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Resisting the Call of Nativism: What U.S. Political Parties Can Learn From Other Democracies

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Summary

Nativism has once again gained momentum in U.S. politics. This tendency to define nationhood not by values or laws but in racial, ethnic, or religious terms is not new. Yet nativism is inherently undemocratic because nativists demote citizens who have the “wrong” characteristics to, at best, second-class citizenship. As nativist voters flex their muscle, what can political parties on both sides of the aisle do to put the genie back in the bottle? Examining how Austria, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy have addressed nativism in their politics offers some useful lessons.

Case studies of these countries’ experiences indicate that:

- Nativists can be found on both sides of the political spectrum. Though currently congregating in conservative parties globally, nativists’ preference for redistributive economics that are restricted to their preferred group make them “swing” voters who may vote for candidates on the left or right.
- Mainstream parties that embrace or collaborate with nativists often believe they can temper nativist preferences. Instead, they tend to absorb the nativists’ views. Nativists then either take over the establishment party or beat it in elections.
- Changing the subject to economic issues or other topics does not seem to work as well as addressing nativism directly.
- Parties that condemn and reject nativists sometimes pay short-term electoral costs but are able to keep nativists from taking over their policy agenda.
- Rejecting nativist politicians does not necessarily reduce the appeal of nativism. Blocking nativist politicians can lead to splinter parties and factions. It does, however, seem to keep nativism from spreading and becoming legitimized.

A number of tactics may succeed in reducing nativist power. Politicians and parties should draw strong red lines, recognizing underlying anxieties while clearly condemning and rejecting nativism. They should also exercise gatekeeping powers against nativist candidates and sitting politicians by, for example, withholding plum committee assignments and supporting agreements among political donors to restrict funding. Electoral changes such as ranked-choice voting may reduce the impact of nativists, particularly when they constitute a small but vocal minority.

Ultimately, however, the most effective way to keep nativists out of government is for both progressives and conservatives to build clear paths to victory that do not rely on nativist appeals to voters. Nativism is a stain on democracy, and it is not inevitable. Some modern democracies have successfully disempowered nativist sentiment. Their experiences show what U.S. parties could achieve with vision and political skill.

Introduction

In July 2019, the president of the United States told four Congresswomen of color to “go back” to “the places from which they came,” suggesting that the one naturalized and three native-born politicians were only contingent Americans.¹ In 2016, local activists tried to prevent Shahid Shafi from becoming the vice chair of a Texas county Republican Party, claiming that though the Pakistani-born surgeon was a naturalized citizen and had lived in the United States for twenty-five years, his real goal was the promotion of “*sharia* law.”² A large minority of Americans believe that full participation in American politics should be limited to those who pass an ethnic, racial, or religious litmus test. A 2018 poll by Grinnell College found that about one-quarter of U.S. citizens felt that to be a “real American” one must be Christian (23 percent) and born in the United States (24 percent).³ A similar survey by the Pew Research Center conducted months before the 2016 elections found even greater concurrence that someone must be born in the United States (32 percent) and Christian (32 percent) to be “truly American.”⁴

Much ink has been spilled on the factors that cause voters to demand nativist policies or the leaders who stir up these sentiments and ride them to power. This paper instead asks: how should U.S. political parties respond to Americans who hold these views?

To answer this question, we examined how parties in Austria, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy have responded to nativism and whether their choices seem to have produced their desired results.⁵ (For details on the six case studies, see the appendix.) The findings offer valuable lessons for U.S. parties dealing with resurgent nativism, including:

- Nativists can be found on both sides of the political spectrum and are often willing to vote for progressive or conservative candidates, though they are currently congregating in conservative parties.
- Mainstream parties that embrace or collaborate with nativists tend to absorb the nativists’ views. Nativists then tend to either take over the establishment party or push it aside.
- Changing the subject to economic issues or other topics does not seem to work as well as addressing nativism directly.
- Parties that condemn and reject nativists sometimes pay short-term electoral costs but are able to keep nativists from taking over their policy agenda.
- Rejecting nativist politicians does not necessarily reduce the appeal of nativism, but it does seem to keep nativism from spreading and becoming legitimized.
- Electoral systems that allow voters to express their preferences more clearly (such as through runoffs or ranked-choice voting) dilute the impact of nativists and fringe candidates.
- The most effective way to keep nativists out of government is for both progressives and conservatives to build clear paths to victory that do not rely on nativist appeals to voters.

What Is Nativism? Creating Two Classes of Citizens

While many people are concerned about nativism, remarkably few have tried to explicitly define it. Journalists, academics, politicians, activists, and others refer to beliefs and policy preferences that appear anti-immigrant and/or bigoted with a broad range of labels—from “nativist” to “nationalist” (implicitly agreeing with those who choose to define the nation by a single race, religion, or ethnicity), to “far-right” (even though not everyone who discriminates by race, religion, or ethnicity is conservative), to “anticosmopolitan” and even “populist” (which more commonly refers to the political tendency to pit a privileged elite against a “true people” whose views should determine policy).⁶ Since these labels are rarely defined, the exact distinction between viewpoints seen as acceptable or unacceptable is rarely described. To clearly identify the problem, a more precise definition of nativism is needed.

The term “nativist” was originally coined in the mid-nineteenth century to describe Americans who opposed demographic change in what was then a predominantly white, Anglo-Protestant nation. Nativists of this era were particularly concerned about immigration from Ireland because it was increasing the Catholic population of the United States.⁷

Nativists today believe that true national identity requires a particular racial, ethnic, or religious background. As in the past, they frequently focus on immigration policy as a means of shaping national demographics in ways that reinforce this idealized national identity.⁸

This paper uses the term “nativist” to describe the portion of any population who advocate, endorse, or believe in a racially, religiously, or ethnically defined notion of nationhood. This leads them to both try to keep members of “undesirable” groups out of their country and to grudgingly offer, at best, only second-class citizenship to members of those groups.⁹ From the nativist perspective, the groups’ second-class citizenship:

- does not entitle them to participate equally in their democracy,
- gives their concerns less weight than other citizens,
- makes their policy views less legitimate,
- justifies providing them with inferior public services, and/or
- otherwise reduces their right to be treated the same as other citizens.

As a Muslim-American public servant targeted by a hate campaign explained, her detractors felt that “there was no way [she] could be an American, and there was no way [she] could work as a public servant or serve the American government or the state government because [she] was a Muslim” and, thus, she could not “serve” but instead only “infiltrate” the parties, federal government, and her state government.¹⁰ Any such concept of second-class citizenship is in direct conflict with democracy’s

fundamental premise of equality for all citizens. Nativism is therefore inherently undemocratic because of its discriminatory view of citizenship, a perspective that distinguishes it from other forms of bigotry or simple differences of opinion on immigration or other policies.¹¹

It is, of course, legitimate for citizens in a democracy to hold various views about immigration. Voters and political parties can wish to limit—even severely limit—immigration and still adhere to democratic values. For example, Canada’s Liberal Party implemented new restrictive immigration policies in the mid-1990s but worked to ensure that these policies would not be discriminatory, unlike Canadian policies during the early 1900s.¹²

Immigration policies that discriminate based on a person’s race, ethnicity, or religion are clearly nativist. It is also possible for people who hold nativist views to propose immigration policies that are less overtly discriminatory. And it can be tempting to speculate about whether policies that treat particular immigrants inhumanely may be motivated by nativism. Rather than attempting to make guesses about hidden motives, this analysis takes a more objective approach and focuses on rhetoric or policy that is unambiguously discriminatory or that openly acknowledges a discriminatory motive—such as in 2018 when an Australian parliamentarian, Fraser Anning, called for a revival of a “White Australia” immigration policy as a “final solution” to Australia’s “immigration problem.”¹³

Nativism has long been endemic in many established democracies. In the United States, until 1965, state governments conducted (and the federal government allowed) overt voter discrimination based on race across much of the South. Indigenous Australians also faced widespread disenfranchisement during this period, while in France, citizens of Algerian descent faced overt, official discrimination in accessing housing.¹⁴ The shift to widespread recognition that second-class citizenship is undemocratic has been both speedy and relatively recent.

While many current voters celebrate that change, others have not fully accepted it. Some voters and politicians are unashamed to state their discriminatory views openly, while others are more reluctant to do so. This can give savvy nativist politicians an incentive to signal their beliefs to their core constituents while cloaking their policy proposals with more anodyne language. For example, in Europe, North America, and Australia, nativist parties have, ironically, begun presenting discrimination against Muslims as a defense of liberalism. By presenting their hostility toward Islam as a defense of women’s rights, gay rights, secularism, free speech, and other norms of tolerance, nativist politicians can attract support from a broader swath of voters who might be turned off by more blatantly discriminatory language. This allows these politicians to pander to their base by defining a second-class citizen group while presenting their policy arguments in the context of liberal values. In this way, nativist politicians and political parties can attempt to use liberal voters, liberal ideas, and even prominently visible minority candidates as shields against accusations of nativism.

Since ambiguity about the line between acceptable and unacceptable views is what makes this cynical approach possible, adopting a clear, specific definition of nativism will make it harder for politicians to engage in nativist appeals while simultaneously denying that they are doing so.

Nativism Is Not Just a Right-Wing Problem

Polls show that nativists identify disproportionately with conservative parties in Western Europe and North America today.¹⁵ The correlation between nativism and right-wing parties has led many academic studies of nativism in Europe to discuss the phenomenon itself as the rise of the “radical right.” However, to address the problem of nativism, it is important to acknowledge another reality: nativist views are often held by voters whose full range of policy preferences could place them on either side of the political spectrum.¹⁶

In Austria, the Freedom Party found its greatest success when it combined support for the welfare state with nativist, anti-Muslim policies. France’s National Rally party (formerly the National Front) has expanded as its leader, Marine Le Pen, has reoriented its platform around a message that combines antiglobalization messages, calls for a stronger economic safety net, and anger at corrupt elites with scaremongering about Muslims and Islam. The Dutch Party for Freedom’s 2014 campaign slogan was “tough on immigration, soft on care,” as it promised to reduce immigration and increase spending on the Netherlands’ welfare state.

In both Canada and Europe, nativist parties have also been attracting voters who are not traditionally part of the mainstream right but who have either not voted, voted inconsistently, or leaned left but without enthusiasm. These voters can be wooed by any part of the political spectrum willing to give voice to their generally ignored policy views.

In other words, nativists can be found among the much-courted swing voters of established democracies. Nativists often demand social welfare for their group while seeking to erect greater barriers to other groups receiving the same—whether the other group comprises naturalized citizens, Roma, Muslims, African-Americans, or others with the “wrong” characteristics. Many of these voters are willing to vote for politicians on the left or right who espouse such a platform, but they are frustrated by right-wing politicians who generally eschew big-state social welfare and by left-wing offers of wealth redistribution for all.

This is certainly the case in the United States. Research from the Democracy Fund indicates that of those who voted for U.S. President Donald Trump, those who held the most nativist views (and constituted his core support in the 2016 presidential primary) also held more left-wing views on taxation and safety net programs than all other Republican voting blocs. In fact, 53 percent of these voters said they have voted for both Democrats and Republicans.¹⁷

This suggests that many nativist voters in the United States are not supporters of Republicans by default. In recent years, nativist views have been more frequently expressed—and condoned—by Republican politicians than by Democrats. But nativists offer potentially ripe pickings for opportunistic politicians of either stripe who are interested in mobilizing an angry constituency. A third-party presidential candidate in the United States who combined economically left-wing policies with nativism could deny a significant number of votes to Democrats.¹⁸

Nativism's Long History in the United States

While nativism in the early twenty-first century has been a particular problem on the political right, nativism has a long history in the United States, where a racially defined concept of citizenship was part of the original constitutional debate and where nativism has long been found across the political spectrum.¹⁹ By the early 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan had revived itself on a platform of anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, and anti-black sentiment. It operated in all forty-eight states and around one in sixteen voting-age Americans appear to have been members by the time the Immigration Act of 1924 passed, which prohibited further immigration from Asia and reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe.²⁰

Discrimination based on the idea that Americans of certain ethnicities were second-class citizens led to the well-documented process of immigrants “becoming white,” as successive waves of Irish, Italian, Southern European, and Jewish immigrants gradually gained greater acceptance. Much of this discrimination looks familiar today: Muslims now face the trope of disloyalty that has long been used against Jews, and such intimations were also leveled against Catholics as recently as 1960, when John F. Kennedy, the first Catholic president, was elected.²¹

Nativist political power also has deep roots. In the mid-1850s, the Know Nothing party, also known as the American Party, was founded on conjoined anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiment and achieved brief but substantial electoral success. Until the mid-1960s, legally enshrined racial nativism impeded African American citizens' ability to vote in numerous Southern states. Native Americans were similarly disenfranchised in many states even after receiving citizenship in 1924.²² In that same year, open Ku Klux Klan members ran for office on both sides of the aisle in states across the country, despite the Klan's reputation at the time for vigilante violence. Klansmen took part in both parties' national conventions, where they influenced nominees and party platforms while defeating anti-Klan amendments. After that election year, the Ku Klux Klan claimed their members were governors of eleven states and that they held one-third of the Senate and seventy-five House seats.²³

It is precisely because of the virulence of politically powerful nativism in the United States that its current resurgence is so concerning. According to the 2018 Grinnell poll, among those who identify as Democrats, 18 percent feel that being born in the United States is “very important” to being a “real” American, while 14 percent feel that being Christian is “very important.” Among Republicans, 32 percent hold each of these views, meaning that this group may be a significant factor in primary elections when they choose to vote.²⁴

By playing a decisive role in party primaries, nativist voters can wield outsized influence. Turnout during primary elections is typically low, so even if nativists represent only a plurality or large minority of the party, if they turn out at a high rate they can use primaries to propel nativist candidates to power. This can force mainstream voters from that party to either support a nativist candidate in the general election or to prioritize antinativism above all of their other policy preferences and vote across party lines.

This is what appears to have happened in the 2016 election. A detailed study by the Democracy Fund divided Trump voters into five groups based on their belief typology, such as “free marketeers” or “staunch conservatives.” One group, labeled “American preservationists,” constituted just one-fifth of Trump’s general election voters, but their support was decisive in the primaries, with 82 percent of their members voting for Trump over the other Republican candidates (this rate of support for Trump was 20–40 percent higher than in the other main groups identified by the study).²⁵

Like many voters, American preservationists wanted to restrict immigration. But their views on citizenship belied a particular racial and religious construct of identity at odds with liberal democracy. To be “truly American,” 86 percent felt one must be born in the United States and 77 percent thought one must be Christian, while 47 percent believed being American required having European descent. In other words, for more than three-quarters of these voters, Jews, Muslims, and naturalized immigrants could never be full Americans, and nearly half felt similarly about African-Americans and anyone else whose families did not appear to have a direct line to Europe.²⁶

Once this nativist group of voters had helped Trump win the primary, Republicans who had previously supported nonnativist candidates had a far tougher choice. They could abandon their partisan identity and priorities on other issues and vote for a Democrat, cast a protest vote for a third-party candidate, or fall in line, accepting nativism as the price for achieving other policy goals. Most Republican voters and politicians chose the third path.²⁷

The Options: Strategies for Addressing Nativism

What can Republicans who do not hold nativist views do to restore their party's historic commitment to the ideals of liberal democracy? What can Democrats do to address the nativism in their own ranks and avoid strengthening this sentiment across the electorate? And what can be done to neutralize nativism among the almost one-fifth of Americans who are disillusioned with both parties?²⁸ Mainstream politicians have four broad categories of methods for dealing with nativist politicians or nativist demands:²⁹

- 1. Collaboration:** They may bring nativist politicians into government or work with them on legislation—sometimes to advance the mainstream parties' own agenda and sometimes in the belief that governing will moderate their partners' most extreme sentiments and force more "normal" behavior. Austria and Italy offer examples of what is sometimes called the "hug strategy."³⁰
- 2. Co-optation:** They may court and co-opt nativist voters, attempting to capture their votes for mainstream parties by adopting some of their policy preferences and rhetoric. At times, this is rationalized as a way of undermining a more extreme fringe party.³¹ This strategy is found in the case studies of Australia, Canada, and Italy.
- 3. Condemnation:** They can condemn such sentiments and attempt to isolate and block nativist politicians from entering government or exercising power once there. This strategy has sometimes been used in Austria, France, and Germany.
- 4. Diversion:** They may simply change the subject, ignoring nativist demands and focusing on other policy issues, often in an attempt to unite voters by economic interests. This strategy rarely seems to be used exclusively but rather in combination with others, such as co-optation, in Italy.

Many countries are holding ferocious debates over which strategy is best. Numerous right-of-center parties argue that co-opting or collaborating will help reduce the power of nativist parties and their agendas. For instance, leaders of Austria's center-right People's Party claimed that edging toward the nativist positions of Austria's Freedom Party would allow the former party to win the latter's supporters and thus reduce its policy impact. People's Party leaders later argued that bringing the far-right into a government coalition would enable the dominant center-right party to manage them and that being forced to govern would moderate the Freedom Party's extremes.³²

Others argue that mainstream parties should condemn and block nativists, since courting their voters legitimizes their positions and increases the electoral salience of their agenda. In France and Germany, mainstream parties have refused to form national coalitions with nativist parties. Following the shooting of Muslims during prayer in a Quebec mosque, the *Globe and Mail*, widely considered Canada’s “newspaper of record,” penned an editorial demanding that parliamentarians condemn anti-Muslim bigotry.³³ Speaking after the murder of pro-immigrant politician Walter Lübcke, the leader of Germany’s center-right Christian Democratic Party said that any politician considering a coalition government with the nativist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party “should close their eyes and think of Walter Lübcke.”³⁴

Few politicians argue publicly for changing the subject, but it is perhaps the most common response employed by those who believe nativism is driven largely by displaced concerns over inequality, social services, and job opportunities. For instance, the tactic was predominant in Britain’s Brexit debate among leading remainers, who tried to shift the focus to the economic costs of leaving the European Union while leavers focused on immigration.³⁵

To evaluate which strategies are the most effective in reducing the power of nativism, it is useful to consider how parties in Australia, Canada, and across Europe have acted. While these countries have different electoral systems, all of their mainstream parties have been confronted by entrepreneurial politicians who have sought to appeal to nativist sentiment. The case studies, elaborated in the appendix, strongly support the need to condemn and block nativism to reduce its salience—though the strategy is no silver bullet.³⁶ Broadly, the findings reveal the following.

