

# The right-wing populist appeal of Donald Trump in comparative perspective

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## Abstract

This study examines Donald Trump's appeal in the 2016 US presidential campaign, and compares this to affect toward right-populists from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. We employ within-country analysis to compare the appeal of right populist to centre-right candidates in each case, and also use cross-country comparisons to assess the appeal of right-wing populists across these cases, and test hypotheses about how sources of appeal of right-populists differ from center-right candidates. Standard predictors of affect toward right-of-centre candidates were generally less relevant to right-populist candidates. This comparative perspective demonstrates that Trump's appeal - based on racial resentment, anti-immigration sentiments, and anxiety over change - was very similar to right-populists in other English speaking democracies. We conclude with a consideration of broader questions about how right-populist candidates might disrupt the positions of centre-right parties.

## *Introduction*

Many observers of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign were perplexed by how an unorthodox candidate with no prior experience could achieve such electoral success. But studies of notable European right-populists and populist parties such the Front National in France (Lewis-Beck and Mitchell 1993), Geert Wilders' PVV (van Kessel 2011), Jörg Haier and the Austria's Freedom Party (Riedlsperger 1998; Mudde 2004), the Swiss People's Party (McGann and Kischelt 2005; Coffe' and Voorpostel 2010), and Norway's Progress Party (Oesch 2008) suggest a potential explanation for Trump's appeal rooted in anxiety, immigration and racial resentment. Placing Trump in the comparative context of right-wing populists from other party systems, we argue, provides us important leverage to develop understanding of his appeal to an important subset of American voters in 2016.

Although sources of the electoral appeal of European right-populists have been documented in the continental European context (e.g. Mudde 2000; Kitschelt 1995; Gibson 2002), there has been less comparative attention to the phenomena in the US and other Anglophone democracies. It is important that Trump is considered from a cross-national comparative perspective in order to better understand his appeal specifically, and to place him in the general context of right-wing populists from other party systems.

The right-wing populism literature is not limited to Europe. Cases from English-speaking democracies identified as right-populist include Preston Manning and the Reform Party of Canada (Barney and Laycock 1999), Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Australia (Mughan et al 2003), Nigel Farage and Britain's UKIP (Webb 2013) and Ross Perot's Reform Party in the US (Owen and Dennis 2006). Yet, despite this range of cases from English speaking democracies, there are few studies of right-wing populism cross-nationally outside

the European continent. By applying hypotheses drawn from the European cases to other right-populist candidates in English speaking democracies, we find that factors known to structure right populist appeal in Europe - antipathy toward immigration, racial resentment, and anxiety - also structured affect toward right-populists in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Trump in the United States. Our results suggest that when the Trump phenomenon is considered in this context, the basis of his popular appeal appears somewhat commonplace, if also unusual given his relative success in the 2016 presidential election cycle.

Understanding the attraction of right-wing populism (RWP) across a range of cases is important because the popular appeal of right-populism is likely to be distinct from the appeal of standard center-right politics. If we understand how it is different, we can advance our understanding of how RPW may affect party systems broadly. A better appreciation of any distinct appeal of right-populism can also bring us some distance toward understanding if RWP may disrupt traditional (left-right) political cleavages, an important question for any established democracy.

### ***Defining right-wing populism***

Populism has been defined by Mudde (2004:544; Freedman 1998) as a "thin centered ideology." Other than championing "the people," it lacks core concepts or a shared agreement about the scope of the state in the economy (Mudde 2007; 2004). Populism is thus something that can "travel" across the left and right of the ideological spectrum (Akkerman et al 2013). Mudde (2007:23) describes populists as seeing society divided into two "antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus the corrupt elite," with populist candidates arguing that politics should be a direct expression of the general will of the people. Right-wing populists have been

differentiated from populists generally by being some combination of nationalist, exclusionary (Mudde 2013), anti-elite conservatism, characterized by a (rhetorical) faith in direct democracy as a means to express popular will over an entrenched, "corrupt" establishment (Mudde 2004; Canovan 1999). This definition of right-populism is both substantive and procedural. Populist politicians claim to speak directly for "the people," in opposition to traditional representation via establishment parties and party elites (Norris 2005; Abedi 2002; Canovan 1999; Hicks 1931), with a category of populists branded as right-wing for combining this process appeal with some conservative policies shared by right-of-centre parties.<sup>1</sup>

Right-wing populist parties have also been defined in terms of the mobilization of grievances and anxiety over social and economic change, political elites, and immigration (Ivarsflaten 2008). While economic disaffection (Anderson 1996; Betz 1994) has been identified as a source of support for right-wing populism, one major source of its appeal lies in mobilizing public hostility to social and cultural change associated with (or blamed on) immigration (Ivarsflaten 2008).<sup>2</sup> The popular appeal of right-populism, depending on context, may also reflect nativist racial resentment (Ivarsflaten 2008; Mudde 2007; Sniderman et al 2000; Anderson 1996; van der Brug et al 2000). The literature generally distinguishes right-populists democratic movements (such as those noted above) from anti-democratic, neofascist parties such as the Italian Social Movement and the British Nationalist Party (Golder 2003; Fennema 2005). Definitions of (left) populism need not assume that populism is inextricably linked to hostility toward immigrants (Akkerman et al 2013; March 2011), but right-wing populists regularly stress the threats that immigrants pose to "the people." Put somewhat

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<sup>1</sup> We recognize that some right-populist parties (e.g. the FN) support expanded social services - as long as those who are deemed undeserving are excluded from access.

<sup>2</sup> Left populism (Mudde 2013:162) may champion redistributive policies and be more inclusive of groups facing discrimination (e.g., Latin America, Syriza, Podemos).

differently, right-populism evokes nostalgic, retrospective nationalism and claims of speaking for 'regular people' anxious about social, cultural, and economic change that is often attributed to the presence and social ascendance of racial and ethnic minorities.

### ***Right-wing populism in contemporary America***

America's decentralized, candidate-centered party system, with parties that are, at times, quite ideologically heterogeneous, and with a fluid, decentralized candidate selection process, can occasionally provide space for populist presidential candidates. George Wallace's split from the Democratic establishment in 1968, Perot's ideologically-vague 1992 campaign against free-trade and "special interests," Pat Buchanan's "culture war" within the Republican Party in the 1990s, and Donald Trump's capture of the 2016 Republican nomination serve as examples of right-populist candidates in the US. Perot competed as an independent, but flirted with establishing a new party. Wallace, Buchanan and Trump fit awkwardly into their respective parties, sharing some issue positions with conservatives of their day, while also adopting positions that put them at odds with their party's establishment. Wallace resisted his party on racial integration. Perot fought an international trade agreement many Democrats and Republicans supported. Buchanan positioned himself farther to the right on social and moral 'values' issues than his party's presidential candidates. Wallace and Perot ultimately ran against their party, while Buchanan unsuccessfully sought his party's nomination. What makes Trump different is that not only did he remain within the party, but he captured the GOP presidential nomination in 2016.

