

Conditional single-issue political entrepreneurship: The impact of education and attitudinal predictors on support for the Finns Party

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ABSTRACT

This study explores support for the populist far-right Finns Party in the 2023 Finnish parliamentary election. In the 2023 election, the Finns Party obtained their largest historical vote share, which led to the party's inclusion in the current coalition government. Utilizing an original, nationally representative survey, we find that Finns Party support can mainly be explained by political entrepreneurship and the attraction of voters holding anti-immigrant sentiment. While we find that other attitudes had some relationship with Finns Party support, the substantive impact of these attitudes is far less substantial than are attitudes towards immigrants. Further, we find that the impact of attitudes towards immigrants and Finns Party vote choice intention is conditional on education level. Attitudes towards immigrants have a more limited impact on Finns Party support for respondents at higher education levels when compared with those at lower levels. The findings hold significance for the broader literature on populist parties, demonstrating that education can significantly diminish the translation of anti-immigration attitudes into support for far-right parties.

1. Introduction

The year 2023 marked a new high for far-right populism in Finland. As a result of parliamentary elections held in April, the main government party, Social Democratic Party of Finland, headed by the popular prime minister Sanna Marin, finished third with 19.9 percent of the vote and 43 members of parliament (MP) seats. The party was bypassed by the leading opposition parties, the National Coalition Party (20.8 percent - 48 MPs) and the Finns Party (20.1 percent - 46 MPs), who then proceeded to form a government. For the populist far-right Finns Party, this marked the second time it was included as a partner in a coalition government. What is different from the party's first experience in a coalition is that this time the party entered the government under a new party leadership that holds strong anti-immigrant attitudes and places greater emphasis on the issue of immigration.

Finland was for a long time regarded as an exception in Western Europe because it did not have a strong populist far-right party, with a dominating xenophobic component, within its party system (see for example, Arter 2010). However, during the 2010s the Finns Party had gradually adopted stronger anti-immigrant, anti-minority, and anti-environmental policy orientations (Arter 2024). At the same time, as the party's support has increased, its supporter base has become less

diverse and more far-right ideologically (Westinen et al., 2020; Söderlund and Grönlund 2024). However, even with the party's increased success, the Finns Party is one of the populist far-right parties in Western Europe which has received comparably little attention outside of Finnish scholarship. The Finns Party represents an important case in Western Europe as it is one of a few populist far-right parties able to rotate in and out of coalition governance, while also having substantial influence over policy, over the last decade.

The aim of this study is to analyze support for the Finns Party. We utilize a nationally representative survey (n = 2797) conducted in autumn 2022 prior to the parliamentary election. Based on previous studies exploring the relationship between sociodemographic variables, attitudinal predictors, and voting for populist far-right parties, we hypothesize that anti-immigration sentiment will have the largest impact on intention to vote for the Finns Party. Even though Finns Party supporters presumably also hold reserved attitudes towards sexual minorities and are against more ambitious climate change mitigation policies, these attitudes are not expected to be as strongly associated with a higher probability to vote for the party, nor were views on policies related to market regulations. In addition, we hypothesize that the impact of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for the Finns Party is conditioned by education level. In particular, the impact of anti-

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immigrant attitudes on the probability of reporting intention to vote for the Finns Party will be lower among individuals at higher education levels when compared to those at lower levels.

The case study on the Finns Party success in the 2023 election is important for several reasons. First, Finland is a small, homogenous country that has historically not tolerated controversial politics, which the Finns Party represented in the election. For example, for a long time, immigration was regarded as a ‘hushed’ issue in the political agenda (Välimäki, 2012). Second, the Finns party had transformed drastically since their previous 2015 entry into government, with politicians representing more extreme positions. Third, people voted for the Finns Party in the 2023 election despite the party’s only other participation in a coalition government resulting in a disastrous performance (see, Söderlund and Grönönd, 2024). Finally, as Van Hauwaert et al. (2018, 86) suggest, it is crucial for scholars to employ case studies to validate whether the general relationships identified in large-N comparative studies hold true in specific contexts. This methodological approach ensures that broad findings are applicable and accurate when examined in particular contexts, thereby enhancing the robustness and reliability of comparative research.

The contributions are threefold. First, the study uncovers the individual-level attitudes that predict intention to vote for the Finns Party. Specifically, we are interested in how attitudes on four policy areas translate into populist far-right support in Finland: 1) immigration, 2) climate change mitigation, 3) sexual minority rights, and 4) market economics. Second, the study contributes to the political entrepreneurship literature by showing how voters were mainly drawn to support the Finns Party due to their ownership over a single, salient issue. The Finns Party was able to utilize the strategy of political entrepreneurship to take ownership of the immigration issue in the view of their voters. Third, we show how education conditions the impact of political entrepreneurship and the exploitation of populist issues. In particular, individuals at higher education levels were less likely to translate negative attitudes towards immigrants into support for the Finns Party.

2. Background on the Finns Party

The Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*) (earlier known as True Finns in English) is a populist far-right party founded in 1995 after the dissolution of the Finnish Rural Party (*Suomen maaseudun puolue*). The party’s political ideology centered around national and social conservatism, as well as anti-elitism and a rejection of further European integration. The party had some success at the local level during the late 1990s and early 2000s, while at the national level the party held a handful of seats in the Finnish parliament (*Eduskunta*). During that time, Finland could be considered one of a few countries in Western Europe where far-right populism still had not gained substantial public support (Arter 2010; Mickelsson 2020; Westinen et al., 2020.)

According to Arter (2010, 484), during the 2000s the Finns Party was a “populist right-wing party [...] without the xenophobic extremism of [its] continental counterparts”. During the 2010s, the party’s profile started to gradually change. The party gained a significant victory in the parliamentary elections held in 2011 winning 29 seats and becoming the third largest party in the parliament. The party’s election campaign was heavily focused on issues of immigration and demands for stricter immigration policies - a message that had previously been mostly absent from Finnish political agenda (Välimäki 2012). Even though the newly promoted policies related to immigration helped the party to gain popularity and distinguish the Finns party and its supporters from competitors, the party was still largely viewed to derive its support from multiple segments of the electorate for differing reasons (Westinen et al., 2020).

The party’s position changed even further in 2017 when a hardliner leadership coup led to, first, the most vocally anti-immigration members occupying the party’s leading positions, and, secondly, the more

“moderate” voices deciding to leave the party (Arter 2024; Söderlund and Grönönd 2024). After this overhaul, the party’s stance on immigration policies had become even more uniform and pronouncedly more hostile. Arguably, the party has benefitted from the fact that immigration became an important cleavage issue among the electorate that competitor parties were leaving unaddressed (Arter 2020; Söderlund and Grönönd 2024; Westinen et al., 2020). Similar to other populist far-right parties in Western Europe, the Finns Party was able to act as a populist issue entrepreneur to exploit the issue of immigration for electoral gain (Hansen and Olsen 2019, 2022, 2024).¹

At the same time, the party has – like many other populist far-right parties – more heavily included political cues related to anti-environmentalism and anti-LGBTQ + rights into the party’s profile (Borg 2020; Westinen et al., 2020). For example, even though there was no direct climate change denialism within the party’s platform, in the 2019 parliamentary elections it criticized the “moral hysteria” related to climate change and pushed for less ambitious national climate change mitigation policies (Arter 2020, 264). These messages on climate change continued for the 2023 parliamentary election campaign (Arter 2024). Overall, many aspects often associated with cultural backlash, anti-cosmopolitanism, and even some fringe culture war issues of the populist far-right can be identified as being part of the Finns Party’s political ideology.

The Finns Party’s economic policy positions have also witnessed evolution over time. In the past, the party positioned itself in the centre of the political ideological scale and pursued higher progression in income taxation and preservation of welfare benefits for the native population (Mickelsson 2020). Simultaneously, “social and moral issues [were viewed to] outrank economic policies in importance” (Jungar and Jupskås 2014, 222). In addition, the party’s supporters tended to spread out quite evenly when asked to self-place themselves on a left-right ideological scale (see for example Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014).

However, as Westinen et al. (2020, 321) show, the party’s electorate has shifted sharply to the right around the end of the 2010s. Prior to 2023 parliamentary elections, demands for stricter economic policies, especially related to welfare benefits and cuts for public spending, increased within the party. After the election and successful government negotiations, the Finns Party formed a coalition government with the liberal conservative National Coalition Party (Kok), Christian Democrats (KD), and Swedish People’s Party of Finland (SFP). In the coalition government, the Finns Party pursued a right-leaning economic agenda, including a combination of heavy public budget cuts and the introduction of lower income taxes.

