction highly consistent with polarisation, especially in the Russian case. Arguably, this was the reason for the relationship in which Cold War support for one power generally meant opposition to the other and was far more of a zero-sum game than the China-US dichotomy. Introducing pro-Russia attitudes would greatly clarify the situation because

respondents will be given the opportunity to express approval for an ideological power that might represent their political preferences.

That said, even then pessimism and optimism will remain a partial source of spuriousness, as preliminary analysis shows. While it is possible to explain the correlations between anti-PRC, anti-EU, and anti-US sentiments as “anti-globalism,” it is harder to do that for their positive correlation with the anti-Russia sentiment. Yet they do correlate, or at least did on TTS 2014, which was administered in July at the height of the crisis in Ukraine. Desiring “strong Russian leadership in world affairs” (Q1C) correlated positively with desiring the same from the US (Q1A). It could be that respondents interpreted the question as desire for international stability, so Russia was perhaps showing weak leadership by invading Ukraine and had to amend its ways. The correlation coefficient was .43 for the entire data set: for instance, .57 for France and .38 for the UK, despite the famously pro-US and anti-Russia preferences of the latter. By the logic of Kim et al., desiring strong leadership from Russia in July 2014 would be the same manifestation of enthusiasm for globalisation as supporting the US or the PRC, even as Russia was directly violating the established international order. If that is so, that casts doubt on the value of the conclusions, and does not reflect the public discourse in the EU, where Russia was strongly condemned.

Is Russia “anti-Cosmopolitan”?

It seems clear that Russia is positioning itself as an “anti-globalist” and right-wing power, though its exact motives for that remain ambiguous. It likely reflects a combination of factors: capitalising on the rising radical right sentiment, an appeal to the large conservative and radical right domestic audience, an attempt to present itself as an international ideational leader, and a way to destabilise its perceived opponents domestically. For example, one of the most internationally popular speeches by Vladimir Putin says the following (addressing a query from a French student):

India, our neighbour to the left, has a population of 1.2 billion, and China has a population of 1.5 billion. The United States continues to receive more and more immigrants; and, as far as I understand, it's White Christian population is already outnumbered. <...> You say 'of course,' but this has changed only recently. White Christians have become a minority, less than 50 percent now. What I am talking about is that the world is going through dramatic, global change. I am not saying this is good or bad, just that global changes are going on. You have said Russia is a vast territory and it is indeed so—from its western to eastern borders, it is a Eurasian space. But as regards culture, even language, language groups and history, this all is undoubtedly a European space as it is inhabited by people of this culture. I am saying this because we have to preserve all this to remain a significant centre in the world—and I do not mean it in the military sense or anything else. We should not divide everything based on ethnicity and should not look back thinking, say, of the war between France and Russia in 1812–14, but rather look to the future for ways to build a common future and follow this common path. This is how we can preserve this vast space and these people as a global centre that is significant for relations with Asian countries and the American continent. (Kremlin.ru 2017)

The speech taps into both anti-US and anti-China attitudes, though the initial comment is on India. It has an emphasis on “civilizational unity” and does not even shun from mentioning race. The fear that white Americans become a minority in the US is a prominent feature of the radical right discourse and has been used as its defining point (Jardina 2014). Indeed, according to Jardina, approximately 22% white Americans are “very worried” about the changing demographic make-up of the US, while 42% are “somewhat worried.” She strongly connects this sentiment, which she perceives as a manifestation of white identity, with radical right anti-immigration attitudes. The correlation is especially high for the more acceptable opinions, such as those immigrants take jobs, and lower for the more controversial opinions, such as that they change values. The paper assumes that a similar reaction can be expected from Western Europeans. Thus, Putin’s emphasis on the issue may have a strong appeal to the radical right, so long as they perceive Russia not to be entirely disingenuous on such issues. Meanwhile, it would likely repulse supporters of centrist parties or “Cosmopolitans,” as well as the radical left.

Variation in Ex-Communist States

Respondents in the EU from a number of countries outside Western Europe will likely perceive Russia as an imperialistic and opportunist power, no matter their ideology. For that reason, it makes less sense to include them into the analysis, except when data are readily

available. Even though Poland is widely acknowledged as experiencing a radical right turn, local attitude to Russia is more likely to be defined by security concerns rather than any ideological direction. For instance, even though the Baltic countries have prominent radical right parties, such parties are unusually inclined among their party family to support the EU and regard Russia as ideologically alien (Schulze 2018). It is difficult to frame the issue in a way that would circumvent such foreign policy considerations. However, they may still be included into an analysis as a separate category, in an attempt to find the line at which Russia ceases to be seen as a threat to sovereignty and instead transforms into an asset for it. It is unclear if the transition will be sudden or smooth. For instance, the radical right in Germany is clearly pro-Russian, but Czechia, Slovakia, and Hungary may be somewhere in the middle.