Collaboration leads to nativist takeover. In the multiparty systems examined in Australia, Canada, and Europe, collaboration with nativist parties usually entails bringing them into coalition governments. In the United States’ two-party system, collaboration involves nativist factions within a party becoming legitimized and embraced rather than marginalized and excluded.

When collaboration occurred in Austria and Italy, nativists generally did not moderate their views when confronted with governing realities: instead, establishment conservatives gradually adopted their coalition partners’ nativist language and helped them implement exclusionist policies.

In Italy, conservative leader Silvio Berlusconi brought nativist parties into his governing coalition on three occasions, and by the third, he was openly rejecting the vision of a multiethnic Italy. Berlusconi’s government enacted emergency decrees that targeted Roma and gave police new powers to raid and dismantle Roma settlements. Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry excused vigilante violence against Roma communities.³⁷

In Austria, the mainstream conservative party has had an on-again, off-again relationship with the nativist Freedom Party. Today, while the Freedom Party is out of government, its once-fringe nativism has become part of mainstream political discourse. In 2015, a coalition government of the center-left and center-right passed a discriminatory law banning foreign funding for mosques (but not churches or synagogues) and requiring Islamic religious leaders (but not other religious leaders) in prisons and the military to take government-approved courses. And in 2018, a coalition of the center-right and the Freedom Party proposed dissolving Muslim kindergartens (though not other parochial kindergartens).³⁸ Regional control of education stymied the latter effort, but Austrian politicians' increased rhetorical attacks on Muslims have been blamed for rising levels of physical assaults against Muslims in recent years. Anti-Semitic harassment has also risen to the highest levels since World War II.³⁹

Co-optation deepens nativist support among voters and lets nativists set the political agenda.

The case studies of Australia and Canada suggest that attempts to co-opt nativist voters can legitimize policies and rhetoric that would have previously been considered unfit for public conversation or debate. Studies of other European countries also find that bringing nativism into the mainstream does not undermine fringe parties but instead increases support for even stronger nativism.⁴⁰ In Western Europe, for example, a quantitative study looking at seventy elections across thirteen countries from 1987 to 2017 found that accommodating radical views did not move voters toward the mainstream but instead led to greater gains for more radical parties—in the words of nativist French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, voters “prefer the original” to an imitation.⁴¹ Attempts at co-optation may even push extreme parties into even more extreme positions, in an escalatory cycle that mainstream parties cannot win without becoming extremists themselves.⁴²

Co-optation may be most problematic when it comes from both sides of the aisle. This sort of legitimation appears to have occurred in Austria and Italy, where left-wing adoption of some nativist policies and rhetoric may have helped move the needle on what sort of proposals and rhetoric are considered acceptable in public debate.⁴³

Condemnation and blocking is essential to minimizing nativist power. Creating a clear distinction between mainstream parties and nativist sentiment is important for neutralizing the salience of nativist beliefs.

In the case studies where mainstream parties have refused to collaborate with nativists, the nativists have been kept out of government and the spread of nativism within the center-right and center-left parties has been very limited. For instance, a united front among mainstream French parties has kept nativists out of political power, even as France's long-standing two-party system has collapsed. In Germany, moderate political parties have mostly refused to ally with the nativist AfD party, even

when its sizable vote share has made it challenging to form coalitions without it.⁴⁴ As a result, the party has been consistently blocked from power at both the federal and state levels. (Indeed, the center-right Christian Democrats have refused to even sit next to AfD legislators in the Bundestag.) And despite some clear public uneasiness about Germany's increasing diversity, Germany's mainstream parties have been able to resist calls to adopt nativist policies and rhetoric. Such efforts can succeed even in the face of widespread nativism. In Greece, polling suggests significant support for anti-Semitism and nativist beliefs among the Greek population. But Greek political parties have succeeded in isolating the nativist Golden Dawn party for years and kept it from exercising power in parliament despite its status as the third-largest party (until all Golden Dawn members lost their seats in Greece's 2019 election).⁴⁵

While blocking can prevent nativists from gaining control of government, it does not necessarily erase the societal demand that leads voters to support nativist parties in the first place. For example, in Australia and Canada, blocking nativists from mainstream parties led to the creation of small nativism-focused splinter parties by politicians seeing an opportunity to ride a base of nativist voters into power. Also, in 2019, European Parliament elections showed steady levels of support for the AfD and France's National Rally, despite their isolation by other parties in their respective countries. The case studies indicate that blocking reduces the spread of nativism within mainstream parties and makes it harder for nativists to enter government and implement their policy agenda. However, it does not necessarily persuade nativists to abandon their undemocratic views.

Unsurprisingly, blocking strategies seem to be less effective when used inconsistently. In countries such as Australia, where parties have sometimes blocked nativist politicians but at other times co-opted nativist sentiment, the political spectrum has experienced shifts in a nativist direction. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Australia's center-right party leaders forced multiple politicians using nativist language to leave their party and even ran a legal slush fund to destroy the splinter nativist party that resulted. But by the late 1990s, they tried co-opting the discourse of nativist politicians to attract voters, including stealing the campaign slogan of a nativist politician banned from the party. Despite their strong blocking efforts, establishment conservatives' co-optation tactics changed the norms of political discourse and shifted the mainstream party itself in a nativist direction. By strengthening nativist sentiment among its voter base, the party made later attempts to condemn and block increasingly costly.

Once mainstream parties have legitimized nativism, it is harder for blocking strategies to work and harder to stick to them when political incentives beckon in the other direction. This seems to be the current situation in the United States.

Ignoring the problem does not seem to work, and changing the subject to economics is likely to fail. In the countries examined, there appear to be no instances in which a political party relied exclusively on ignoring nativism and simply changing the subject—some cases instead showed parties employing a blend of ignoring and condemning or ignoring and co-opting or sometimes all three. For instance, at times, Italian progressives were clearly determined to ignore nativism. When the leader of the nativist Northern League criticized the Pope’s outreach to Muslims and described Muslims as a threat to Italy, the governing center-left coalition dismissed his remarks as “barroom talk” and declined to engage further. At other times, however, Italy’s progressives have attempted to co-opt nativists: while Italian far-left parties such as the Communists have often emphasized solidarity with minority groups, center-left politicians have sometimes echoed the conservative coalition’s language in describing Roma and immigrants as part of a security problem.⁴⁶ The two-pronged approach has been ineffective: in 2019, Italy’s most popular political party was nativist.⁴⁷

While no party examined seemed to use a “changing the subject” strategy exclusively, other research on the causes of nativism suggests that trying to defuse identity issues simply by emphasizing economic issues in campaigns or while in office may not be an effective strategy, because nativism is not simply driven by economic hardship.

What Causes Nativism?

Studies conflict on the causes of nativist sentiment—many people struggle to define nativism and many conflate nativism and populism, making root causes even harder to disentangle. Yet the most rigorous research seems to find that economic status plays only a minor role. Most researchers agree that living in poverty, being working class or unemployed, or fearing economic loss do not automatically lead to support for nativist policies.⁴⁸

Which factors, then, best explain support for nativist politicians and policies? On this point, existing research is conflicted. Some studies suggest that nativism is driven by large demographic changes or, alternatively, by changes that happen rapidly, even if they are smaller.⁴⁹ Another body of research makes the case that the *fear* of demographic change is a more powerful predictor of nativist attitudes, rather than the extent or rapidity of the change itself.⁵⁰ Some evidence suggests that voters are more likely to be nativist if they believe that their social, political, or economic status has declined relative to others.⁵¹ There does seem to be some emerging consensus that, in white-majority democracies, white voters are more likely to support nativist politicians if they perceive that their privileged position is eroding.⁵²

It also appears that political leaders play a key role in mobilizing nativist sentiment by appealing to voters' nostalgia for an era in which their privileges were more secure or to their fears of a decline in their social or economic position.⁵³

Politicians can mobilize nativist sentiment in various ways, but a common strategy is to make non-majority population groups the scapegoats for a perceived decline in living conditions, regardless of the reality. For instance, politicians might associate Muslims with terrorism, link Latinos to criminality, or connect minorities such as Roma or African-Americans to abuses of the social safety net. This gives majority population groups the opportunity to blame a rigged system for their grievances and to then point the finger at groups who are allegedly benefitting from the rigging.

Insofar as economics plays a role, a bigger problem seems to be inequality, even if a rising tide is raising all boats. Some research suggests that nativism may be most attractive to those doing less well relative to others within a growing economy—even if those individuals are doing better than they previously had been.⁵⁴ For instance, many of the poorest European countries have not seen a major rise in nativist parties, while countries with relatively high employment and prosperity, such as Austria and the Netherlands, as well as regions with expanding economies and employment such as Saxony and Brandenburg in Germany, have seen rising nativism.⁵⁵

Blaming elites for perceived problems, as populists do, or blaming ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, as nativists do, is attractive to many voters. These positions are often deployed together, as in the populist nativist trope that elites are rigging national policy to admit greater numbers of ethnic and racial minorities who will reduce wages and perpetuate inequality.⁵⁶

Thus, nativism will not be quelled by simply increasing economic growth. But if it is unwise to ignore nativism, and if nativist demands cannot be accommodated without furthering inherently undemocratic, unequal treatment of citizens, then nativism must be addressed another way.

What Should Parties Do?

The experience of other democracies makes clear that Republicans and Democrats who wish to curb nativism can neither co-opt nor ignore nativists within their ranks or on the other side of the aisle. Nativists must be condemned and blocked. However, the election of Trump showed that nativists remain a potent political force in the United States and that nativism continues to be a viable electoral strategy, at least for conservatives. And now that nativism has been normalized among a broader swath of politicians and the electorate, a condemning and blocking strategy will be harder to execute than it was five years ago. So how can it be done?

Here are five tactics that politicians, parties, voters, activists, and donors can use, as well as a fundamentally new direction that conservatives could pursue:

- 1. Draw clear redlines that explicitly condemn and reject nativism within each party.** For politicians, parties, and pundits, drawing clear distinctions between mainstream ideology and unacceptable nativism is important to isolating the latter. For example, Italian politicians' failure to draw redlines played a significant role in bringing the nativist Northern League party to power. After the party was initially dismissed for its fringe views, conservative leader Silvio Berlusconi repeatedly brought it into his coalition governments as a junior partner. In 2018, the party managed to push Berlusconi to the sidelines and emerged as the leading conservative party in Italy. That year, the Northern League had become legitimized enough that the Five Star Movement, a new populist party, rejected Italy's center-left party and instead chose to form a coalition government with the Northern League. Over the following year, leaders of the Five Star Movement gradually began to signal their discomfort with some of the Northern League's nativist rhetoric and eventually formed a new coalition with the center-left after a split with the League. If mainstream conservatives or progressives had more clearly articulated the difference between mainstream conservatism and the Northern League's nativism, this might have helped discourage the Five Star Movement from forming a coalition with the nativist party when other potential partners were available.

In condemning nativists, mainstream leaders must be careful to articulate exactly which democratic principle nativists are disregarding—namely, that all citizens are equals. Criticizing nativists in broad terms and failing to distinguish them from mainstream conservatives (or mainstream progressives) can actually play into nativists' hands. Populists tend to rely on a strategy of painting all mainstream parties as the same and of presenting themselves as the “real” people, whose will is being blocked by the elite. While not all nativists are populists, many of the nativist parties in the cases studied benefited from this strategy.

Drawing clear redlines that reinstate norms against discrimination is crucial to delegitimizing nativism. But, in the United States, nativism is widespread enough that it is probably too late for this tactic to work by itself. Other methods must be used in tandem.

- 2. Speak to underlying anxieties without condoning nativism.** Does drawing clear lines between mainstream views and nativism mean rejecting a large swath of voters? Or can mainstream politicians still hope to win the support of voters who may have backed nativists in the past? A Democracy Fund Voice study suggests that political leaders who reject nativism could still acknowledge some nativists' concerns, such as the worry that the United States is losing its

unique position in the world and the fear that the United States cannot manage unauthorized immigration.⁵⁷ At a minimum, it is possible to discuss these concerns while maintaining a firm commitment to the equality of all Americans. By contrast, other concerns—that demographic change is a negative phenomenon or that Muslims are a national security threat—cannot be acknowledged as legitimate because they are inherently nativist.

As noted above, one of Canada’s mainstream parties attempted to respond to voters’ immigration concerns without condoning nativism. After the nativist Reform Party of Canada gained a significant vote share in 1993, the governing Liberal Party adopted new policies regarding immigration, including a reduction in the total number of immigrants accepted into the country, a decrease in the percentage of immigrants admitted for family reunification, and an increase in the percentage admitted for economic reasons (meaning immigrants with desired skills or personal wealth).⁵⁸ Yet they crafted their policies after a long period of public consultation and carefully employed nonnativist language. Furthermore, the new policies did not discriminate based on ethnic, religious, or other identity-based grounds, and the government increased Canada’s refugee intake.⁵⁹ Thus, while many pro-immigration groups and religious organizations criticized the new policies, politicians managed to address immigration as a policy issue while upholding the norm of equality of citizenship.⁶⁰

Still, more research would be worth conducting. Take the issue of speaking English. The same Democracy Fund Voice study found that voters who had supported the most nativist candidate in the 2016 U.S. presidential primaries (Trump) were particularly likely to be bothered by the inability of some immigrants to speak English.⁶¹ However, speaking English is also important to many immigrants; in a Pew survey from the early 2000s, 96 percent of foreign-born Latinos said it is important to teach English to children of immigrant families.⁶² This indicates that being able to communicate in a common language may be a shared value that unites nativists and immigrants who have become American citizens. Yet there appears to be no rigorous research on whether messaging about the value of a shared national language disarms or deepens nativism. Similarly, there seems to be no available research on how nativism is impacted by messages stating that immigrants wish to join the American way of life and values system rather than fundamentally alter it.⁶³

- 3. Exercise gatekeeping powers to disempower nativists.** Once political parties and leaders have made a decision to condemn and isolate nativists, they have some powers that could be used to reject and marginalize nativist candidates or sitting politicians. As Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt argue in *How Democracies Die*, one of the core historical functions of political parties has been to keep extremists out of power.⁶⁴ Gatekeeping by major parties, occasionally to their own short-term detriment (as in France), was attempted in nearly every case study.

Strong, consistent gatekeeping by major parties was the most successful tactic in reducing nativist power. In France and Germany, mainstream parties, especially center-right parties, have successfully kept nativists from assuming power by refusing to partner with them, even as nativist parties have increased their vote share and gained legislative seats. For decades, France's major parties—both center-right and center-left—have isolated the nativist National Front by refusing to join the party in any national coalition. In 1986, Jacques Chirac's right-of-center government chose to govern with a razor-thin two-vote majority rather than welcome the thirty-five votes of the National Front. In 2017, after the National Front gained 21 percent of the vote in the first round of presidential elections, the third-place candidate, former conservative prime minister François Fillon, urged his supporters to vote for the centrist party candidate Emmanuel Macron rather than the more conservative National Front candidate Marine Le Pen.⁶⁵

Like most norms, gatekeeping is more effective when used consistently and potentially even more so when it occurs on both sides of the aisle. The German center-right's firm opposition to partnering with right-wing nativists has likely been reinforced by the German center-left's refusal to partner at the national level with the successor to the East German Communist Party. Conversely, where gatekeeping has been inconsistently applied, as in Australia or Austria, nativist parties have grown more influential.

While gatekeeping by parties can isolate nativists, there is little support for strengthening the powers of U.S. political parties. Both the Republican and Democratic parties are relatively weak by international standards, but there is nonetheless a long history of powerbrokers blocking the rise of qualified candidates who simply lacked the proper connections, particularly female and minority candidates. This history, and a long distrust of elites, contributes to a skepticism of strong parties in the United States.

Indeed, both major U.S. parties have been shedding gatekeeping powers for years. In 2018, Democratic Party leaders voted to significantly limit the ability of elected officials and party insiders (known as superdelegates) to choose the party's presidential nominee. This change was made in the aftermath of charges that the Democratic National Committee had attempted to influence the 2016 presidential primary process.⁶⁶ The Republican Party, meanwhile, does not have superdelegates at all. Even if party leaders had wished to isolate candidate Trump or reduce the power of his nativist appeals on the 2016 campaign trail, they had little formal power to do so.

Shifts in campaign financing laws and fundraising techniques have also led to fundraising and media operations being increasingly conducted outside of official party organizations, either through political action committees (PACs) or through individual campaigns' direct contact with voters.

It is unlikely, then, that U.S. political parties will reacquire the strong candidate selection powers that European parties still possess, and regaining them may be undesirable in any case. However, U.S. parties could exercise more limited powers, such as formally rebuking or penalizing candidates for violating antidiscrimination policies. For example, multiple Australian politicians from a variety of parties have been cut from party lists after using nativist language. More subtly, in a shadow cabinet meeting in Australia, when a leading party figure suggested that the party stoke fears of Muslims, the meeting's chairperson reportedly responded by rejecting the suggestion and reminding him of the party's policy of nondiscrimination.⁶⁷

In the U.S. context, such rebukes could take a variety of forms. While U.S. political parties are not as powerful as they once were, they still provide valuable support to candidates through funding, endorsements, and organizational support. For an example of how a party could reject a nativist candidate, consider the election campaign of Alabama politician Roy Moore. Moore is known for his controversial positions, including strongly nativist stances; he has said he believes Muslims should not be permitted to serve in Congress.⁶⁸ When Moore ran for the U.S. Senate as a Republican in a 2017 special election, Republican Party leaders endorsed his primary opponent and spent heavily against Moore, in an unsuccessful but concerted effort to deny Moore the nomination.⁶⁹ After Moore won the nomination, his candidacy was further roiled by multiple sexual assault allegations, and a number of prominent Republicans—including Alabama's other senator, senior Republican Richard Shelby—pointedly declined to back Moore in the general election.⁷⁰ Both the Republican National Committee and the National Republican Senatorial Committee also withdrew funding from Moore's race for a portion of the campaign.⁷¹ This uneven support from party leaders and institutions likely impacted Moore's campaign, and he lost narrowly in a heavily Republican state. While Republican resistance to Moore was shaped by many factors unrelated to Moore's nativism, taking similar steps against other nativist candidates during primary campaigns could help the party to change course.