3. Populist far-right political entrepreneurship

Hobolt and de Vries (2015; 1161) define issue entrepreneurship as a “strategy by which parties mobilize issues that have been largely ignored in party competition to adopt a policy position on an issue that is substantially different from the mainstream status quo.” The strategy of issue entrepreneurship can be especially useful for minor or fringe parties that are seeking to score support from a segment of disaffected voters. As de Vries and Hobolt (2020) note, challenger parties are rarely successful when they attempt to mobilize voters on issue already monopolized by the main competitor parties. Therefore, these parties

¹ Mudde (2007) discusses the useful terminological variance in referring to right of center-right parties in Europe. However, Mudde and scholars such as Pirro (2023) recognize a broader category of “far-right” that comprises both “radical” and “extreme” right parties. Further, Ennsner (2012) finds that the party family of right of center-right parties exhibits the highest degree of policy homogeneity of any of the party families in Western Europe. To avoid a conceptual debate, which is not the point of the analysis, we opt for use of the broader concept of “populist far-right” when referring to the party.

need adopt an alternative strategy to be successful.

Challenger parties are more likely to succeed when they adopt the strategy of issue entrepreneurship and exploit “niches in the electoral marketplace by seizing on issue areas that might very well reflect a consensus among established parties, but enjoy far less consensus among the public at large” (Hansen and Olsen 2024, 34). Several issue areas exhibit high degrees of appropriability, and challenger parties are in many instances able to monopolize these issues at the outset. Moreover, if competitor parties attempt to co-opt the innovative stance of a challenger party on an issue as a counter-electoral tactic, it might inadvertently backfire and splinter the competitor parties voting and activities bases (de Vries and Hobolt 2020, 120).

We argue that the Finns Party has recently been a successful issue entrepreneur by primarily staking out a unique position on the issue of immigration, which is an issue that is salient to a substantial portion of the Finnish electorate. However, we also posit a few additional issue positions from which the Finns Party might have drawn voters based on monopolizing issues salient to the electorate, but unrepresented by the main competitor parties. Below, we discuss in greater detail these additional attitudinal positions. Aligned with Hansen and Olsen (2024), we recognize that the strategy of issue entrepreneurship is not static and could be impacted by factors exogenous to the party. Therefore, after discussing additional issues that the party could exploit, we highlight how the success of issue entrepreneurship is conditional on other factors – mainly education.

4. Potential issues/attitudes for populist far-right issue ownership

According to Guiso et al. (2017), cross-national differences between far-right parties’ policies can be explained by disillusioned citizens views and demands on contrasting salient issues. For example, populist parties in many southern European countries have campaigned for minimum income legislation and other measures related to citizens’ economic and social protection. The economic demands stem from strict fiscal discipline and austerity politics imposed in the region during the 2010s, which created a demand for populist solutions to these types of policies. In many other parts of Western Europe and North America, populism is instead associated with rightist political orientation, nativism, anti-minority sentiments, and in some cases authoritarianism and xenophobia (Arter 2024; Jungar and Jupskås 2014; Mudde, 2007). There are, therefore, significant contextual differences in how populist far-right issue-entrepreneurship appears; i.e. depending on the context, the issues can vary and even the same issues can be influential to different extents.

Much of the developments that have led to higher support of populist far-right parties are related to the increased salience of immigration as a political issue. Populist far-right parties’ rhetoric and policies are widely associated with xenophobia and rejection of multiculturalism. The parties’ rhetoric appeals to voters possessing fears, prejudices, or even racist attitudes towards immigrants, which leads these people to oppose multicultural policies (Elgenius and Rydgren 2019; Hansen and Olsen 2022; Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020; Lancaster, 2019; Rooduijn 2018; Söderlund and Grönlund 2024). It is reasonable to expect that the Finns Party draws support from people that hold these views by advocating for stricter immigration policies. For example, restrictive admission policies or denial of equal political, civic, social, and/or removal of other kinds of rights to immigrants are commonplace stances among Finns Party politicians.

Along with immigration, opposition to environmentalism and climate action has become a theme that unites Europe’s disparate populist far-right parties and their voters. Even though there is a link between the populist far-right and climate change denialism (see for example, Hultman et al., 2019), many of these parties do not necessarily focus on questioning the existence of the phenomenon altogether. Instead, populist far-right parties mainly aim to illustrate

environmentalism and international climate policies as both ideologically, as well as economically, problematic. First, these parties provide a narrative that climate mitigation policies are solely favored by the cosmopolitan elite at the expense of national sovereignty. Second, the parties frame the outcomes of climate mitigation policies as unbalanced and causing economic grief to the average citizen, while the benefits are allegedly enjoyed by “the others”. The two complimentary strategies intend to cause tension between “ordinary” people and the “elite” implementing the policies (see for example, Arter 2020; Hatakka and Välimäki 2019; Kulin et al., 2021; Lockwood, 2018; Marquardt and Lederer 2022). Among the public, nationalist ideology, anti-cosmopolitan identities, and populist far-right party support are associated with lower climate change related worry and demands for less ambitious national mitigation policies (Drews and van den Bergh, 2016; Kulin et al., 2021; Lockwood, 2018; Weko 2021; Borg, 2020; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Westinen et al., 2020).

In recent years LGBTQ + issues have become an increasingly more pronounced part of a cultural backlash, and therefore, of a populist/non-populist divide. The populist far-right has expanded their attention beyond ethnic minority groups to other vulnerable minority populations, including sexual minorities. The parties’ stance on these matters are generally considered conservative and traditionalist (Lancaster, 2019; Norris and Inglehart 2019). At the same time, populist far-right parties have accused many established parties as focusing on “identity politics,” suggesting that the parties’ increased attention towards LGBTQ + rights poses a challenge to the majority population. Even though findings are sometimes mixed (see for example, Lancaster, 2019), studies find voters of populist far-right parties to be less supportive of improving sexual minorities’ rights compared to competitor parties (Borg 2020; Spierings et al., 2017).

When it comes to the association between preferred economic policies and voting for populist far-right parties, the empirical findings are mixed. Indeed, populist far-right support is connected to economic grievances and opposition to economic elites in some instances (see Golder 2016; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Rooduijn 2018). In the case of Finland, “being [...] on both sides of the middle of the left-right scale predicted the populist vote” in the early 2010s (Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014, 654), but in recent years there are signs that the party’s voting base has shifted to favor more rightist policies (Westinen et al., 2020). However, the salience of economic positioning in comparison to attitudes on other issues in predicting Finns Party support is an area of inquiry that is missing.

5. Conditional impact of education on populist far-right issue ownership

Previously, education has been recognized as a significant predictor of electoral behavior both broadly (Smets and van Ham, 2013) and specifically in relation to populist far-right parties (Cordero et al., 2022; Rooduijn, 2018). In the context of voting for the Finns Party, several reasons suggest that voting intentions are influenced by individuals’ education levels.

First, higher education has traditionally been associated with values promoted by the political left (Rooduijn, 2018). This implies that the values held by highly educated individuals are generally less likely to align with the Finns Party’s stance, irrespective of their views on specific issues such as immigration policy. Second, higher educational attainment is negatively correlated with populist attitudes, meaning that individuals with higher education levels are less likely to support the core elements of populism, namely anti-elitism and people-centrism (Huber et al., 2022). A diminished emphasis on these elements should reduce the appeal of populist rhetoric and policies, regardless of opinions on individual issues.

There are several plausible explanations for relationships between education and electoral behavior. Education serves various functions, such as fostering personal growth, advancing vocational expertise, and,

most pertinent to our discussion, developing individuals' critical thinking capacity. Personal growth can lead to increased openness to alternatives and a reduced emphasis on existing prejudices. Higher education, particularly a university degree, is strongly linked with the development of cosmopolitan values. A cosmopolitan ethical outlook advocates for an interconnected global community where responsibility, openness, and compassion are extended to all individuals (Leino, 2021). This perspective aligns more closely with the values promoted by the political left than those of the populist far-right. Consequently, voters with higher education levels are less likely to be drawn to the issues championed by the populist far-right, in contrast to those supported by left-wing parties.

In the context of supporting populist far-right parties and the effectiveness of their strategy of issue entrepreneurship, critical thinking capacity has at least two significant implications: one related to issue salience and another to how individual issues are framed as political cues. Hansen and Olsen (2024) demonstrate that populist far-right political entrepreneurs target groups that are either dissatisfied with the political system or have previously been non-participants. Therefore, we expect education to have a substantial impact on these two implications. First, higher education is likely to reduce the salience of populist far-right issues by encouraging individuals to critically evaluate political claims and recognize the complexity of social and political issues. Second, individuals with higher education levels are more adept at discerning the framing of political issues, making them less susceptible to simplistic or emotionally charged populist rhetoric. This capacity for critical evaluation diminishes the effectiveness of the populist far-right's issue entrepreneurship strategy among the highly educated.