These candidates might also be labeled as conservative in a literal, non-ideological sense of the word for defending against change, and against forces threatening change. With Wallace, traditional white superiority was threatened by a federal government promoting the

interests of "underserving" blacks. He stressed "law and order" while calling attention to lazy "punks," "hippies," "elites" and "bureaucrats and intellectual morons" who made life hard for regular people. For Perot, trade with Mexico threatened American workers in traditional industries, because America had been "out negotiated" by disloyal lobbyists aligned with Mexico. Buchanan called to "take America back" and rallied against Mexican immigrants and "relativistic," secular threats to traditional "Judeo-Christian values." To varying degrees, although their popular support was limited, their themes had some appeal that cut across party lines (Burden 2003, on Buchanan; Alvarez and Nagler 1995 on Perot).

The populist labels applied to these right-of-centre American candidates stem from their anti-party (Owen and Dennis 2006) and anti-elite themes. Wallace bolted from and challenged the "liberal" Democratic establishment of his party. Buchanan, Perot and Trump never held office, with the latter two never clearly situated with either major party. Trump won the Republican nomination after proposing to build a wall on the Mexican border, monitor mosques, ban all Muslims from entering the US, and ridiculing his rivals as "lying," "corrupt," "weak," and (Jeb Bush) as "dumb as a rock." His candidacy, although more electorally successful than Wallace, Perot, Buchanan, and Perot, nonetheless reflected elements of a recurring style of American right-wing populism that they shared.

### *A comparative perspective*

Our primary interest here is assessing how Trump's appeal compares to that of other right-populists. We test this by comparing Trump's appeal to that of right-wing populists from several other English-speaking democracies, using opinion data from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. These cases share a relatively common cultural and political landscape, and with the exception of Quebec, democracy developed in each country from

English-common law traditions, with (primarily) white English-speakers initially as the dominant social group (after colonization) Each country also experienced periods of immigration of non-white, and / or non-English speakers that corresponded with the rise of prominent right-wing populist candidates.

We test hypotheses about the basis of affect toward Trump by comparing models of Trump's appeal to models predicting the appeal of Pauline Hanson (Australia, ONP), Preston Manning (Canada, Reform), Winston Peters (New Zealand, NZF), and Nigel Farage (UK, UKIP). We also compare these populist candidates' sources of appeal to the appeal of standard center-right candidates and party leaders in each country. The goal of this is to test how the appeal of right-wing populists is different than the appeal of center-right candidates they compete against. Although the political context giving rise to each of these individuals was somewhat unique (e.g. the moment in time, the party system, electoral system), each of these right-populist candidates promoted a range of standard conservative issues while also voicing populist, anti-immigration themes that challenged their nation's centre-right establishment.

### ***Cases for comparison***

*Preston Manning and Canadian Reform:* Manning's father was a Social Credit Premier of Alberta, and Manning stood (unsuccessfully) as a federal Social Credit<sup>3</sup> candidate after graduating from university. Manning formed Reform in 1987 as western Canadian party protesting Canada's Ontario and Quebec-based political and economic establishment.<sup>4</sup> Reform differentiated itself from the ruling centre-right Progressive Conservatives (PC) over

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<sup>3</sup> For discussions of western Canadian Social Credit and populism see Macpherson (1953), Canovan (1982).

<sup>4</sup> "The West wants in" was a Reform slogan in the 1988 federal election.

immigration and other social issues. Manning opposed immigration "designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada" (Tropper and Weidfeld 1999). Under Manning, Reform also differentiated itself from the PC by rejecting bilingualism, multiculturalism, affirmative action for minorities and aboriginal self-governance (Flanagan 2001: 284). At the same time, Reform's populism could also be seen in its acceptance of direct democracy, and its championing of the "common sense of the common people" (Johnson et al 2005:87).<sup>5</sup> In the 1993 Canadian election that we examine here, Manning challenged the governing centre-right PC, which had recently replaced its leader Brian Mulroney with Kim Campbell.<sup>6</sup>

*Winston Peters and New Zealand First (NZF):* Peters founded NZ First in 1993 after breaking from the governing National Party, New Zealand's main centre-right party. His party rose to prominence after modest success in the 1996 New Zealand election. Peters distinguished NZF from National by staking out anti-multicultural and 'law and order' policies while claiming that Asian immigration should be "cut to the bone." He accused immigrants of stealing jobs, driving up real estate prices, and claimed Asian immigrants were "importing criminal activity" to New Zealand (McLachlan 2013). Peters derided the New Zealand Labor party as "spa bath, Chardonnay sipping, social elites" promoting "politically correct" cultural and immigration policy that was out of touch with "working class New Zealand." He criticized policy allowing Muslim asylum seekers, who he called "potential terrorists" holding values alien to New Zealand (quotes from Johnson et al 2005). In the 1996 New Zealand election, Peters challenged the governing centre-right National Party, led by Jim Bolger.

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<sup>5</sup> Manning also injected moral issues into Canadian politics, stating that homosexuality was "destructive" to society.

<sup>6</sup> Results reported here are similar if affect toward Campbell or Mulroney is compared to affect toward Manning.



*Pauline Hanson and One Nation Party (ONP):* Like Peters, Hanson followed a similar path from centre-right governing party candidate to establishing a new populist party. She was disendorsed as a candidate for the Liberal Party of Australia after she called for ending the government's policy of aiding Aborigines. After being elected as an independent in 1996, she formed ONP, calling for an end to multiculturalism and zero Asian immigration. One Nation promoted the defense of Australia's "Anglo-Celtic" cultural traditions that Hanson alleged to be threatened by the "political correctness" of establishment parties (Johnson et al 2005:92). In the 1998 federal election that we examine, Hanson challenged John Howard's governing centre-right Liberal Party.

*Nigel Farage and United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP):* Farage also left his country's the main centre-right party to form a new right-populist party. He renounced his membership in the governing Conservative Party in 1992 in protest over the party's embrace of the European Union, and then co-founded UKIP in 1993. Support for UKIP grew after 2006 as the party adopted conservative positions on social issues and taxation, while promoting "anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim populism" (Trilling 2012). Farage claimed Muslim immigrants were "coming here to take us over," called for reduced immigration, a requirement that foreign workers speak English, and benefits cuts for migrants. Farage also claimed a UKIP government would leave the EU in order to "take back control of our borders."<sup>7</sup> In the 2015 British election Farage challenged David Cameron and Cameron's Conservative Party.

