

Study suggests anger drives voters to turn to far right parties in Europe

July 6 2022



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Anger and a lack of trust in traditional political institutions—rather than

fear—are the key drivers of support for radical right and anti-immigration political movements in Europe, according to a new study published in *Social Science Quarterly*.

Researchers found that a desire to take action against a perceived out-group by voting for far right political parties increased with the level [anger](#) rather than with the level of anxiety or fear, which showed no such correlation.

And the effect of anger over immigration on support for radical right parties was strongest among those with the lowest levels of trust in traditional political institutions.

The findings were revealed in a new paper co-authored by Professor Sofia Vasilopoulou, of the Department of European and International Studies at King's College London, and Professor Cengiz Erisen, of Yeditepe University, Turkey.

The authors said: "Our study demonstrates that anger in reaction to immigration is associated with support for the far right. Such parties are seen as the key political actors to address the norm violations that immigrants are perceived to be committing.

"Distinguishing emotions beyond their valence provides an important corrective to a commonly held view that support for the far-right relates to the 'politics of fear.'

"Simply put, whereas anger pushes groups and people away from each other toward opposite ends, thereby provoking affect-driven polarized politics, fear is much more closely associated with support for the status quo rather than radicalism and polarization."

Data for the study was drawn from surveys taken in Germany and the

Netherlands in 2015, at the height of the European migration crisis, and from the U.K. in 2019, following elections to the European Parliament and amid ongoing Brexit negotiations.

Across all three surveys, the likelihood of voting for a far-right party (AfD, PVV, and the Brexit Party) increased in line with the level of anger about immigration, while there was no clear correlation between increased level of anxiety and voting for the far right.

The researchers also found that higher levels of anger over immigration increased the likelihood of overestimating the number of immigrants coming into a country.

They said: "The feeling of significant dissatisfaction with [immigration policies](#) tends to color how the public perceives the number of immigrants entering the country. Anger appears to bias the public's capacity of estimation in regard to an issue of importance, such as immigration."

More information: Cengiz Erisen et al, The affective model of far-right vote in Europe: Anger, political trust, and immigration, *Social Science Quarterly* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/ssqu.13153](https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13153)

Provided by King's College London

Citation: Study suggests anger drives voters to turn to far right parties in Europe (2022, July 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-07-anger-voters-parties-europe.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.