Advances in critical thinking enable individuals to make reasoned and educated political choices, such as voting decisions. A well-reasoned vote involves the careful consideration of various issues and policy positions, rather than focusing solely on the salience of individual issues. Consequently, individuals with enhanced critical thinking skills are less likely to cast their vote based primarily on a populist, single policy issue, thereby reducing the effectiveness of issue entrepreneurship strategies in garnering political support. The success of single-issue entrepreneurship relies on individuals' focus on specific issues, often amplified through populist rhetoric. Populist rhetoric is typically characterized as 'colorful,' being simple, lofty, confrontational, and divisive (Norris and Inglehart, 2019, pp. 75–76; Van Hauwaert et al., 2018). However, different groups respond differently to these types of cues. For instance, Bos et al. (2013a) found that individuals with higher educational attainment perceive populist rhetoric as diminishing the legitimacy of a politician, whereas the opposite is true for those with lower levels of education. This indicates that more educated individuals are less likely to be swayed by populist rhetoric, as they are better equipped to recognize that there are rarely simple, 'common sense' solutions to complex societal issues.

Although this discussion does not constitute a fully developed theoretical account and findings regarding the association between education and support for populist parties are mixed (Rooduijn, 2018), the reasons provided above warrant further exploration of how individuals' education levels influence their stances on different policy issues. Furthermore, it is plausible that education impacts the effectiveness of populist issue entrepreneurship. Specifically, the connection between views on a single issue and support for populist far-right parties is likely to be less pronounced among highly educated individuals, regardless of their views on that particular issue.

6. Hypotheses

Political attitudes concerning immigration, climate change mitigation, and LGBTQ+ rights are all issues that are ripe for populist far-right party issue exploitation. All these attitudes have been linked to support for populist far-right parties (Norris and Inglehart 2019). We should not, however, expect each of these attitudinal factors to predict populist

far-right support to the same degree. There is considerable evidence that issues related to immigration are central to predicting support for populist far-right parties (Borg 2020; Elgenius and Rydgren 2019; Guiso et al., 2017; Norris and Inglehart 2019). At the same time, populists can also become issue entrepreneurs who seek to exploit other issues in the political agenda that no other party chooses to adopt (Hansen and Olsen, 2024). We hypothesize the following.

H1. The main predictor of support for the Finns Party is attitudes towards immigration and other attitudes are weak predictors.

As was stated previously, in Finland, greater populist far-right support has been associated with lower educational attainment. At the same time, people with higher education levels are less likely to hold anti-immigrant views (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Leino, 2021). There are a few causal mechanisms behind this finding. Previously, higher education levels have been linked to a few attitudinal tendencies, such as increases in levels of tolerance and social trust, amplification of cosmopolitan values, and decreased perceived threat of work market competition generated by increased immigration in general (Cordero et al., 2022; Leino and Ylisalo 2022).

Even though the main aim here is not the causal relationships between education level, immigration attitudes, and Finns Party vote intention, it is plausible to believe that these measures interact. Higher education levels likely predict numerous different tendencies, such as decreased susceptibility to the exploitation of a single, populist issue. Conversely, populist support could be expected to be highest among those who are both low educated and possess negative views about immigration. Based on the above, we hypothesize that.

H2. The impact of attitudes on immigration and support for the Finns Party is conditioned by education level.

7. Data and methodology

7.1. Data

The data for this study derive from a nationally representative original survey conducted in Finland using a Finnish-based survey firm.² The survey was conducted in Finnish and translated to English. The survey was launched in October 2022 and completed in two weeks. Respondents were allowed to pause the online survey and finish the survey later so long as completion occurred within the dates of availability. The average length of time respondents took to complete the survey was ≈28 min. Informed consent was obtained from all participants at the start of the survey. Data collection methods complied with the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on research Integrity (TENK). Overall, there are 2797 respondents included in the empirical analysis, which is a sufficiently sizable sample for estimating party support in a multiparty electoral system. All analyses incorporate post-stratification survey weights to reduce sampling error and avoid any potential non-response bias.

² Estimating multinomial logistic regression models with datasets like the European Social Survey (ESS) or European Values Study (EVS) poses challenges due to limited sample sizes and degrees of freedom issues. For example, the ESS provides fewer than 1250 observations per biennial survey for Finland, with fewer than 1000 useable cases for vote choice models due to non-response. Additionally, the ESS lacks data for recent elections, and the EVS only includes Finland in select years that do not align with election periods. The Finnish National Election Study (FNES) has similar limitations on the number of observations, as well as limitation on the offerings of independent variables. Given these limitations/issues, we opted to collect our own data, which consists of approximately 2800 cases after accounting for non-response on independent variables, allowing for a more robust and reliable analysis.

7.2. Dependent variable and method

The dependent variable of this study is a survey question that asks respondents, “If the parliamentary elections were now, which party would you vote for?” The question refers to the parliamentary election to be held in under six months. The respondents were provided nine competitor parties as choices, as well as options to indicate they would not vote, they do not want to answer, or that they support some other party. The nine competitor parties include all the parties that ended up winning greater than 1 percent of the vote in the 2023 Finnish Parliamentary Election. On average, the vote shares for the parties in the survey sample were within a couple of percentage points of the official elections results (see, [Appendix B](#)).

To predict party vote choice intention, we estimate multinomial logistic regression models. Since the analysis is about individual level vote choice intention, and the variable is a nominal level variable with more than two categories, the most appropriate statistical tool is multinomial logistic regression. For a model with this type of nominal level dependent variable with k categories, the multinomial regression model estimates $k - 1$ logit equations. Therefore, the model estimates coefficients and standard errors for each category in comparison to a reference category of the dependent variable. In this study, the reference category is vote choice intention for the Finns Party. Since voting for the Finns Party is the empirical phenomena of interest, we compare voting for this party to voting for all other competitor parties individually.

The multinomial logistic regression setup allows us to observe two distinct trends. First, we can view how voting for the Finns Party is statistically different than voting for each competitor party. For example, we will be able to test whether the Finns Party draws support based on distinct attitudinal positions not held by supporters of other parties. Second, it will be possible to observe the ways in which Finns Party supporters are similar to supporters of other parties. For instance, we will be able to test whether supporters for the Finns Party are identical on some attitudes to those of the other right-wing parties that the party ultimately entered a coalition government with. To accurately test our hypotheses, we estimate two models: 1. A base multinomial logistic regression model with all predictors included, and 2. An interactive multinomial logistic regression model with all predictors included and an interaction between education and sentiment towards immigrants.

A current weakness of research on the populist far-right parties in multi-party systems is that in many instances binary logistic regressions are utilized to estimate how voters for the populist far-right party differ from competitor parties. This type of model setup is susceptible to differences in the voters of one of the competitor parties driving what appears to be differences between voters for the populist far-right party and all other competitor parties – since all the competitor voters are forced into one group and coded as 0. Using binary models, a theoretical and mathematical assumption is accepted that all competitor parties are statistically the same. Thus, in the Finnish context, for example, if Social Democratic Party (SDP) voters were extremely pro-immigrant, even if Finns Party voters were no different than voters for all other voters, results using the binary models would indicate that Finns Party voters were statistically different than the competitor parties. The issue is especially problematic when using datasets that do not contain enough observations (while utilizing several predictor variables) and analyses that try to compare across binary models over time.

7.3. Independent variables

Research on political behavior finds that individual level socio-demographic differences are generally important predictors for vote choice and party support ([Smets and Van Ham, 2013](#)). Alternatively, there is some indication that specific populist far-right parties do not attract support from a wide variety of voter cohorts ([Hansen and Olsen 2019, 2022](#)). However, in general it is expected that populist far-right

parties can draw individuals from distinct sociodemographic profiles. Therefore, there are several sociodemographic variables utilized in the multiple regression analysis as control variables.

The respondent’s age at the time of the survey is included. According to [Golder \(2016\)](#), the most likely voter for the populist far-right is young men. In addition, [Hansen and Olsen \(2019\)](#) find that AfD voters in Germany are younger on average than voters of other parties, although the substantive effect is miniscule. In Finland, voting for the Finns party was traditionally attributed to middle-aged people ([Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014](#)). However, recently it was found that the elderly are least likely to vote for the party, while the party’s support was almost the same across all other age segments ([Hansen 2024](#)).

Models also account for the respondent’s self-reported gender. There are some conflicting results in the literature regarding the impact of gender on far-right voting, but we generally expect that men will be more likely to vote for the Finns party ([Golder 2016; Hansen 2019; Rooduijn 2018; Westinen et al., 2020](#)). In the case of the Finns party, this pattern has been especially evident, with the party’s voting base being identified as largely male-dominated ([Westinen et al., 2020](#)).

While the relationship between individuals’ educational attainment and voting for left-wing populist parties can be more complicated (see [Rooduijn, 2018](#)), populist far-right parties are expected to garner more support from citizens at lower education levels ([Golder 2016; Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014; Norris and Inglehart 2019](#)). Therefore, the respondent’s highest self-reported education level is included with the expectation that Finns party supporters will be at lower education levels when compared to supporters of competitor parties.³

Lower income can be expected to predict higher populist far-right support, regardless of the party’s stance on distributive policies. When exploring support for the Finns Party, the self-reported total annual yearly income of the respondent is included as a predictor since it is expected that Finns Party supporters tend to be in more precarious financial situations ([Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund 2014](#)). Still, it is important to note that lower income is not universally linked to voting for the populist far-right, which indicates a need to investigate the relationship further ([Rooduijn, 2018](#)).