*Donald Trump and the U.S. Republican Party:* Trump's relationship with the Republican Party was different than what these other candidates had with their governing centre-right parties, but the Trump case has many similarities. The open, candidate-centric

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/general-election-2015-no-room-for-the-word-immigration-on-nigel-farage-s-five-point-pledge-but-10144593.html>

US party system allowed Trump to mount an insurgent campaign against centre-right Republican presidential candidates by appealing directly to voters *within* the Republican Party's presidential nomination process. Trump used racially-tinged language, argued for deporting undocumented immigrants, stressed that America needed to be made "great again" because it was "losing" as a result of immigration and the actions of "stupid" elites. Trump linked Mexican immigration to rape and other crimes, and borrowed Farage's language to condemn international trade deals. His emphasis of imminent economic and cultural threats posed by Muslims, mosques, and "political correctness" echoed the language of Peters, Hanson, Farage, and to a lesser extent, Manning. In 2016, Trump challenged centre-right candidates Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio and John Kasich for the Republican nomination, and then faced Hillary Clinton in the general election.<sup>8</sup>

Table 1 about here

Antipathy to immigration, as often present with European right-populists, was a common theme in the rhetoric of right-populists in these English-speaking democracies. Our interest, however, is in the substantive effects this had on affect toward these candidates relative to rival centre-right candidates. As Table 1 demonstrates, there were consistent, substantial differences in how anti-immigration attitudes resonated with supporters of right-wing populists and establishment centre-right candidates. The differences reveal the capacity for anti-immigration sentiments to create far greater positive affect toward right-populist than centre-right candidates. American respondents supporting Trump were four times more likely than supporters of centre-right Republicans to say that legal immigration was bad, and over three times more likely to support decreased immigration. In Australia, Hanson's supporters

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<sup>8</sup> In the multivariate tests, we compare affect toward Trump to affect toward Bush. Results are similar when Trump is compared to Rubio.

were nearly four times more likely than Howard's to call for major reductions in immigration. Supporters of Manning, Peters, and Farage were generally about twice as likely to call for reduced immigration compared to people who supported Campbell, Bolger, and Cameron, respectively. It appears these anti-immigration attitudes were central to the appeal of RWP candidates.

### ***Expectations and hypotheses***

The capacity for immigration attitudes to differentiate the relative appeal of centre-right versus right-populists must be assessed relative to the effects of other attitudes - racial resentment and anxiety - also known to condition affect toward right-wing populists in Europe. In this section we consider the relative basis of affect toward right-populist versus right of centre candidates when attitudes about immigration, racial resentment, anxiety, and other attitudes and demographic factors are considered independently. The analysis here employs within-country comparisons (comparing the appeal of the right-populist to a centre-right candidate in each case) and cross-country comparisons (identifying common factors across cases), in order to distinguish the popular appeal of both sets of candidates.

To begin, attraction to parties and candidates is conventionally explained (in varying degrees) by partisan orientation (Campbell et al 1960), by a person's self-placement on a left-right ideological continuum (Jacoby 1991), religion (Rose and Urwin 1969) or religiosity (Arzheimer and Carter 2009), income or social status (Alford 1967; Butler and Stokes 1969), and economic evaluations (Lewis-Beck 1988).

These conventional variables reflect general expectations about what we might observe when comparing affect toward a centre-right candidate to affect toward a standard centre-left candidate. That is, people who place themselves on the right of the left-

right continuum (or who identify as conservative), and people who identify with the major right-of-centre party, are expected to rate a centre-right candidate more favorably. Conversely, those placing themselves on the left and those who do not identify with the centre-right party are expected to find the centre-left candidate more appealing. Religious attendance, likewise, is expected to have a positive association with the appeal of a centre-right candidate, and an inverse association with evaluations of a centre-left candidate. Higher income / higher social-status voters would be expected to be drawn toward centre-right parties and candidates, while lower-status voters would be expected to find the centre-left more appealing. Negative evaluations of economic performance would be expected to correspond with negative evaluations of incumbents, regardless of party.

However, we anticipate that these conventional factors can be disrupted by right-populists. Given that right-wing populists share some conservative positions with centre-right parties, while also adopting positions on issues and process that depart from those held by the centre-right (most notably immigration), and because these candidates may mobilize support by highlighting the alleged ('corrupt', 'elite') flaws of the centre-right establishment, we expect that factors predicting the appeal of right-wing populists will be distinct from those that predict support for major party centre-right candidates. Put differently, we will test how right-wing populists tap into sentiments that cut across conventional left-right attitudinal and demographic cleavages. Ideological self-placement on the right, and affiliation with the dominant right party, then, could correspond with approval of centre-right candidates, but may play less of a role (or no role) in explaining affect toward right-populists. Likewise, religiosity and (upper) social status (reflected by higher income and higher education) may play more of

a role in explaining the appeal of conventional centre-right candidates than right-wing populists.

Given the discussion above, we expect that racial resentment and anti-immigrant sentiments in the public provide cleavages that allow right-populists to mobilize affect, but these sentiments may have no effect, or a potentially depressing effect, on affect toward centre-right candidates. This follows from our assumption that right-wing populists may successfully cast establishment centre-right figures as supporting status quo policies (immigration, multi-culturalism) that created the alleged social / economic / cultural ‘crises’ that populists critique.

Related to this, we expect that part of the populists’ appeal lies in their attempt to embrace people who feel anxious about their country and its future. When right-populists decry the ills of social and cultural change, they compare a flawed present to a supposedly better past, or to a future expected to be dangerous if the status quo is maintained. We have multiple measures for such anxiety; one is a demographic proxy, the second are attitudinal, which vary, based on availability of survey questions. They measure such attitudes as fear of crime and joblessness in the future (Australia), the demise of traditional values (Canada, UK), things going the wrong way in the future (NZ), the need to protect the American way of life from foreign influence (Iowa caucus voters), and fear of a local terror attack (U.S. national survey).

Our demographic proxy measure of anxiety is gender. Men have enjoyed privileged social and economic position, so on average men may find themselves threatened by changes that right-populists decry, and by the perceived social dislocation associated with women and minorities ascending toward equal status with men. Moreover, men may be more likely to

hold blue collar jobs and thus be anxious due to changes in that workforce (Givens 2004). Some women may be offended by right-populist rhetoric; right-populist and radical-right candidates in Europe have been characterized by their anti-feminist rhetoric (Kitschelt 1995). Women may also be affronted by the "verbal violence" (Mayer 1999) and extreme positions (DeVaus and McAllister 1989) of right-populists candidates. As such, we expect right-wing populists to be more appealing to men than women. Indeed, right-wing populist parties in Europe have attracted more support from men than women (Mayer 2015; Givens 2004).

### ***Data, measures, and models***

Our hypotheses are tested with opinion data from the 1998 Australian Election Study, the 2015 British Election Study, the 1993 Canadian Election Study, the 1996 New Zealand Election Study, a 2015 survey of likely Republican caucus attendees conducted in Iowa during the caucus campaign, and a US sample from the 2016 American National Election Pilot Study.<sup>9</sup> Popular appeal of populist and standard centre-right candidates is measured (depending on the survey) on a 0 - 100 feeling thermometer scale, or 0 - 10 rating indices re-scaled to range from 0 - 100. These scores provide us a comparable measure of affective evaluations of candidates and party leaders (Roseman 2006; Aarts, Blais' and Schmitt 2011).

The measurements of our key independent variables differ somewhat across countries, given differences in question wording and response options across the six surveys (see Appendix for details). Nonetheless, the substantive magnitudes of effects estimated with these items are directly comparable in within-country tests since items are identical in those tests. The measures of racial resentment and enmity toward immigration are scaled relatively similar across each country. Racial resentment is measured with questions that asked

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<sup>9</sup> The telephone survey of likely caucus attenders was conducted by [deleted].

respondents their attitudes about the behavior of minorities or about policies that benefited minorities. Enmity to immigration is measured with items that measured support for slowing the pace of immigration - a dichotomous measure reflecting a preference for fewer immigrants. As noted above, measures of anxiety vary but these are also coded as a dichotomy where 1 reflects an anxious response. Religiosity is measured as frequency of attendance at religious services, apart from the Canadian survey where it reflects the 'importance of God' in a person's life. Self-identified conservatism reflects responses to placement on a left-right or liberal-conservative continuum.<sup>10</sup> Models were estimated with OLS, and also included measures of party identification, economic evaluations, education, income, gender and age. All variables are described in the Appendix.

