Taming the far right? Government inclusion strengthens rather than weakens far-right parties *

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Abstract

Can inclusion in government break the appeal of far right parties? This question is critical given the global rise of far-right parties which makes government formation increasingly difficult. Commentators and pundits alike increasingly argue that the appeal of the far right could be broken by including far-right parties in government. The idea is that taking over government responsibility, dealing with the constraints of day-to-day politics and making policy compromises would make it difficult for far-right parties to maintain their popular appeal. We test this argument by analyzing 1,237 cabinets in 57 democracies from 1976 to 2023 by relying on a difference-in-differences design. We find no evidence that executive participation weakens far-right support. On the contrary, far-right parties gain in popularity, increasing their vote share by an average of about six percentage points in the next election. Thus, government inclusion does not break the appeal of the far right, it consolidates their electoral position.

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Introduction

The rise of far-right parties has fundamentally reshaped the political landscape across advanced democracies. Once relegated to the fringes of politics, far-right parties have become central players in many party systems, often winning double-digit vote shares and entering national parliaments. Their ascent poses a profound challenge to liberal democracy, not only by shifting political discourse (Saldivia Gonzatti and Völker, 2025), but also by complicating the formation of stable governments. As far-right parties become electorally indispensable, democracies confront a strategic choice: uphold a strict cordon sanitaire - the so-called "Brandmauer" in Germany - or bring these actors into government in the hope that responsibility will contain their appeal. At the heart of this debate lies a pressing question: Does participation in government actually curb the rise of far-right parties or does it reinforce it?

This question has gained renewed urgency. A widely held belief, prominent in both public debate and academic commentary, is that granting far-right parties executive responsibility will expose the limits of their populist appeal (Heinisch, 2003; Le Point, 2021; Posener, 2024; Serrao, 2024). According to this logic, once in government, far-right parties will be forced to moderate their positions, make compromises, and ultimately disappoint their voters, thereby undermining their support. Yet despite its growing prominence, this argument rests on surprisingly thin empirical ground. Beyond anecdotal claims, only a single-case study on the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) has examined this question (Heinisch, 2003). To date, we still lack systematic causal evidence on whether inclusion in government actually weakens far-right parties or whether it might instead backfire.

This gap in knowledge is particularly consequential. If the argument that far-right parties can be "tamed" through co-optation proves false, the consequences are severe. Elevating far-right parties to positions of power may not only fail to erode their support, it could instead strengthen their institutional legitimacy, expand their media visibility, and entrench their ideas in the political mainstream through processes of "normalization" (Valentim, 2024). Relying on inclusion as a strategy to contain far-right influence, in the absence of robust empirical evidence, therefore constitutes a potentially dangerous gamble for liberal democracy.

Existing research has yielded important insights into the rise of far-right parties. Scholars have identified key drivers of support, including status threats, identity concerns, and media dynamics (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Mutz, 2018; Cohen, 2020; Stoetzer et al., 2023; Stier et al., 2024), and have examined their impact on political norms, voter turnout, and party competition (e.g., Bischof and Wagner, 2019; Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020; Adams et al., 2022; Leininger and Meijers, 2020; Valentim, 2024). Other studies have explored how mainstream parties respond in terms of rhetoric and position-taking (e.g., Meguid, 2005; Chou et al., 2021; Haas et al., 2023; Saldivia Gonzatti and Völker, 2025) while a more recent correlational study finds that populist parties may lose support when joining coalition governments as junior partners (Riera and Pastor, 2022). Despite the growing debate, we still lack systematic causal evidence on whether participation in government diminishes the strength of far-right parties or ultimately backfires.

To address this gap, we compile a novel dataset covering 1,237 cabinets across 57 democracies from 1980 to 2023. Exploiting variation in government participation across time and space, we estimate the causal effect of far-right inclusion on two outcomes: subsequent electoral performance and performance of far-right parties in the polls. Importantly, we differentiate between distinct forms of government

involvement - whether a far right party leads the government as prime minister party, enters as a junior coalition partner, or provides support for a minority government from outside the cabinet. Using a difference-in-differences design, we isolate the impact of far-right cabinet entry from confounding trends and structural country characteristics.

Overall, our results point to a simple conclusion: participation in government does not reduce support for far-right parties. Across both elections and polls, we find no evidence that executive participation weakens far-right support. On the contrary, far-right parties tend to gain in popularity, increasing their vote share by an average of about six percentage points in the next election. These findings have important implications. The notion that co-optation can neutralize the far right does not hold up to empirical scrutiny. Quite on the contrary, participation in government even amplifies their electoral strength. Efforts to contain the far right by bringing them into government are therefore not only ineffective, but dangerously counterproductive for liberal democracy. Inclusion in government does not weaken far-right appeal, it reinforces it. Confronting the far right thus requires more than tactical coalition choices; it demands broader efforts to address the underlying grievances and social divisions that sustain their rise.

Research Design

To assess whether government participation moderates or amplifies far-right support, we leverage a comprehensive cross-national dataset and a research design that isolates the causal impact of executive inclusion. Our analyses combine data collected by Krause and Stelzle (2024) and Thürk and Klüver (2024), resulting in a comprehensive dataset covering 1,237 cabinets across 57 democracies from 1976 to 2023, yielding 2,277 country-year observations. By matching and integrating these datasets, we create the most extensive and fine-grained cross-national dataset on far-right government participation to date. In total, 204 cabinets included far-right parties in executive office, either as prime minister (57), junior coalition partner (136), or external supporter of a minority government (17).[1] Figure SM2 illustrates the distribution of far-right participation over time and across countries.[2]

Outcomes

First, we assess whether participation in government reduces the *electoral performance* of far-right parties. We examine electoral performance at both the party and the country level. At the party level, the unit of analysis is the party-election, allowing us to estimate the effect of government participation on the electoral fortunes of the specific far-right party in office. At the country level, the unit is the country-election, and the outcome is the cumulative vote share of all far-right parties in a given election. This aggregation is necessary in multiparty systems where multiple far-right parties may compete simultaneously. Electoral data are obtained from the PPEG Database (Krause and Stelzle, 2024), which provides comprehensive information on party participation and government composition. We classify parties as far-right based on their classification in the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al., 2025).

[1] This adds up to more than 204 cabinets (210) because some cabinets include far-right parties in multiple roles—for instance, a cabinet may feature a far-right prime minister from party A alongside another far-right party B as a junior partner.

[2] See SM Section A for details on data sources and sample composition.

Second, to investigate short-term dynamics, we analyze the performance of far-right parties in the *polls*. Here, the unit of analysis is the country-year, and the outcome is the average annual cumulative support in opinion polls for all far-right parties in a given country. Polling data are primarily obtained from the Politico Poll of Polls (POLITICO, 2025), which provides data for most European countries from 2014 to 2025. To expand temporal and geographic coverage, we supplement these data with national polling sources (see SM A.1 and Table SM1 for details). This compilation results in the most extensive database of far-right vote intention polls currently available.

Treatment

To measure the effect of far-right participation in government, we study various forms of far-right involvement: prime ministership, junior coalition partnership, any cabinet inclusion and external support for minority governments.

We use four distinct treatment indicators to capture different forms of far-right participation in government. First, we identify cases with a far-right prime minister. Second, we consider instances where a far-right party serves exclusively as a junior coalition partner. Third, we define far-right cabinet participation as any case in which at least one far-right party holds any cabinet position. Fourth, we construct a broader measure of any government involvement by the far right, which includes both cabinet participation and cases where far-right parties provide external support to minority governments without formally joining the cabinet.[3] The figures in the results section present the results for this broad measure of government involvement, with the figures for the other measures reported in the supplementary material. We identify far-right cabinet membership, prime ministers, and junior partners using the PPEG data on cabinets (Krause and Stelzle, 2024) as well as the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow, 2024). To identify far-right party support for minority governments we use the data compiled by Thürk and Klüver (2024) as well as the information in PPEG.

All treatments are binary, both for the country level and the party level models. For the country level models a country is treated if at least one far-right party is involved in government. Countries (or parties) enter treatment in the year a far-right party joins government and exit when it leaves. In our main specification, we allow for such reversals; robustness checks treat participation as permanent once a far-right party first enters government.[4]

In addition to our treatment variable, we include a set of time-varying country-level covariates to account for confounding factors that may influence far-right support. Specifically, we control for GDP per capita and GDP growth (World Bank), unemployment (OECD and IMF), and net migration (World Bank). These variables capture key aspects of economic performance and migration dynamics, which have been shown to affect far-right voting (Rodrik, 2021; Funke et al., 2016; Dustmann et al., 2019; Brückner and Grüner, 2020). A complete list of data sources and links is provided in SM Section A.1.