Within Congress, party leaders can work to ensure that particular members receive desirable committee assignments and get the opportunity to sponsor prominent legislation. Some or all of this support could be withheld from party members who breach norms against discrimination. For an example of what a lack of party support might look like in a legislative body, consider the experience of Texas politician Ron Paul in Congress. Despite serving for over twenty years and eventually obtaining reasonable seniority, Paul was treated as a fringe figure by most of his colleagues. Even in periods when Republicans held the majority, legislation backed by Paul was rarely voted on, let alone passed by Congress.⁷² In Paul's case, he was marginalized due to his libertarian and iconoclastic views on a wide range of issues rather than a nativist agenda. But a party could coordinate similar or even stronger treatment toward overtly nativist legislators, reducing their power in much the same way that Germany's Christian Democrats did in refusing to partner with or even sit next to the nativist AfD in the German legislature.⁷³

These examples show how political parties could use their limited, existing powers to exclude or marginalize nativist politicians. A newly reborn conservative party could adopt conservative positions on a variety of issues while enforcing a strong public nondiscrimination message that would serve as a branding strategy to distinguish it from nativists such as Trump. Such a strategy was attempted by the Reform Party of Canada, which changed its name, merged with another party, and advanced a slate of minority candidates in an attempt to distinguish itself from a nativist past. And when that failed, party leaders doubled down on this distancing strategy until they gained power as Canada's Conservative Party.

- 4. Support electoral reform such as ranked-choice voting.** Even if national politicians and parties seem recalcitrant to change, voters and state elected officials could support electoral reforms that would make it easier for voters to block nativist candidates without compromising their other policy priorities. This could involve reforming primary elections and/or allowing general election voters to express more specific preferences.

Regarding primary elections, it is hard to persuade political leaders to draw a clear line against nativism if they fear being beaten by nativist challengers. In the United States, that challenge is most likely to arise in party primaries.

Different political structures create different paths to power for nativists. For example, in Canada's federal system, nativists who can gain a majority within a province can attain outsized power—many Canadians argue they have done so in Quebec with a French nationalist message that is discriminatory against those who are not Francophone, white, and of Catholic heritage.⁷⁴ Alternatively, highly fractured parliamentary systems may allow nativists with far less support to become kingmakers if they control a few crucial seats that can enable a coalition to obtain a majority.

In the United States, nativists gain outsized importance if they congregate within particular states and even more if they gather within the ranks of a single party, as they are now doing.⁷⁵ This impact is due to the winner-take-all effect of the electoral college at the national level and to gerrymandering and the self-sorting of voters into distinct geographies at the state level; in combination, these latter two factors make the majority of House seats noncompetitive in general elections. In 2020, nearly 80 percent of House seats are considered safely “owned” by one party or the other.⁷⁶ Even in the Senate, where candidates are elected on a statewide basis, a growing number of states are becoming safe seats for one party or the other. In many districts, the opposing party sometimes does not run a candidate at all or offers a sacrificial lamb with little chance of winning. So the time when these safe House districts (and a number of state-level races) are most likely to be contested is during primary elections.

In safe states and districts, candidates rarely encounter a credible threat from the opposition, but they must guard their flanks against competition from within their own party. That means candidates in safe districts are incentivized to play to their most activist base; there is less incentive to support policies that could win voters from the other side. By rallying around candidates who offer nativist rhetoric or policy proposals and turning out to vote at a high rate, small numbers of nativists can effectively control the ultimate choice within a far broader electorate. Thus, primaries are frequently the elections of greatest salience for fighting nativism.

Reducing the power of base voters so that candidates must court general election voters to win would dilute the power of nativists. Several potential electoral reforms could help do this.

One alternative is the top-two primary system, adopted in Washington state and California; all candidates, regardless of party, compete in the same primary, with the top two vote-getters moving on to the general election. A somewhat similar system is used in Louisiana, where multiple candidates face off in the general election, regardless of party affiliation. In the event that no candidate gains a majority, the top two candidates then face each other in a runoff election. (A similar runoff system is used for presidential elections in France.)

A significant downside of the top-two system is that it can allow several like-minded candidates to split the vote, giving more extreme candidates with a limited but enthusiastic base of support the opportunity to advance. This same spoiler effect arises in general elections in the United States that feature third-party candidates on the ballot.⁷⁷

A more promising option, then, is ranked-choice voting, a system used in a number of countries—most prominently Australia and Ireland—and recently adopted in Maine and some U.S. cities. In ranked-choice voting, voters pick their first, second, third (and so on) choices from among a spectrum of candidates on the ballot, and the votes for less popular candidates are reallocated based on voters' second (and so on) choices. This system allows extreme candidates to receive a hearing, but it also allows alternative candidates to run with no spoiler effect and favors candidates who campaign to be at least the second choice of a broad number of voters.⁷⁸

Ranked-choice voting by itself will not solve the problem of nativism; in states and districts where a majority of voters favor nativist candidates, establishment candidates from both the right and left might be tempted to adopt nativist rhetoric or proposals to co-opt these voters. But while electoral reforms are unlikely to check nativists in places where nativism is actually popular, they could help reduce the influence of nativists in places where they make up a vocal but smaller minority. Reforms such as these may be ambitious, but they offer a promising avenue for genuine and lasting change.

- 5. Create pacts among political donors to cut off funding for nativist candidates.** Political donors can also play a significant role in fighting nativism. Donor PACs and super PACs could pledge to withhold funds and endorsements for candidates who use nativist rhetoric or propose nativist policies.

An even stronger form of gatekeeping could occur if donor PACs or groups of the largest donors on the right paired with their counterparts on the left to enforce various norms of governance, including a commitment to nonnativist rhetoric and policies—each promising to uphold or abandon the norms together. However, since nativists are currently clustering within the Republican Party, conservatives have a greater incentive to embrace or tolerate nativism than progressives do. Any sort of cross-party agreement would likely have to include a pledge by progressives to refrain from doing something that conservatives viewed as undemocratic, such as altering the number of justices on the Supreme Court.

A Long-Term Strategy: Find Another Demographic Path to Victory

Even if these five ideas are pursued successfully, a party that depends on nativist support to win will always have an incentive to cater to nativists. Thus, the best way for a party to fight nativism within its ranks is to find a clear path to victory that does not require it to win votes through appeals to nativism.

The most pertinent example of a party that found electoral strength in nativism and then abandoned it is the U.S. Democratic Party prior to 1964. From the Reconstruction period through the early 1960s, the Democratic Party depended on the “solid South” of segregationist Dixiecrats to help it build national majorities. In 1952, polls showed that 83 percent of (nearly entirely white) voting Southerners identified as Democrats. Although many Klansmen leaned right because of their anti-union agenda, a speaker at the 1924 Democratic National Committee convention claimed that 343 Klansmen served as delegates for the Democrats (nearly one-third of the total number).⁷⁹

The solid South began to soften after president Harry S. Truman desegregated the military and then throughout the 1950s as the party became more associated with civil rights. But support for Democrats among voting Southerners was still at 69 percent in 1960, and segregation was overwhelmingly the most pertinent issue to these voters.⁸⁰ In the early 1960s, president John F. Kennedy tried to maintain the backing of northern civil rights supporters while keeping Southern segregationist votes by publicly supporting but not prioritizing civil rights legislation and while appointing openly racist segregationists to Southern judgeships.⁸¹

By the 1964 campaign, president Lyndon B. Johnson saw that straddling northern progressives and southern segregationists was becoming impossible. He could have made the choice to turn his back on civil rights and regain the segregationist vote; given Democrats' long-standing ties to the South in general and segregationists in particular, the math of the Electoral College, and Johnson's own history of segregationist votes as a senator, this might have been the more obvious political choice. But he instead made a leap toward the future and moved decisively to cement a new, winning coalition based on an (at times uneasy) alliance among progressives, minorities, and union members.

Republicans saw similar trends a few years ago. In an "autopsy" of the 2012 election, a Republican report based on deep research and extensive polling concluded that the party needed to expand its reach among minority voters to remain competitive.⁸² In 2016, as Trump was winning early Republican primaries, Ari Fleischer, a senior republican operative and one of the report's co-authors, explained that because of the United States' changing demography, even if Trump won in 2016 due to the support of "blue-collar Democrats," it would not affect the long-term trends and need for change.⁸³ Pollsters were telling Republicans that they had two options if they wished to continue winning elections over the long term: they could either alter their demographic appeal or alter the electorate itself through gerrymandering and voter suppression.⁸⁴

Many party leaders urged candidates to reach out to various new constituencies to reinvigorate the party. In 2012, Senator Lindsay Graham saw the writing on the wall: "The demographics race we're losing badly. We're not generating enough angry white guys to stay in business for the long term."⁸⁵ Others saw that some growing U.S. populations could potentially become Republican constituencies, particularly those with high levels of religiosity, antiabortion beliefs, and similar policy preferences. Republican strategist Dick Armey made the case that "we've chased the Hispanic voter out of his natural home."⁸⁶ Armey and others argued for a strategy that (whether they realized it or not) had been successfully adopted by the Canadian Conservative Party. Canada's Conservatives consciously chose to run candidates from conservative minority populations and to reach out to those constituencies—a strategy that helped them win elections from 2006 to 2015. (The party subsequently drifted back toward nativist rhetoric and lost its majority.)

Trump's election win blew this emerging consensus to smithereens. As Trump showed that his overt nativism could generate enthusiasm and win elections, many of his detractors got on board. Yet Fleischer and his fellow pollsters remain correct: despite high voter intensity that scares politicians who fear primary challenges from nativists, the Republican Party is unlikely to regain a majority of the national popular vote if it remains on this path. Republicans could rely on their advantages in the Electoral College to retain the presidency for several cycles without winning the popular vote, and

their strength in rural states combined with advantageous House district maps can keep them competitive in congressional elections as well. But if the party is unable to broaden its appeal, in about two decades it will only remain viable by manipulating who is allowed to vote.⁸⁷

The Republican Party would need a major rebranding effort to alter its current trajectory and push nativists back to the fringes. Republican leaders began moving along this path in 2000, when, as Canada's Conservatives would a few years later, they began outreach to minority communities who might share their conservative views and started to coalesce around a more inclusive strategy.⁸⁸ In that year, Pat Buchanan found so little support for his nativist ideology within the party that he left the Republicans to run on Ross Perot's Reform Party ticket. (Trump's first presidential run was a loss to the then more nativist Buchanan in the contest for the 2000 Reform Party nomination.)⁸⁹

Today, there are organizations within the Republican Party that are working to make it more inclusive—from established groups like the Log Cabin Republicans to newer entities like the Catalyst PAC. Should party leaders wish to broaden their appeal to minority groups, they could emphasize accomplishments like criminal justice reform or take credit for the benefits of a strong economy. It would take serious rebranding and perhaps even a party splintering, but the path for an inclusive, conservative movement is not entirely closed off should a decisive faction of the party choose to move in this direction.

It may seem fantastical that both the mainstream left and right of the United States would turn their backs on nativism as a wedge issue, particularly after seeing recent proof of its continued relevance. Yet it is a feat the Republican Party performed over 150 years ago when it surpassed the Know Nothing party, in part by offering Know Nothing supporters a more honest and compelling approach to the country's problems.⁹⁰ Leaving the single-issue nativist vote on the table while appealing to voters attracted to nativism by offering a more appealing and more fact-based diagnosis of the real cause of their problems and possible solutions is also precisely what major parties in Germany and France have done in recent years. This, at times, forced center-right parties to modify their policy agenda and even had electoral costs, but it also allowed them to maintain control of their party identity while keeping nativists from power. Some of their counterparts in the United States may, in time, decide that these benefits are worth the short-term price.

Conclusion

The costs of opportunistic politicians leveraging the concept of second-class citizenship to gain political success are serious. The United States and numerous European countries are joining the many countries in which ethnic, racial, or religious identity is more salient than economic identity

for determining political party preferences. In countries where parties are based in identity, voters expect politicians to provide more goods to their group and less to others, rewarding politicians with their votes.⁹¹ The distribution of basic governance—from policing to clean water to health services—becomes more and more linked to which ethnic, racial, or religious group is in office. Incentives to vote for members of one’s group deepen, leading to a vicious cycle. The idea of equality of citizenship crumbles as politicians govern on behalf of their narrow constituencies alone. Such countries inevitably become riddled with patronage, which easily hides more blatant corruption. They also become more prone to violence.⁹²

Thanks to its long and troubled racial history, the United States starts further down this path than many peer democracies.⁹³ Americans can ill-afford to continue.

Appendix: Case Studies on Political Parties’ Responses to Nativism

Italy: Collaborate and Co-opt

Following massive political upheaval in the early 1990s, Italian politics came to be dominated by the populist leader Silvio Berlusconi, who at first collaborated with nativist parties and then began to co-opt their agenda. Progressive parties sometimes attempted to address the problem of nativism, but they failed and even occasionally co-opted similar rhetoric. The result has been a ratcheting up of nativist sentiment. As of 2014, Italians had the highest anti-Roma and anti-Islamic views of any country in Western Europe.⁹⁴ And over the past decade, an aggressively nativist party has governed in multiple coalitions and worked to implement its discriminatory policy agenda while in office—to the detriment of Italian minority groups.

Background

In the decades after World War II, Italy’s various centrist parties cooperated to block both neo-fascist and Communist parties from entering national government. Constant political turnover and deep distrust between the left and right (including serious political violence in the 1960s and 1970s) sometimes obscured this basic compromise at the heart of the system. But prior to the 1990s, the norm against collaboration with parties viewed as extreme was breached only once, in 1960, when then prime minister Fernando Tambroni, a conservative Christian Democrat, accepted parliamentary support for his minority government from the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement. His decision to collaborate with this party triggered a public backlash, including riots around the country. He was forced to resign after four months in office.⁹⁵

Italy's political landscape shifted dramatically in the 1990s. In 1992, a massive corruption scandal brought down all of Italy's largest and most established political parties (except the Communist Party, which had split in 1991). Italian voters' blanket distrust of elites benefitted Berlusconi, a media magnate and conservative populist, who eschewed traditional parties to build his own political base with the help of his media empire.

The Right Collaborates

Berlusconi's 1994 campaign took place in a field in which the mainstream parties had collapsed. Breaching decades of mainstream blocking, he included two fringe parties (the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement and the nativist Northern League) in his governing coalition. The Northern League had campaigned on greater autonomy for northern Italy based on the belief that some citizens—in Italy's early years, southern Italians and Roma—were inferior to others.⁹⁶ The Northern League's leader at the time, Umberto Bossi, argued that northern Italians were the victims of racial discrimination and asserted that government benefits were being disproportionately given to undeserving immigrants and minorities. In a 1998 book, Bossi claimed that “Roma gypsies receive . . . twice as much as a minimum [retirement] pension.”⁹⁷ After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, the Northern League focused increasingly on the exclusion of Muslims, opposing the construction of mosques and Islamic schools and describing Italy's Muslim population as a security threat and an economic burden.⁹⁸ Northern League leaders claimed that Islam was incompatible with both Christian European society and with democracy and that Muslims were therefore a threat to Italy's Christian identity and to democracy itself.⁹⁹

Berlusconi's first term as prime minister lasted less than a year, but each time he returned to power (2001–2006 and 2008–2011), he included the Northern League as a junior partner in his conservative coalition. This repeated collaboration seems to have helped legitimize the Northern League as a mainstream party rather than a regional movement or nativist fringe party.

Jean-Léonard Touadi, a Congolese-Italian politician, claimed that the September 11 attacks on the United States triggered a new phase of advancing racism in Italy, in which “Muslims [were] associated with violence and considered the enemy of Italy's Christian identity.” According to Touadi, the Northern League led this phase, but other politicians, journalists, and Catholic leaders also participated.¹⁰⁰ In other words, in 2001, Berlusconi and his conservative coalition moved from collaboration to co-optation. Berlusconi came to embrace the Northern League and its rhetoric regarding minority groups within Italy.

The Left Co-opts

The various center-left and far-left parties that made up Italy's progressive coalition were unable or unwilling to effectively counter this rise in nativist rhetoric. While the far-left Communist Refoundation Party often emphasized solidarity with minority groups and immigrants, center-left politicians sometimes echoed the conservative coalition's language in describing Roma and immigrants as part of a security problem.¹⁰¹

For example, during the 2006 election for mayor of Rome (a prominent position in Italian politics), posters from the right-wing National Alliance challenger criticized center-left incumbent Walter Veltroni for not evicting any Roma from the city's "nomad camps." Veltroni's campaign responded with posters that did not challenge the National Alliance's focus on evictions of Roma as the appropriate metric to evaluate Veltroni's record but instead touted different figures that emphasized the high number of evictions and closures of "Roma camps" that had taken place during Veltroni's tenure.¹⁰²

Nativism Normalized

This rhetoric had an impact. In the 2000s, both the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism and the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia noted that nativist rhetoric and activity by mainstream Italian political parties had legitimized and contributed to an increase in racism and xenophobia in Italy, directed in particular at Roma, immigrants, and Muslims.¹⁰³

Berlusconi and the conservatives were out of power from 2006 to 2008, but the mainstreaming of hateful rhetoric continued. Authorities around the country established security pacts that often targeted the Roma specifically, and Roma settlements were cleared and destroyed without notice or compensation in multiple cities.¹⁰⁴ Once Berlusconi and his coalition were back in power in 2008, vigilante violence against Roma was met with tacit approval from national officials. Human rights organizations document how, in May 2008, Berlusconi's interior minister declared that "all Roma camps will have to be dismantled right away and the inhabitants will be either expelled or incarcerated." Later that week, a mob threw Molotov cocktails at a Roma camp in Naples, burning down the camp and forcing an estimated 800 residents to flee. Police made no arrests, and Bossi, the Northern League leader who had become a cabinet minister in Berlusconi's government, openly condoned the violence, stating that "the people do what the state can't manage." Berlusconi's government went on to enact emergency decrees that targeted Roma along with undocumented immigrants, giving police new powers to raid and dismantle Roma settlements.¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, despite Italy's increasingly diverse citizenry, Berlusconi explicitly rejected the multiethnic vision of Italy he attributed to the left and instead argued that it was both possible and desirable to preserve a homogenous Italy.¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch noted in 2011 that a range of officials from Berlusconi's coalition had made comments or speeches dehumanizing Roma and migrants and that some of the "most egregious" statements came from Northern League officials in particular.¹⁰⁷ As discriminatory policies and language were normalized, Noureddine Chemmaoui of the Union of Islamic Communities of Italy said, "We are worried for our children, who are Italian, but who could become second-class citizens."¹⁰⁸

Italy's courts occasionally responded to the rise in nativism. A number of locally elected Northern League officials were criminally charged for inciting racism and violence toward Roma and other minorities in the late 2000s. In 2010, a court ruled that housing policies pursued by the Northern League and its coalition partners on the Milan City Council were deliberately discriminatory.¹⁰⁹

Berlusconi's third stint as prime minister ended in 2011. After two years of splintered multiparty coalitions, a coalition of progressives and centrists assumed power following the 2013 elections. The left-center coalition government began trying to address racial tensions directly, most prominently by appointing Cécile Kyenge, a Congolese-Italian who was Italy's first black cabinet member, as Minister for Integration. In an illustration of how pervasive nativism has become in modern Italy, Kyenge was subject to jarringly racist public abuse, including from Northern League senators.¹¹⁰ Pew polling found that, in 2014, 85 percent of Italians held unfavorable views of Roma, nearly twenty points higher than the next highest country, France; and 63 percent of those polled viewed Muslims unfavorably, about ten points higher than the next highest country, Greece.¹¹¹

The following year, the government was forced to confront the same massive migrant influx that shaped politics across Europe. Italy's location on the southern edge of Europe meant that it received a particularly large number of immigrants, and many Italians viewed the situation as a crisis.¹¹²

While the progressive-centrist coalition was in power from 2013 to 2018, the Northern League made a substantial pivot. In a bid to transform the party from a regional to a national one, the Northern League's new leader, Matteo Salvini, abandoned the cause of regional separatism, removed "Northern" from the party's name, and publicly apologized to southern Italians for years of insults.¹¹³ The renamed League party remained staunchly nativist, however—it simply moved southern Italians from the "out group" to the "in group." Under Salvini's leadership, League officials worked to win over southern Italian voters while labeling other groups—including Muslims, Roma, and naturalized citizens—as threatening, burdensome, or less authentically Italian. For example, Salvini criticized the

Pope's outreach to Muslims and stated that "Islam is a problem, they are killing and cutting throats in the name of Allah. They may be a minority, but they are trying to impose a way of life that is incompatible with ours."¹¹⁴

The Italian center-left dismissed such remarks as "barroom talk" but had no coherent defense or alternative national narrative to counter the League's framing.¹¹⁵ Instead, they largely declined to engage.