### ***Results***

Table 2 displays results of models estimating affect toward Donald Trump and Jeb Bush in the Iowa and US samples. Table 3a and Table 3b report results of nearly identical models comparing estimates of feelings about right-populist candidates to estimates of feelings toward centre-right candidates in Australia, Canada (Table 3a), New Zealand, and the UK (Table 3b). The results demonstrate substantial consistency across countries and provide support for most of our hypotheses.

**Racial Resentment.** Figure 1 plots the independent effect of a one standard deviation increase in racial resentment on evaluations of right populist versus center-right candidates, as estimated from our models. In every case but New Zealand racial resentment had a substantial, positive effect on affect toward the right-populist candidate. The exception with

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<sup>10</sup> The CES did not ask about religious attendance or ideological self-placement.

New Zealand here likely reflects an ineffective measure of resentment.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, racial resentment had a substantial relationship with (warm) feelings toward Trump in Iowa, but had no relationship with feelings toward Bush. In the US sample, racial resentment had five times greater substantive magnitude on warm feelings toward Trump than Bush. We find a similar pattern in Australia, where racial resentment had nearly five times the magnitude on ratings of Hanson than Howard. In Canada racial resentment corresponded with modestly warmer feelings toward Manning and slightly cooler ratings of Campbell. Farage was also perceived more positively among UK respondents with racially resentful attitudes, while Cameron was not.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 about here

**Anti-Immigration Attitudes.** Figure 2 illustrates that the role of anti-immigration attitudes is even larger than racial resentment, and consistent across all six tests. Feelings about Trump in Iowa, and in the US, were much warmer among people who wanted to deport immigrants (Iowa) and people who wanted to decrease (legal) immigration "a lot" (the US national sample). Conversely, these anti-immigration sentiments corresponded with cooler ratings of Bush in the Iowa and in the US samples. Figure 2 shows that the *net* magnitude of these attitudes on candidate affect is also substantial: opposition to immigration equates to a net 23 point difference in feelings toward Trump versus Bush in Iowa, and a net 19 point difference in the US sample (on the 100 point scale). Attitudes critical of immigration were associated with a similarly large spread in feelings toward Hanson versus Howard in Australia (26 points), Peters versus Bolger in New Zealand (17 points) and Cameron versus Farage in the UK (15 points). In Canada, where anti-immigration discourse was more subdued in 1993,

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<sup>11</sup> The NZES item may likely tap sentiments of relations between Pakeha (European New Zealanders) and Maori, rather than sentiments about Asian immigrants. Peters is Maori.



respondents who supported reduced immigration nonetheless rated Manning 2 points higher, other things equal. Overall, right populists were advantaged by public enmity toward immigration in each case, and in several cases (Bush in Iowa and the US, Howard in Australia, Bolger in NZ) this enmity further dampened the relative appeal of centre-right candidates.

Table 2, Table 3a and Table 3b about here

**Anxiety.** Our results also demonstrate how anxiety (and gender, a proxy for anxiety) structure the relative appeal of right-wing populists compared to traditional centre-right politicians. Figure 3 illustrates how various attitudinal measures of anxiety explained another consistent difference in affect toward right-wing populist versus centre-right candidates. In all five surveys where we had an attitudinal measure of anxiety (there was no item measuring this in Canada), respondents offering an anxious response had greater affect toward a right-populist candidate. Trump was seen as much more appealing (8 points so) by those in Iowa who thought “the American way of life” had to be protected from foreign influence, while these same respondents rated Bush nearly 10 points lower. Trump was rated 8 points higher in the US sample by people who worried that there would be a terror attack in their local area, whereas that worry had no effect on ratings of Bush. Australians who were worried about increased crime and joblessness rated Hanson 3.5 points higher and Howard almost 6 points lower. Respondents in Canada and the UK who thought traditional “traditional values” were at threat rated Manning and Farage more appealing, but this worry had no effect on ratings of Campbell or Cameron. In New Zealand, Peters received significantly higher marks from people who thought their country was going in the wrong direction.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 about here

Figure 4 documents a gender effect is also evident in five of six cases, to varying degrees. Men found the right-populist more appealing in Canada (3 points) than women did, and they rated Kim Campbell significantly lower than women did. There was a similar pattern in the US and UK samples; men found Trump more appealing than women did, while men rated Bush lower. Men in Britain rated Farage warmer than women did, while being significantly cooler toward Cameron than women were. Men in New Zealand also viewed Peters significantly more favorably than women did. The only exception here is Australia, where a female right-populist candidate may have closed the right-populist / centre-right gender gap in a manner similar Marine Le Pen's effect in France (Shields 2013; Mayer 2015). Yet even in Australia, the signs for gender were in the expected direction (Table 3a).

**Demographic factors.** We find a bit of a mixed bag with some of our other hypotheses. As for the ideal that right-populists had more appeal than centre-right candidates among people of lower social status, we do find that Hanson, Farage, and Peters were viewed significantly more favorably among respondents with less education. Yet lower education had no relationship with evaluations of Manning or Trump. We do find that less affluent respondents rated populists Hanson and Peters higher than wealthy respondents did and wealthier people felt more affect toward Cameron, but not Farage. The US and Canada, then, were cases where there was no evidence of right-populists disrupting the standard relationship between social status and support a candidate of the right.

Our tests of the relationship between religious attendance and candidate affect offers some further evidence that the appeal of Trump and other right-populist candidates disrupted standard predictors of affect toward centre-right candidates. Unlike Bush, Trump was viewed less favorably among Iowans who attended religious services frequently. In the US sample,

religious attendance corresponded with warmer feelings toward Bush, but not Trump. Where church attenders have long been a key element of the Republican Party's electoral base (Gelman 2010; Brooks and Manza 2004), they had not warmed to Trump in the preliminary stages of the 2016 campaign. Farage, likewise, was rated lower by people who attended services regularly, while these same people rated Cameron higher. Any positive relationship between religious attendance and candidate rating was limited to centre-right candidates (Bush, Bolger, Cameron and Howard).

**Ideology and Partisanship.** As we anticipated, we see a pattern where conservative ideology and centre-right party identification play much less of a role in the appeal of populists from new parties on the right than with center-right candidates. Self-identified conservatives were generally warmer toward centre-right candidates from the establishment right party (Howard, Cameron, Bolger) than they were toward right-populists. Likewise, self-identification with the main centre-right party had little or no relationship with evaluations of three of the populists (Farage, Hanson, and Manning) and had an inverse relation with ratings of Peters. But Trump is an exception here, most likely reflecting that his electoral context was unique among these cases: rather than leading a new party he captured the Republican nomination. On balance, Trump's appeal did not reflect a disruption the standard pattern of ideological and partisan affinity. Republicans in Iowa did rate Trump lower than other respondents, while rating Bush higher. However in the US sample self-identified Republicans had significantly warmer ratings of both Trump and Bush compared to other respondents, with the effect notably stronger for Trump. Conservatives in the Iowa Republican caucus

sample<sup>12</sup> (most of who were Republicans) also rated Trump higher, and conservatives in the US sample rated both Bush and Trump higher than other respondents did, with the effect again stronger for Trump.