The multiple regression models also include several attitudinal variables. First, we include a general measure of political ideology with the expectation that right-wing placement on the scale will lead to an increase in the probability of reporting Finns Party vote choice intention. In particular, the political ideology measure is self-reported placement on a ten-point, left-right political ideological scale from “0 = left” to “10 = right”. In the case of Finland, where leftist orientation usually entails support for the welfare state, social programs, and ‘safety nets’ provided by the government, it can be expected that nowadays support for the Finns Party would be lower among leftist voters, even when accounting for other predictors.

Then, we include responses to four survey questions that measure specific political attitudes. For each question, the respondent was provided a statement and asked their evaluation of the statement on a ten-point scale from “0 = extremely bad suggestion” to 5 = neither a good nor a bad suggestion” to 10 = “extremely good suggestion”. A variable is utilized that measures sentiment towards immigrants in the country. The survey question asks, “Finland, where immigration is more

³ The education variable is treated as continuous to avoid degrees of freedom issues and unnecessary complexity that would arise from including eight separate coefficients if treated categorically. This approach is statistically appropriate and efficient given the number of categories. To ensure the robustness of our findings, we also estimated a vote choice model with the education variable treated categorically. This categorical treatment confirmed our results, as the predicted probabilities for the interaction between immigration attitudes and education aligned with the results presented in [Fig. 3](#). The point estimates for the probability of Finns Party support, based on this interaction, are included in [Appendix E](#) to verify the trends.

extensive.” Next, a measure is included that represents a traditional economic conflict within politics. The statement the respondent was asked to evaluate reads, “Finland, where there is more private entrepreneurship and a market economy.” In addition, as far-right parties have begun adopting more critical platforms towards the climate crisis, we include a variable that measures the tension between individual burden and climate change mitigation. The statement the respondents were asked to evaluate was, “Finland, where people have to compromise their lifestyles in order to mitigate climate change.” Finally, we include a variable that represents a culture war issue that far-right parties have recently made more salient in their party programs. In particular, the respondent was asked to evaluate the statement, “Finland, where the rights of sexual minorities are strengthened.” While some of these measures do not perfectly capture each concept, we utilize the same questions as the Finnish National Election Study to be comparable to other studies on the Finns Party. Variable coding and descriptive statistics are provided in [Appendices A and B](#) for predictor variables.⁴

8. Results

In [Table 1](#), multinomial logistic regression output from the base model is presented. The results are mixed when looking at whether Finns Party supporters have a distinct sociodemographic profile. On average Finns Party supporters are statistically younger than are supporters of the competitor parties, except those for the Green League (VIHR). Elderly people are less likely to vote for the party. In contrast, the impact of gender and income does not follow a clear pattern. The relationship between education and Finns Party support does align with the broader literature on populist far-right support. Supporters of all other competitor parties have a statistically significant higher reported education level. The results point out the important relationship between education and support for fringe parties.

There are numerous statistically significant differences between Finns Party supporters and competitor parties when assessing political attitudes. First, only National Coalition Party (Kok) supporters report a more right-wing political ideology. Supporters for all other competitor parties are more moderate or left-wing in their general ideological orientations. Second, supporters for all other competitor parties have more positive (or less negative) views of immigration in the country. Besides education, the immigration variable is the only other variable to show a statistically significant difference in the same direction when comparing Finns Party supporters and supporters for all other parties. Third, the results show that Finns Party supporters convey greater support for private entrepreneurship and a market economy when compared to the left-wing parties, Christian Democrats (KD), and SFP. However, the main right-wing parties – Centre, Kok, and Movement Now (Liik) express a greater commitment to a market economy when compared to Finns Party supporters. Fourth, supporters for all competitor parties except Liik demonstrate a greater belief that Finland needs to be more environmentally friendly even if it means that there will be low economic growth. The result points to the increasingly prominent role of climate mitigation skepticism in attracting support for far-right parties. Finally, only Centre Party and KD supporters provide lower support for LGBTQ + rights when compared to Finns Party supporters. Supporters for all other parties have a statistically greater agreement that LGBTQ + rights should be strengthened. The result highlights the impact of culture war issues on support for far-right parties.

We calculate predicted probabilities for the attitudinal variables to

⁴ The correlations between predictor variables were generally low. The exception was the correlation between attitudes towards immigration and the LGBTQ + rights, which had a correlation less than 0.6. Robustness tests confirmed that the relationship between the variables was not a substantial issue for model estimation and the calculation of standard errors – as model output in [Tables 1 and 2](#) demonstrate.

investigate the impact of the attitudes more concretely on vote choice intention. All predicted probabilities were calculated holding all other predictor variables at their survey-weighted means. Plots showing the effect of political ideology, as well as figures showing the effect of the attitudinal variables with alternative presentation formats are provided in [Appendix C](#). In [Fig. 1](#), the predicted probabilities are displayed for the effect of views on immigration on vote choice intention. Views on immigration have little or no substantive impact on the probability of expressing a vote intention for any of the competitor parties. In contrast, the figure shows the large impact that views on immigration have on Finns Party support. When comparing an individual that views immigration as “extremely bad” to an individual that views immigration as “extremely good” there is a change in the probability of voting for the Finns Party of 0.51. On average, an individual that indicated that Finland with extensive immigration is “extremely good” has a probability of less than 0.03 in voting for the Finns party. For all other parties, when comparing individuals at opposite values on the immigration variable the change in probability of voting for the competitor parties is less than ± 0.13 . The results point to the dominant role that attitudes towards immigration have on populist far-right party support in Finland.

In [Fig. 2](#), the effect of the relationship between the other three specific attitudinal variables and vote choice intention are displayed. The figure demonstrates that the relationship between Finns party support and the three attitudes is much weaker when compared to the effect of views on immigration. An individual that expresses that private entrepreneurship and a market economy is “extremely good” only has an increase of 0.07 in the probability of vote intention for the Finns party when compared to an individual that responded “extremely bad”. In comparison, the change in vote choice intention probability when comparing respondents at these extremes is around 0.37 for Social Democratic Party (SDP) supporters. Similarly, the change in probability of vote choice intention for the Finns Party is only 0.15 and 0.07 respectively when exploring opposing responses for attitudes on the environment and LGBTQ + rights. The results demonstrate that these three attitudinal variables are much weaker predictors of Finns Party support when compared to views on immigration.

In [Table 2](#), multinomial logistic regression output from the interactive model is presented. Generally, the results are consistent with those from the base model with a couple of exceptions. The exceptions are that when accounting for the interaction between immigration and education the results indicate that Finns Party supporters are at lower income levels when compared to all competitor parties (except SFP) and that the impact of political ideology is negligible. The important finding from [Table 2](#) is that the interactive relationship is statistically significant when comparing Finns Party supporters to supporters of the competitor parties. Statistical significance aside, it can be difficult to ascertain the substantive relationship between immigration, education, and vote choice intention from the model output alone.

In [Fig. 3](#), the conditional relationship between education and attitudes towards immigration is displayed. The figure shows that the relationship between views on immigration and vote choice intention for the competitor parties is on average substantively similar regardless of a respondent’s education level. In comparison, there is an interactive relationship between views on immigration and education on vote choice intention for the Finns Party. For a respondent at the lowest education level with a view that Finland with extensive immigration is “extremely bad” the probability of vote choice intention for the Finns Party is 0.65. In comparison, for a respondent with the same view on immigration at the highest education level the probability of Finns Party vote intention drops 20 percent to 0.45. Notably, a respondent that believes extensive immigration is “extremely good” at the lowest education level has a predicted probability of 0.12 for Finns Party vote choice intention. In comparison, a respondent with the same view on immigration at the highest education level has a probability of 0 for indicating Finns Party vote choice intention. Across the panels in [Fig. 2](#), the trend is that the Finns Party vote intention prediction line decreases

Table 1
Vote Choice Finnish National Election (reference category = Finns Party).