A Nativist Party Gains Power

The impact of the left's failure to counter the League's narrative became particularly clear in the aftermath of the 2018 election. As the top vote winner, the Five Star Movement—a populist, euroskeptical party that supported a progressive economic agenda and had a strong anti-elite, anticorruption platform—could have chosen to form a government with Italy's progressive coalition or call for new elections.¹¹⁶ Instead, the Five Star Movement's parliamentarians decided to govern in coalition with the League, which received the most votes of any conservative party. At the Five Star Movement's request, the League ejected Berlusconi and his once-dominant party from the conservative coalition but included the rebranded "post-fascist" party Brothers of Italy.

The League's political success gave it the opportunity to implement many of its proposals and to use state institutions to discriminate against minority groups such as Roma and Muslims. The League's Salvini became the interior minister, and the government continued to destroy Roma camps. Salvini also announced his intention to carry out mass deportations of Roma, stating in June 2018 that it was "unfortunate" that Roma with Italian citizenship could not be expelled from Italy.¹¹⁷ Salvini also continued to describe Islam as a threat to democracy and Italian values, and the League continued to work to block the construction of mosques.¹¹⁸

While some Five Star Movement legislators openly blamed the League for encouraging racism, others declined to criticize their governing partner.¹¹⁹ By fall 2018, Salvini had become Italy's most popular politician, with a 60 percent approval rating and nearly as many Italians viewing him as the true head of government.¹²⁰

Some observers continued to note that the rhetoric of the League and other nativist politicians helped normalize racism and xenophobia in Italian society at large.¹²¹ In 2018, the League still stood out for its stigmatization of immigrants and minorities, but many Italian conservatives used similar language to assert that particular Italian minority groups are not authentically Italian. The Italian

Interior Ministry has reported an increase in the number and severity of racially motivated attacks since 2016, and it was noted that many of the offenders cite Salvini as they commit their attacks.¹²² According to a Pew poll from 2018, Italians held the strongest anti-immigrant and anti-religious minority views of any country in Western Europe, overtaking the next highest country by a substantial margin.¹²³

Conclusion

The League has been a successful political party in part because its leaders have been shrewd and quick to recognize opportunities. But the national ascendance of a party that began as a northern secessionist movement was certainly not guaranteed, even with strategic leadership. Nativists rose to the top of Italian politics in part because mainstream conservatives aided their ascent and because centrists and left-wing parties repeatedly missed or passed up opportunities to respond to them effectively. The combination of collaboration from one side and attempts to ignore or co-opt from the other has been particularly devastating to Italian civic life.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, conservative parties (led by Berlusconi's Forza Italia but including the Christian Democrats and others) chose to embrace the Northern League, despite its leaders' exclusionary and secessionist rhetoric. This is because collaborating with the League in government made it easier to implement a conservative policy agenda. Over time, however, the League's nativist views spread increasingly to its conservative coalition partners as they tried to co-opt its voters. Finally, the League grew powerful enough that it was able to marginalize its establishment allies.

But the fault lies not only with conservatives. Progressives' lack of a clear, effective counter to the League's narrative gave the League space to build support for its worldview, which only made it harder for centrist and center-left politicians to challenge the League later on issues related to minority rights and national identity. (And center-left politicians even sometimes attempted to co-opt nativist rhetoric, as noted above.)

If conservatives had rejected the League in 1994 and/or 2008, they would have been forced to govern in a grand coalition with progressives; therefore, isolating the League would have required tough ideological and policy choices.¹²⁴ But other countries have chosen this difficult path. For example, right-wing politicians in Germany and France chose to partner with the left rather than give ground to nativists.

Over the course of their year-long partnership, some Five Star Movement parliamentarians became visibly uncomfortable with the League's nativism, and a number of Five Star officials eventually denounced the rhetoric of Salvini and other League leaders.¹²⁵ The League grew increasingly popular with Italian voters, however. In August 2019, polls showed support for the League at 39 percent,

making it by far the most popular party in Italy. Salvini attempted to seize this opportunity by withdrawing the League from its unsteady partnership with the Five Star Movement and calling for new elections.¹²⁶ The Five Star Movement announced instead that it would form a new governing coalition with the progressive parties, and this new government took office in September 2019, pushing Salvini and the League into the opposition.¹²⁷

Given Five Star leaders' eventual uneasiness with the League's nativism, it is possible that a clearer redline in Italian political discourse might have discouraged the Five Star Movement from partnering with the League at the outset, when other potential options were available. Instead, the League's prominent role in government allowed them to build up public support and implement their policy agenda. For instance, despite a significant ongoing decline in irregular migration, Salvini took aggressive new steps to keep immigrants from reaching Italy, including closing Italian ports to rescue ships and attempting to withdraw the Italian coast guard from rescue operations, despite warnings that this would cause people to die in the sea. The League now dominates Italian conservative politics, and while it has been forced out of government for the time being, its popularity among voters indicates that it will be a force to be reckoned with for the foreseeable future.

Austria: Collaborate, Block, Co-opt, Collaborate Again

While Austria clearly experienced violent, systemic nativism during World War II, the country's politics in the postwar decades were relatively stable. From the end of the war until 2000, Austrian politics were dominated by the center-left Social Democrats and the center-right People's Party, who frequently governed in coalition with each other. The one exception to this pattern came in 1983, when the center-left, with 48 percent of the vote, chose to form a government with the Freedom Party, which had just 5 percent of the vote. The Freedom Party was founded by former Nazi officials in 1956 but had begun to move toward the political center in the early 1980s.¹²⁸ This coalition lasted until 1986, when the Freedom Party named Jörg Haider—a politician whose parents had been Nazi officials and who had praised various aspects of the Nazi era—as the party's new leader, and the Social Democrats ended their partnership.¹²⁹

Under Haider, the Freedom Party shifted to emphasize identity politics and anti-immigration policies as its primary focus. The party gained voters throughout the 1990s as a wave of migrants came into Austria from the former Yugoslavia. During the 1990s, Haider also began describing Islam as a threat to Austrian democracy and European values.¹³⁰ Many observers warned that Haider's rhetoric was fueling an increase in racism and violence against immigrants and Austrian Roma, though Haider disputed any connection between his statements and violent attacks.¹³¹

Collaboration and International Condemnation

In the 1999 Austrian election, Haider's Freedom Party essentially tied with the center-right People's Party. The Social Democrats had won the most votes but could not come to their usual coalition agreement with the center-right. Instead, the People's Party and the Freedom Party formed a government. International reaction was swift; citing "concerns about threats to democracy and 'xenophobic views,'" the other fourteen European Union (EU) countries diplomatically sanctioned Austria with the support of the United States and Israel.¹³² In response, Haider was kept out of national government and formally stepped down as the head of the Freedom Party.¹³³ However, despite clear concern over the Freedom Party's rhetoric, other European governments struggled to articulate exactly which taboo the Freedom Party was breaking. Over the following months, as Austria's government affirmed its commitment to racial tolerance and EU membership, an EU panel concluded that despite some troubling rhetoric, the Austrian government had respected democracy and minority rights. European countries subsequently responded by lifting sanctions.¹³⁴

Over the next few years, the center-right's collaboration strategy—while unusually being attempted in tandem with strong international condemnation and diplomatic pressure—appeared to operate just as some of its supporters claimed it would. The Freedom Party failed to implement many of its policy goals, such as strengthening libel laws or reforming the judicial appointments process. Meanwhile, governing in coalition cost the Freedom Party its antiestablishment credibility among voters. By 2002, its popular support had plummeted, and it lost more than half of its legislative seats—though the center-right continued to govern in coalition with the Freedom Party as its junior partner.

However, the Freedom Party's influence over its mainstream partner was apparent. In particular, the party successfully pushed for restrictive new immigration laws, despite substantial opposition from the Austrian business sector, because it was able to obtain significant support from conservatives within the People's Party. Support was forthcoming because the mainstream People's Party had been gradually adopting the Freedom Party's perspective on immigration issues.¹³⁵

In 2005, the Freedom Party suffered an internal fracture that splintered its voters, and the party was out of government entirely from 2007 to 2017. During this period, the Freedom Party's new leader, Heinz-Christian Strache, experimented with moving left on economic matters while increasing the party's anti-Muslim focus.¹³⁶ In discussions of migration and the place of Muslims and Islam in Austrian society, the Freedom Party distinguished itself as being willing to breach social taboos and say things that other Austrian parties would not say.¹³⁷

The strategy proved to be an electoral winner, especially following the Europe-wide spike in immigration from Syria and other Muslim-majority countries in 2015. From 2006 to 2017, the Freedom Party consistently increased its vote share, establishing itself as the third major party in Austrian politics.

Blocking—For a Time

The Freedom Party's strongest electoral showing to date came in the 2016 elections for the largely ceremonial post of president. Freedom Party candidate Norbert Hofer campaigned on several norm-breaking positions, suggesting that he would use the presidency's rarely invoked powers to dissolve parliament and block legislation to implement an anti-immigration and antitrade policy agenda. In an election where polarized voters punished mainstream parties, Hofer won a plurality of the vote and faced off against a candidate from Austria's Green Party.

In a stunning step, leaders of the center-right People's Party attempted to block the Freedom Party from the presidency by encouraging their supporters to vote for the Green Party candidate instead, despite these two parties' obvious ideological differences.¹³⁸ This appears to have been decisive; exit polls indicate that surprising support from rural, conservative People's Party supporters was an important factor in the Green candidate's narrow victory.¹³⁹ Had the Freedom Party's Hofer become president, he could have helped the People's Party advance a conservative policy agenda, but People's Party leaders chose to favor Austria's democratic norms instead and helped bring about his defeat.

Co-optation

While this blocking attempt was successful, the Freedom Party remained popular. In the run-up to the 2017 parliamentary election, both the center-right and center-left attempted to co-opt the Freedom Party's supporters with nativist rhetoric and policy proposals. The center-left/center-right coalition government had already banned foreign funding for mosques (although Christian and Jewish groups faced no such ban), and, in 2017, the coalition also passed a ban on face coverings, which was widely perceived to be targeted at Muslim women.¹⁴⁰ The center-right proposed further discriminatory measures, such as a ban on Muslim kindergartens. The center-left did not go as far as the center-right but proposed new immigration restrictions while trying to change the focus of political debate to economic issues.¹⁴¹ Significantly, center-left leaders also announced that they would be open to forming a governing coalition with the Freedom Party, ending a self-imposed ban that had been in place since 1986.¹⁴²

Collaboration, Take Two

In the fall 2017 legislative elections, the center-right People's Party had the strongest showing, while the Freedom Party came in just one percentage point behind the center-left. The center-right chose to form a government with the Freedom Party, and the formerly fringe party returned to government in partnership with a center-right party that was itself becoming increasingly nativist.

The new People's Party/Freedom Party government was stymied in implementing some of its policies. Kindergartens, for example, are under the purview of regional governments, so dissolving Muslim kindergartens nationwide would have required a supermajority in the national legislature. However, harassment and assaults against Muslims continued to rise, and observers suggested that the rhetoric of Austrian politicians fueled this increase. The U.S. State Department noted that anti-Semitic harassment rose to post-World War II highs in 2017.¹⁴³

In mid-2019, the People's Party/Freedom Party coalition split over a scandal involving the Freedom Party's leader, Strache, who was seeking assistance from what he believed was a Russian oligarch. In the September 2019 elections, the center-right People's Party finished well ahead of the center-left, while support for the Freedom Party dropped to around 15 percent, just ahead of the surging Green Party. In January 2020, the People's Party announced the formation of a new, unprecedented governing coalition with the Green party. While it is too early to evaluate this partnership, initial indications are that the multiculturalist Greens were prepared to accept some nativist policies in exchange for aggressive action on climate change; for example, the new coalition announced that it would expand a 2019 ban on Muslim headscarves (but not yarmulkes or Sikh patkas) in Austrian schools.¹⁴⁴

Conclusion

Some might argue that the People's Party used successful strategies to co-opt nativists by sometimes working with the Freedom Party as a junior partner and sometimes opposing it. It would probably be more accurate, though, to say that the Freedom Party successfully co-opted the political mainstream. While the Freedom Party has never been the top vote-getter in a national election, it is now seen as a viable partner by both of Austria's two large mainstream parties. And it has effectively shaped debate on the treatment of Austrian Muslims to the point where both mainstream parties have supported and implemented discriminatory policy measures. As Wolfgang Sobotka, the speaker of parliament and a senior People's Party figure put it, "You don't enter into a coalition to change your partners."¹⁴⁵

This sort of political adoption matters: while some voter backlash against immigration may have been inevitable after the highly publicized influx of migrants in 2015, Austria's political parties seem to be shaping shifts in attitude and not merely responding to them.¹⁴⁶ Scoring just below Italy, Austria is now ranked second highest among Western European countries on nationalist, anti-immigrant, and anti-religious minority attitudes, according to Pew polling.¹⁴⁷

Australia: Co-opt

As in the United States, nativism runs deep in Australian politics. Upon Australia's founding in 1901, its white, English-speaking population denied citizenship to the Aboriginal inhabitants of the land and excluded them from the census count, entitlement programs, and old-age pensions.¹⁴⁸ Australian residents born in Asia, Africa, and all the Pacific islands except New Zealand were afforded the same treatment. The new country adopted a "white Australia" immigration policy, supported largely by unions on the left to avoid wage competition from imported Chinese labor.¹⁴⁹

Background

In the 1940s and 1950s, Australian policymakers gradually began to relax restrictions on immigration, and it became possible for non-European immigrants to become Australian citizens. This process accelerated in the 1960s as norms regarding racial discrimination were shifting in Australia as they were in much of the world.¹⁵⁰ Rights for Aboriginal Australians expanded as well; by 1965, Aboriginal Australians were eligible to vote in all federal and state elections, and they were added to the census in 1967.¹⁵¹ A new Labor government came to power in 1972, pledging to remove "all racially discriminatory provisions" from Australian law. This government directed immigration officials to stop discriminating on the basis of skin color and took the first steps toward enabling Aboriginal Australians to reclaim native lands.¹⁵²

In the 1970s, Australian officials from both the progressive Labor and conservative Liberal parties began to articulate an explicitly multicultural Australian identity. This concept of Australian identity was adopted as a national policy and helped normalize the tens of thousands of refugees the country accepted during and after the Vietnam War.¹⁵³ In government documents, all Australians, including white Australians, were described as multicultural, and government officials stressed that multiculturalism was about celebrating the diverse origins of everyone in the immigrant nation, not just minorities and people of color. In government reports, Australia's multiculturalism was described as rooted in its British heritage and Australian values.¹⁵⁴

Backlash against this promotion of multiculturalism began soon afterward. By the early 1980s, the governing conservative coalition of Liberals and Nationals were criticizing what they termed “reverse discrimination” against prospective European immigrants and advocating a stricter immigration regime that did not “jeopardise social cohesiveness and harmony”—code for returning to a regimen that heavily favored white Europeans.¹⁵⁵ When the left-wing Labor Party gained power in 1988, it used more inclusive language toward immigrants and minorities, but it also advanced policies that tightened family migration and reinstated an English language test for extended family members of Australian citizens wishing to immigrate to Australia.

Blocking

From the late 1980s into the 1990s, mainstream parties acted as gatekeepers, often drawing redlines to condemn and block obvious nativist sentiment.¹⁵⁶ Former (center-right) Liberal Party leader John Howard’s advocacy of a controversial “one nation” policy tested this national agreement by denigrating multiculturalism as an ideal, rejecting policies such as aboriginal land rights, and expressly calling for reductions in Asian immigration. The stance divided his party and was a major factor in his removal from party leadership in 1989.¹⁵⁷ In the same year, the National Party, a main center-right party with a rural base, ousted its leader, Ian Sinclair, after he made explicitly racist statements on immigration. In 1995, the left-wing Labor Party ejected Graeme Campbell, a longtime Labor parliamentarian, after years of run-ins in which he fought against sanctioning apartheid South Africa, called for an end to immigration, and supported an anti-Semitic political advocacy group.¹⁵⁸ The next year, Pauline Hanson, who was running as a Liberal, was disendorsed by the party and forced to sit as an Independent after an inflammatory statement she made about Aboriginal Australians.¹⁵⁹

The blocking strategy forced nativists out of mainstream parties, but it created a splinter party. After her expulsion from the Liberal Party, Hanson formed the One Nation Party, which was grounded in nativist ideology and staunchly against the “Asianisation of Australia.”¹⁶⁰ Her platform tied together anti-Asian and anti-Aboriginal sentiment in a single package. It proved popular. In the next election in 1998, One Nation won 9 percent of the vote nationally and 22.7 percent of the vote in Queensland State. It looked as if it might overtake the National Party, a junior partner in government, and thus require a reconfiguration of the Liberal coalition of conservative parties if conservatives wanted to maintain power.