**Other factors.** Our results also suggest that Trump benefited from worries about economic conditions. He was viewed substantially more favorably by people in both samples who felt the US economy was doing worse than a year before, whereas Bush, also seeking to challenge a Democrat from the incumbent party, was not. Right-populists Peters and Hanson were also rated higher by people concerned about their country's economy, while centre-right candidates Howard, Cameron, and Campbell and Bolger were all rated substantially lower. We expect that although these economic evaluations disadvantaged centre-right candidates, they did not necessarily reflect a disruption of the traditional basis of affect for the centre-right. Rather, incumbent centre-right candidates suffered as the result of standard retrospective evaluations of voters who perceived worsening economic conditions and rated incumbents lower as a result.<sup>13</sup> It is nonetheless noteworthy that Trump benefited from retrospective concerns about economic performance, whereas an establishment centre-right Republican did not.<sup>14</sup>

### *Discussion*

Few early observers anticipated Donald Trump had sufficient appeal to capture the 2016 Republican nomination. This paper provides an explanation of affect toward Trump that is grounded in the comparative literature on right-wing populism. We contend that Trump

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<sup>12</sup> The Iowa sample was of likely Republican caucus voters. It contained 398 registered Republicans, 49 independents, and 46 Democrats.

<sup>13</sup> Indeed the election of Adolf Hitler's Nazi party has been explained, in part, as "fairly ordinary" retrospective economic voting (King et al 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Additional analysis tested if affect toward RWP candidates was associated with nationalist / isolationist sentiments, however there were few questions on the matter in these surveys.

reflected a recurring feature of American politics - the "outsider" candidate who rallies against elites and mobilizes support around racial resentment and nativist, xenophobic anxiety about social, cultural, and economic change. His discourse updated and combined Perot on trade, Buchanan on culture and immigration, and Wallace on race. We demonstrate that Trump's appeal, and that of right-populists in other English speaking democracies, had roots similar to sources of right-wing populist appeal in continental Europe. Trump's rhetoric often mirrored that of Hanson, Peters, Farage, and prominent European right populists. By these standards, Trump was not all together unique.

But Trump was also unique. By winning a major party nomination he was able to capture a far greater vote share than Wallace, Perot, or Buchanan, and a greater vote share than right-populists elsewhere. His nomination as a Republican thus complicates comparisons with leaders of right-populist parties. On one level affect toward Trump was very similar to what is observed with right-populists in other countries. Trump benefited substantially from sentiments (immigration, racial resentment, anxiety) that disadvantaged and disrupted affect toward centre-right party leaders in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK.

Affect toward right-populist leaders in most of these countries was greater among men, and people of lower social status who might otherwise be drawn to centre-left parties. This latter point suggests right-populism has capacity to disrupt standard left - right cleavages. Trump, in contrast, while also more appealing to men than a centre-right Republican, was not more appealing to lower social status respondents. As expected, we find that centre-right candidates were more appealing higher status individuals, to those attending religious services, to center-right partisans, and to people who placed themselves on the right of the left-right spectrum, but these factors do not generally coincide with greater affect toward

right-wing populists. Trump, and to varying degrees the other right-populists, were more appealing to those who did not attend religious services frequently. Trump mobilized affect via anxiety, racial resentment, and opposition to immigrants, but unlike other right-populists he did so while simultaneously being relatively more appealing to conservatives and people who identified with the center-right party (Republicans).

Trump generally fits the right-populist pattern while being appealing to partisans of the party establishment he challenged. This begs questions about how such a candidacy - inside a major party or via an insurgent right-populist party - can alter a party system. A comprehensive analysis of this is required for future research, but we suggest Trump tapped into sentiments held by Republican voters that had been unaddressed by establishment Republican candidates. Under such a scenario, Trump may not present a fundamental change to the Republican party or the US two-party system. Right-wing populists from the other countries we examine also provide lessons on the [limited] capacity for right-populists to affect party systems. Each case reminds us that although voters may respond to similar rhetoric across democracies, institutional factors play an important role in the success of RWP candidates.

*Canada:* A strong western regional presence in single-member districts allowed Preston Manning's insurgent Reform Party to win scores of Progressive Conservatives (PC) seats in the west with just 19% of the national vote in 1997, and Manning became the Leader of the Official Opposition. But the Canadian party system is relatively fluid. Ultimately, Reform formed an alliance with the remnants of the PC for the 2000 election, and then became the Conservative Party in 2003, Canada's main centre-right party. Former Reform MP Stephan Harper led the Conservatives to victory in 2006, and Harper served as Conservative

Prime Minister from 2006-2015. In this case the RWP party became more or less assimilated into a more conservative, centre-right Conservative Party, rather than a governing right-populist party.

*Australia:* Pauline Hanson's ONP had modest regional success in Queensland state elections, but collected only 8% of first preference votes in the 1998 federal election. Preference transfer agreements between Labor and Liberals placed ONP last, helping to ensure the party won no House seats. ONP secured one seat under Australia's Single Transferable Voting (PR) for the federal senate. Hanson's threat may have moved Howard to become more aggressive on immigrants, moving the coalition to the right. Nonetheless, Howard and the Liberal/National coalition won governing majorities in 1998, 2001, and 2004 and ONP faded.

*United Kingdom:* Although moderately popular in some regions, UKIP never achieved success under the UK's single member district structure. Farage's party found its strongest showings after 2014 when UKIP won 27% (and finished first) in the European elections. Two Conservative MPs switched to UKIP in 2014, when UKIP also won a by-election. Under threat from UKIP, the Conservatives changed their immigration policy and Prime Minister Cameron also promised a referendum. The Brexit referendum in June 2016 resulted in a 52% in favor of leaving the European Union, the results of which are still to play out as of this writing. Despite the drama of Brexit, UKIP never gained traction in Westminster.

*New Zealand:* Peters' and NZF won 13% of the party vote in the 1996 election, and briefly held the balance of power under the country's MMP/PR system, as Peters became a Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer in a coalition with Bolger's centre-right Government.

But the party has not been in government since 1998, suggesting only a short-term effect that appears to have had little impact on policy.

Taken together, our findings on the perhaps surprising consistency of wellsprings of voter support for RWP candidates compared to the centre-right across countries, combined with the somewhat different outcomes in different systems, suggest that the similar voting dynamics in the English speaking democracies we studied do not result in a given set of outcomes. More importantly, for our purposes, our findings situate the electoral success of Donald Trump not as something unique to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century in the United States, but more of a continuation of dynamics that have existed over the past couple of decades across a number of democracies where RWP candidates have met with at least a modicum of success.