	Vas	VIHR	SDP	Centre	Kok	KD	Liik	SFP	Other
Constant	1.36** (0.00)	-5.46** (0.00)	-1.21** (0.00)	-4.14** (0.00)	-8.53** (0.00)	-4.66** (0.00)	-2.87** (0.00)	-10.46** (0.00)	-1.02** (0.00)
Age	0.01** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	0.05** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)
Woman	-0.27** (0.00)	0.59** (0.00)	-0.09** (0.00)	0.22** (0.00)	0.07** (0.00)	0.80** (0.00)	0.06** (0.00)	-0.23** (0.00)	0.34** (0.00)
Education	0.13** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	0.11** (0.00)	0.17** (0.00)	0.33** (0.00)	0.33** (0.00)	0.04** (0.00)	0.58** (0.00)	0.32** (0.00)
Income	-0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Political Ideology	-1.20** (0.00)	-0.48** (0.00)	-0.69** (0.00)	-0.18** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	-0.06** (0.00)	-0.12** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	-0.27** (0.00)
Immigration	0.45** (0.00)	0.42** (0.00)	0.36** (0.00)	0.38** (0.00)	0.38** (0.00)	0.41** (0.00)	0.32** (0.00)	0.55** (0.00)	0.25** (0.00)
Market Economy	-0.35** (0.00)	-0.20** (0.00)	-0.22** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.16** (0.00)	-0.02** (0.00)	0.04** (0.00)	-0.03** (0.00)	-0.12** (0.00)
Environment	0.18** (0.00)	0.52** (0.00)	0.13** (0.00)	0.07** (0.00)	0.04** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	-0.04** (0.00)	0.17** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)
LGBTQ+	0.24** (0.00)	0.27** (0.00)	0.21** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	0.14** (0.00)	-0.31** (0.00)	0.10** (0.00)	0.21** (0.00)	-0.03** (0.00)
N									2797
PRE									0.40
ePRE									0.25
Akaike Inf. Crit.									8125.5

* Indicates $p < 0.05$; ** indicates $p < 0.01$. standard errors in parentheses.

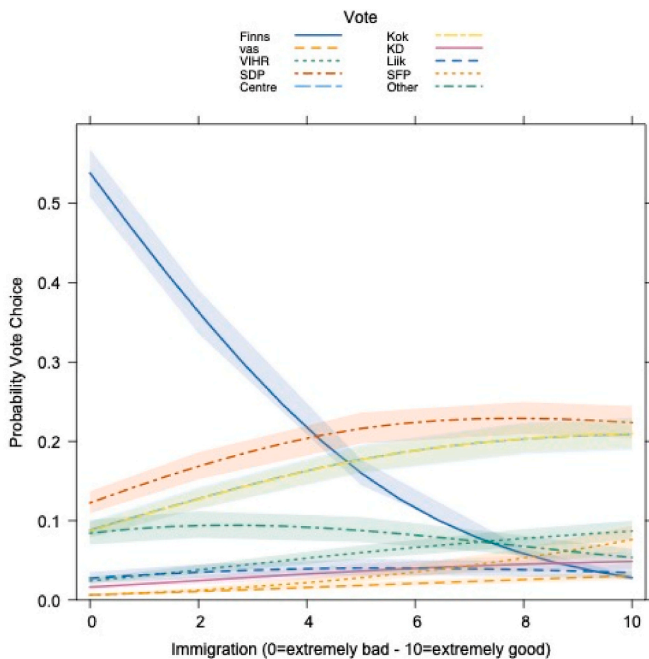


Fig. 1. Effect of attitudes towards immigration on vote choice. 95% confidence bounds displayed.

in size as the education level increases. The result is that the impact of attitudes on immigration in predicting Finns Party vote intention decreases with greater levels of education. The finding might be explained by people at higher education levels having a firmer grasp on the reality that immigration is a complex political and social topic that cannot be attended to with the simplistic narratives of the Finns Party.

We also conducted an empirical robustness check to investigate whether vote choice was influenced by a conditional relationship between education and the other three attitudinal variables. In Appendix F, our analysis indicates that the relationship between environmental views and Finns Party vote choice is indeed conditional on education.

Specifically, the effect of prioritizing the environment over the economy on Finns Party vote choice disappears at the highest education level but is substantial at the lowest education level. Although environmental attitudes play a limited role in Finns Party vote choice, this result is noteworthy given the complexity of climate change and the education or socio-economic resources required to understand it.

Additionally, Appendix F demonstrates that the effect of environmental attitudes on Green Party vote choice is also conditional on education. While this study is not specifically focused on the Green Party, this finding supports the logic underlying our second hypothesis: that single-issue entrepreneurship is influenced by education. Interestingly, we find the opposite pattern compared to the Finns Party: the impact of environmental attitudes on Green Party vote choice is greatest at the highest education level and non-existent at lower levels. Presumably, individuals with higher education, who are expected to hold more cosmopolitan positions and be more aware of the threat of climate change and governmental inaction (see for example Weko, 2021, 1078), are more likely to support a minor party such as the Green Party. This finding demonstrates how higher education levels can be associated with lower success of issue entrepreneurship in the case of the populist far-right, while education has a reverse effect when it comes to left-wing parties, whose policies are presumably more in line with cosmopolitan values.

This result offers an intriguing avenue for future empirical inquiry, specifically, examining when education negatively conditions the effect of attitudes on voting for minor parties and when it positively conditions the effect of attitudes.

9. Discussion

This study investigated vote choice intention for the Finns Party in the 2023 Finnish parliamentary election. The Finns Party is a populist far-right political party that achieved their largest historical electoral success in the 2023 election – a success that led to the party’s inclusion in the current ruling coalition government. By utilizing an original, nationally representative survey we find that Finns Party support is based on voters viewing the party as owning a range of issues, although it can mainly be explained by negative attitudes towards immigrants. While we find that other attitudinal variables have some impact on Finns

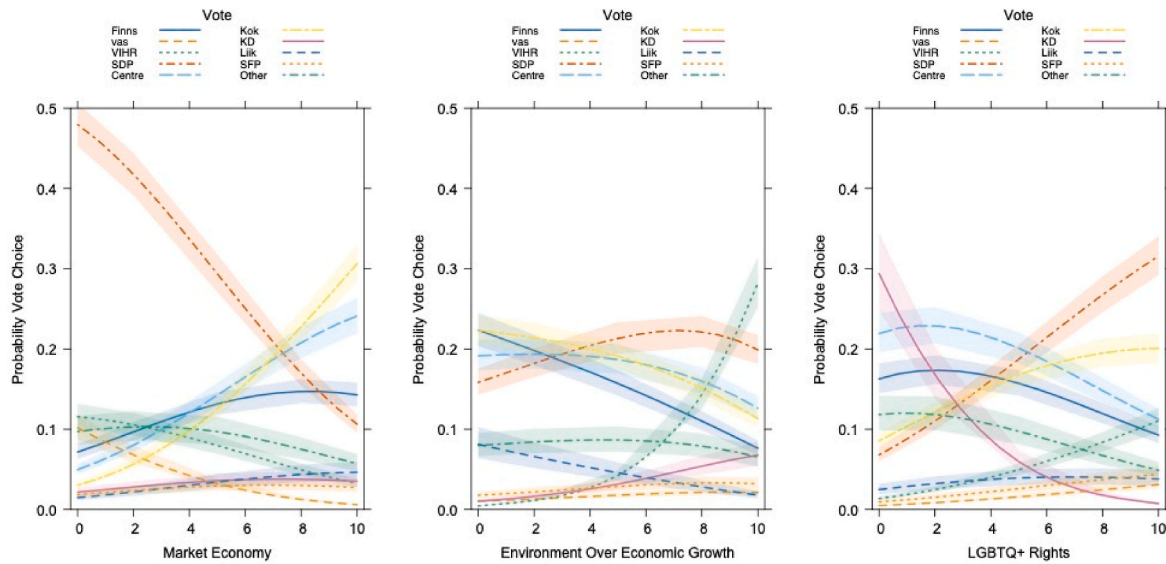


Fig. 2. Effect of attitudes on vote choice. 95% confidence bounds displayed. Coded from 0 = “Extremely bad” to 10 = “Extremely good”.

Table 2
Vote Choice Finnish National Election w/Interaction (reference category = Finns Party).

	Vas	Vihr	Sdp	Centre	Kok	Kd	Liik	Sfp	Other
Constant	1.67** (0.00)	-5.05** (0.00)	-1.07** (0.00)	-3.95** (0.00)	-8.58** (0.00)	-4.40** (0.00)	-3.58** (0.00)	-5.72** (0.00)	0.66** (0.00)
Age	0.01** (0.00)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.05** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)
Woman	-0.28** (0.00)	0.57** (0.00)	-0.11** (0.00)	0.19** (0.00)	0.05** (0.00)	0.78** (0.00)	0.06** (0.00)	-0.24** (0.00)	0.31** (0.00)
Education	0.32** (0.00)	0.29** (0.00)	0.28** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	0.34** (0.00)	0.29** (0.00)	0.40** (0.00)	-0.25** (0.00)	-0.17** (0.00)
Income	0.02** (0.00)	0.19** (0.00)	0.07** (0.00)	0.12** (0.00)	0.32** (0.00)	0.25** (0.00)	0.17** (0.00)	-0.30** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)
Political Ideology	-0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Immigration	-1.17** (0.00)	-0.47** (0.00)	-0.68** (0.00)	-0.18** (0.00)	0.31** (0.00)	-0.05** (0.00)	-0.11** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	-0.26** (0.00)
Market Economy	-0.34** (0.00)	-0.19** (0.00)	-0.22** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.16** (0.00)	-0.02** (0.00)	0.05** (0.00)	-0.04** (0.00)	-0.13** (0.00)
Environment	0.18** (0.00)	0.53** (0.00)	0.13** (0.00)	0.07** (0.00)	0.04** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	-0.04** (0.00)	0.18** (0.00)	0.10** (0.00)
LGBTQ+	0.24** (0.00)	0.26** (0.00)	0.21** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	0.14** (0.00)	-0.32** (0.00)	0.10** (0.00)	0.21** (0.00)	-0.04** (0.00)
Immigration: Education	0.03** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	-0.02** (0.00)	0.14** (0.00)	0.08** (0.00)
N	2797								
PRE	0.40								
ePRE	0.25								
Akaike Inf. Crit.	8118.3								

* Indicates $p < 0.05$; ** indicates $p < 0.01$. standard errors in parentheses.