Co-optation

Suddenly, with a competitor on its right flank, the Liberal Party shifted from a gatekeeping strategy to one of courting and co-opting One Nation voters. John Howard, who had wrested back control of the Liberals, refused to call Hanson’s views racist. Howard’s government passed new laws to curtail aboriginal land rights claims. (A United Nations committee found in 1999 that these laws discrimi-

nated against Australian Aboriginals.)¹⁶¹ The Border Protection Bill and visa regulations Howard advanced in 1999 were borrowed directly from Hanson's policies. The Labor Party offered little organized opposition.

Still, One Nation went into a long period of decline. By 2007, it had fallen from winning 1 million votes nine years earlier to earning just over 50,000. So was courting the nativist vote a success that reduced the salience of these nativist ideas and destroyed a fringe party?

Not really. While Howard's co-optation of parts of Hanson's nativist agenda certainly played some role in One Nation's fall, the party was also beset by constant legal and financial troubles—caused in some part by the Liberal minister Tony Abbott (later prime minister from 2013 to 2015), who ran a slush fund to support civil lawsuits against One Nation. Abbott's strategy was targeted toward destroying the nativist party itself rather than simply condemning its rhetoric and blocking its rise to power.¹⁶²

Yet the greatest cause of decline was probably self-inflicted. Leadership infighting forced One Nation's founding charismatic leader, Pauline Hanson, out of the party. The party splintered, fundraising became difficult, and the multiple nativist parties that replaced it lacked focus and personality.¹⁶³

While One Nation nearly ceased to exist as a party, Liberal pandering to nativist sentiment meant that many of One Nation's ideas lived on within Howard's conservative coalition, regardless of the limited support for One Nation itself. By 2001, Howard had taken Hanson's anti-immigration campaign slogan as his own and had capitalized on two highly publicized sexual assaults committed by Muslim migrants. He merged anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and anti-Asian sentiment into a potent mainstream message.¹⁶⁴ The Liberal government also implemented harsh policies regarding the treatment of migrants arriving by boat, who were overwhelmingly poor and non-European.¹⁶⁵ Hundreds of refugees attempting to arrive by boat died just outside Australia's maritime boundary. The government began forcing asylum claimants to live on small Pacific islands while waiting for their asylum claims to be processed—in camps so squalid and rife with abuse that children as young as eight attempted suicide.¹⁶⁶

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, Howard's stance on Islam and immigration proved to be politically popular. Yet Howard pushed this sentiment a step too far when he tried to expand offshore asylum processing on remote island detention centers. Three Liberal members of parliament voted against the measure, a revolt by Australian standards of tight party discipline.¹⁶⁷ The next year, voters punished Howard's party largely for such excesses and sent

the conservative coalition into the opposition. But Howard's policies regarding harsher treatment for migrants arriving by boat than migrants arriving by airplane proved to be the future of Australian politics and would eventually be accepted by both parties.

Blocking, Take Two

At times, Australian conservative leaders have tried to maintain internal gatekeeping, whether out of personal opposition to nativism or an understanding that excessive nativism could cause voters to turn away. In 2011, when Liberal parliamentarian Scott Morrison, a shadow immigration minister of the then opposition, purportedly urged the shadow cabinet to play up concerns about Muslim immigration and integration, the meeting chair stopped him by reminding participants that the Liberal Party had a nondiscriminatory immigration policy.¹⁶⁸ Malcolm Turnbull, Liberal leader and Australian prime minister from 2015 to 2018, explicitly acknowledged Muslims as an integral part of the Australian family and called out Hanson for "racism" and "stupidity" after her comments that Australia was at risk of being "swamped by Muslims." "Let's be quite clear," he would later say in response to the Islamophobic comments of the legislator, "those who seek to demonise all Muslims on the basis of the crimes of a tiny minority are helping the terrorists."¹⁶⁹

Nativist Parties Proliferate, but Lack Power

But after years of Howard, Morrison, and others pandering to nativists, Turnbull was fighting a sentiment that seemed to be widespread in the Liberal Party. Tony Abbott, the former Liberal prime minister who had previously overseen the use of legal cases to gut One Nation, even defended Islamophobia in 2017, stating publicly that unlike Islamist terrorism, Islamophobia had never killed anyone.¹⁷⁰

The Liberal Party's rhetoric may have softened voters for a return of unvarnished nativism. In 2014, Hanson returned to the stage and running as Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party came roaring back—this time on a platform of anti-Muslim rather than anti-Asian sentiment. Hanson's first senate speech in 2016 spoke of the dangers of being "swamped by Muslims" and suggested an immigration ban on Muslims, a cessation of building new mosques and Muslim schools, and increased surveillance of Muslims.¹⁷¹

In its reborn form, Hanson's One Nation, like Marine Le Pen's National Rally, uses liberal and national security rationales to present its criticisms of Muslims and Islam—though One Nation is more overtly nativist and does not confine its attacks to "radical" or "fundamentalist" Islam as the National Rally often does. Brian Burston, a One Nation senator, declared, "Yes, we criticise Islam, but it's on the basis of national security and border protection. More particularly, it's about social cohesion. We criticise a culture that seems willfully incompatible with Australia and we have to

discriminate at our borders so that citizens don't have to discriminate within our borders."¹⁷² This new incarnation of the party is doing well politically, gaining 800,000 votes in Australia's 2019 federal election, representing 5.4 percent of the total vote.

Co-optation Expands Nativist Reach

Far more important than One Nation's direct power, however, has been the co-optation of nativist rhetoric by major parties and its spread to a growing number of minor parties. For example, in 2016, a Liberal member of parliament sponsored hearings on third-party food certification, in which he stated (without evidence, echoing a trope formerly used by One Nation) that nongovernmental organizations "receive halal certification funds [for meat prepared according to Muslim law] which then flow through the system, and where they end up no one really knows. But we do know that extremist organisations in Australia are funded by someone and they are linked, in many cases, back to these not-for-profit bodies."¹⁷³ In 2017, a Liberal member of parliament shared two anti-Muslim videos from Britain First, a far-right organization.¹⁷⁴ In 2018, Hanson's One Nation sponsored a motion in the Senate to support the white supremacist mantra that "it is ok to be white." The motion won many votes from Liberal and National party parliamentarians, losing by a slim margin of twenty-eight votes to thirty-one.¹⁷⁵

One Nation has also sparked imitators who share its ideas. A short-lived party named Rise Up Australia was led by a Sri Lankan-born immigrant who fights Muslim immigration, describes Islam as a "death cult" and promotes the slogan "keep Australia Australian."¹⁷⁶ In 2018, it was actually Hanson who could posture as a moderate and condemn freshman member of parliament Fraser Anning's speech calling for a revival of a "White Australia" immigration policy as a "final solution" to Australia's "immigration problem."¹⁷⁷ Anning, who had left the One Nation party to join another nativist party and later to form his own, infamously spoke against Muslims after an Australian murdered scores of Muslims in 2019 in a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand. Parties spoke up across the spectrum, condemning Anning's comments. However, the more muted reaction to One Nation's platform and the proliferation of multiple nativist parties suggested that the standards for allowable discourse had shifted.¹⁷⁸ In 2019, the National Party was willing to coordinate with One Nation to enhance their joint chances of winning, and the Liberal Party did the same with the United Australia Party led by Clive Palmer, a parliamentarian who suggested in 2014 that all people practicing "*sharia* law" should be expelled from Australia.¹⁷⁹ Observers noted that Australia's 2019 federal election featured a number of islamophobic or homophobic statements from candidates, though many of these candidates were forced to withdraw due to public scrutiny.¹⁸⁰

Conclusion

After committing the country to a multicultural concept of citizenship in the 1960s and 1970s, political parties across the spectrum made efforts to keep nativism out of their ranks. But Australia has a long history of nativism, and the sentiment ran deep in political discourse. Attempts to block nativist political candidates led to a splinter party with a strong enough showing to threaten the conservative hold on power. The splinter party's decline may have been due to internal leadership battles after a series of civil lawsuits funded by a slush fund run by the Liberal party created stress for its finances. But the Australian center-right co-opted some of the splinter party's rhetoric and policies, so nativism resurged even as the most nativist party declined. The Liberals have continued to draw some redlines—in 2019, the party ousted two candidates who had published anti-Muslim sentiments on social media.¹⁸¹ But the party's decision to co-opt nativist rhetoric has helped nativism carve its niche in the modern Australian political landscape.

The normalization of tropes once seen as unacceptably nativist across the political spectrum means that nativist parties do not need to win seats to win arguments and change Australia's political discourse. The debate over immigration policy in Australia continues to be shaped by Islamophobic and anti-Asian rhetoric, and this has undoubtedly contributed to cross-party support for harsh treatment of asylum seekers who arrive by boat. By 2017, 48 percent of Australians felt that no asylum seeker who tried to enter Australia by boat should ever be permitted to settle, and 2016 surveys found that well over 50 percent of Australians support offshore processing, while nearly 75 percent believe the government should turn back boats when practicable.

Islamophobia continues to be a problem as well: a 2006 parliamentary inquiry found that increased domestic surveillance that began after the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States was having a disproportionate and negative effect on the Australian Muslim community.¹⁸² Yet this finding led to no significant reforms, even as greater surveillance measures were passed in the ensuing years. By 2016, 41 percent of poll respondents claimed not to be bothered if Muslims are "singled out for increased surveillance as part of counterterrorism measures."¹⁸³

Australia does not track hate crimes at the national level, so statistics and comparisons of how rhetoric has translated into violence do not exist. However, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry has reported a 59 percent rise in anti-Semitic incidents across Australia from 2017 to 2018.¹⁸⁴ And perhaps the most worrisome sign of what may be to come is a white nationalist group's successful effort from 2017 to 2018 to infiltrate the Young Nationals, a youth division of the National Party. The group, called the Lads Society, might have eventually stacked the party's membership had their efforts not been uncovered by an investigatory organization, the White Rose Society and a journalist with the Australia Broadcasting Company.¹⁸⁵

Yet while the use of nativist language against Islam and Asians (as well as rhetoric against women and gays) was frequent in Australia's last election, some see a renewed interest in gatekeeping by Australia's parties as a sign of hope. As noted earlier, conservative parties and the Labor Party have purged some candidates for such language—something that observers point to as a sign of progress.¹⁸⁶

Canada: Condemn or Co-opt

When Canadians were polled in 2016 about what made their country unique, 43 percent answered, unprompted, “multiculturalism.”¹⁸⁷ The national self-image of a multicultural society that prizes equality of citizenship was hard won, but it has—along with the large percentage of voting immigrants and the children of immigrants who uphold this multicultural national story—been the main force providing a bulwark against political flirtations with nativism.¹⁸⁸ Generally, left-of-center parties have buttressed this multicultural identity in recent years by strongly condemning nativism; others have followed suit intermittently. However, voter surveys suggest that significant latent intolerance exists among many Canadian voters, which could be exploited as voters realign and parties experiment with nativism. A sense of equality of citizenship, gained with difficulty, should not be taken for granted.

Background

As in Australia, Canada's founding self-image as a British outpost led to a long struggle with a majority national identity. In Canada, this meant the exclusion of indigenous Canadians, French Canadians, and non-British immigrants. In the early 1900s, the country passed a “White Canada” policy after a backlash over Asian immigration. It banned Canadians of Chinese descent from voting, holding public office, owning land, or even practicing medicine.¹⁸⁹ During World War II, Japanese Canadians faced internment, and even after the war had ended, then prime minister Mackenzie King only gave Japanese Canadians two options: move to Japan or live east of the Rockies.¹⁹⁰

As norms regarding discrimination shifted around the world, demands for greater equality grew louder in the early 1960s. In response, a conservative prime minister ended Canada's policy of favoring white immigrants, which proved pivotal to building a new self-image for Canadians. The country soon adopted a system that rewarded more skilled and educated immigrants.

Quebecois Separatism and Quebecois Nativism

Meanwhile, Quebecois' calls for equality turned into more strident demands for provincial autonomy and then serious proposals for secession. By 1970, the nation faced terrorism, bombing campaigns, the kidnappings of government leaders, and the assassination of then labor minister Pierre Laporte by the Quebec Liberation Front, a Quebecois terrorist faction. The Canadian government invoked

emergency powers and initiated a counterterrorism campaign, but then prime minister Pierre Trudeau recognized that deeper measures were required to ameliorate French-speaking Canadians' concerns about equality. After first declaring that the country should be bilingual and bicultural, Trudeau discovered serious opposition both from Anglophones resistant to sharing their dominant cultural status with French Canadians and from the nearly one-quarter of Canadians who were of neither British nor French descent. It was the first time the nation's large pool of Canadians of non-European descent had made themselves a political force.

In 1971, Trudeau hit upon a solution that was perhaps obvious, given the rhetoric of the time, but was novel in its implementation. He aggressively promoted a multicultural identity for what was formerly viewed as an Anglophone society with small outposts of French and other minority populations. By subsuming tensions between Anglophones and Francophones into a broader multiethnic Canadian identity, he created a path for Canada to embrace its growing immigrant community, begin facing its history with its indigenous peoples, and acknowledge both of its founding European influences.¹⁹¹ Through the 1980s, all national political parties espoused multiculturalism and bilingualism to some extent.¹⁹²

By the 1990s, Canada's immigration policies and its cross-party multiculturalism would yield unusually positive national feelings toward immigrants compared to European countries and even the United States. Over time, these policies began to create both an image of Canada as a nation of immigrants (four in ten Canadians today are immigrants or the children of immigrants) and a positive view of that accomplishment.¹⁹³

The new policies, however, led to a nativist backlash among Quebecois in the east and among rural voters in the west who resented Quebecois exceptionalism. While many Quebecois politicians continue to reject multiculturalism today, conservative politicians in western Canada have moved away from nativism. Even as they continue to articulate a sense of western rural grievance, conservative leaders have repeatedly learned that overt nativism threatens their national political aspirations, given the preferences of the broader Canadian public.

In Quebec, some worried multiculturalism would dilute their unique political status and French-speaking, Catholic culture. Gaining greater autonomy, and, in 1991, the power to restrict immigration into the province, did not ease this discomfort.¹⁹⁴ Instead, a series of provincial parties gained power and in acceding to what nativist voters want—more for our group, less for other groups—rejected the multicultural frame in favor of a platform that merged French nationalism with anti-immigrant, particularly anti-Muslim, sentiment.¹⁹⁵

The three main parties in Quebec have pandered to the nativist tendencies of many voters. In 2017, the Quebec Liberal Party sponsored a bill to ban face coverings for those using government services, including public transit. While the bill was not explicitly limited to religious attire, it was widely seen as an attempt to increase the Liberals' low polling numbers during the campaign season by gaining a bump from anti-Muslim sentiment.¹⁹⁶ The other two main regional parties, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) and Parti Québécois (PQ), deemed the bill too watered-down. In addition to pledging broader legislation, the PQ insisted it would only accept French-speaking immigrants and pointed to its own broader proposal to ban religious attire (which Quebec's human rights commission claimed violated provincial human rights law).¹⁹⁷ The CAQ gained a majority in Quebec's provincial legislature in 2018 and enacted a ban on all religious attire for certain public employees. While this ban was presented as a defense of secularism, the CAQ's campaign ads presented the ban as being targeted at observant Muslims.¹⁹⁸ The CAQ's leader, Quebec premier François Legault, has also explicitly expressed a preference for immigrants from European backgrounds, even as his party seeks to limit overall immigration to Quebec.¹⁹⁹

The combination of Francophone nationalism and anti-Muslim nativism was seen as a political winner in a province where a 2016 poll found that 48 percent of Quebecois respondents expressed dislike for Islam—the highest percentage recorded in Canada.²⁰⁰ Hate crimes against Muslims also increased in recent years, tripling in 2017.²⁰¹ Quebec has also witnessed particularly violent hate crimes, such as the murder of six people attending a mosque in Quebec City in 2017. According to B'nai Brith, which has kept statistics since 1987, Quebec had the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents of any Canadian province in 2018, and the number increased by almost 50 percent from 2017 to 2018.²⁰²

With regard to Quebec, the national government faces a quandary. The federal electoral system and the devolution of significant powers to Quebec means that national politicians have no direct power over nativist parties within the province. And if the national government attempted to intervene in Quebec's provincial policymaking—for example, to oppose legislation targeted at Muslims or to insist that Quebec's immigration policies be nondiscriminatory—this could spark backlash given Quebecois' long-standing demands for regional autonomy. There is no easy solution, and yet the choice of national parties to largely ignore the problem allows nativism to fester in the province.

Nativism in the West

The second strain of nativism to emerge from the multicultural policies and Quebec-focused policymaking of the 1970s grew from a long-festering sense of grievance in Canada's west. In 1987, Preston Manning created a conservative, rural party that capitalized on the feeling that Eastern elites ignored

and misunderstood the Western provinces. Running on the slogan “The West Wants In,” the Reform Party focused on changes that would give the west greater voice and, they argued, support the rights of “ordinary Canadians” against immigrants, indigenous peoples, Francophone Quebecois, and other “special interests.”²⁰³ Thus, they sought to end Quebec’s special status, reduce indigenous rights, weaken federal control over guns, and promote other policies popular in rural areas. They also supported a socially conservative platform that opposed homosexuality, bilingualism, and multiculturalism and warned darkly of “fake refugees” entering the country on false pretenses.