[3] Due to the small number of cases in which far-right parties support minority governments without holding cabinet positions, we do not use this category as a separate treatment in the main analysis. However, the supplemental model treating minority support as the treatment (Figure SM7) shows the same pattern: far-right parties also do not lose electorally when they support a minority government from outside the cabinet.

[4] We report these results in Figures SM11, SM12, SM23, SM24, SM29.

Estimation

To estimate the effect of far-right government participation, we rely on the fixed effects counterfactual (FEct) estimator (Liu et al., 2024), a recent imputation-based method designed to address key challenges in difference-in-differences (DiD) designs, including heterogeneous treatment effects, treatment reversal, and staggered adoption (Chiu et al., 2025). FEct estimates the ATT by imputing counterfactual outcomes for treated units. Counterfactual outcomes for treated units are imputed using a model trained only on untreated observations, incorporating covariates and unit and time fixed effects. This avoids the negative weighting problem that can bias traditional two-way fixed effects (TWFE) estimates. We focus on FEct because it accommodates the complexities of our setting, particularly treatment reversals (where far-right parties exit and re-enter government), and offers transparent diagnostics for model fit and assumption testing. While FEct serves as our main estimator, we assess robustness using additional methods discussed in the supplementary material, including two related imputation-based estimators that relax the strict exogeneity assumption – the interactive fixed effects counterfactual (IFEct) estimator (Xu, 2017) and the matrix completion (MC) estimator (Athey et al., 2021) – as well as non-imputation-based DiD extensions such as PanelMatch (Imai et al., 2023) and the staggered adoption DiD estimator (Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2021). We provide more details on our estimation strategy in SM B.

Results

Electoral Performance

We first examine whether far-right parties suffer electorally after entering government. The evidence points in the opposite direction. Across both party- and country-level analyses, our analyses clearly show that government participation leads to electoral gains for the far right rather than losses (Figure 1). At the party level, far-right parties increase their vote share by an average of 5.3 percentage points in the next election following a spell in government. Effects are positive across alternative treatment specifications (see Figure SM6 in the SI Appendix) and are strongest when the far-right party holds the prime ministership. At the country level, where we aggregate the combined vote share of all far-right parties, government participation corresponds to an average increase of roughly six percentage points in the next election (Figure SM18).

We conduct extensive robustness analyses, including alternative samples based on ParlGov data and model specifications with different treatment codings (see SI Appendix, Sections C). While some specifications yield null rather than positive effects, none indicate an electoral penalty for far-right participation in government. Overall, our results provide no support for the idea that inclusion in government weakens far-right parties. On the contrary, government participation consolidates the electoral strength of far-right parties rather than diminish it.

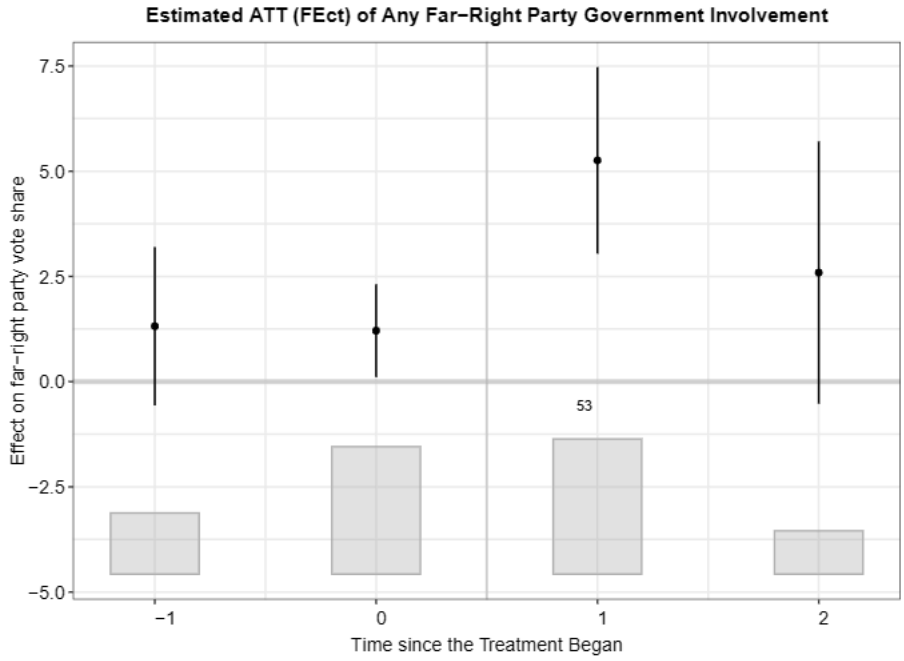


Figure 1: ATTs of far-right government involvement on electoral support of the far-right party. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct). Estimated effects are shown 1 election before and 2 elections after a far-right party's government involvement started with 95% confidence intervals. The bar plot shows the number of treated units for each time period (e.g. 53 for the first period after treatment began).

Far-right support in polls

Elections capture outcomes at discrete moments, but polling data reveal whether far-right support erodes between elections. To assess short-term dynamics, we analyze country-year averages of reported far-right vote intention in polls using data from 2014 to 2023. We estimate the effect of government participation on polling support across multiple treatment definitions, prime ministership, junior coalition partnership, and cabinet inclusion.

Across all specifications, far-right participation in government does also not reduce their support in the polls (Figure 2). Estimated effects are tightly centered around zero and remain stable across alternative estimators that account for unobserved heterogeneity and temporal dependence.[5]

[5] See SI Appendix, Section D, for full results using counterfactual fixed-effects, PanelMatch, and the Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021) estimators.

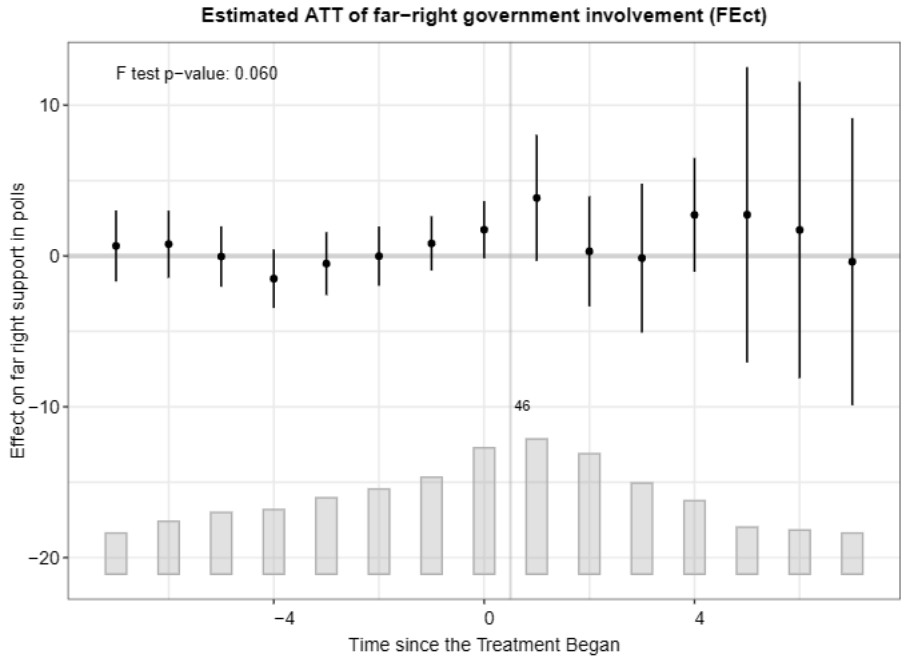


Figure 2: ATTs of far-right government involvement on support for far right parties in polls. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct). Estimated effects are shown 7 years before and 7 years after a far-right party's government involvement started with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. The bar plot shows the number of treated units for each time period (e.g. 46 for the first period after treatment).

These results reinforce the electoral findings: far-right parties maintain their popularity after entering government. This pattern is remarkably consistent across a wide range of model specifications, treatment definitions (including cases where far-right parties merely support minority cabinets) and robustness checks (see SM D). The evidence is clear: neither governing responsibility nor providing parliamentary support for minority cabinets weakens far-right parties in elections or in the polls. Efforts to contain the far right by bringing them into government do not work; they only strengthen them electorally.

Mechanisms

The argument that far-right parties can be "tamed" through participation in government rests on three expectations (Cuzán, 2015; Thesen et al., 2020; Müller and Louwerse, 2020; Hjorth, 2025; Klüver and Spoon, 2020; Tepe, 2019; Akkerman and Rooduijn, 2015). First, governing responsibility is expected to force these parties to moderate their positions. Second, voters might withdraw their support once far-right parties fail to deliver on their promises in office. Third, their participation could provoke a liberal backlash among citizens who reject far-right influence in government. We empirically examine each of these proposed mechanisms.