Party vote intention, the size of their impact combined is only a fraction of the impact that attitudes towards immigration have on vote intention. The Finns Party effectively employed political entrepreneurship to establish issue ownership over immigration in the eyes of those worried about the issue.

The findings extend a recent study by Söderlund and Grönlund (2024) in three ways. First, the results show that when comparing Finns Party voters to each of the competitor parties’ voters the relationships are not unidirectional. For example, the results show an increase in the probability of voting for the Finns Party, Centre Party, and Coalition Party if an individual holds a more positive pro-market view. In comparison, there is a drastic decrease in the probability of support for the Social Democratic Party. Binary models combining the Centre,

Coalition, and Social Democratic parties would average out the effect of the variable and show either no significant difference or a small difference for the attitudinal variable. Second, we explore a larger range of attitudinal predictors more recently linked to populist far-right support to explore the role that these attitudes might play in vote choice, showing that they do play a limited role. Third, we demonstrate how education can play a conditional role on populist attitudes to decrease vote choice for populist far-right parties (more on this below).

Our findings have implications for the study of populist far-right parties in Western Europe. First, since immigration is the most salient policy area distinguishing Finns Party voters from competitor parties, so long as competitor parties do not change their position on the policy area while the issue remains salient, the Finns Party will have a

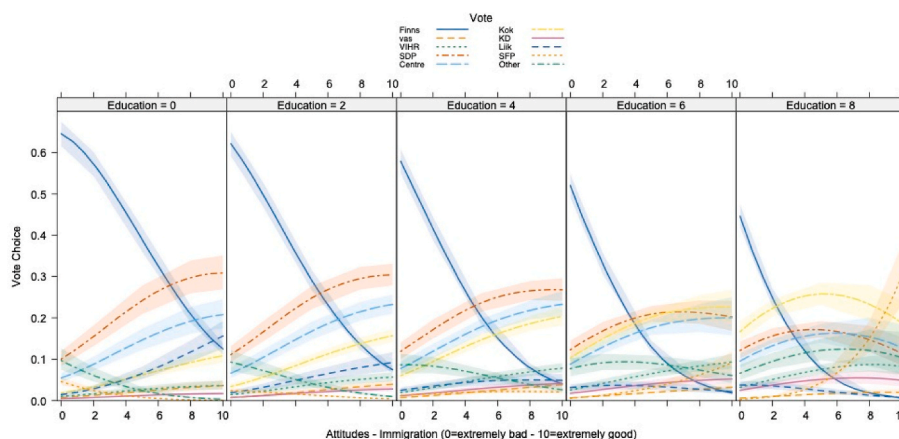


Fig. 3. Interactive effect of immigration and education on vote choice. 95% confidence bounds displayed.

consistent voting base. Mainstream responsible party governance has traditionally been seen as damaging for populist far-right parties' support (Kestilä-Kekkonen and Söderlund, 2014). However, if the party manages to satisfy its supporters in this policy area, they might remain loyal even if policies in some unwanted areas are adopted, such as the reduction in social benefits and social programs.

The importance of immigration as a political topic for populist far-right parties is further highlighted by the fact that for a long time the Finns Party was considered a nationalist and/or social conservative populist party without an overt xenophobic message (Arter, 2010). However, when the anti-immigration voices within the party grew louder after the leadership coup, its political message seems to have "hit home" more efficiently. That is, the party has risen in popularity by attracting a group of voters with a similar view on one policy topic. On the other hand, it is also likely that those identifying themselves as party supporters might have – influenced by the party's rhetoric - developed greater negative attitudes towards immigrants than before. We find that the Finns Party's evolution is similar to other populist far-right parties, such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in Germany. The AfD also, "started life largely as a Eurosceptic party and then morphed into an anti-immigrant party" (Hansen and Olsen 2022, 2). The existence of these anti-immigrant parties raises a question of whether right-wing, conservative populism can achieve substantial electoral success in the future without pronounced anti-immigrant and xenophobic signaling.

This study also uncovered that the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and Finns Party support is conditional on education level. In particular, the impact of attitudes towards immigration on Finns Party support is remarkably smaller for respondents at higher education levels when compared to those at lower education levels. The finding indicates that for more highly educated voters immigration as a voting issue may be less salient. Alternatively, they might recognize that immigration as a political topic is more complex than the simplistic policy positions often advocated by the Finns Party, or be alienated by the party's populist rhetoric. However, when it comes to other parties and issues, for example the Greens and environmental issues, interactions between education levels and attitudes do not follow a similar pattern as hypothesized or as observed in the case of Finns party and attitudes concerning immigration. This reveals two important avenues for future research. First, studies on populist far-right parties exploring single-issue voting should investigate whether similar relationships exist, i.e. the impact of the attitude/issue position is conditional on education level. Second, we need further theoretical exploration into

how education conditions the impact of attitudes on vote choice in general. Additional empirical analyses would also help gauge these relationships.

Furthermore, the interactive finding is important because it demonstrates that education is related to reduced support for a party that espouses extremist views. Although the Finns Party has become a normalized, consistent presence in the Finnish political landscape - i.e. an institutionalized party (Harmel et al., 2018), members of the party have expressed dangerous and undemocratic rhetoric (see Arter, 2024). The party's leader and Deputy Prime Minister of Finland Riikka Purra had even advocated for violence against immigrants in her past. While she was not a politician at the time, she made these comments well into adulthood. Our findings show that education could be a tool in limiting support for a party with these types of extremist elements. What would be important is for future studies to investigate additional factors that impact the saliency of immigration as a voting issue for populist far-right parties.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Michael A. Hansen: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.
Mikko Leino: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Investigation, Data curation.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A. Variable Coding

Age - continuous, age at the time of the survey.

Gender - binary, self-identified sex of the respondent: 0 = man; 1 = woman.

Education - continuous, 0 = no education; 1 = Primary school grades 1–6, elementary school; 2 = Primary school grades 7–9, 10, middle school; 3 = Short vocational education (vocational school, course); 4 = Institute level of vocational degree; 5 = Matriculation examination; 6 = University of Applied Sciences degree or similar; 7 = University degree; 8 = Scientific postgraduate degree.

Income - continuous, self-reported income.⁵

Political Ideology - continuous, self-reported ideology from 0 = left – 10 = right.

Immigration - continuous, survey question asks, “What do you think of these suggestions? Finland, where immigration is more extensive.” Responses coded from 0 = “extremely bad suggestion” to 10 = “extremely good suggestion”. The response options were labeled so that 5 represented “neither a good nor bad suggestion”.

Market Economy - continuous, survey question asks, “What do you think of these suggestions? Finland, where there is more private entrepreneurship and a market economy.” Responses coded from 0 = “extremely bad suggestion” to 10 = “extremely good suggestion”. The response options were labeled so that 5 represented “neither a good nor bad suggestion”.

Environment - continuous, survey question asks, “A more environmentally friendly Finland, even if it means low economic growth or no economic growth at all.” Responses coded from 0 = “extremely bad suggestion” to 10 = “extremely good suggestion”. The response options were labeled so that 5 represented “neither a good nor bad suggestion”.

LGBTQ+ - continuous, survey question asks, “What do you think of these suggestions? Finland, where the rights of sexual minorities are strengthened.” Responses coded from 0 = “extremely bad suggestion” to 10 = “extremely good suggestion”. The response options were labeled so that 5 represented “neither a good nor bad suggestion”.

Vote Choice – nominal, survey question asks, “If the parliamentary elections were now, which party would you vote for?” All party options are represented in the variable. National Coalition Party = Kok; Movement Now = Liik; Finns Party = Finns; Centre Party = Centre; Christian Democrats = KD; Swedish People’s Party = SFP; Social Democratic Party = SDP; Left Alliance = Vas; Green League = VIHR; Other = indicates some other choice.

Appendix B. Descriptive Statistics

Table B1
Descriptive Statistics – Independent Variables

Variable	Min	Median	Mean	Max	SD
Age	18	50	49.34	84	16.93
Education	0	5	5.09	8	1.65
Political Ideology	0	5	5.39	10	2.60
Immigration	0	5	5.21	10	3.00
Market Economy	0	7	6.63	10	2.37
Environment	0	6	5.94	10	2.85
LGBTQ+	0	6	6.16	10	3.18
Variable	0	1			
Gender	49.44%	50.56%			

Table B2
Descriptive Statistics – Vote Choice

Finns	Vas	VIHR	SDP	Centre	Kok	KD	Liik	SFP	Other
590	335	326	532	285	577	107	77	79	151
19.29%	10.95%	10.66%	17.39%	9.31%	18.86%	3.50%	2.52%	2.58%	4.94%

Appendix C. Additional Effects Plots

⁵ The income variable had oddly reported yearly incomes for some respondents. It is possible that respondents did not fully understand the question. Therefore, inferences from this variables relationship with vote choice should be made with caution. We include the variable as a control nonetheless.