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## Appendix: Variable descriptions and data sources

### *Racial resent*

Australia	Special efforts to protect minorities; <i>e17p3</i> 1-3 (not important)
Canada	Do what for racial minorities?; <i>cpsk3a</i> ; 1-5 (much less)
New Zealand	Importance of race relations on vote?; <i>prace</i> ; 1-5 (extremely)
United Kingdom	Gone to far; quality for blacks and Asians?; <i>r04</i> ; 1-5 (much too far)
Iowa	Blacks should try harder to get ahead; <i>Q45</i> ; 1-4 (strong agree)
United States	Blacks should try harder to be well off; <i>rr4</i> , 1-5 (strong agree)

### *Immigration*

Australia	Reduced number of immigrants a lot?; <i>f6</i> ; 0-1 (reduce a lot)
Canada	Admit fewer migrants?; <i>cpsg5</i> ; 0-1 (fewer)
New Zealand	Reduce immigration a lot?; <i>pimmred</i> ; 0-1 (reduce lot)
United Kingdom	Strong feelings about immigrants? Too many; <i>j05</i> & <i>j06</i> ; 0-1 (yes)
Iowa	Immigration issue position; <i>Q37A</i> ; 0-1 (deport all)
United States	Reduce immigration; <i>immig_numb</i> , 0-1 (reduce a lot)

### *Anxiety*

Australia	Crime up since '96 & no jobs in future; <i>d10</i> & <i>d11p5l</i> ; 0-1 (yes)
Canada	People today don't respect trad. values; <i>mbsa17</i> , (0-1), yes
New Zealand	Things in NZ going the right/wrong way?; <i>ritewrg</i> ; 0-1 (wrong)
United Kingdom	People don't respect trad. British values; <i>tabf0l_3</i> ; 0-1 (agree)
Iowa	Am. way of life need to be protect from for. inf.; <i>Q41</i> ; 0-1 (st agree)
United States	How worried, attack where you live; <i>terror_local</i> , 1-0 (extreme worry)

### *Religion*

Australia	Frequency of attendance; <i>i6</i> ; 1-6 (at least once per week)
Canada	Importance of god in your life; <i>cpsol0</i> ; 1-4 (very important)
New Zealand	Frequency of attendance; <i>qgodgo</i> ; 1-6 (weekly)
United Kingdom	Frequency of attendance; <i>y07</i> ; 0-8 (once p week or more)
Iowa	Frequency of attendance; <i>QD12</i> ; 1-6 (once p week or more)
United States	Frequency of attendance <i>pew_churatd</i> (once p week or more)

### *Conservative*

Australia	Left-right self-placement; <i>b10own</i> ; 0-10 (right)
Canada	n/a
New Zealand	Left-right self-placement; <i>cscal</i> ; 0-10 (right)
United Kingdom	Left-right self-placement; <i>e01</i> ; 0-10 (right)
Iowa	Ideology lib, in between, conservative <i>QD4</i> ; 1-3 (conservative)
United States	Liberal / conservative self-placement; <i>lcsel</i> , 1-7 (conservative)

### *Centre-right party ID*

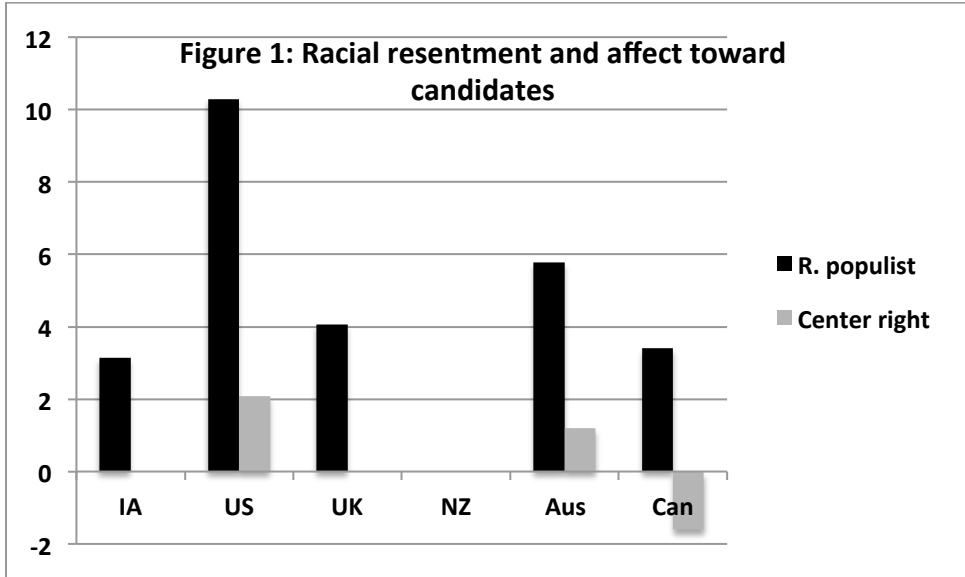
Australia	Party identification Liberal; <i>b1</i> (0-1)
Canada	Party identification Conservative; <i>cpsm1</i> (0-1)
New Zealand	Party identification National; <i>qptisan</i> , (0-1)

United Kingdom	Party identification Conservative; <i>d01</i> , (0-1)
Iowa	Respondent pre-ID as Republican, <i>A_REPUBLICAN</i> , (0-1)
United States	Party identification Republican, <i>pid3</i> ; (0-1)
<i>Economy</i>	
Australia	Situation now compared to 1 year ago?; <i>d4cntry</i> ; 1-5 (a lot worse)
Canada	Past year, the economy of the country?; <i>cpsH1</i> ; 1-3 (got worse)
New Zealand	Country's economy compared to 1 year ago?; <i>pcnow</i> ; 1-5 (lot worse)
United Kingdom	How has economic situation changed? <i>l04</i> ; 1-5 (a lot worse)
Iowa	Country's financial situation change from yr ago; <i>Q35</i> ; 1-3 (worse)
United States	Nation's economy compared to 1 yr ago; <i>econnow</i> 1-5 (worse)
<i>Female</i>	
Australia	Gender; <i>i1</i> ; 0-1 (female)
Canada	Gender; <i>cpsrgen</i> ; 0-1 (female)
New Zealand	Gender; <i>qsex</i> ; 0-1 (female)
United Kingdom	Gender; <i>y09</i> ; 0-1 (female)
Iowa	Gender; <i>QD26</i> ; 0-1 (female)
United States	Gender, gender; 0-1 (female)
<i>Education</i>	
Australia	Assoc, undergrad, BA, or post-grad degree; <i>h3</i> ; 0-1 (higher degrees)
Canada	Highest level completed; <i>cps03</i> ; 1-11 (professional, Ph.D.)
New Zealand	Education level; <i>pedqual</i> ; 1-7 (univ.)
United Kingdom	Education level; <i>y12a</i> , <i>y13a</i> ; 0-1 (uni. diploma, 1st degree, postgrad)
Iowa	Education level; <i>QD6</i> ; 1-8 (graduate work)
United States	Education level; <i>educ</i> , 1-6 (highest)
<i>Income</i>	
Australia	Gross annual income; <i>i14</i> ; 1-16
Canada	Income in thousands; <i>cps018</i> ; 1-994
New Zealand	Personal income; <i>qrincum</i> ; 0-8
United Kingdom	Gross household income; <i>y01</i> ; 1-15
Iowa	Household income; <i>QD21</i> ; 1-6
United States	Family's income; <i>income</i> , 1-16
<i>Age</i>	
Australia	in years; <i>i2</i> ; 18-99
Canada	in years; <i>cpsage</i> ; 18-96
New Zealand	in years; <i>qage</i> ; 18-96
United Kingdom	in years; <i>Age</i> ; 18-97
Iowa	in years; <i>QD7</i> ; 18-96
United States	in years; <i>age</i> , 19-95
<i>Candidate ratings</i>	
Australia	Rate Hanson, <i>c1hans</i> *10; Rate Howard; <i>c1how</i> * 10, (0-100)