Moderation: Confronted with the responsibilities of office, far-right parties may need to moderate their positions, which in turn may turn away the parties' core supporters (Heinisch, 2003). Using Manifesto Project data to track far-right parties' policy positions, we find little evidence that government participation induces systematic moderation. While some parties slightly soften their stance on selected societal issues,

their positions on immigration and their overall left–right orientation remain largely unchanged (see Figure 3 and SM Section E.1, Table SM4). Governing responsibility, in other words, does not moderate the far right.

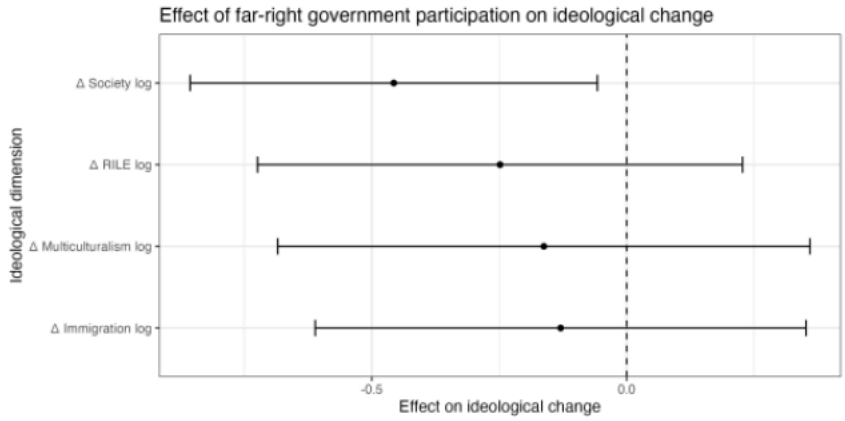


Figure 3: Effects of far-right party government involvement on changes in far-right party positions. Deltas represent changes in party positions from $t = 0$ (election after which party enters government) to $t = 1$ (the subsequent election). Negative values on the ideological scales represent more liberal positions, thus negative effects imply changes toward a more liberal position.

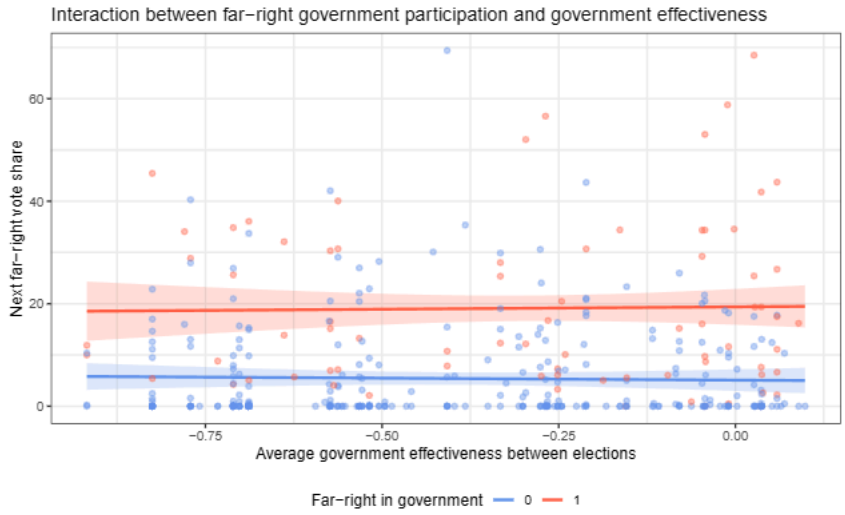
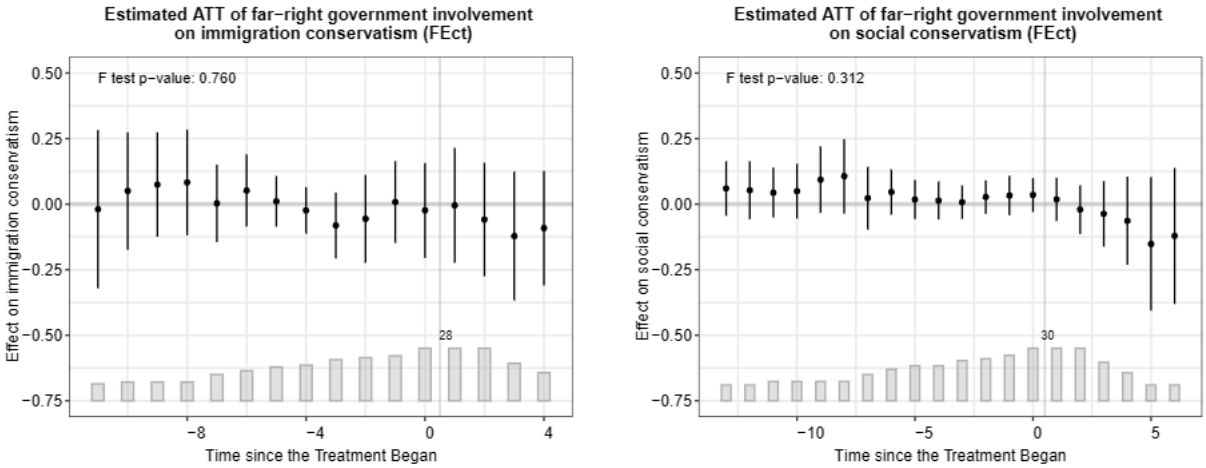


Figure 4: Interaction effects of far-right government involvement by average government effectiveness between elections on far-right electoral support.

Government performance: A second possible mechanism is that voters evaluate far-right parties based on their performance in office (e.g., Powell and Whitten, 1993; Anderson, 2000). If voters hold far-right parties accountable for poor governance – which prior research suggests is common (Funke et al., 2023) – then participation should reduce their support. Yet, neither moderation nor mediation analyses provide support for this mechanism (see SM E.2). Figure 4 shows that government effectiveness has little to no effect on far-right vote share in the next election, regardless of whether the far-right was in government. In other words, unlike other parties, far-right parties are not electorally punished for poor performance. Even if they govern badly, support persists.



(a) Immigration conservatism **(b)** Social conservatism

Figure 5: Estimated treatment effects of far-right government involvement on right-wing attitudes with 95% confidence intervals. Higher values on the scales indicate higher values in immigration conservatism or social conservatism, i.e. more right-wing positions. Lower values indicate more liberal positions. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct). 1000 bootstraps. Including p-values for F-tests for no pre-trend. Both models pass the no pre-trend tests. The bar plot shows the number of treated units for each time period. The numbers (28, 30) above the bar for the first period after treatment began indicates the number of treated units included in the analysis.

Liberal backlash: Finally, we test whether far-right participation in government triggers a liberal backlash among the broader electorate. The logic is that when mainstream voters are confronted with far-right influence in executive or coalition positions, they might adopt more progressive or anti-authoritarian attitudes as a defensive response. Drawing on item response theory–based estimates of national-level attitudes from 1981 to 2016 compiled by Caughey et al. (2019), we find no evidence that far-right entry into government shifts public opinion toward more liberal or progressive positions (see Figure 5). These results are robust across alternative estimators and treatment indicators (see SM E.3).

To sum up, we find no evidence that far-right participation in government diminishes their electoral appeal, nor any support for the proposed mechanisms that are said to make this strategy effective. The evidence is unequivocal: including far-right parties in government does not weaken them. Quite on the contrary, such as strategy backfires and only makes the far right stronger.

Conclusion

Our findings challenge a widely made argument in both public discourse and academic debate: that granting far-right parties access to executive office will curb their appeal. Across a wide array of specifications and outcomes, we find no evidence that government participation reduces support for far-right parties. On the contrary, our results suggest that far-right parties even gain votes in subsequent elections after entering government, especially when they occupy prominent cabinet positions or hold the prime ministership. Importantly, the pattern holds not only for formal cabinet participation, but also for cases in which far-right parties merely support minority governments. While support in opinion polls remains stable and public attitudes on core far-right issues do not shift measurably, these results

undermine the idea that inclusion "tames" the far right. Instead, far-right parties gain electorally by government participation.

These findings carry important implications. First, they suggest that inclusion strategies, increasingly pursued across Europe, may backfire. Rather than exposing the limitations of far-right actors, governing responsibilities can confer legitimacy, normalize their rhetoric, and sustain – or even boost – their popularity. Second, our results highlight the need for scholars and policy-makers to move beyond a narrow focus on coalition dynamics. Countering far-right success likely requires structural responses: addressing the grievances that drive their appeal, defending democratic norms, and limiting the diffusion of exclusionary discourse. Finally, our study underscores the value of rigorous, comparative evidence in guiding democratic strategy. As liberal democracies face mounting pressure from the far-right, misguided assumptions about the disciplining power of office may do more harm than good.

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Valentim, V. (2024). *The Normalization of the Radical Right: A Norms Theory of Political Supply and Demand*. Oxford University PressOxford, 1 edition.