Manning claimed he was committed to keeping extremists and intolerance out of his party, just as his father had purged anti-Semites from his Alberta Social Credit Party decades before.²⁰⁴ For instance, when a potential Reform Party candidate attempted to run on a more openly nativist platform and when another made nativist comments to a student newspaper, Manning claimed to have insisted that they accept the party’s denouncement of racism and purged the candidates who refused.²⁰⁵ Yet the Reform Party’s early platform documents expressed opposition to immigration policies that would “radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada,” a clearly nativist position. The party’s platform also took other stances that naturally appealed to many nativists: they were against federal bilingualism and the special status of French-speaking Canada, against multiculturalism, and against the entry of “bogus refugees.”²⁰⁶ Its legislators also made comments viewed as anti-French Canadian and racist; a Reform Party candidate for Vancouver campaigned for “the immigration policies of the fifties and sixties, when quotas were imposed on non-whites.”²⁰⁷ While that candidate lost his place on the party list, an organizer in Alberta discussing the party’s slogan of “righting the balance” in immigration explained that “it should be geared more to Europe—50-50 between Europe and the Third World.”²⁰⁸

When the Progressive Conservative Party collapsed in the west in 1993, the Reform Party gained most of their voters and suddenly transformed from a fringe movement into a force that captured 16 percent of the popular vote, dominated the western provinces, and stood two seats away from serving as the official opposition in the national parliament. Mainstream parties reacted to the Reform Party’s success and to the economic climate by moving toward slightly more restrictive immigration policies. In 1994, in the midst of recession, the Labor government announced it would decrease the percentage of immigrants admitted for family reunification and increase the percentage admitted for economic reasons (meaning immigrants with desired skills or personal wealth). The Conservatives also proposed greater restrictions.²⁰⁹ Yet both mainstream parties were careful to avoid nativist language and instead attacked the Reform Party’s intolerance. They criticized the party’s racial statements in particular and maintained strong support for the country’s multicultural identity and antinativist norms.²¹⁰

In response to such criticisms, the Reform Party leapt toward the center. Manning and future Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper blamed the Reform Party's inability to win parliamentary seats in Canada's more populous East on the nativism that had become associated with the party.²¹¹ Manning appears to have decided that to achieve real national power with a heavily immigrant and pro-multiculturalism electorate, he needed to moderate the party's stance on immigration by switching to economic rather than racial language.²¹²

After being shut out of power for multiple election cycles, others on the right sought to build a bigger tent. The goal of this "unite the right" movement was to join forces across the conservative spectrum, bringing together Quebecois nationalists, populists from the prairies, mainstream conservatives from the cities, and naturalized citizens with more conservative values. The first attempt to merge the Reform Party with another conservative party, change its name, and alter its image failed. The new Canadian Alliance under Harper's leadership included many minority candidates. Yet the leaders of this new party failed to convince voters they were fundamentally different; nativist comments from candidates continued to emerge, and particularly after the party ran an advertisement seen as anti-Francophone, the new name was simply seen as new branding for the same old Reform Party.²¹³

Collaboration With a Twist

In 2003, Reformers tried again. This time, the Progressive Conservative Party agreed to merge with the Canadian Alliance to create the Conservative Party of Canada under Harper. The merger appeared to be a classic example of a mainstream party collaborating with a nativist one to increase vote share. But unlike Austria's collaboration with the nativist Freedom Party and Silvio Berlusconi's decision to bring the nativist Northern League into the Italian government, in Canada the merged party not only promoted minority candidates, as the Reform Party's expanded Canadian Alliance had earlier, but it fielded the largest number of minority candidates of any party in 2006.²¹⁴ Conservative leaders also worked to gain minority voters with conservative views, in part by advocating some clearly nonnativist policies specifically focused on Canadians with Chinese and South Asian backgrounds; the merged party apologized for the anti-Chinese immigration policies of a century before.²¹⁵ The strategy worked, and the Conservative Party of Canada enjoyed a decade in power from 2006 to 2015.

Why did the Conservative Party attempt such a different strategy from the center-right in Italy and Australia, which simply decided to collaborate with nativist parties on their right flanks? The best explanation is that Canada's large percentage of immigrant voters and the broad support for multi-

culturalism across Canada's voting population forced extreme parties to moderate.²¹⁶ Canada had a history of nativism similar to that of Australia and the United States, but Canada's immigrant community and multicultural identity had been so deeply and widely adopted in the thirty-five years since Pierre Trudeau's multiculturalism initiative that conservatives felt they could not win national power while promoting open nativism.²¹⁷ This was particularly true of areas in Ontario and British Columbia with a disproportionately large immigrant population and a large number of parliamentary seats.²¹⁸

Some critics on the left countered that the unique Canadian embrace of its immigrants and multicultural identity meant that nativists were forced to veil their goals with the optics of diversity—in other words, visible minority candidates—but that the apparent change was just window dressing for an illiberal agenda.²¹⁹ Minorities, after all, can discriminate against other minorities. The Conservatives backed ethnic and racial minority candidates for parliamentary seats and courted ethnic and racial minority voters with wedge issues such as opposing same-sex marriage—issues on which immigrants from non-European countries sometimes have more conservative views.²²⁰ The Conservative Party then advanced a slate of bills that reduced Canada's openness to refugees and made citizenship harder to obtain. With this carefully calibrated set of policies, they won national elections again in 2011.

After years of electoral success, the Conservatives experimented in 2015 with running an almost overtly anti-Muslim campaign while continuing their outreach to minority and immigrant voters around shared conservative values.²²¹ Conservative legislators passed a law making it easier to strip Canadians with dual nationality of their citizenship and also banned the wearing of face coverings, including the Muslim niqab, during citizenship ceremonies—a policy that Conservatives credited with bringing in the Quebecois vote.²²² Campaigning on issues of religion, identity, and “Canadian values,” they proposed creating a “barbaric cultural practices” tip line to alert authorities to crimes such as forced marriages and honor killings. (Canadian press have noted that these crimes are “sometimes associated in the public mind with Islam.”²²³) The proposal became a flash point, as the name and idea for a special line (when such crimes could simply be reported to 911 emergency services) was seen as a dog whistle to nativists who feared immigrant “barbarism.”²²⁴

Conservatives found the limits of Canadian voters' tolerance. Their 2015 campaign failed spectacularly, handing the election to Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party. A former Conservative cabinet minister specifically blamed the tip line proposal for the loss, suggesting that leading Conservatives had learned their lesson.²²⁵ The clear implication of the defeat was that in contrast to the United States and Australia where appeals to nativism can be a formula for electoral success, Canadian voters would be quicker to punish perceived attempts at nativism. When Conservatives held a nationwide contest for a new party leader, Kellie Leitch, the candidate who most strongly identified with proposals such as the tip line, came in sixth place, with only 7 percent of the vote.²²⁶

But while nativism appeared to be a failed strategy for mainstream conservatives, respected pollsters suggested that survey data showed potential support for a message of populism and nativism if pushed by a more skilled politician than Leitch.²²⁷ Maxime Bernier was a popular libertarian member of parliament from Quebec who attempted to pursue this approach. He came in second in the Conservative Party leadership race, losing his bid only on the thirteenth round of voting with 49 percent of the Conservative vote. In 2018, Bernier left the Conservatives and formed the People's Party of Canada, with a platform that blended libertarianism, nativism, and populism.²²⁸ As Bernier's new party attracted nativist supporters, it began to emphasize nativist policy proposals such as subjecting Muslim immigrants to greater scrutiny.²²⁹ One of its candidates tweeted, "Let's make Muslims swim back to the Middle East," while another said the party turned him away after he publicly urged Bernier to condemn white supremacy.²³⁰

Co-opt and Condemn

Conservatives have confronted fringe parties with a mix of co-optation and condemnation. In 2018, the Conservative Party ran anti-immigration ads showing a black man rolling a suitcase up to a hole in a fence.²³¹ But they also drew a clear line between themselves and Bernier. For instance, after Bernier tweeted that more diversity would "destroy what makes us a great country," multiple conservatives criticized the then party member. Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer, declaring that he disagrees with the use of "identity politics to divide Canadians," disavowed the statement and Bernier himself.²³² In the 2019 federal election campaign season, the Conservative party largely eschewed nativism, focusing instead on corruption, carbon taxes, and a message of trust.

Meanwhile, the Liberal and New Democratic parties ramped up their strategy of condemning nativism at both the national and local levels.²³³ Liberal members of parliament spoke out in a clearly coordinated fashion against Scheer for attending a rally later attended by a white supremacist speaker, for the nativist anti-immigration ad, and for backing candidates in provincial elections who have made Islamophobic comments.²³⁴ Prime Minister Trudeau spoke after the 2019 attack on a mosque in New Zealand, claiming that "toxic rhetoric has broken into the mainstream. It's anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, anti-black, anti-indigenous, misogynistic, homophobic," he said, later adding, "The problem is not only that politicians routinely fail to denounce this hatred. It's that, in too many cases, they actively court those who spread it."²³⁵ While Trudeau was later condemned by many for repeatedly wearing blackface makeup in his younger days, he won the 2019 federal election.

Canada's mainstream conservatives took a risk by co-opting nativist sentiment. Strong and consistent condemnation by progressives, as well as a return to condemnation by conservatives, has held the line against nativism in Canada. Bernier's People's Party of Canada registers almost no support, and Bernier lost his parliamentary seat in the 2019 election.

Conclusion

Canada's greatest defense against nativism lies in decades of rapid naturalization that gave it a large population of politically active immigrant voters.²³⁶ Because 40 percent of Canadians are either immigrants or the children of immigrants (as of 2011 when data were last collected), there is a large group of citizens who are more likely supporters of multiculturalism.²³⁷ This includes more conservative immigrants who may still punish the Conservative Party when it takes nativist positions against minorities. These factors helped Canada buck the international wave of nativism that grew in Europe and the United States after 2015.

Yet Canadians should not be complacent. As noted, nativists are a potent political force at the regional level in Quebec. Nationally, nativists are beginning to gather on one side of the political aisle, and as they do so, they may gain greater power. For years, about 40 percent of Canadians worried about too many non-white immigrants, with numbers only slightly higher on the right than the left. Now the gap has widened, demonstrated by an increase from 47 percent in 2013 to 69 percent in 2019 among conservatives and a decrease from 34 percent to 15 percent among progressives.²³⁸ Former Reform Party leader Preston Manning argues that this nativist voter segment is the "Achilles heel" of the conservative movement. After the party's failed anti-Muslim campaign of 2015, a conservative strategist asked, "For every vote you win that way, how many do you lose?"²³⁹ But as nativists become increasingly important for candidates on the right of the aisle, incentives shift and create a political opening for conservative, nativist candidates.²⁴⁰

France: Block

While nativists have been an organized force in French politics for decades, consistent condemning and blocking by mainstream French parties has successfully kept nativists out of government at the national level. Mainstream parties have for the most part also managed to resist adopting nativist policies and rhetoric.

Deep Nativist Roots

France's National Front, renamed the National Rally in 2018, became the country's main nativist party shortly after its founding in the early 1970s. The party was initially modeled after Italy's neofascist Italian Social Movement.²⁴¹ Like nativist parties in Australia and Canada, it began as a tiny fringe force based around a single leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen; it gained negligible vote shares, was ignored or castigated by the media, and experienced party infighting and discord with various other nativist movements.

After a decade on the fringes of national politics, Le Pen and the National Front began to gain momentum in the early 1980s, during the tenure of France's first Socialist government in almost thirty years. In the 1970s, the party's platform focused on general opposition to progressive and left-wing political movements, but by the 1980s, the National Front began to focus increasingly on concerns about immigration and the influence of Islam in France.²⁴² In 1982, the party began registering double-digit vote totals in some regional elections. In 1983, Le Pen won a council seat in an outer district of Paris, with 11 percent of the vote. Later that year, in municipal elections in the northern town of Dreux, the National Front gained 16 percent of the vote in the first round, prompting the local center-right party to join with the National Front to ensure victory in the second round. This collaboration, along with Le Pen's earlier victory, breathed life into the nativist party, and it began to gather increased public attention. When Le Pen protested to Socialist President François Mitterrand about the virtual media boycott of the National Front, Mitterrand pushed the country's main television channels to cover the National Front more equally. Le Pen was invited to appear in his first prime-time interview in February 1984, and that spring, his party won a stunning 11 percent of the vote in the European Parliament elections, benefitting from low relative turnout.²⁴³

In 1986, Mitterrand experimented with proportional representation for that year's legislative elections. This fulfilled one of his 1981 campaign promises, though Socialist party leaders later acknowledged that they hoped this new system would blunt conservative gains in the French Parliament.²⁴⁴ While proportional representation systems can have advantages, such as allowing a broader variety of ideological preferences to receive representation, they can also allow fringe parties to gain more power than they otherwise would. The National Front took nearly 10 percent of the vote and won around 6 percent of the national legislative seats.²⁴⁵

Consistent Blocking by the Mainstream

While the local center-right party had partnered with the National Front in Dreux, establishment conservatives began to repeatedly block the National Front at the national level. After the 1986 election, the new prime minister, Jacques Chirac, presided over a conservative coalition that included multiple other right-wing parties. He chose to govern with a razor-thin, two-vote majority rather than include the National Front's thirty-five parliamentarians in his coalition.

In a second, potent blocking move, Chirac overturned the experiment with proportional representation and returned to a system of single-member legislative districts. Thus, although the National Front received the same vote share in the next election, it gained only one seat in the National Assembly rather than thirty-five. From then on, Le Pen served as the party's perpetual presidential candidate and reliably gained about one-sixth of the presidential vote in 1988, 1995, and 2002.²⁴⁶

France's voting system is similar to the jungle primary and top-two systems adopted by the U.S. state of California in that elections for most offices begin with a first round featuring multiple candidates, followed by a runoff between the top two vote-receiving candidates (if neither receives a majority in the first round). This system has the virtue of allowing many political views to gain representation and a hearing in the first round, while generally preventing fringe parties from advancing to power. It thus combines some of the virtues of both the proportional representation and first-past-the-post systems. But if too many similar candidates run against each other and split the first-round vote, a candidate whose overall ideology is less popular can surpass them and make it into the runoff. This is what occurred in France's 2002 presidential election, when six progressive candidates faced off in a pool of sixteen contenders and split the left-wing vote. Suddenly, despite receiving about the same share of votes as in previous years, the openly nativist Jean-Marie Le Pen was advancing to the runoff.

But France's two-round voting system gave the French electorate the opportunity to choose between the top two vote-getters. Virtually the entire political spectrum banded together to support the conservative Jacques Chirac over the nativist Le Pen. Chirac thus won the largest landslide in French history with 82 percent of the runoff vote.

Nativist views can also be challenged by legal means in France due to bans on Holocaust denial and the incitement of racial hatred. Le Pen has been prosecuted for violating these laws several times—for statements such as his repeated remark that Nazi gas chambers were merely a “detail” in the history of World War II.²⁴⁷ Despite multiple fines and convictions, Le Pen reliably won around one-sixth of the vote in presidential elections, though he never climbed higher.

Le Pen's political career was finally ended by his daughter. In apparent recognition that the elder Le Pen's racism, anti-Semitism, and vitriolic style were preventing the party from growing its vote share, Marine Le Pen expelled her father from his own party in 2015.

Nativists Rebrand

Under Marine Le Pen, the National Front adopted a more left-wing economic agenda that combined an emphasis on wage and employment issues with strident opposition to immigration and descriptions of Islam as threats to France. The combination of nativism and promises to protect or expand public benefits was a vote winner.²⁴⁸ Meanwhile, she has attempted to reframe the party's proposals to restrict Muslim religious practices as a defense of secularism. For instance, a campaign clearly targeted at banning Muslim headscarves was framed as applying to visible apparel from any religion.²⁴⁹ Her 2017 presidential campaign claimed that French people were being threatened by both economic globalism and Islamist fundamentalism—a message that was particularly resonant after a string of high-profile terrorist attacks in France. Notably, Le Pen seems to take pains to always speak about radical or fundamentalist Islam rather than Muslims in general.²⁵⁰

This message seems designed to appeal to nativists without being explicitly discriminatory. And it has found broader acceptability in an era when 38 percent of French respondents still tell pollsters that Islam is not compatible with being French.²⁵¹ The proportion of survey respondents who claimed the National Front was a danger to the country dropped from 70 percent of those polled between 1980 to 2002 to less than 50 percent after 2012.²⁵² The party was also helped by a substantial loan from a Russian bank.²⁵³

The result was increased electoral success. In 2015, during a wave of mass immigration to Europe, the National Front won more than one-quarter of the vote in regional elections. In 2017, Le Pen advanced to the second round of the presidential race, winning 21 percent of the vote in the first round, just shy of Emmanuel Macron's 24 percent.

Blocking, Take Two

Again, however, the French center-right worked to block the party's entry into government. François Fillon, the conservative former prime minister who finished in third place, endorsed Macron rather than Le Pen in the second round. Denouncing the National Front's "extremism" and "intolerance," Fillon appears to have persuaded many of his supporters to back Macron.²⁵⁴ About half of them did so, while most of the remainder chose to cast blank votes or abstain. While Le Pen's 34 percent showing in the runoff was the most successful result ever achieved by a National Front presidential candidate, Fillon's choice to try to block her rise rather than work with her on agreed-upon conservative policies appears to have been a significant factor in preventing her success. When the conservative parties came together to form an opposition bloc in parliament, they, too, did not invite the National Front legislators.

Nevertheless, Le Pen has rebranded her party as the National Rally and continues to have a substantial base among French voters. The 34 percent vote share she received in the presidential runoff in 2017 was almost double what her father received in 2002. Furthermore, the majority of her support does not come from older voters, as is often the case with nativists of other countries. The National Front was the first favored option of voters ages 35–49, was supported by about 29 percent of this demographic, and was the second favored option for about 25 percent of voters ages 25–34.²⁵⁵

Conclusion

While the National Front has clearly struck a chord with many French voters, the consistent rejection of nativism by the center-right has left nativists with little power over public policy. French conservatives in the 2000s and 2010s favored stronger controls on immigration; condemned radical, violent Islam; and banned public face covering (which, while not explicitly discriminatory, was

widely perceived to be targeted at Muslim women).²⁵⁶ But center-right leaders have continued to denounce the National Front, and center-right former president Nicolas Sarkozy took steps to expand the French government's institutional recognition of Islam.²⁵⁷

This continued rejection of the National Front as an acceptable governing partner has had real costs for the French center-right, who were relegated to the opposition by Macron's 2017 election victory. But while Le Pen continues to command a substantial base of support—the party was the top French vote-getter in the 2019 European Parliament elections with 23 percent—the continued rejection of Le Pen and her party by center-right French politicians has left her with limited influence on French public policy and has set a clear divide between the National Front/National Rally and other conservative parties in France.

Germany: Ban and Block

Since World War II, German governments have alternated between center-left and center-right parties, with Germany's libertarian and Green parties as occasional junior partners. Since 2005, the center-right Christian Democrats under Chancellor Angela Merkel have largely governed in a grand coalition with the center-left Social Democrats.