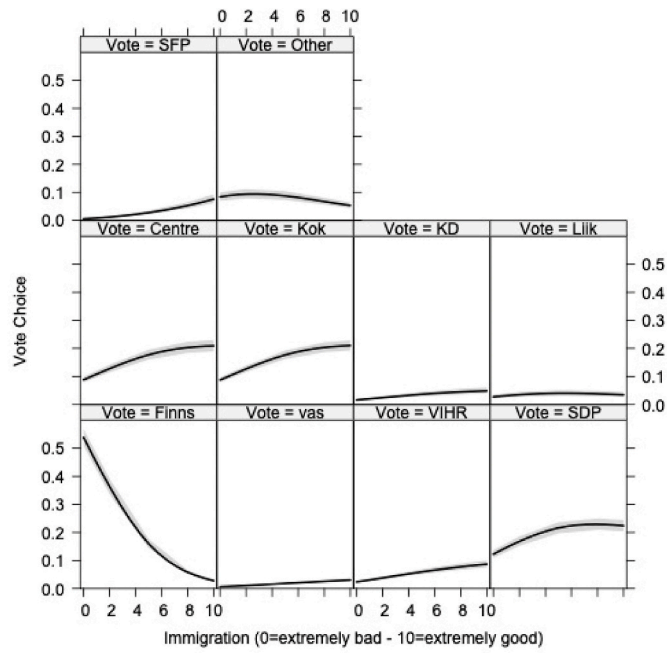


Fig. C1. Effect of Attitudes Towards Immigration on Vote Choice.

95% confidence bounds displayed.

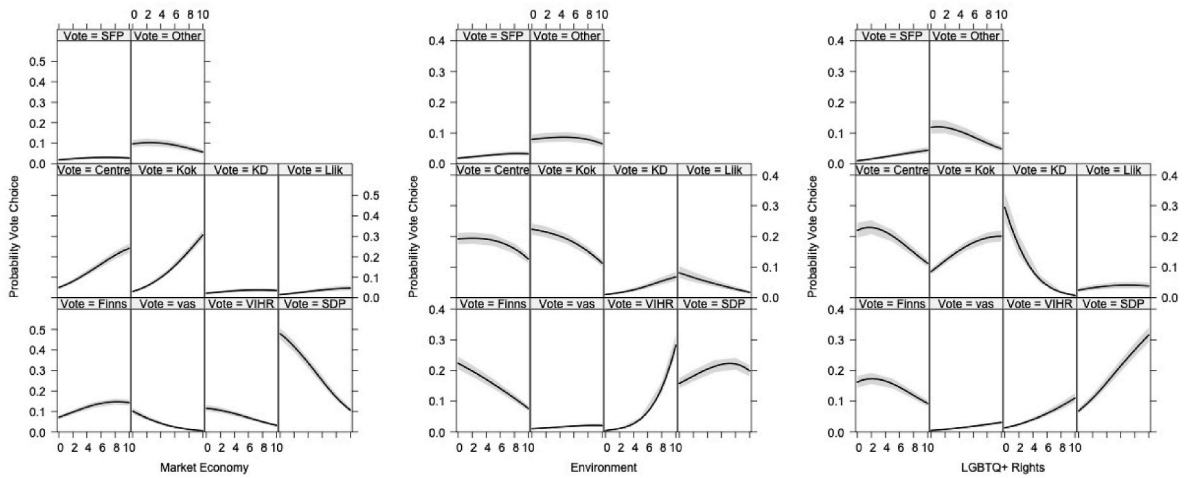


Fig. C2. Effect of Attitudes on Vote Choice.

95% confidence bounds displayed. Coded from 0 = "Extremely bad" to 10 = "Extremely good".

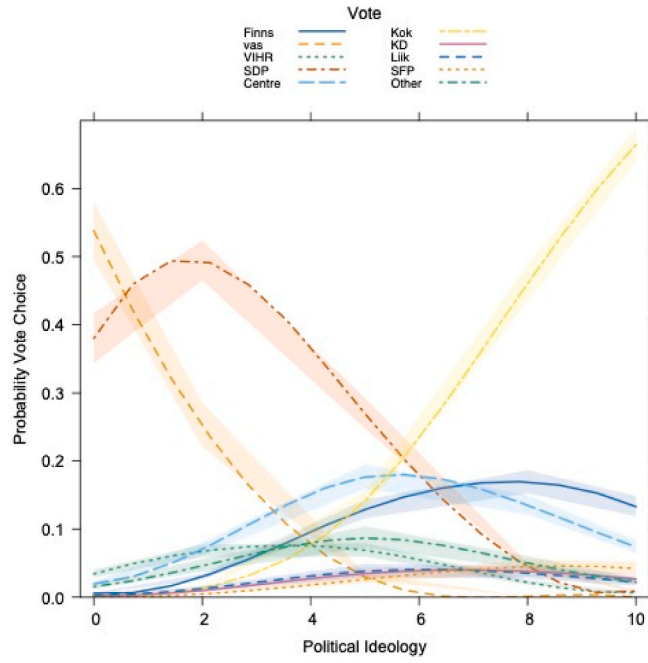


Fig. C3. Effect of Political Ideology on Vote Choice.

95% confidence bounds displayed.

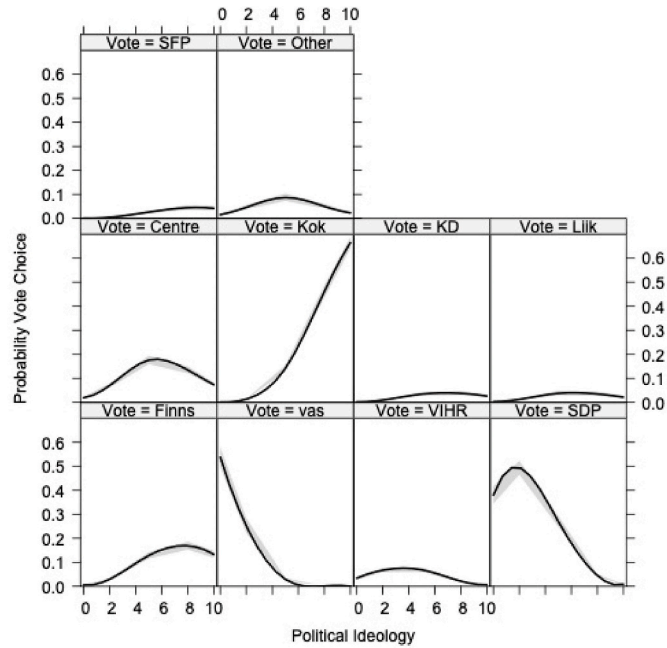


Fig. C4. Effect of Political Ideology on Vote Choice.

95% confidence bounds displayed.

Appendix D. Predicted Probability Point Estimates for Interaction with Categorical Education

Table D1
 Predicted Probability Points Estimate for Interaction with Categorical Education

Probability Finns Party Vote									
Immigration	Education								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	0.46	0.36	0.59	0.47	0.47	0.55	0.48	0.52	0.39
2	0.28	0.36	0.43	0.41	0.44	0.39	0.31	0.29	0.26
5	0.07	0.19	0.22	0.30	0.17	0.18	0.12	0.08	0.11
8	0.01	0.04	0.09	0.19	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.04
10	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.13	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02