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Part

Supplementary Material

Taming the far right? The consequences of far right parties in government

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A Data and Measurement

A.1 Data Sources

ParlGov: Data on elections, cabinets and parties, available at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/2VZ5ZC.

PPEG Database: Data on political parties, presidents, elections, and governments around the world, available at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/K5AJAW.
While the PPEG Database also provides information on elections in non-democratic countries, we limit our analyses to democratic countries. Moreover, we exclude the US from our analyses due to the particularities of the party system. While the PPEG data is available from 1945, we start our analyses in the 1970s, when far-right parties were first established in Europe.

PopuList: Party classifications as far right, available at: https://popu-list.org, https://osf.io/2ewkq/files/osfstorage.

Minority Governments: Data on minority governments and parties supporting minority governments from Thürk and Klüver (2018), available at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/SHKP32.

Attitudes: Measures of policy ideology in 27 European countries from 1981-2016 by Caughey et al. (2019). Available at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/H9XGEB, dataset used: summary/europe_ideology.dta.

Party Positions: Data on party positions from the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al., 2025).

GDP: GDP data from the OECD (annual GDP per capita measured in US dollars per person, PPP converted), ID: OECD.SDD.NAD:DSD_NAMAIN10@DF_TABLE1_EXPENDITURE_HCPC(2.0). Available at: https://data-explorer.oecd.org.
GDP per capita (current USD) from the World Bank, Series: NY.GDP.PCAP.CD. Available at: https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=.
GDP growth (annual %) from the World Bank, Series: NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG. Available at: https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG&country=.

Unemployment: Unemployment data from the OECD's Infra-annual labour statistics (DSD_LFS@DF_IALFS_INDIC), available at: https://data-explorer.oecd.org.
Unemployment data (annual unemployment rate, in percent) from the IMF. Dataset name: Labor Statistics (LS), ID: LS, Agency: IMF.STA, Version: 9.0.0, Dataset: IMF.STA:LS(9.0.0), Indicator name: Unemployment rate, available at: https://data.imf.org/en/Data-Explorer?datasetUrn=IMF.STA:LS(9.0.0).

Migration: Net Migration: Migration data (Total net-migration, annual) from the UN Population Division, available at: https://population.un.org/wpp/.
Crude Migration: Migration data (Crude rate of net migration, annual) from the UN Population Division, available at: https://population.un.org/wpp/.

Government Effectiveness: Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) Government Effectiveness indicator, available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators. Government effectiveness "captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies." For a list of individual variables and respective data source used to construct the measure see https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/sites/govindicators/doc/ge.pdf.

Poll data: Our primary source for poll data is Politico's Poll of Polls (https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/). The Poll of Polls aggregates polling data from European countries and is updated daily. It presents the most comprehensive readily available source for polling data. The data are obtained from the website using webscraping techniques. However, Politico's Poll of Polls only covers countries in Europe and spans a relatively limited time (see Table SM1). Therefore we supplement these data with data from additional sources to extend the spatial and temporal coverage of our data. In some cases, national poll aggregations are available (e.g. Norway, Netherlands, Ireland, Austria). However, more often than not these are not available, or only available for a limited time span. In such cases we rely on data from Wikipedia. For many countries extensive records of all polls conducted in a country are kept on Wikipedia. The data are organized by election, with a

Wikipedia page on an election containing all polls conducted between this and the prior election. By relying on data from Wikipedia we use a data source that can potentially be edited and vandalized by anyone with access to the internet. We cannot fully mitigate this risk, as this would require identifying and checking the source for every single poll. However, most Wikipedia pages have a reference for every poll listed, and we sample a variety of the links to the results listed. Where the sources are available we did not come across any obvious departures from the source data. Another issue is that in some cases the original sources are no longer available because the websites no longer exist and have not been archived. In these cases it is not possible to check the validity of the data. To check the validity of the data from Wikipedia we can compare it to other data where available (e.g. Politico Poll of Polls). We do not find any obvious biases of the Wikipedia data doing this. An overview of the availability of poll data is provided in Table SM1.

Politico Poll of Polls: Polling data for European countries, available at: https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/.

Polls Canada: Polling data for elections in Canada (Wikipedia), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2011_Canadian_federal_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_Canadian_federal_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2019_Canadian_federal_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2021_Canadian_federal_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2025_Canadian_federal_election.

Polls New Zealand: Polling data for elections in New Zealand (Wikipedia), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1993_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1996_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1999_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2002_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2005_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2008_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2011_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2014_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2017_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2020_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2023_New_Zealand_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_next_New_Zealand_general_election.

Polls Turkey: Polling data for elections in Turkey (Wikipedia), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2011_Turkish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_June_2015_Turkish_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_November_2015_Turkish_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2018_Turkish_general_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2023_Turkish_parliamentary_election.

Polls Norway: Polling data for elections in Norway from Norpoll: Manedssnitt 1964-2021, available at:
https://www.norpoll.no/2021/02/manedssnitt-1964-2021/.

Polls Netherlands: Aggregated polling data from the Netherlands from Peilingwijzer, available at:
https://peilingwijzer.tomlouwerse.nl/resources/Results_DyGraphs_Fullhistory.csv.

Polls Finland: Polling data for elections in Finland from Taloustutkimus (https://www.taloustutkimus.fi), available at: https://yle.fi/a/3-10509309; https://plus.yle.fi/2020-03-puoluekannatusmittari/data/timeseries.json.

Polls Germany: Polling data for elections in Germany, available at: https://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/.

Polls Ireland: Polling data for elections in Ireland. Source: Tom Louwerse and Stefan Müller. 2025. Irish Polling Indicator Datasets: Stable Version (1987–2024). Harvard Dataverse. DOI: 10.7910/DVN/8YVVYX. Available at: https://pollingindicator.com/.

Polls Czech Republic: Polling data for elections in the Czech Republic, for 2010-2021 from Centrum pro výzkum

veřejného mínění (CVVM), available at:
https://cvvmapp.soc.cas.cz/election-model/csv?periodId=1, https://cvvmapp.soc.cas.cz/election-model/csv?periodId=3, https://cvvmapp.soc.cas.cz/election-model/csv?periodId=4.
For 1998-2013 from Wikipedia, available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1998_Czech_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1996_Czech_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2002_Czech_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2006_Czech_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2010_Czech_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2013_Czech_parliamentary_election

Polls Austria: Polling data for elections in Austria from neuwal.at, archived: https://web.archive.org/web/20221219142440/https://neuwal.com/wahlumfragen/data/neuwal-wahlumfragen-user.json.

Polls Bulgaria: Polling data for elections in Bulgaria (Wikipedia), available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Bulgarian_parliamentary_election.

Polls Spain: Polling data for elections in Spain (Wikipedia), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1977_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1979_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1982_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1986_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1989_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1993_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1996_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2000_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2004_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2008_Spanish_general_election,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2011_Spanish_general_election.

Polls Hungary: Polling data for elections in Hungary from TÁRKI (https://tarki.hu), archived: https://web.archive.org/web/20120419004634/http://www.tarki.hu:80/hu/research/elect/gppref_table_02.html.

Polls Poland: Polling data for elections in Poland (Wikipedia), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2011_Polish_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2007_Polish_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2005_Polish_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2001_Polish_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1997_Polish_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_1993_Polish_parliamentary_election.

Polls Croatia: Polling data for elections in Croatia (Wikipedia), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_Croatian_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007_Croatian_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2011_Croatian_parliamentary_election, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_Croatian_parliamentary_election.

A.2 Sample Overview

A.2.1 Sample Coverage

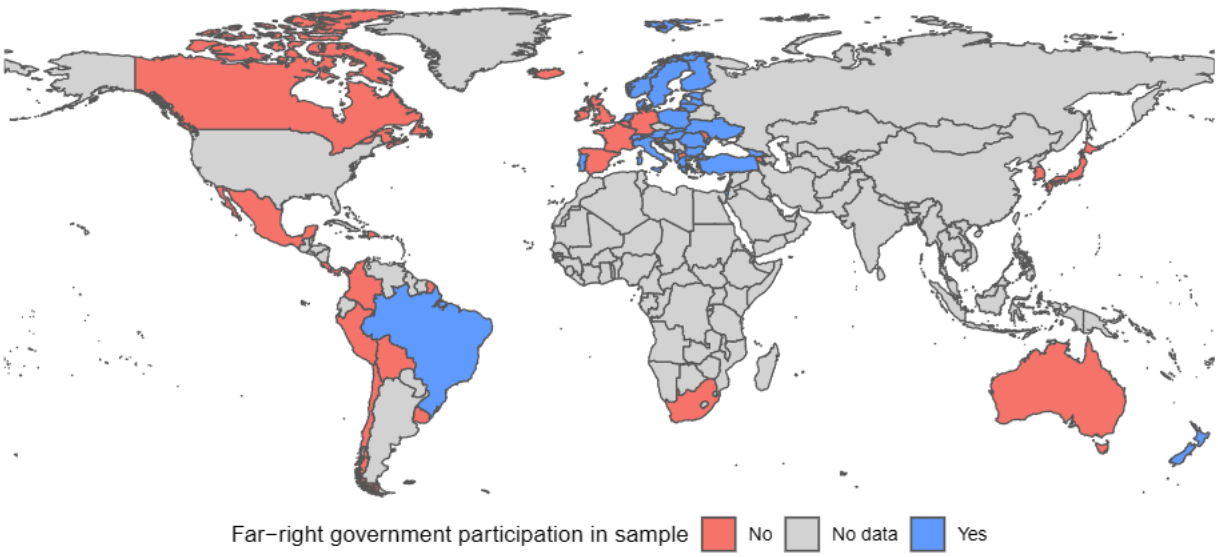


Figure SM1: Main sample geographical overview.