Background

Until 2015's immigration wave, Germany seemed largely immune to the nativist political waves that were lapping at some of its democratic neighbors. Immediately after World War II, some neo-Nazis had regrouped into a series of political parties, but most of these failed within a few years, unable to gather much support. German laws banning hate speech and Holocaust denial probably helped; three small nativist parties that formed in the mid-1980s through 1990 were banned, preventing their fringe leaders from stoking nativism or posing a political threat to mainstream parties.

One tiny party, the National Democratic Party (NPD), founded in 1964, has managed to survive attempts to ban it. In 2003, the German Constitutional Court found state intelligence assets among the party's leadership and claimed that these paid informants might have shaped the party's agenda; later, in 2016, the court ruled that the NPD was too irrelevant to be banned.²⁵⁸ The NPD's platform combines anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, distrust of a corrupt plutocracy, and support for a strong social welfare system—a similar platform to those that have gained ground in Austria, France, and the United States.²⁵⁹ However, while the NPD has occasionally won seats in German state legislatures and held a German seat in the European Parliament from 2014 to 2019, it has never crossed the 5 percent minimum vote share required to win a seat in Germany's national parliament.

Germans' collective shame over their country's history has undoubtedly played a role in blunting the political appeal of nativism in Germany. It is probably not a coincidence that the NDP's most recent state legislative victories have been concentrated entirely in former East German states, as East Germany did not grapple with the legacy of the Holocaust in the same way West Germany did.

In attempting to explain the relative lack of nativism in Germany, researcher Friedrich Heckmann noted that German elites promulgated a strong pro-immigration message based on the idea that immigration was important to economic growth. From the 1950s through the early 1970s, many immigrants came to Germany through a guest worker program that granted renewable working visas for short periods to citizens of certain nearby countries, reinforcing the concept of immigration as a source of economic strength.²⁶⁰ Although by the 1980s many guest workers were staying and bringing families and numbers of asylum seekers were increasing, surveys showed that a substantial majority of Germans continued to believe that immigrants contributed to German economic strength.²⁶¹

Nativist Politics Reappears

Nativism reemerged as a potent political force only after Merkel's decision to accept over 1 million Syrian refugees in 2015.²⁶² After initial pride in Merkel's stance, Germans began to grow worried about the refugee influx, and Merkel's approval ratings fell.²⁶³ The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, founded in 2013 to advance euroskepticism, quickly pivoted to focus primarily on immigration and identity issues and began to voice overtly anti-Islamic rhetoric and policy positions.²⁶⁴ In April 2017, its explicitly discriminatory party platform called for constitutional revisions to make it easier to revoke the citizenship of Germans born to immigrant parents.²⁶⁵

The AfD lacked the stigma of the NDP, and it appealed to voters from former East Germany and older Germans. It also received help from Russian propaganda among the Russian-speaking émigré community.²⁶⁶ As with nativist voters in Austria, France, and the United States, a substantial share of the AfD's voters are not extreme right-wing conservatives but are disaffected working-class swing voters who have voted for left- and right-wing parties in the past. In Germany's case, many of these are eastern Germans who previously supported the successor to the Communist party known simply as the Left.²⁶⁷

Both the Left and AfD have offered an antiestablishment, antielite message that appears to resonate with these voters. However, while the Left's roots in eastern Germany had previously focused more on identity than ideology, AfD's overt nativism seems to have been more appealing to eastern voters in 2017 and in recent regional elections than the Left's ideology was.²⁶⁸ The anti-Islamic policies of the AfD are intertwined with its basic immigration message, which is perhaps unsurprising given the predominance of Syrian refugees and Turkish guest workers among Germany's immigrant population

and the widespread feeling, held by 47 percent of the population, that Islam is incompatible with being truly German.²⁶⁹ This message has proved to be a politically viable one, and AfD won 12 percent of the national vote in 2017—a share that made it the third-largest political force in the nation and the official opposition party in the German Bundestag.

Blocking Continues

So far, mainstream politicians have stuck to a strong blocking strategy to blunt the AfD's impact. Merkel refused to include the party in a governing coalition. She forced her center-right party to spend weeks trying to forge a three-party coalition with the Greens and the libertarian Free Democrats after being refused by the center-left Social Democrats. She was unsuccessful, but when faced with the prospect of a new election that might further empower the AfD, the Social Democrats overcame serious internal disagreements to join a coalition as Merkel's junior partner. Merkel's center-right Christian Democrats have mostly refused to ally with the AfD at the state level, despite strains in their partnerships with other coalition partners that have made advancing a conservative agenda more difficult. In Germany's national parliament in 2017, Christian Democrats even refused to sit next to AfD legislators in an attempt to maintain a clear distinction between the two parties.²⁷⁰

The one recent case in which the center-right's commitment to blocking appeared to waver actually demonstrates the strength of the strategy: in February 2020, Thomas Kemmerich of the libertarian Free Democrats was elected premier of the German state of Thuringia after receiving support in the state legislature from both the Christian Democrats and the AfD. The backlash was swift—Merkel called the development “unforgivable” and attacked the regional branch of her own party. Other Christian Democrat and Free Democrat leaders also condemned the idea of forming a state government with the AfD. Kemmerich was forced to resign and call for new state elections three days after becoming premier.²⁷¹

The center-right's firmness in refusing a coalition with the AfD may have been bolstered by a precedent set by the center-left Social Democrats, who have refused to partner with the Left at the national level even when doing so would have given the Social Democrats control of the government and pushed Merkel and her Christian Democrats to the opposition.²⁷² This stance by the center-left appears to have buttressed a norm against collaborating with parties viewed as extreme—blocking behavior is undoubtedly easier when both sides hew to the same norms. During the 2017 election campaign, for example, Merkel emphasized her firm opposition to a coalition with either the Left or AfD as a reason to vote for the Christian Democrats.²⁷³

As the Left moves away from its roots, however, German democracy watchdogs have begun to state that it is no longer a threat to democracy. Should the center-left choose to partner with the Left at the national level, this could contribute to an erosion of the norm against collaborating with the AfD, particularly if the distinction between the two parties' adherence to democratic values is not clearly articulated.²⁷⁴ Certainly, the temptation of a Christian Democratic/AfD ticket could be strong in some eastern German states, such as Saxony and Brandenburg or Thuringia, where AfD's strong performance has made it challenging for the Christian Democrats to form coalitions without them.

Conclusion

Germany has long had an intense nativist subculture: the country has experienced 195 murders by right-wing extremists since reunification in 1990.²⁷⁵ Violent incidents spiked in 2015 and 2016, when there were more than 750 violent attacks on refugees. And rising extremism has been blamed for the murder of a local German politician by a neo-Nazi in 2019.²⁷⁶ Germany's intelligence services are reportedly investigating 450 cases of possible extremism within its armed forces.²⁷⁷ Widespread civic education about the Holocaust (particularly in West Germany) likely gave most voters long-term resistance to nativist extremism, but as nativism shows itself in a newer anti-Islamic rather than anti-Semitic form, the inoculation may be wearing off. The aggressively nativist AfD again received over 10 percent of the national vote in Germany's 2019 European Parliament elections, and it has now received around 25 percent of the vote in several state elections in the former East Germany. Despite this societal support, however, mainstream parties' concerted efforts to block nativists from power seem to be working.

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Notes

- 1 Donald J. Trump, Twitter post, July 14, 2019, 5:27 a.m., https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1150381394234941448?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw.
- 2 Doug Stanglin, “Muslim Vice-Chair of Texas County GOP Survives Effort to Oust Him Over His Religion,” *USA Today*, January 11, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/01/11/muslim-official-texas-county-gop-survives-effort-oust-him/2546091002/>; Bud Kennedy, “Once Wary of Muslims and ‘Stealth Jihad,’ Texas Republicans Finally Say: No Discrimination,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 9, 2018, <https://www.star-telegram.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/bud-kennedy/article222848155.html>; and Protect Texas, Facebook post, August 19, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/ProtectTexasRPT2014/posts/1396618643809056?__xts__%5B0%5D=68.ARD5f8AS1XSQJS6wQ_-60jAb_LnHDTO3W7TybaKGW_6mqDIj1Py3ezHIQPPEbPVwh2gchBKUVJmax-kJzJfpuCjTNqf_AIx-EhKZSp7pmxJnyOwu2-TBnEDijpIvm5ox7zowcQm95Sd&__tn__=K-R.
- 3 Grinnell College News, “Who Is a Real American? Overwhelming Agreement on the Answer,” Grinnell College, December 3, 2018, <https://www.grinnell.edu/news/who-real-american-overwhelming-agreement-answer>.
- 4 Bruce Stokes, “What It Takes to Truly Be ‘One of Us,’” Pew Research Center, February 1, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2017/02/01/what-it-takes-to-truly-be-one-of-us/>.
- 5 The case studies focused on the policies, messages, and electoral tactics that political parties have pursued in different countries. Of course, foreign propaganda and interference can play a significant role, particularly given the Russian government’s clear support for nativists in Western Europe and the United States. For the purpose of this study, the issue of countering foreign interference is treated as distinct from the problem of how to develop a political response to nativism; this, however, does not diminish the importance of addressing both.
- 6 For a good discussion of the differences between nativism, populism, and authoritarianism, see Uri Friedman, “What Is a Nativist?,” *Atlantic*, April 11, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/04/what-is-nativist-trump/521355/>.
- 7 Within Anglo society in Ireland, Roman Catholics were second-class citizens who lacked many basic rights, and upon arrival in the United States, many American Protestants saw Roman Catholic Irish immigrants as akin to a different race as well as a different religion, referring to them at times as “white Negroes” (while African Americans were occasionally called, “smoked Irish”). See Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
- 8 For instance, the term is often used to describe hostility toward Muslims or Islam in Christian-majority countries, regardless of whether a given country has long had a Muslim-minority population. See, for instance, George Hawley, “Ambivalent Nativism: Trump Supporters’ Attitudes Toward Islam and Muslim Immigration,” Brookings Institution, July 24, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ambivalent-nativism-trump-supporters-attitudes-toward-islam-and-muslim-immigration/>.
- 9 In many countries, individuals are treated as second-class citizens based on their gender or sexual identity. This is equally undemocratic, and the conceptual framework described in this paper—distinguishing between those who support equality for all citizens and those who do not—can be applied to these forms of discrimination as well. Some of the nativist parties in the case studies (such as the Alternative for Germany, Italy’s Northern League, and Canada’s Reform Party) have opposed equal rights for same-sex couples in particular.
- 10 “What Does It Mean to Belong in America Today?” YouTube video, 13:29, posted by “TedX Talks,” April 17, 2019, accessed October 1, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLOit1tdq9o>.

- 11 In 1993, Thomas Saalfeld developed a somewhat similar definition of right-wing extremism. See Thomas Saalfeld, “The Politics of National-Populism: Ideology and Policies of the German Republikaner Party,” *German Politics* 2, no. 2 (1993): 177–199.
- 12 Craig Turner, “Canada Moves to Limit Immigration: Policy: The Shift Away From Giving Priority to Recent Arrivals’ Family Members Signals U-turn by Government,” *LA Times*, November 5, 1994, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-11-05-mn-58769-story.html>; Warren Caragata, “Changing Tracks,” *MacLean’s*, November 14, 1994: <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1994/11/14/changing-tracks>; John C. Courtney, “Right to Vote in Canada,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*, March 18, 2007, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/franchise>; and Arlene Chan, “Chinese Head Tax in Canada,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*, September 8, 2016, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chinese-head-tax-in-canada>.
- 13 Paul Karp, “Fraser Anning Speech ‘Straight From Goebbels’ Handbook’, Says Pauline Hanson,” *Guardian*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/15/fraser-anning-speech-straight-from-goebbels-handbook-says-pauline-hanson>; Katharine Murphy and Amy Remeikis, “Australian senator calls for ‘final solution to immigration problem,’” *Guardian*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/14/australian-senator-calls-for-final-solution-to-immigration-problem>.
- 14 Abderahmen Moumen, translated by Oliver Waine, “Housing the ‘Harkis’: Long-Term Segregation,” *Metropolitiques*, April 4, 2012, <https://www.metropolitiques.eu/Housing-the-harkis-long-term.html>.
- 15 Pew polling in 2018 finds that people who described themselves as “on the political right” scored higher on the scale of nationalist, anti-immigrant, and antireligious minority attitudes across Western Europe. See Jeff Diamant and Kelsey Jo Starr, “Western Europeans Vary in Their Nationalist, Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Religious Minority Attitudes,” Pew Research Center Fact Tank, June 19, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/06/19/western-europeans-vary-in-their-nationalist-anti-immigrant-and-anti-religious-minority-attitudes/>. An earlier Pew poll from 2014 found that unfavorable views toward Roma and Muslims were higher on the right than the left by a gap of more than 20 percentage points in France, Italy, and Greece; and significant gaps between the left and right were found in Spain and the United Kingdom. See Pew Research Center Global Attitudes & Trends, “Chapter 4. Views of Roma, Muslims, Jews,” in “A Fragile Rebound for EU Image on Eve of European Parliament Elections,” Pew Research Center, May 12, 2014, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2014/05/12/chapter-4-views-of-roma-muslims-jews/>.
- 16 Emily Ekins, “The Five Types of Trump Voters: Who They Are and What They Believe,” Democracy Fund Voter Study Group, June 2017, <https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publication/the-five-types-trump-voters>; and Tim Bale, “Cinderella and Her Ugly Sisters: The Mainstream and Extreme Right in Europe’s Bipolarising Party Systems,” *West European Politics* 26, no. 3 (2010): 67–90.
- 17 Ekins, “The Five Types of Trump Voters: Who They Are and What They Believe.”
- 18 In fact, this is partially the story of the 2016 election, when many union members, who are traditionally seen as a Democratic constituency, chose to vote for Trump. CNN found that 43 percent of union households nationally voted for Trump; while still less than a majority, this was the best margin for a Republican since 1984 when president Ronald Reagan won his second term. In the key swing state of Ohio, the support was even greater: 54 percent of union households voted for Trump versus 41 percent for the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. See “Ohio Exit Polls,” CNN, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/ohio/president>; Philip Bump, “Donald Trump Got Reagan-Like Support From Union Households,” *Washington Post*, November 10, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/10/donald-trump-got-reagan-like-support-from-union-households/>; and “How Groups Voted in 2016,” Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/how-groups-voted-2016>.

- 19 Beyond the constitutional “compromise” declaring enslaved people to be three-fifths of a person, it is also difficult to explain the 1790 law that limited naturalized citizenship to whites, and the wide range of local and state laws that restricted the rights of free black Americans, as being motivated by anything other than a racially based view of American citizenship. See James Oliver Horton, “Race and the American Constitution: A Struggle Toward National Ideals,” Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Fall 2007, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-now/essays/race-and-american-constitution-struggle-toward-national-ideals>.
- 20 As a secret society, Klan membership numbers were not public. They counted 5 million supporters at their height in 1925, while scholars cite numbers ranging from 3 to 6 million. See Rory McVeigh, “Power Devaluation, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Democratic National Convention of 1924,” *Sociological Forum* 16, no. 1 (2001): 1–30. The voting age population in the election of 1924 was approximately 66,414,000, according to Charles E. Johnson Jr., “Current Population Reports P-23, No 102,” U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census. So, KKK members constituted between one in twenty-two and one in eleven of all voting-age Americans; the average is used here.
- 21 See, for instance, the editorial “Pluralism: National Menace, 1951,” *Christian Century* (1951): 701–703.
- 22 The Snyder Act of 1924 gave Native Americans born in the United States full U.S. citizenship, a status previously denied because tribes constituted legal sovereign nations themselves, with the internal right to vote. However, many states with significant indigenous populations barred Native Americans from voting for decades. New Mexico and Arizona did not grant voting rights until 1948, Maine refused until 1954, and Utah refused until 1962. As recently as 2018, North Dakota refused to accept a Native American tribal identification card to vote. Meanwhile, Michelle Alexander argues that unequal felony punishment for African Americans has maintained voter suppression to the present day and played a role in the recent movement to return voting rights to ex-felons; see Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, 2010).
- 23 Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017).
- 24 The Grinnell College National Poll Study groups independents who lean in a direction with the party they lean toward. See “Grinnell College National Poll Study #2179,” Selzer and Company, November 24–27, 2018, https://www.grinnell.edu/sites/default/files/docs/2018-12/Grinnell%20College%20National%20Poll_Nov18.pdf. To determine the parties’ political power, polls would need to disaggregate these views by state, but the Grinnell poll is not large enough to make such a disaggregation statistically relevant. In 2016, Pew polling found that 32 percent of Democrats and 35 percent of Republicans viewed being born in the United States as very important to being American, and 43 percent of Republicans versus 29 percent of Democrats felt the same about being Christian; see Stokes, “What It Takes to Truly Be ‘One of Us.’”
- 25 Ekins, “The Five Types of Trump Voters: Who They Are and What They Believe.”
- 26 Unsurprisingly, an estimated 67 percent of this group felt that race was extremely or very important to their own identity. A separate poll by Democracy Fund Voice found that 73 percent of those who voted for Trump in the primary felt that Islam itself was incompatible with being American; see Democracy Fund Voice, “Stranger in My Own Country: Populism and Nativism in America,” A Summary of Initial Research Findings, January 2017. For Republicans who backed another candidate in the primary, the number was still a high at 64 percent.
- 27 One study found that of the Republican primary voters who backed a candidate other than Trump, 12 percent voted for Hillary Clinton in the general election, while 88 percent fell in line with their party; see Danielle Kurtzleben, “Here’s How Many Bernie Sanders Supporters Ultimately Voted for Trump,” *NPR*, August 24, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/24/545812242/1-in-10-sanders-primary-voters->

- ended-up-supporting-trump-survey-finds. This finding is in keeping with Milan Svobik's research that finds "in polarized electorates, voters are willing to trade off democratic principles for partisan interests"; see Milan W. Svobik, "Polarization Versus Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 3 (July 2019): 20–32.
- 28 Pew polling from 2019 finds that 17 percent of U.S. adults feel unfavorably toward both major political parties; see "Political Independents: Who They Are, What They Think," Pew Research Center, March 14, 2019, <https://www.people-press.org/2019/03/14/political-independents-who-they-are-what-they-think/>.
- 29 For an excellent overview of research in this area, see Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective: Reflections on the Contemporary and Future Research Agenda," *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 13 (2018): 1,667–1693. Bonnie Meguid distinguishes three strategies: accommodative, adversarial, and dismissive, conflating the collaboration and co-optation approaches. These four categories are loosely drawn from William M. Downs, "Pariahs in Their Midst: Belgian and Norwegian Parties React to Extremist Threats," *West European Politics* 24, no. 3 (2001): 23–42. However, Downs is examining Europe and thus defines the contours of each category slightly differently, given different legal systems and multiparty parliaments. In the context of Europe, Downs noted that blocking strategies can include legal restrictions on parties; these strategies are not examined here, as they would conflict with American free speech protections. Spain, Germany, and Belgium, however, have engaged in banning racist speech, banning parties, and prosecuting politicians; France also has legal restrictions on Holocaust denial and hate speech that have been used to prosecute members of the National Front party.
- 30 "Why Cosying Up to Populists Rarely Ends Well for Moderates," *Economist*, May 23, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/05/23/why-cosying-up-to-populists-rarely-ends-well-for-moderates>.
- 31 For example, the nativist Party for Freedom in the Netherlands has captured between 10 and 15 percent of the vote for much of the last decade. Some claim it would have done even better had the center-right, winning party not mimicked some of its rhetoric, as it did in 2017 when it ran advertisements warning immigrants to "be normal or be gone." See Sena Boztas, David Chazan, and Peter Foster, "Dutch Prime Minister Warns Migrants to 'Be Normal or Be Gone' as He Fends Off Populist Geert Wilders in Bitter Election Fight," *Telegraph*, January 23, 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/23/dutch-prime-minister-warns-migrants-normal-gone-fends-populist/>.
- 32 Shuster, "Austria's Young Chancellor Sebastian Kurz Is Bringing the Far-Right into the Mainstream"; and "The Hugs Don't Work," *Economist*, May 25, 2019.
- 33 "Globe Editorial: Call It 'Islamophobia' or 'Anti-Muslim Bigotry,' MPs Should Unanimously Condemn It," *Globe and Mail*, February 16, 2017, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/globe-editorial-call-it-islamophobia-or-anti-muslim-bigotry-mps-should-unanimously-condemn-it/article34055838/>.
- 34 Philip Oltermann, "Germany Slow to Hear Alarm Bells in Killing of Walter Lübcke," *Guardian*, July 2, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/02/germany-slow-to-hear-alarm-bells-in-killing-of-walter-lubcke>.
- 35 Sunder Katwala, "How to Talk About Immigration: Better Storytelling in a Polarized Time," *Apolitical*, May 14, 2019, https://apolitical.co/solution_article/how-to-talk-about-immigration-the-stories-we-need-in-polarised-times/. The problem of avoidance is so common that a British think tank created a pamphlet, "How to Talk About Immigration," to help politicians address the topic so many of their constituents want to discuss. See Sunder Katwala, Steve Ballinger, and Matthew Rhodes, "How to Talk About Immigration," British Future, 2014, <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/How-To-Talk-About-Immigration-FINAL.pdf>.