2014 and 2016 Datasets

The data for TTS 2014 were gathered in July 2014, meaning that its usefulness on Russian affairs is limited because any opinions were likely severely affected by the Ukrainian crisis, which was at its height. On the other hand, it also meant a large number of questions dealing with Russia-related affairs. The survey contains detailed data on the ideological preferences of the respondents, including an adequate size of people who voted for radical right or “populist” parties like UKIP. It also contains an apparently useful question that could be used to assess radical right attitudes: ‘Q27a. As you may know, according to official estimates, around [XX]% of the [COUNTRY] population was born in another country. In your opinion, is this too many, a lot but not too many, or not many? (SPLIT A5)’. Furthermore, it asks people to place themselves on a left-right axis, as opposed to the liberal-conservative axis, which may be preferable if it proves to be correlated with social rather than economic views.

Unlike TTS, Pew GAS paints a very clear picture of radical right foreign policy preferences. The data were also gathered at an unusual moment: Barack Obama was still the president of the US, but the EU was already experiencing a large populist shift. Pew GAS has no question on Russia that would be exactly equivalent to its questions on the USA and China (‘Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion

of [Country]’). However, it includes the following question: “Thinking about our relations with Russia, in your view, which is more important?” with the possible answers including, “Being tough with Russia on foreign policy disputes” and “Having a strong economic relationship with Russia.”

Table 3 combines these questions; it presents (1) the difference between favourable and unfavourable attitudes for the USA and China; (2) the difference between “strong economic relationship” and “being tough on foreign policy” for Russia. In all cases, Russia is dramatically favoured by the radical right party compared to the centrist parties. The situation is similar for other surveyed countries in Western Europe. As expected, the relationship is more complicated in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, in Poland, PiS favours a tougher stance on Russia (-13), while the right-wing populist Kukiz’15 favour cooperation (+13). Conversely, Hungary follows the general pattern, with Fidesz and Jobbik being pro-Russian, while the centre-left parties are anti-Russian.

Table 3: relative country favourability by party ideology (Pew GAS 2016)

Country	Party ideology	USA	Russia*	China
France	centre-left (Parti Socialiste)	33	-22	-28
	centre-right (Les Républicains)	68	11	-21
	radical right (Front National)	41	22	-26
	total France	35	0	-27
Germany	centre-left (SPD)	23	31	-31
	centre-right (CDU/CSU)	37	20	-31
	radical right (AfD)	-26	59	4
	total Germany	18	25	-31
Italy	centre-left (Partito Democratico)	51	12	-23
	centre-right (Forza Italia)	60	29	-26
	radical right (Lega Nord)	38	45	-18
	total Italy	49	28	-31
UK	centre-left (Labour)	22	-7	-9
	centre-right (Conservative)	62	-4	-5
	radical right (UKIP)	24	29	-23
	total UK	38	-3	-9

* Distinct measurement (see main text)

A good way to measure favourability towards radical right attitudes is to inquire about the respondent's perception of a radical right party. A respondent may have a positive view of it, denoting a radical right attitude, but might not vote for it for some strategic considerations (for example, a party has no chance of winning due to low organizational capacity). Alternatively, they may have an even more positive attitude towards some other party. However, it still highlights tolerance for a highly contentious political entity. This measure shows favourability towards Russia as well, yet it also suggests a more positive attitude towards other powers, which runs contrary to Kim et al. (Table 4) An unfavourable attitude towards the radical right party does not just predict a more negative stance on Russia, but also on China, while the stance on the US varies by country. Indeed, it is influenced by a general propensity to assess *all* items unfavourably. For example, extremely pro-FN ("very favourable") respondents are also unusually

pro-EU. Still, extreme aversion to the radical right generally means greater sympathy towards the EU, as might be expected.

Table 4: favourability towards radical right parties in France and Germany and attitudes towards countries (Pew GAS 2016)

Country (party)	Respondent's attitude to the radical right party	USA	Russia*	EU	China
France (FN)	Very favourable	62	42	-24	-10
	Somewhat favourable	38	22	-48	-11
	Somewhat unfavourable	50	23	-20	-17
	Very unfavourable	24	-19	-16	-37
	Total	35	0	-23	-27
Germany (AfD)	Very favourable	-28	56	-80	32
	Somewhat favourable	14	44	-20	-14
	Somewhat unfavourable	23	26	3	-18
	Very unfavourable	19	22	13	-46
	Total	18	25	4	-31

* Distinct measurement (see main text)

The findings of Kim et al. hold for some countries, but not for others. In general, centre-right voters are more positively disposed to the US than their centre-left counterparts. However, the radical right voters in some countries are more hostile towards the US than either their centre-left or centre-right competitors. In such anti-American radical right cases, the radical right tends to be somewhat more positively disposed towards China relative to centrist parties.