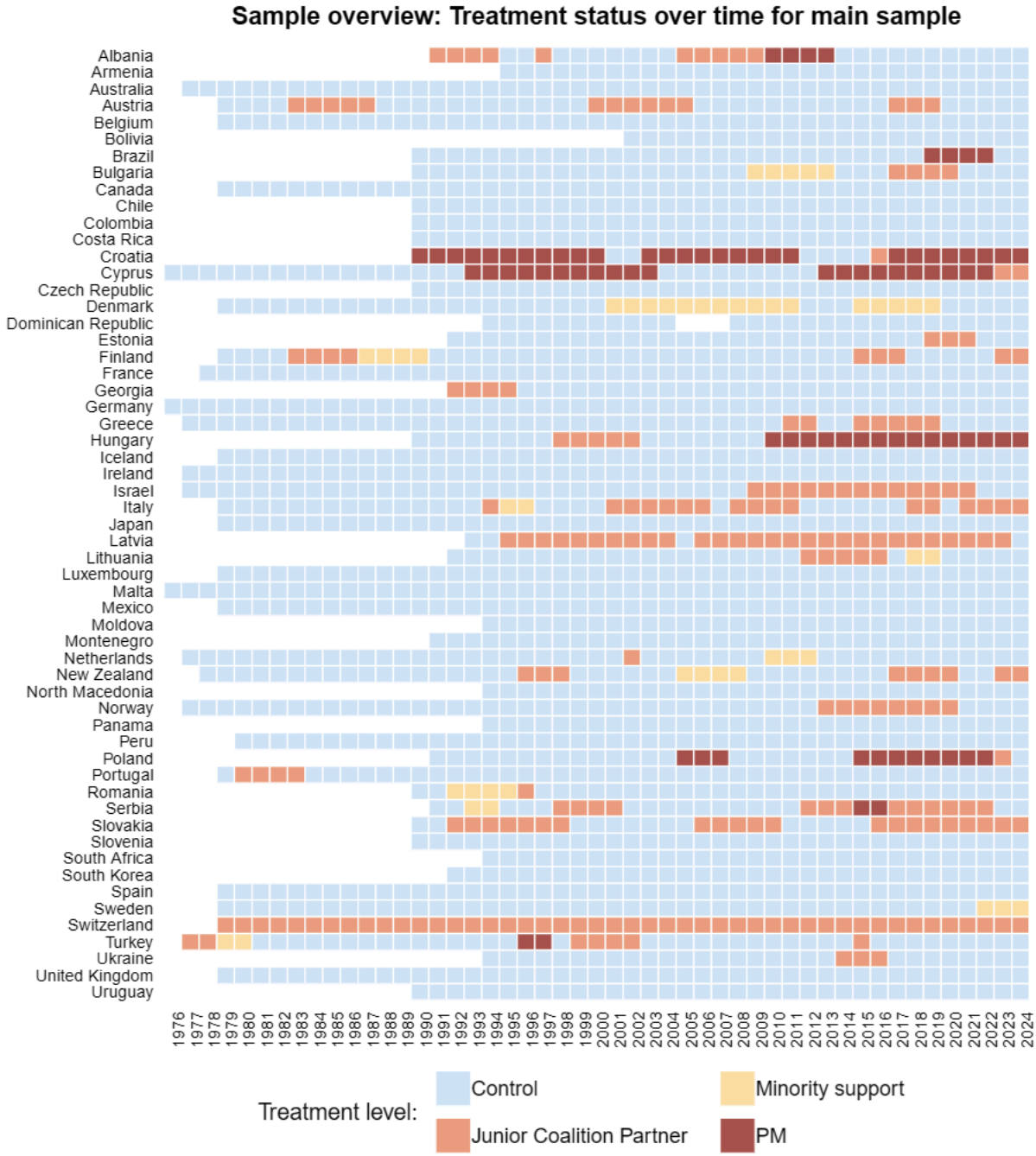


Figure SM2: Distribution of treatment status over time, main sample. NB: It is possible that in one country-year there is, e.g. both a far-right prime minister *and* the government is supported by another far-right party at the same time. In such cases the figure always reports the "strongest" treatment, i.e., in our example the treatment would be reported as PM in this figure. More, it is possible that more than one cabinets were in office in a country during one year. A year is indicated as treated if a far-right party participated in government at any time during that year.

A.2.2 Sample Coverage for Polling Data

In order to estimate the effect of far right involvement in governments on their performance in the polls, we rely on the ParlGov Dataset instead of the PPEG data which allows for directly linking the party identifiers to polling data.

A.2.3 Poll Data Availability

Table SM1: Overview of poll data availability by country, comparing core data from Politico's Poll of Polls with the extended data.

	Politico			Expanded Data		
Country	Start Date	End Date	Number of Polls	Start Date	End Date	Number of Polls
Austria	2013-10-03	2025-05-13	816	2006-07-12	2025-05-13	1205
Belgium	2016-01-20	2024-07-04	42	2016-01-20	2024-07-04	42
Bulgaria	2013-05-03	2025-04-30	234	2009-07-01	2025-04-30	260
Canada	NA	NA	NA	2008-10-14	2025-04-27	2186
Croatia	2014-01-06	2025-05-01	326	2003-02-18	2025-05-01	533
Cyprus	2015-07-17	2025-03-21	47	2015-07-17	2025-03-21	47
Czechia	2013-11-13	2025-05-12	462	1996-01-01	2025-05-12	896
Denmark	2010-01-20	2025-05-11	1699	2010-01-20	2025-05-11	1699
Estonia	2011-04-30	2025-04-28	578	2011-04-30	2025-04-28	578
Finland	2011-05-31	2025-05-06	316	1994-02-01	2025-05-06	660
France	2017-05-01	2024-06-28	87	2017-05-01	2024-06-28	87
Germany	2005-09-22	2025-05-12	3830	2000-07-28	2025-05-24	8680
Greece	2012-06-17	2025-05-15	1009	2000-04-09	2025-05-15	1592
Hungary	2014-04-29	2025-04-18	550	2000-01-01	2025-04-18	768
Ireland	2016-01-16	2025-05-02	271	1982-10-30	2025-05-04	965
Italy	2006-10-02	2025-05-05	4033	2006-10-02	2025-05-05	4033
Latvia	2014-09-30	2025-04-24	163	2014-09-30	2025-04-24	163
Lithuania	2015-11-14	2025-04-29	203	2015-11-14	2025-04-29	203
Luxembourg	2016-01-31	2025-04-24	18	2016-01-31	2025-04-24	18
Malta	2013-04-30	2025-04-08	123	2013-04-30	2025-04-08	123
Netherlands	2012-09-26	2025-05-12	882	1998-05-06	2025-05-12	10519
New Zealand	NA	NA	NA	1990-12-08	2025-05-04	947
Norway	2013-09-16	2025-05-06	1053	1964-01-01	2025-05-06	1689
Poland	2011-10-14	2025-05-13	1657	1993-01-01	2025-05-13	2440
Portugal	2011-06-28	2025-05-14	524	2011-06-28	2025-05-14	524
Romania	2014-07-06	2025-04-05	187	2014-07-06	2025-04-05	187
Slovakia	2016-01-14	2025-05-04	287	2016-01-14	2025-05-04	287
Slovenia	2013-12-17	2025-04-28	471	2013-12-17	2025-04-28	471
Spain	2011-12-15	2025-05-06	1538	1977-05-05	2025-05-06	2903
Sweden	1972-11-30	2025-05-04	1194	1972-11-30	2025-05-04	1194
Switzerland	2015-03-13	2024-11-11	40	2015-03-13	2024-11-11	40
Turkey	NA	NA	NA	2010-05-01	2023-05-01	336
United Kingdom	2014-01-02	2025-05-12	2724	2014-01-02	2025-05-12	2724