- 36 Recent academic studies looking empirically at the modern wave of fringe parties agree that condemning and blocking has been more effective at keeping nativism at bay. See Kai Arzheimer and Elisabeth Carter, “Political Opportunity Structures and Right-Wing Extremist Party Success,” *European Journal of Political Research* 45, no. 3 (2006): 419–443.
- 37 “Berlusconi: ‘Si ai rimpatri, non apriremo le porte a tutti,’” *Corriere della Sera*, May 9, 2009, https://www.corriere.it/politica/09_maggio_09/maroni_immigrati_respinti_da84e542-3ca2-11de-a760-00144f02aabc.shtml?refresh_ce-cp; and Human Rights Watch, “Everyday Intolerance: Racist and Xenophobic Violence in Italy,” March 21, 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/italy0311WebRevised.pdf>. This paper follows the example of the European Roma Rights Centre and other advocacy groups in using the term “Roma” to refer collectively to Roma, Sinti, and other groups of people who are frequently referred to as “gypsies” in English or “zingari” in Italian.
- 38 Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2018: Austria Country Report,” 2018; and Francois Murphy, “Win or Lose, Austrian Far Right’s Views Have Entered Government,” *Reuters*, July 16, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-austria-politics-farright-analysis/win-or-lose-austrian-far-rights-views-have-entered-government-idUSKBN1A107V>; Farid Hafez, “Islamophobia in Austria: National Report 2015,” in *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Enes Bayrakli and Farid Hafez, eds., Istanbul, SETA, 2016.
- 39 Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, “Austrian Muslims Say Religious Intolerance Is Growing,” *NPR*, December 26, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/12/26/572572798/austrian-muslims-say-religious-intolerance-is-growing>; Mersiha Gadzo, “Austria’s Muslims Fear Being Cast as Threat to Security,” *Al Jazeera*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/austria-muslims-fear-cast-threat-security-180114064057435.html>; Carmen Fishwick, “It’s Been Looming Over Us for Decades: Austrian Voters on the Far-Right,” *Guardian*, December 23, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/23/its-been-looming-over-us-for-decades-austrian-voters-on-the-far-right>; and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, “International Religious Freedom Report for 2017,” May 28, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/>.
- 40 Arzheimer and Carter, “Political Opportunity Structures and Right-Wing Extremist Party Success”; and Bale, “Cinderella and Her Ugly Sisters.”
- 41 Markus Wagner and Thomas M. Meyer, “The Radical Right as Niche Parties? The Ideological Landscape of Party Systems in Western Europe, 1980–2014,” *Political Studies* 65, no. 1 (2017): 84–107.
- 42 In *The European Mainstream and the Populist Radical Right* (New York: Routledge, 2017), Pontus Odmalm and Eve Hepburn study British, French, Finnish, Danish, and Dutch politics from 2002 to 2015, examining the effects of populist positions on immigration.
- 43 Carl Dahlström and Anders Sundell looked at views on immigration rather than nativism per se and found that tough immigration stances from the left legitimized once-radical anti-immigration views even more than tough stances from the right; see Carl Dahlström and Anders Sundell, “A Losing Gamble. How Mainstream Parties Facilitate Anti-Immigrant Party Success,” *Electoral Studies* 31, no. 2 (2012): 353–363.
- 44 In February 2020, a potential alliance between the AfD and moderate parties in the Thuringia state legislature collapsed after just three days, following widespread condemnation from leading German politicians.
- 45 A 2015 Anti-Defamation League poll found that anti-Semitic beliefs were prevalent among 67 percent of Greeks—by far the highest percentage in Europe; see Anti-Defamation League, “The ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism,” 2015. For Golden Dawn’s isolation, see Patrick Strickland, “What Is the Future of Greece’s Neo-Fascist Golden Dawn?,” *Al Jazeera*, April 17, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/europe/2018/04/future-greece-neo-fascist-golden-dawn-180412125831240.html>.

- 46 Human Rights Watch, “Everyday Intolerance: Racist and Xenophobic Violence in Italy”; Nando Sigona, “The ‘Latest’ Public Enemy: Romanian Roma in Italy,” *Osservazione*, January 21, 2008, http://www.romsintimemory.it/assets/files/discriminazione/interculturala/guerra-ai-rom/III.3.d%20ALLEGATO%203%20OSCE_publicenemy.pdf; Dino Martirano, “New Immigration Law,” *Corriere della Sera*, March 13, 2007; and Juliana Menasce Horowitz, “Widespread Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Italy,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, January 12, 2010, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2010/01/12/widespread-anti-immigrant-sentiment-in-italy/>.
- 47 In Austria, the Freedom Party won just 16 percent of the 2019 vote after a major scandal forced elections, but the winning People’s Party had adopted many of their views; in Italy, though the League’s political bumbling lost it a place in government, the party polls at 32 percent—ten points higher than any other party. See “Voters Turn Against the Populist Right,” *Economist*, October 3, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/10/03/voters-turn-against-the-populist-right>.
- 48 Marcel Lubbers, Merove Gijsberts, and Peer Scheepers, “Extreme Right-Wing Voting in Western Europe,” *European Journal of Political Research* 41, no. 3 (2002): 345–378; Duane Swank and Hank-Georg Betz, “Globalization, the Welfare State and Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe,” *Socio-Economic Review* 1, no. 2 (2003): 215–245; Kai Arzheimer, “Contextual Factors and the Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe, 1980–2002,” *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 2 (2009): 259–275; Matt Golder, “Explaining Variation in the Success of Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe,” *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 4 (2003): 432–466; and Nonna Mayer, “The Political Impact of Social Insecurity in France,” *Partecipazione e conflitto* 11, no. 3 (2019).
- 49 “Britain’s Immigration Paradox,” *Economist*, July 8, 2016, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2016/07/08/britains-immigration-paradox>; and Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan L. Hajnal, *White Backlash: Immigration, Race, and American Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2017).
- 50 Seth Hill, Daniel J. Hopkins, and Gregory Huber, “Demographic Change, Threat, and Presidential Voting: Evidence from U.S. Electoral Precincts, 2012 to 2016,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, March 7, 2019, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3351950>; and Jens Rydgren, “Immigration Sceptics, Xenophobes or Racists? Radical Right-Wing Voting in Six West European Countries,” *European Journal of Political Research* 47, no. 6 (2008): 737–765.
- 51 Justin Gest, Tyler Reny, and Jeremy Mayer, “Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain,” *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 13 (2017): 1,694–1,719.
- 52 Maureen A. Craig, Julian M. Rucker, and Jennifer A. Richeson, “Racial and Political Dynamics of an Approaching ‘Majority-Minority’ United States,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 677, no. 1 (2018).
- 53 Daniel J. Hopkins, “The Activation of Prejudice and Presidential Voting: Panel Evidence From the 2016 U.S. Election,” *Political Behavior* (2019): 1–24; Bradley Jones and Jocelyn Kiley, “More ‘Warmth’ for Trump Among GOP Voters Concerned by Immigrants, Diversity,” Pew Research Center, June 2, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/02/more-warmth-for-trump-among-gop-voters-concerned-by-immigrants-diversity/>; and Abrajano and Hanjal, *White Backlash: Immigration, Race and American Politics*.
- 54 Matthijs Rooduijn and Brian Burgoon, “The Paradox of Well-Being: Do Unfavorable Socioeconomic and Sociocultural Contexts Deepen or Dampen Radical Left and Right Voting Among the Less Well-Off?” *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 13 (July 26, 2017): 1,720–1,753.
- 55 Cas Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2016). For instance, in Eastern Germany where the AfD party has been growing, wages have risen from being 50 percent of wages in the West in 1991 to 90 percent when adjusted for cost of living, so people in Eastern Germany are doing far better than in the past, but still not as well as their new(ish) countrymen to the West. See

- Beverly Crawford, “It’s the German Economy, Stupid! Economic Inequality, Not Immigration, Explains Far Right Rise in Germany,” UC Berkeley Politics and Law Blog, September 27, 2017, <https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2017/09/27/its-the-german-economy-stupid-economic-inequality-not-immigration-explains-the-rise-of-the-far-right-in-germany/>; and “Deutschland AG Worries About the Rise of the Hard-Right AfD,” *Economist*, September 5, 2019. For employment and economic growth statistics in these countries and regions, see the European Commission’s EURES Labor Market Information statistics, <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=2641&countryId=DE&acro=lm&lang=en>.
- 56 See Tucker Carlson, *Ship of Fools: How a Selfish Ruling Class Is Bringing America to the Brink of Revolution* (Simon and Schuster Digital: Free Press, 2019), 9–15.
- 57 Democracy Fund Voice, “Stranger in My Own Country.”
- 58 Craig Turner, “Canada Moves to Limit Immigration: Policy: The Shift Away From Giving Priority to Recent Arrivals’ Family Members Signals U-Turn by Government,” *LA Times*, November 5, 1994, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-11-05-mn-58769-story.html>; and Warren Caragata, “Changing Tracks,” *MacLean’s*, November 14, 1994: <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1994/11/14/changing-tracks>. The new immigration rules also gave preference to prospective immigrants who spoke either English or French. While this could potentially give an advantage to immigrants from certain geographic or ethnic backgrounds, who might be more likely than others to speak English or French, language ability is a nonetheless a skill rather than an unchangeable aspect of identity.
- 59 Caragata, “Changing Tracks.”
- 60 Caragata, “Changing Tracks”; and Turner, “Canada Moves to Limit Immigration: Policy: The Shift Away From Giving Priority to Recent Arrivals’ Family Members Signals U-turn by Government.”
- 61 The Democracy Fund Voice found that Trump primary voters were bothered more than twice as much as other Americans by encountering immigrants who could not speak English. White voters with less than a high school education were the group most likely to believe speaking English was a very important requirement for being an American, with 80 percent holding this view. See Democracy Fund Voice, “Stranger in My Own Country,” 23, 29. Language is also of crucial importance to being seen as a full citizen in many democracies; see Stokes, “What It Takes to Truly Be ‘One of Us.’”
- 62 Pew Hispanic Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation, “National Survey of Latinos,” August 7–October 15, 2003, as reported in “Hispanic Attitudes Toward Learning English,” Pew Hispanic Center, June 7, 2006; and “Second-Generation Americans: A Portrait of the Adult Children of Immigrants,” Pew Research Center, February 7, 2013.
- 63 The Democracy Fund Voice found these to also be issues important to diffusing nativist sentiment; see Democracy Fund Voice, “Stranger in My Own Country.”
- 64 Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York: Crown, 2018), 20.
- 65 There is a persuasive case to be made that Fillon’s endorsement of Macron over the National Front candidate Marine Le Pen was decisive in that election; see Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 70.
- 66 Astead W. Herndon, “Democrats Overhaul Controversial Superdelegate System,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/25/us/politics/superdelegates-democrats-dnc.html>.
- 67 Lenore Taylor, “Morrison Sees Votes in Anti-Muslim Strategy,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 17, 2011, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/morrison-sees-votes-in-anti-muslim-strategy-20110216-1awmo.html>; and Malcolm Farr and Emma Reynolds, “Waleed and PM to Face Off on Project After Feud Over Morrison’s Reported Muslim Remarks,” *news.com.au*, <https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/tv/current-affairs/waleed-and-pm-to-face-off-on-project-after-feud-over-morrison-reported-muslim-remarks/news-story/8089f25018027e48d42e90204867cc68>. Morrison claims that he was warning against the use of such arguments in the closed door meeting; however, multiple newspapers have claimed that their investigatory reporting supports the original reading of the meeting.

- 68 For Moore's view that Muslims should not be permitted to serve in Congress, see Roy Moore, "Muslim Ellison Should Not Sit In Congress," December 13, 2006, <http://archive.is/Onilk>.
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- 73 House Republicans' treatment of Representative Paul could serve as a model for the treatment of nativists, even though Republicans' marginalization of Paul was driven by the view that he held fringe policy positions, rather than the perception that he was a nativist. A number of racist newsletter articles were published under Paul's name in the 1990s, but this does not appear to have been the basis for his marginalization by his House Republican colleagues. See Jerry Markon and Alice Crites, "Ron Paul Signed Off on Racist 1990s Newsletters, Associates Say," *Washington Post*, January 27, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/ron-paul-signed-off-on-racist-newsletters-sources-say/2012/01/20/gIQAvblFVQ_story.html.
- 74 The Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) gained a majority in Quebec's provincial legislature in 2018. The CAQ's leader, Quebec Premier Francois Legault, has explicitly expressed a preference for immigrants from European backgrounds, even as his party seeks to limit immigration to Quebec overall. The CAQ's advertising also indicates that Quebec's ban on religious attire for certain public employees is, in fact, targeted at observant Muslims. See "As Quebec Cuts Immigration, Premier Calls for More Newcomers From Europe," *CBC News*, January 22, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-immigration-legault-paris-1.4987843>; and Frederic Berard, "Le (mauvais) film identitaire," *Journal Metro*, November 26, 2016, <https://journalmetro.com/opinions/in-libro-veritas/1056428/le-mauvais-film-identitaire/>.
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- 76 In September 2019, the Cook Political Report estimated that 78 percent of House seats were safely held by one party or the other; see Cook Political Report, "2020 House Race Ratings," accessed September 30, 2019, <https://cookpolitical.com/ratings/house-race-ratings>. The University of Virginia's Sabato Crystal Ball rated 79 percent of House districts as safe for the incumbent party in January 2019; see Sabato's Crystal Ball, "House 2020: Our Initial Ratings," University of Virginia Center for Politics, January 17, 2019, <http://crystalball.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/house-2020-our-initial-ratings/>.
- 77 Indeed, in the 2016 U.S. election, there were fourteen states where a presidential candidate won with a plurality (rather than a majority) of the vote. Had voters who supported a third-party candidate (such as Libertarian Gary Johnson or Green party candidate Jill Stein) been allowed to express a second-choice preference, it is possible that some of these states would have seen different results.

- 78 A 2013–2014 study by Caroline Tolbert of the University of Iowa and Todd Donovan of the Western Washington University polled nearly 5,000 likely voters in cities that had used ranked-choice voting for recent elections versus control cities. See “Campaign Civility: Ranked-choice Voting and Civil Campaigning,” FairVote, http://www.fairvote.org/research_rcvcampaigncivility. See also David C. Kimball and Joseph Anthony, “Voter Participation With Ranked-choice Voting in the United States,” Electoral Systems, Electoral Reform, and Implications for Democratic Performance Workshop, FairVote, October 2016, <http://www.umsl.edu/~kimballd/KimballRCV.pdf>.
- 79 Jon Meacham, *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels* (New York: Random House, 2019), 121–123, citing David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan, Third Edition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).
- 80 See the National Election Studies data in David Niven, *The Politics of Injustice* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 131–144. While opinion polling shows a decline in support for Democrats, voters often did not have a choice of candidates at the state level because Republicans had not bothered to field candidates for decades in unwinnable districts. Thus, the presidential level is more telling; in 1952, a Republican presidential candidate won Florida, Texas, and Virginia, while, in 1956, a Republican won those three states and Louisiana. Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy regained Louisiana, with its heavily Catholic population, and Texas, thanks perhaps to his choice of a Texan running mate, but he lost Mississippi and Alabama. Note that surveys of voting southerners in the mid-twentieth century would exclude nearly all African-Americans, who were disenfranchised through aggressive voter suppression.
- 81 One of his judicial appointees who was particularly active in blocking voting rights had called black Americans “chimpanzees” from the bench, for instance, prior to being elevated by Kennedy. See David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 22–24.
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- 83 Kyle Cheney, “Trump Kills GOP Autopsy,” *Politico*, March 4, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/03/donald-trump-gop-party-reform-220222>.
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- 87 Rob Griffin, Ruy Teixeira, and William H. Frey, “America’s Electoral Future: Demographic Shifts and the Future of the Trump Coalition,” Center for American Progress, April 14, 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/democracy/reports/2018/04/14/449461/americas-electoral-future-2/>.
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