Canada	Rate Manning, <i>cpsd2d</i> ; Rate Campbell, <i>cpsd2a</i> , (0-100)
New Zealand	Rate Peters, <i>qpeters</i> * 10; Rate Bolger, <i>qbolger</i> * 10, (0-100)
United Kingdom	Rate Farage, <i>i01_5</i> * 10; Rate Cameron, <i>i01_2</i> *10, (0-100)
Iowa	Rate Trump, <i>Q9G2</i> ; Rate J. Bush, <i>Q9A2</i> , (0-100)
United States	Rate Trump, <i>fttrump</i> ; Rate J. Bush, <i>ftjeb</i> , (0-100)

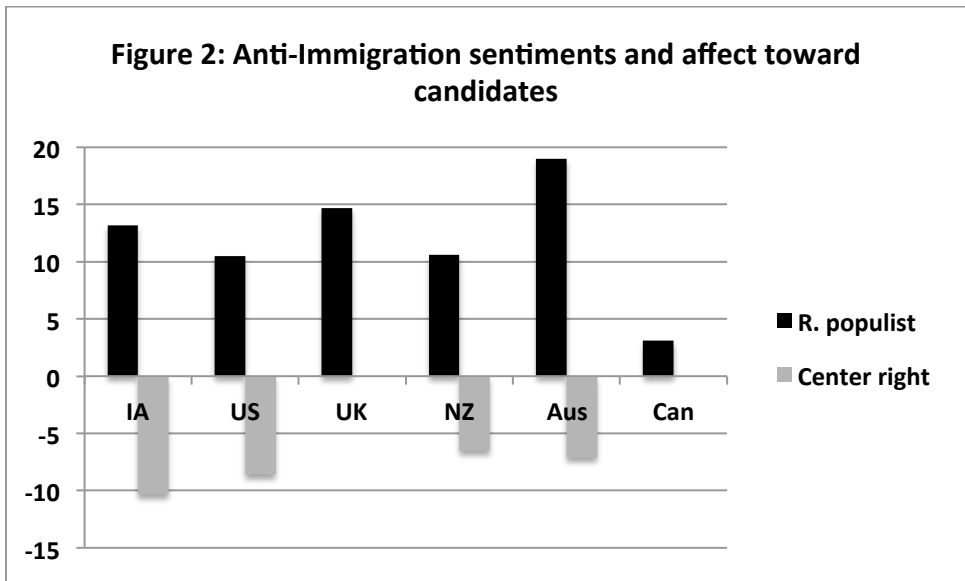
*Data sources*

Australia	1998 Australian Election Study
Canada	1993 Canadian Election Study (English, campaign period & mail back)
New Zealand	1996 New Zealand Election Study (postal respondents)
United Kingdom	2015 British Election Study
Iowa	2015 Rutgers / Eagleton Poll
United States	2016 American National Election Pilot Study



*Note:* Independent effect of a one standard deviation increase in racial resentment, on feelings toward candidates (0-100 scale). See appendix for variable coding and question wording details.

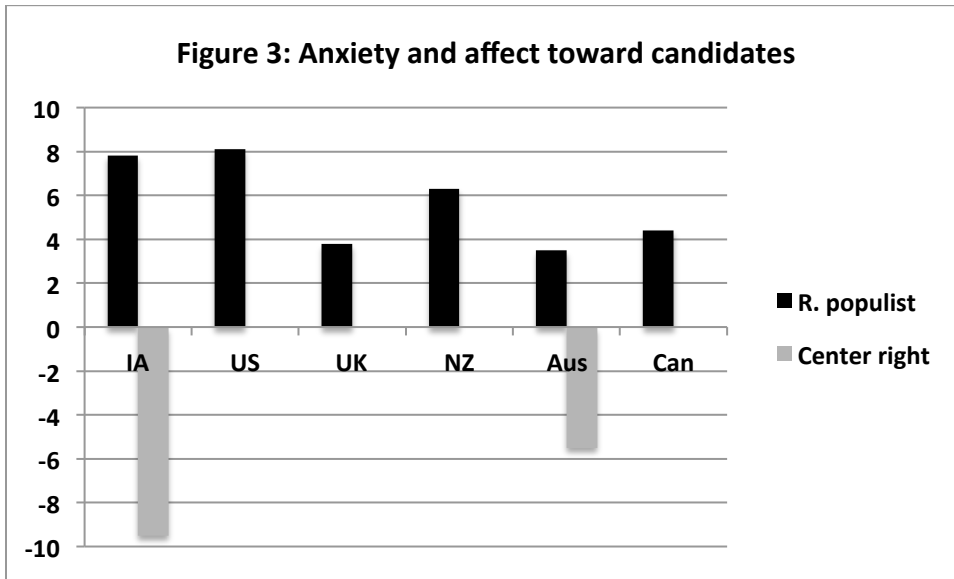
*Source:* Estimated from models 2, 3a and 3b.



*Note:* Independent effect of support for restricting immigration / too many immigrants (dichotomous measures), on feelings toward candidates (0-100 scale). See appendix for variable coding and question wording details.

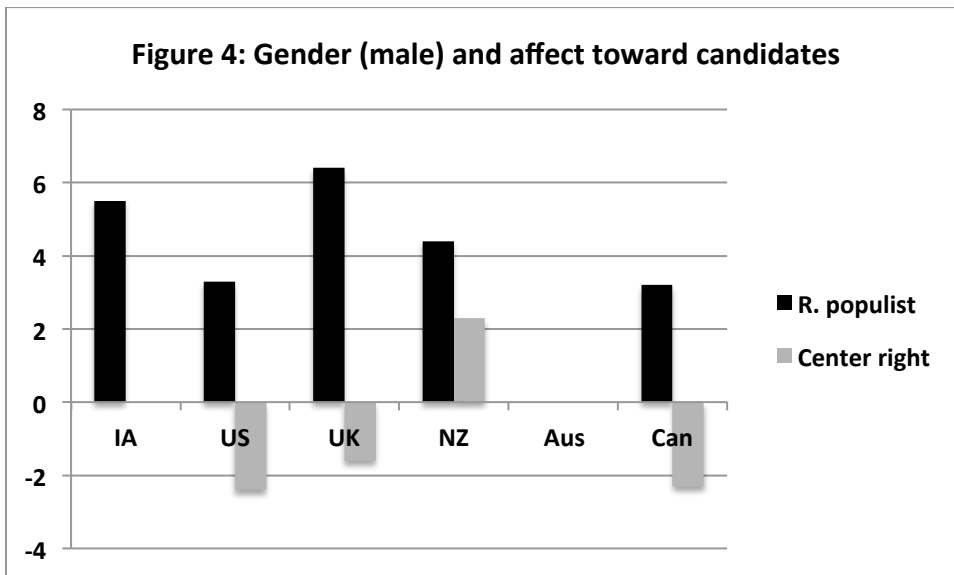
*Source:* Estimated from models reported in tables 2, 3a and 3b.