A.3 Attitude Data Interpolations

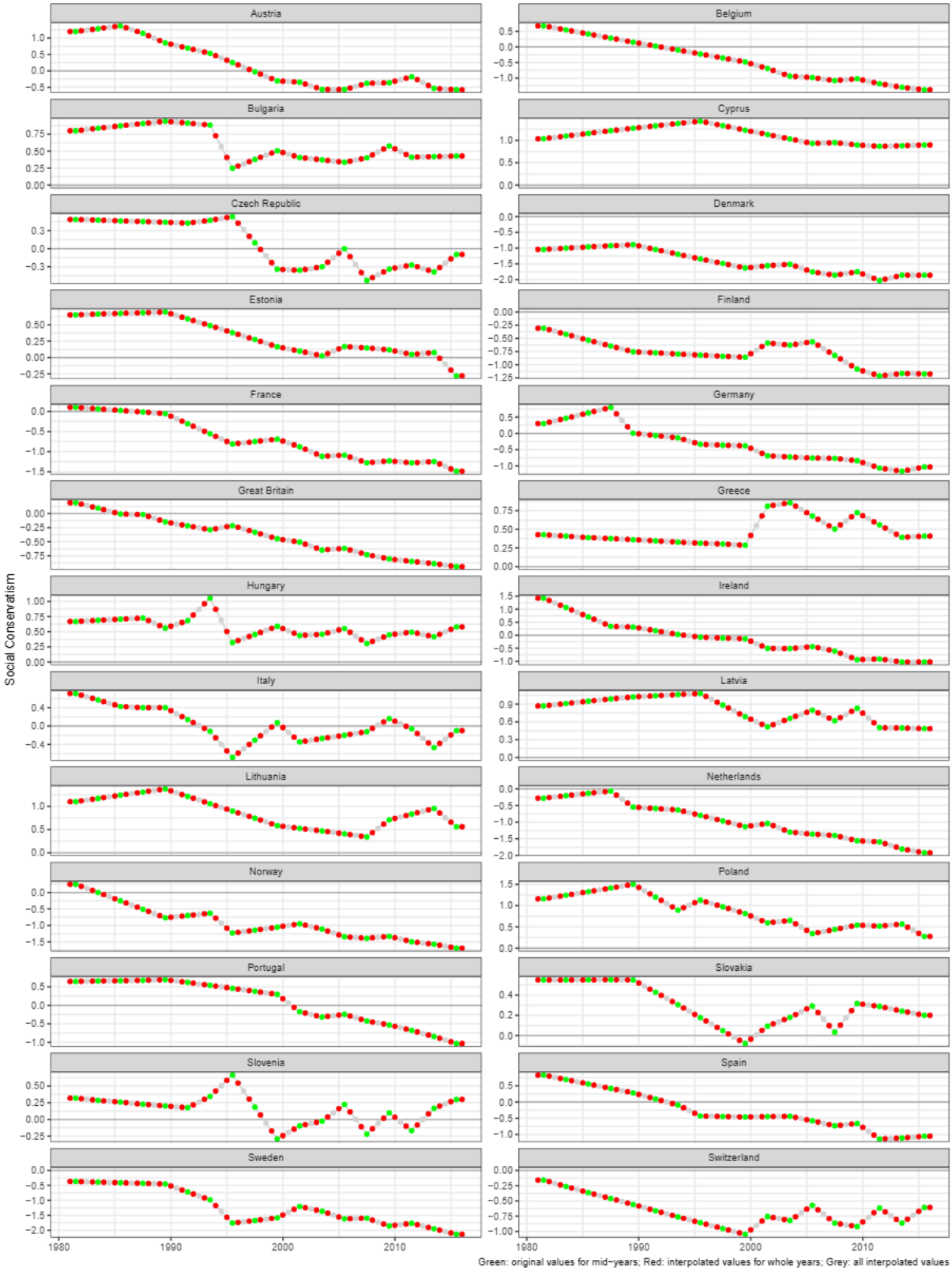


Figure SM3: Overview of results of linear interpolations for data on socially conservative attitudes. Green dots are the original bi-annual values for mid-years; red dots are the interpolated values for whole years; gray dots (not used in analyses) are interpolated values for mid-years.

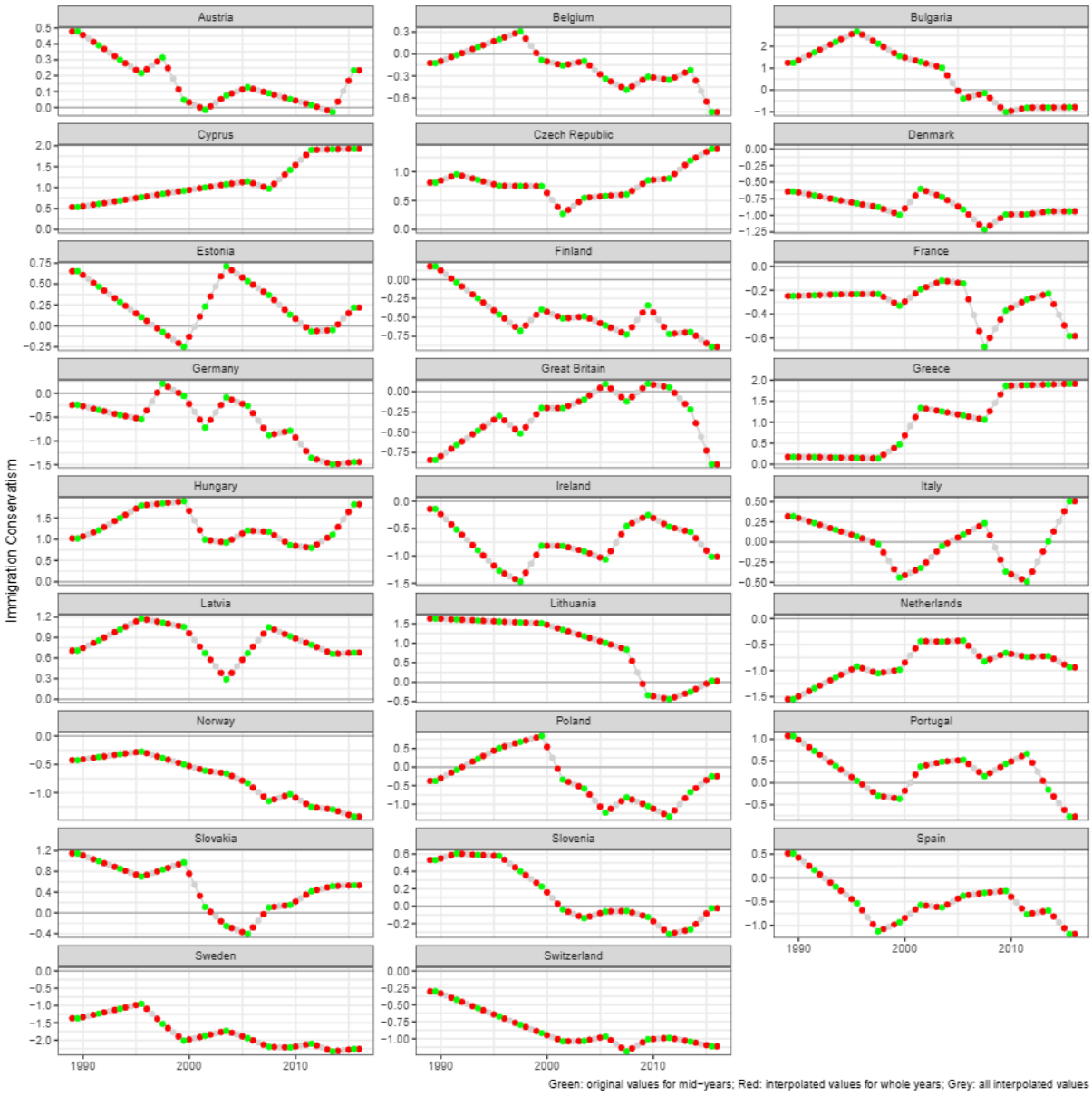


Figure SM4: Overview of results of linear interpolations for data on immigration attitudes. Green dots are the original bi-annual values for mid-years; red dots are the interpolated values for whole years; gray dots (not used in analyses) are interpolated values for mid-years.

B Estimation Strategy

We estimate the effects of far-right government participation using a difference-in-differences (DiD) design. Our approach leverages recent methodological advances that enhance robustness to challenges such as heterogeneous treatment effects (HTE), treatment reversals, and staggered treatment adoption. The primary estimator employed is the fixed effects counterfactual (FEct) estimator (Liu et al., 2024). To validate and complement our main results, we also use two related imputation-based estimators – the interactive fixed effects counterfactual (IFEct) estimator (Xu, 2017) and the matrix completion (MC) estimator (Athey et al., 2021) – as well as two extended DiD approaches: PanelMatch (Imai et al., 2023) and the staggered adoption estimator by Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021).