Of course, because of the particular wording of the question about Russia, it may be said that radical right voters are simply less activist on foreign policy (e.g., unwilling to interfere on behalf of Ukraine) and unusually interested in economic cooperation, which again runs contrary to Kim et al. Yet they are also unusually well disposed to Vladimir Putin (Taylor 2017), so it is unlikely that the motivators are isolationism and economics alone.

CONCLUSION

The data strongly support a part of hypothesis 1. Radical right party supporters in EU member states are more positively disposed towards Russia than their centre-right and centre-left counterparts. This tendency is highly pronounced in Western Europe, though a little less prominent in parts of Central and Eastern Europe. The evidence for this relationship has grown stronger over time, such that the Pew GAS dataset from 2016 illustrates it much better than the TTS dataset from 2014, which was administered during the initial stages of the Ukrainian conflict. This relationship is consistent with the qualitative evidence of Russia's efforts to present itself as a country that may support radical right attitudes.

At the same time, radical right respondents are sometimes distinctly more anti-American, especially compared to the very pro-American centre-right. Since Barack Obama was still the US president at the time of the polls, it is possible that perceptions have changed with the election of Donald Trump, making the radical right more pro-American. Still, this is an important amendment to the claim in Kim et al. that more conservative attitudes lead to stronger support for the US. That principle only applies to mainstream right, not radical right attitudes. Radical right attitudes towards China vary, with the German AfD being uncommonly pro-China, while the Italian and the French radical right barely differs from the centrist parties. Still others are anti-China, such as UKIP. Thus, the centrist American part of the auxiliary hypothesis 2 holds, especially for the centre-right, but the China part remains inconclusive and contingent on the nation.

Though Kim et al. presented a vision of the world where ideological struggle no longer plays much of a role and the main concerns are economic, the old ideological "Cold War" hypothesis merely applies to a different set of countries and issues. Sympathy towards Barack Obama's US is connected to centrist preferences, while sympathy towards Russia corresponds to radical right attitudes in 2016.

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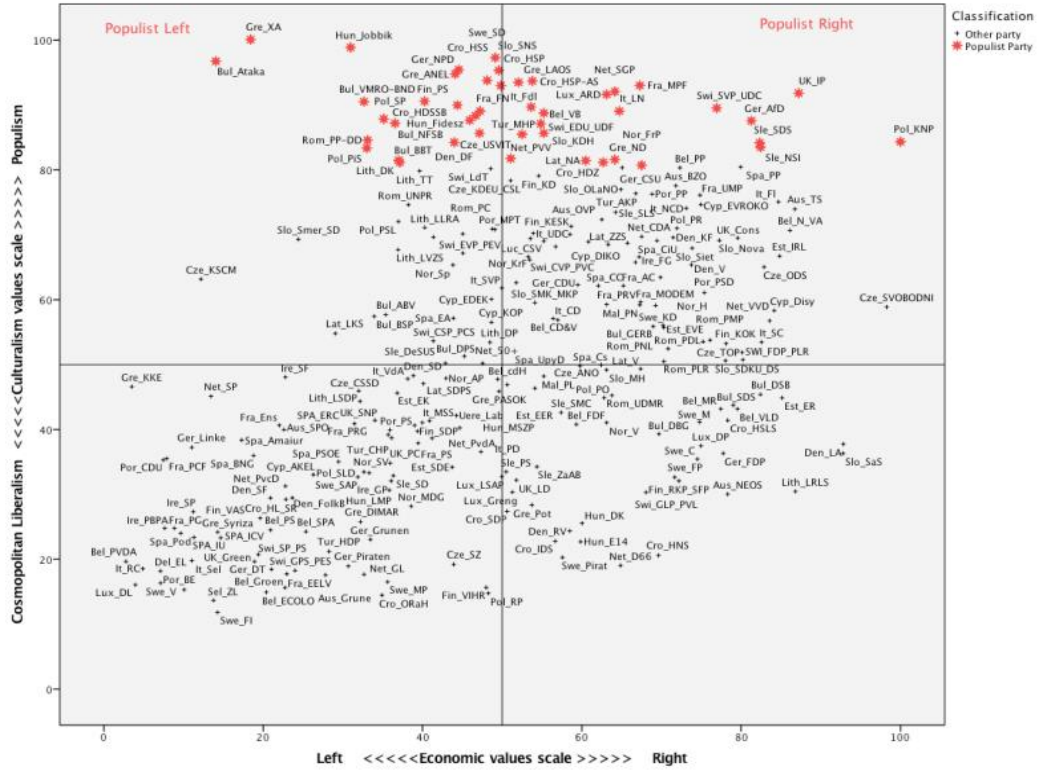
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APPENDIX

Figure 3: Classification of European political parties



Notes: For the scale components, see Table 1. Party scores on both dimensions are standardized to 100-point scales. Source: 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Figure 1. "Populist" (anti-Cosmopolitan Liberal) parties in EU countries. Source: Inglehart and Norris (2016).