Appendix E. Interactive Predicted Probabilities Between Attitudes and Education

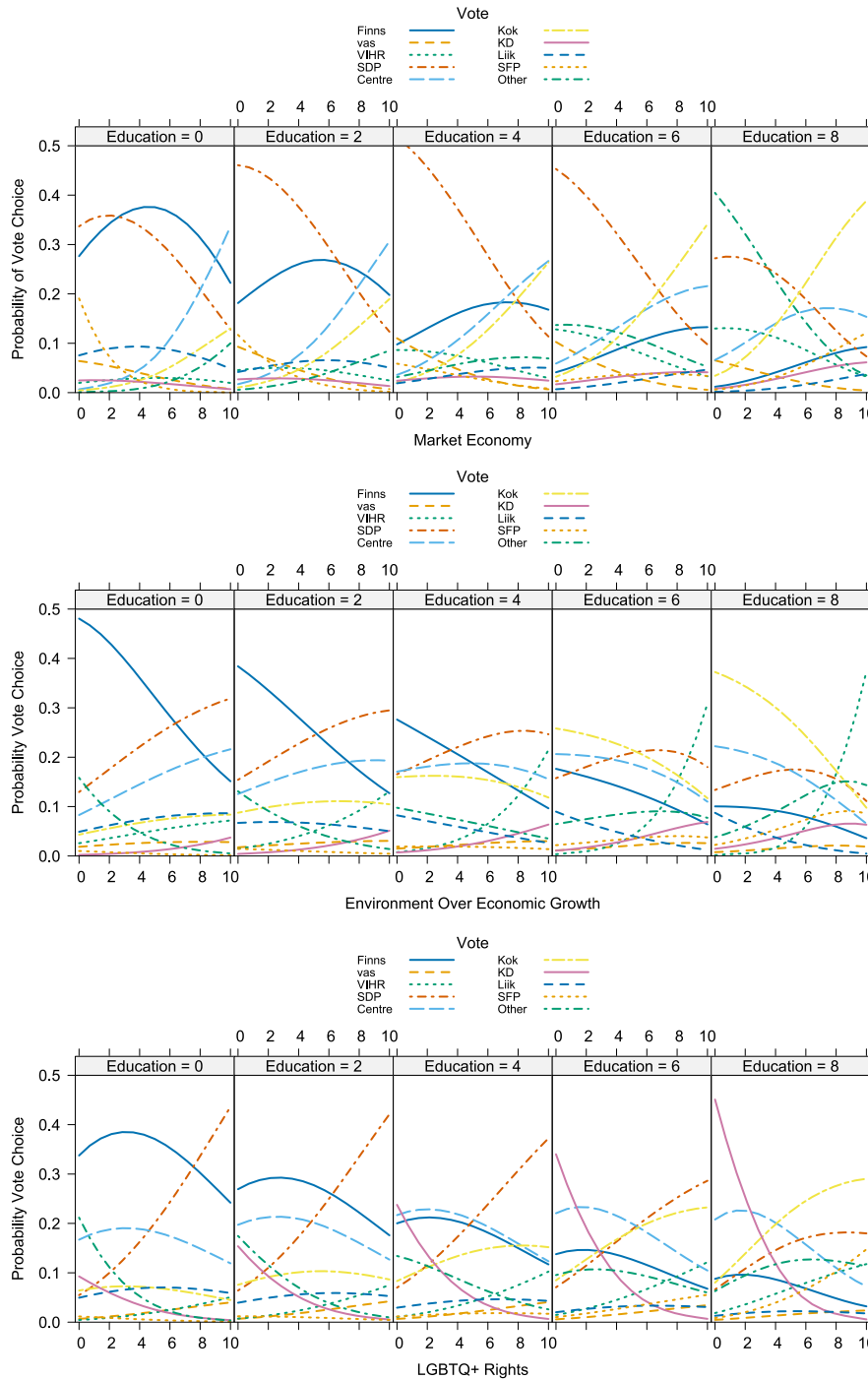


Fig. E1. Interactive Predicted Probabilities Between Attitudes and Education.

95% confidence bounds displayed.

Appendix F. Vote Choice Model Results w/4-Category Education Variable

Table F1
Vote Choice Model w/ 4-Category Education Variable

	Vas	VIHR	SDP	Centre	Kok	KD	Liik	SFP	Other	
Constant	1.68** (0.00)	-4.55** (0.00)	-1.67** (0.00)	-3.21** (0.00)	-7.43** (0.00)	-4.42** (0.00)	-2.26** (0.00)	-6.51** (0.00)	1.51** (0.00)	
Age	0.01** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	0.05** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	-0.02** (0.00)	
Woman	-0.31** (0.00)	0.66** (0.00)	-0.09** (0.00)	0.22** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.88** (0.00)	0.10** (0.00)	-0.24** (0.00)	0.41** (0.00)	
Edu Cat 1	0.41** (0.00)	0.24** (0.00)	0.41** (0.00)	0.36** (0.00)	0.29** (0.00)	0.36** (0.00)	0.22** (0.00)	0.26** (0.00)	-0.32** (0.00)	
Edu Cat 2	-1.36** (0.00)	-1.19** (0.00)	-0.12** (0.00)	-0.32** (0.00)	-0.77** (0.00)	0.12** (0.00)	-0.87** (0.00)	-0.03** (0.00)	-1.24** (0.00)	
Edu Cat 3	-0.29** (0.00)	0.57** (0.00)	0.61** (0.00)	0.06** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	1.12** (0.00)	-0.03** (0.00)	-1.16** (0.00)	-0.28** (0.00)	
Income	-0.91** (0.00)	0.77** (0.00)	-0.08** (0.00)	0.32** (0.00)	0.63** (0.00)	0.85** (0.00)	0.58** (0.00)	-2.01** (0.00)	-0.41** (0.00)	
Political Ideology	-0.00** (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	
Immigration	-0.95** (0.00)	-0.40** (0.00)	-0.59** (0.00)	-0.19** (0.00)	0.30** (0.00)	-0.08** (0.00)	-0.13** (0.00)	0.12** (0.00)	-0.22** (0.00)	
Market Economy	-0.26** (0.00)	-0.14** (0.00)	-0.16** (0.00)	0.10** (0.00)	0.17** (0.00)	0.04** (0.00)	0.02** (0.00)	-0.06** (0.00)	-0.18** (0.00)	
Environment	0.17** (0.00)	0.50** (0.00)	0.12** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.05** (0.00)	0.32** (0.00)	-0.03** (0.00)	0.19** (0.00)	0.08** (0.00)	
LGBTQ+	0.19** (0.00)	0.24** (0.00)	0.20** (0.00)	-0.02** (0.00)	0.16** (0.00)	-0.28** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.22** (0.00)	-0.07** (0.00)	
Imm: Educ Cat 1	0.15** (0.00)	0.34** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.07** (0.00)	0.20** (0.00)	0.13** (0.00)	0.29** (0.00)	0.14** (0.00)	0.67** (0.00)	
Imm: Educ Cat 2	-0.02** (0.00)	0.10** (0.00)	-0.14** (0.00)	-0.04** (0.00)	0.11** (0.00)	-0.05** (0.00)	0.03** (0.00)	0.23** (0.00)	0.56** (0.00)	
Imm: Educ Cat 3	0.19** (0.00)	0.25** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.18** (0.00)	0.19** (0.00)	0.09** (0.00)	0.64** (0.00)	0.77** (0.00)	
N										2797
PRE										0.40
ePRE										0.24
Akaike Inf. Crit.										8253.2

* Indicates p < 0.05; ** indicates p < 0.01. standard errors in parentheses.

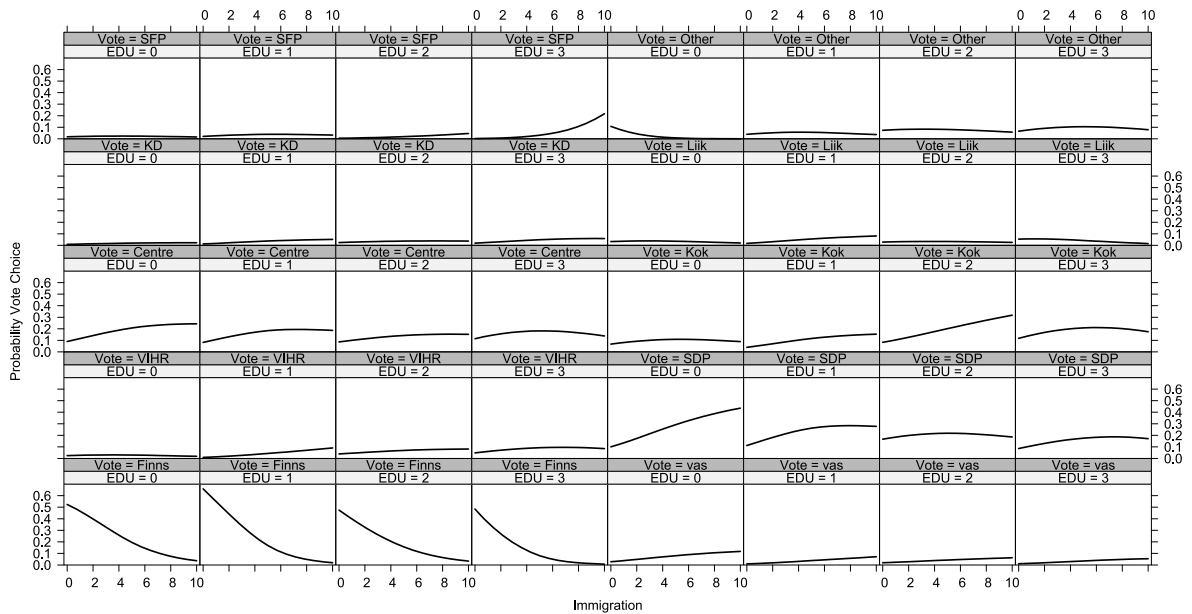


Fig. F1. Effects Plots for Interactive Effect w/ 4-Category Education Variable.

95% confidence bounds displayed.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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