Standard two-way fixed effects (TWFE) models are known to produce biased estimates when treatment is introduced at different times across units, when treatment can be reversed, or when treatment effects are heterogeneous across units or over time (e.g., Goodman-Bacon, 2021). In response, a growing literature has developed a range of "HTE-robust" estimators that are designed to mitigate these issues (for reviews see de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille, 2023; Chiu et al., 2025). These methods generally fall into two categories: DiD extensions and imputation-

based methods. DiD extensions build on local 2×2 designs by aggregating across comparisons, while imputation methods construct estimates of the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) by directly imputing counterfactual outcomes for treated observations, thus using individual treatment effects (ITEs) as building blocks.

Our main models allow for treatment reversals, which are present in our data due to far-right parties entering and later exiting government. We also estimate models under an absorbing treatment specification, in which a unit is coded as treated from the moment a far-right party enters government and remains treated thereafter. For this latter approach, we employ the FEct and PanelMatch estimators, and additionally include the staggered adoption DiD estimator by Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021), which does not accommodate treatment reversal and is therefore only applied in this specification.

The PanelMatch estimator (Imai et al., 2023), a DiD extension method, matches treated and untreated observations with identical treatment histories over a specified number of pre-treatment periods. It then uses additional matching and weighting procedures to improve covariate balance, thereby strengthening the plausibility of the parallel trends assumption. The ATT is estimated using a DiD estimator applied to the matched and weighted sample. PanelMatch assumes that outcomes are only affected by a unit's own treatment history during the specified lags (i.e., no spillover effects), and that treated and untreated units would have followed parallel trends in the absence of treatment.

Imputation methods such as FEct, IFEct, and MC estimate counterfactual outcomes by leveraging both observed covariates and latent confounding structures. These approaches compare treated units to their own imputed untreated outcomes, rather than to a group of matched control units. The identification assumptions underpinning these models are: (1) untreated potential outcomes are generated by a process that is additive in observed covariates, unit-specific effects, and idiosyncratic shocks; (2) strict exogeneity, meaning that the potential untreated outcomes are conditionally independent of treatment status, given the entire time series of observed and latent variables; and (3) unobserved heterogeneity can be adequately captured by a low-rank structure, such as a factor model. These assumptions imply the absence of anticipation or carryover effects and require that selection into treatment be explainable by observed and latent confounders.

The FEct estimator models untreated potential outcomes using a two-way fixed effects structure: $Y_{it}(0) = X_{it}'\beta + \alpha_i + \xi_t + \varepsilon_{it}$. When a unit is treated, it considers the outcome for that unit as missing, because it's affected by treatment and we want to know what would have happened if it had not been treated. Then, the method uses only untreated (control) data to build a model of outcomes. Using this model, it imputes the counterfactual outcomes for treated units – i.e., what their outcomes would have been without treatment. TWFE often gives negative weights to some units in estimating treatment effects, especially when treatment timing is staggered or effects vary by unit. By not using treated units in model training and imposing equal weights, this framework avoids biased estimates due to heterogeneous treatment effects. It thus improves on traditional TWFE by appropriately reweighting observations to avoid bias from negative weights (Arkhangelsky and Imbens, 2022). However, when time-varying unobserved confounders are present, FEct may produce biased estimates. To address this, we also use the IFEct estimator, which augments the FEct model with an interactive fixed effects component $\lambda_i' f_t$ that captures unobserved, time-varying confounders through a latent factor structure (Xu, 2017). The number of factors, r, is selected using cross-validation.

The matrix completion (MC) estimator (Athey et al., 2021) shares the low-rank assumption of IFEct but estimates the factor structure through regularized matrix completion. This approach penalizes the nuclear norm – the sum of singular values of the data matrix – with a tuning parameter λ_L that governs the extent of regularization. When IFEct selects $r = 0$ or when MC's regularization is sufficiently strong to shrink all singular values to zero, both estimators effectively reduce to the FEct model. In such cases, we report only FEct results, as the more flexible models offer no added benefit. For all imputation-based estimators, we derive uncertainty estimates with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level.

The choice of estimators across models depends on the specific treatment dynamics under consideration. For example, PanelMatch and FEct are applied in both the reversible and absorbing treatment specifications, while the staggered adoption estimator is restricted to the absorbing case. Our triangulation across multiple HTE-robust methods enhances the credibility of the findings by ensuring robustness to model-specific assumptions and potential biases arising from staggered timing, treatment reversals, and unobserved confounding.

C Electoral Performance

C.1 Party-Level Analysis

C.1.1 Treatment Distribution

Figure SM5: Effects of government involvement on electoral support. Distribution of treatment status over time for party-level models. Data includes all far-right parties and their government status, using the main sample based on PPEG data.

C.1.2 Main Results: All Treatment Specifications

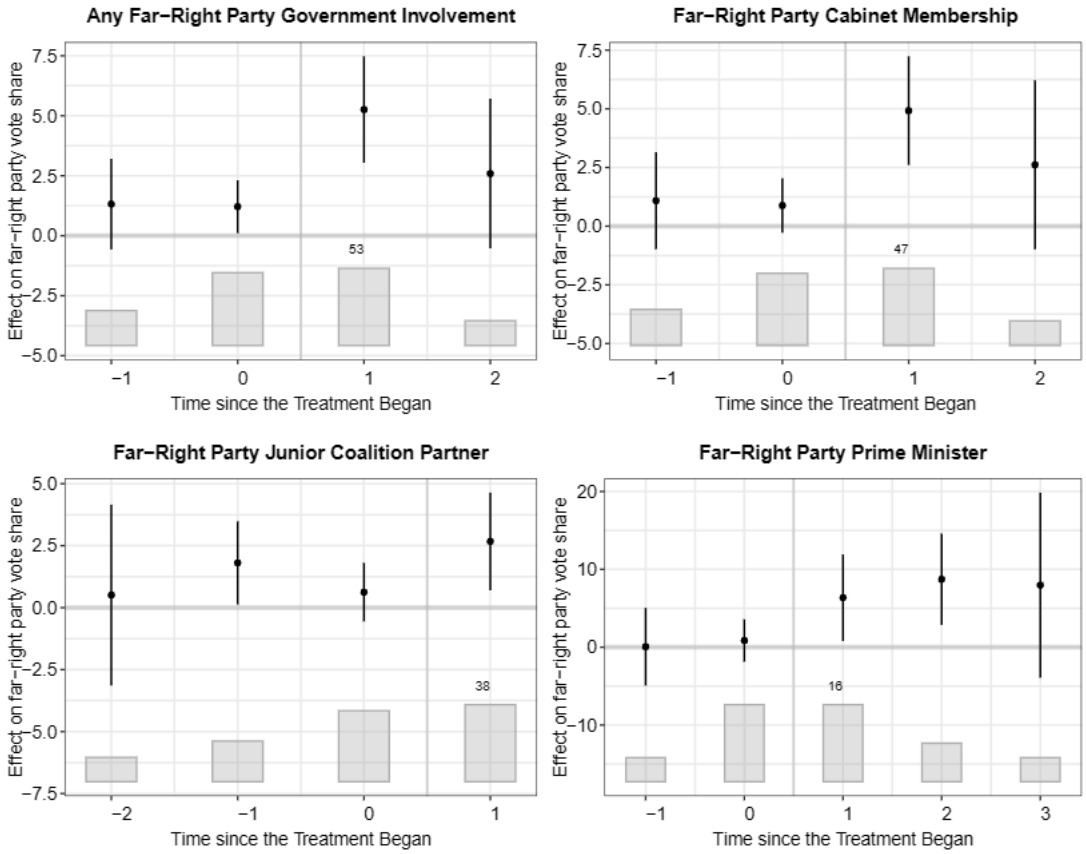


Figure SM6: ATTs of far-right government involvement on electoral support of the far-right party. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. Models pass F-test for no pre-trends but fail no pre-trends TOST equivalence tests. Time units correspond to election numbers.

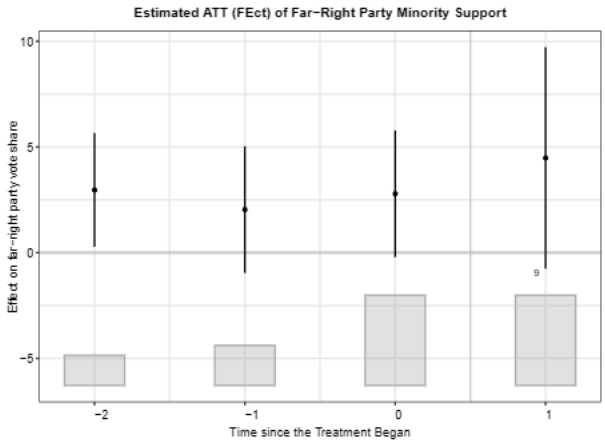


Figure SM7: ATTs of far-right support of minority governments on electoral support of the far-right party. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. Time units correspond to election numbers.