*Note:* Independent effect of dichotomous measures of anxiety, on feelings toward candidates. (0-100 scale). See appendix for variable coding and question wording details.

*Source:* Estimated from models reported in tables 2, 3a and 3b.



*Note:* Independent effect of gender on feelings toward candidates. (0-100 scale).

*Source:* Estimated from models reported in tables 2, 3a and 3b.

Table 1: Attitudes toward immigration. Right-wing populist voters compared to centre-right voters.

<i>Australia, 1998</i> Number of migrants, reduce a lot?	Voted ONP 64%	Voted Liberal 17%
<i>Canada, 1993</i> Admit fewer immigrants?	Vote Reform 72%	Vote PC 42%
<i>New Zealand, 1996</i> Reduce immigration a lot?	Voted NZF 44%	Voted National 18%
<i>United Kingdom, 2015</i> Too many immigrants, strong feelings about immigration ?	Voted UKIP 79%	Voted Conservative 42%
<i>United States, 2015 (IA)</i> Position on immigration: Deport all undocumented?	Support Trump 45%	Support Center GOP 10%
<i>United States, 2016 (US)</i> Decrease legal immigration	Prefer Trump 38%	Prefer Center GOP 11%
Legal immigration bad for US	20%	5%

*Note:* Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom values from post-election studies. Canada and Iowa 2015, US 2016 pre-election surveys. Center GOP candidates in US are Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, and John Kasich.

*Sources:* 1998 Australian Election Study; 1993 Canadian Election Study; 1996 New Zealand Election Study; 2015 British Election; 2015 Eagleton / Rutgers Iowa Poll; 2016 ANES Pilot Study.

Table 2: Estimating feeling thermometer ratings of Donald Trump and Jeb Bush; Dependent variable 0= 0-100 point scale.

	Trump (IA)	Bush (IA)	Trump (US)	Bush (US)
Racial resentment	4.0* (1.9)	0.3 (1.7)	7.4** (.73)	1.5* (.63)
Immigration	13.2** (3.8)	-10.3** (3.4)	10.5** (3.0)	-8.6** (2.6)
Anxiety	7.8* (3.4)	-9.5* (2.9)	8.1* (3.7)	1.0 (3.2)
Religion (attend)	-1.9+ (1.2)	0.4 (1.1)	-0.2 (.54)	2.41** (.47)
Conservative	5.3 (3.4)	-5.6+ (2.9)	3.7** (.60)	1.5** (.51)
Republican	-8.3* (4.0)	8.7* (3.5)	18.3** (2.3)	12.2** (2.0)
Economy bad	8.4** (2.7)	.05 (2.4)	4.1** (.92)	-1.3+ (.77)
Female	-5.5+ (3.2)	4.2 (2.9)	-3.3+ (1.7)	2.4+ (1.4)
Education	-1.2 (.84)	1.1 (.75)	0.8 (.65)	0.4 (.56)
Income	-0.9 (1.2)	.66 (1.1)	.14 (.30)	-.14 (.26)
Age	-.05 (.09)	.32** (.09)	.19** (.05)	-.01 (.04)
Constant	31.9** (14.6)	25.0+ (12.9)	-28.8** (4.7)	18.3** (4.0)
N	390	390	1029	1028
R <sup>2</sup>	.19	.14	.41	.12

Table 3a: Estimating ratings of right-wing populist and centre-right candidates; Dependent variable 0= 0-100 point scale.

	Hanson (Aus)	Howard (Aus)	Manning (Can)	Campbell (Can)
Racial resentment	8.2** (1.1)	1.7+ (.97)	3.4** (0.9)	-1.6* (0.6)
Immigration	19.0** (1.9)	-7.1** (1.7)	3.1+ (1.8)	.22 (1.3)
Anxiety	3.5+ (2.1)	-5.5** (1.9)	4.4* (1.9)	-.22 (1.4)
Religion	-.10 (.40)	1.5** (.36)	1.0 (.94)	.01 (.71)
Conservative	1.2** (.41)	3.0** (.37)	----	----
Centre-right PID	1.4 (1.6)	26.1** (1.5)	-0.6 (2.0)	14.5** (1.5)
Economy bad	1.4* (.69)	-4.3** (.63)	.59 (.64)	-1.8** (.49)
Female	-1.8 (1.4)	1.3 (1.3)	-3.2+ (1.7)	2.3+ (1.3)
Education	-3.3* (1.6)	1.0 (1.5)	.55 (.44)	.37 (.32)
Income	-.68** (.18)	-.02 (.16)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Age	.16** (.04)	.17** (.04)	-.08 (.05)	-.10* (.04)
Constant	-8.8+ (4.6)	26.9** (4.2)	29.6** (6.4)	62.5** (3.6)
N	1338	1350	710	1070
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.40	.04	.11

Note: See Appendix for data and variable descriptions. \*\* = p. <.01; \* p. <.05; + p. <.10 (all two-tail).

Table 3b: Estimating ratings of right-wing populist and centre-right candidates; Dependent variable 0= 0-100 point scale..

	Farage (UK)	Cameron (UK)	Peters (NZ)	Bolger (NZ)
Racial resentment	4.1** (.61)	-0.3 (.48)	0.2 (.74)	0.6 (.59)
Immigration	14.7** (1.3)	-0.2 (1.0)	10.6** (2.0)	-6.5** (1.6)
Anxiety	3.8* (1.2)	-0.3 (1.0)	6.3** (1.6)	-1.9 (1.3)
Religion	-.34+ (.20)	.80** (.17)	-.06 (.44)	1.4** (.35)
Conservative	2.0** (.37)	3.1** (.29)	-.35 (.43)	4.3** (.34)
Centre-right PID	-1.0 (1.4)	22.8** (1.1)	-12.1** (2.0)	20.8** (1.6)
Economy bad	-1.9** (.63)	-7.9** (.50)	2.5** (.81)	-5.0** (.65)
Female	-6.4** (1.2)	1.6+ (.92)	-4.4** (1.6)	-2.3+ (1.3)
Education	-4.2** (1.4)	-.10 (1.2)	-2.1** (.53)	.21 (.42)
Income	.11 (.16)	.42** (.13)	-1.5** (.54)	.39 (.43)
Age	.11** (.03)	.13** (.03)	.29** (.05)	-.11* (.04)
Constant	10.0* (4.0)	38.2** (3.1)	39.2** (6.4)	30.1** (5.1)
N	2131	2290	1306	1311
R <sup>2</sup>	.20	.44	.18	.45

Note: See Appendix for data and variable descriptions. \*\* = p. <.01; \* p. <.05; + p. <.10 (all two-tail).