C.1.3 Robustness: Jackknife Analysis

To assess the robustness of our main results to the inclusion of specific parties, we conducted a leave-one-out jackknife analysis. We sequentially excluded each of the 101 far-right parties in our sample and re-estimated our main FEct model (Model 1 from Table SM6).

Table SM2 presents the five most influential parties. The most influential case is FIDESZ in Hungary, which shifts the ATT by 1.1 percentage points when removed – reducing the estimated effect from 4.44 to 3.33. This is unsurprising given FIDESZ's long tenure in government and substantial vote share. However, even this most extreme case does not fundamentally alter our conclusions. Figure SM8 shows the distribution of jackknife ATT estimates. The mean jackknife ATT (4.44) is virtually identical to the original estimate (4.44), with a jackknife standard error of 1.40. The distribution is relatively symmetric and concentrated around the original estimate, indicating that no single party or small set of parties drives our results.

These results confirm that our findings are not driven by any single party or outlier case. While certain parties (particularly those with long government tenures or extreme vote shares) have more influence on the estimates, the overall pattern remains consistent across all jackknife iterations.

Table SM2: Five most influential parties in jackknife analysis. Party-level models. Treatment: any government participation.

Country	Party	Elections	Mean Vote	ATT Change	Influence
HUN	FIDESZ - MPS/KDNP	8	33.6%	-1.115	1.115
HUN	FIDESZ - MPP/MDF	2	20.5%	+0.463	0.463
LVA	TB	10	10.3%	+0.279	0.279
CYP	DISY	10	32.1%	+0.238	0.238
LTU	PTT	4	9.3%	+0.206	0.206

Note: ATT Change shows how the average treatment effect changes when that party is excluded. Influence is the absolute value of the change. Original ATT: 4.44.

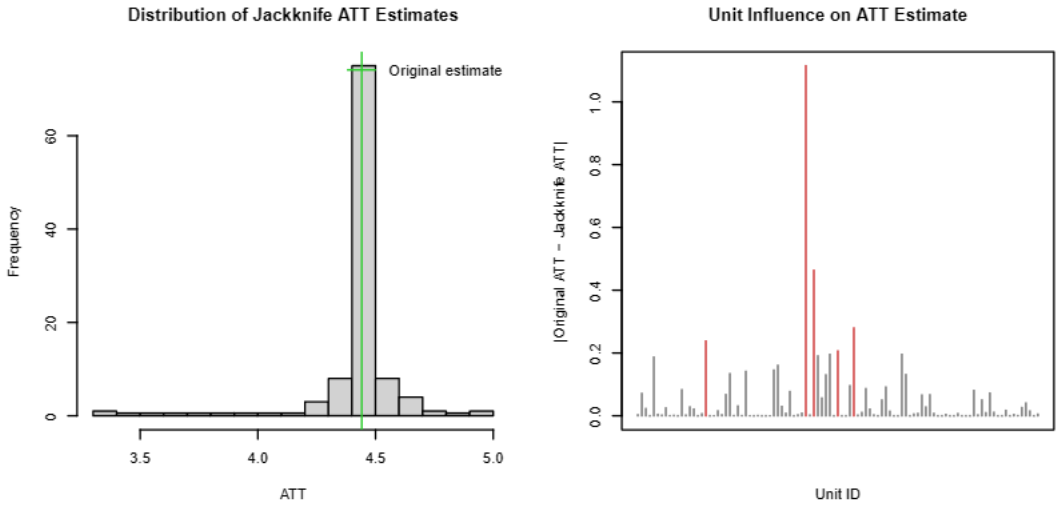


Figure SM8: Distribution of jackknife ATT estimates (left) and unit influence on ATT (right). The green line (left) indicates the original estimate. The red lines (right) indicate influential units. Each estimate is computed by excluding one party from the analysis.

C.1.4 Robustness: Matrix Completion Estimator

Matrix completion estimator As mentioned above, we use the matrix completion estimator or the interactive fixed effects counterfactual estimator to supplement the estimates from the FEct estimator when these models do not reduce to the FEct estimator (this happens when $r = 0$ for IFEct and $\lambda = 1$ for MC). This is because FEct estimates are biased in the presence of unobserved time-varying confounders. MC and IFEct can help with this.

For model 3 - which analyses the effect of far-right junior coalition partners - in Figure SM6, the IFEct and MC estimators do not reduce to FEct. In this case, we use the MC estimator, based on its better performance in the diagnostic tests (Liu et al., 2024). Figure SM9 reports the results of the model as well as the diagnostic tests. The effect of far-right junior coalition membership on far-right party vote share is no longer statistically significant in these models, showing that participation of far-right parties in government *does not* lead to a decrease in far-right vote share. The model passes both the F-test for no pre-trends and the TOST equivalence test: larger p-values for the F-test and smaller p-values for the equivalence test suggest better pre-trend fitting. Additionally, we conduct leave-one-out tests to eliminate potential attenuation bias in the standard FEct estimators (Li and Strezhnev, 2025). While the F-test p-value remains satisfactory, the model now fails the TOST equivalence test.

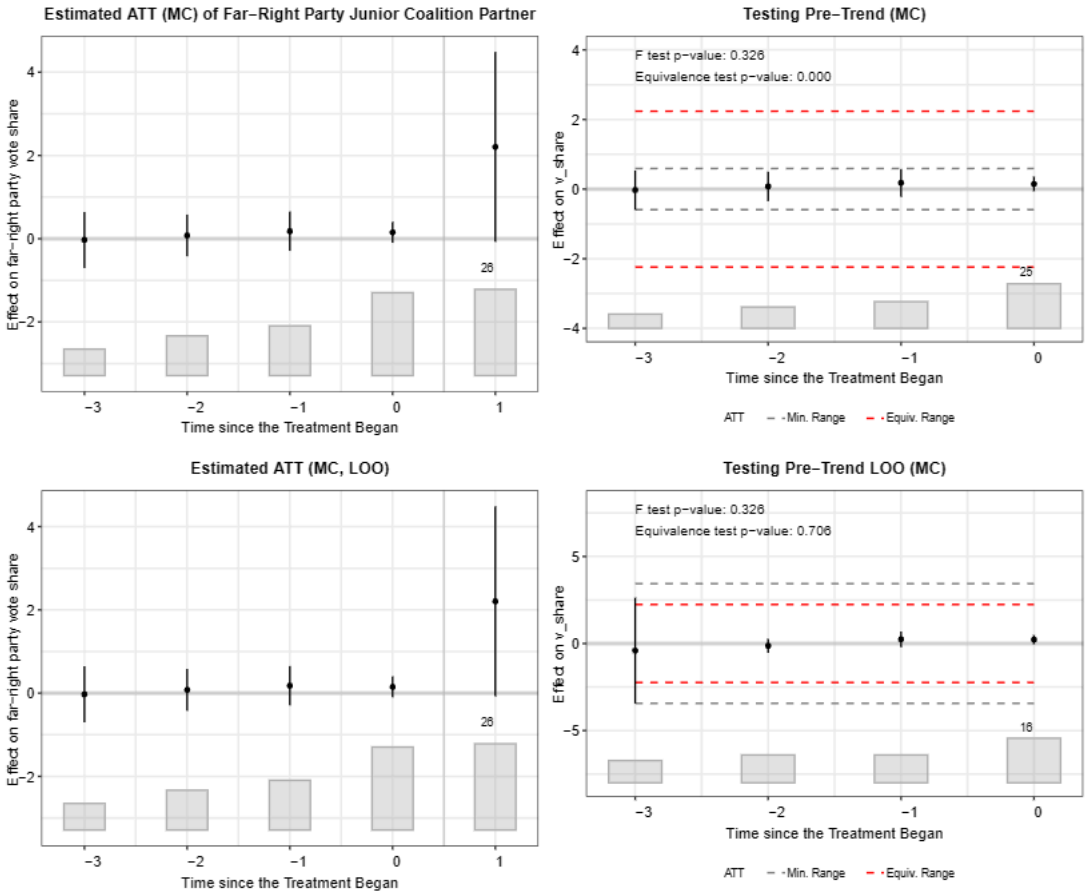


Figure SM9: ATTs of far-right junior coalition partner on electoral support of the far-right party and tests for no pre-trends. Estimates derived using the matrix completion estimator (MC).

C.1.5 Robustness: Alternative Estimators

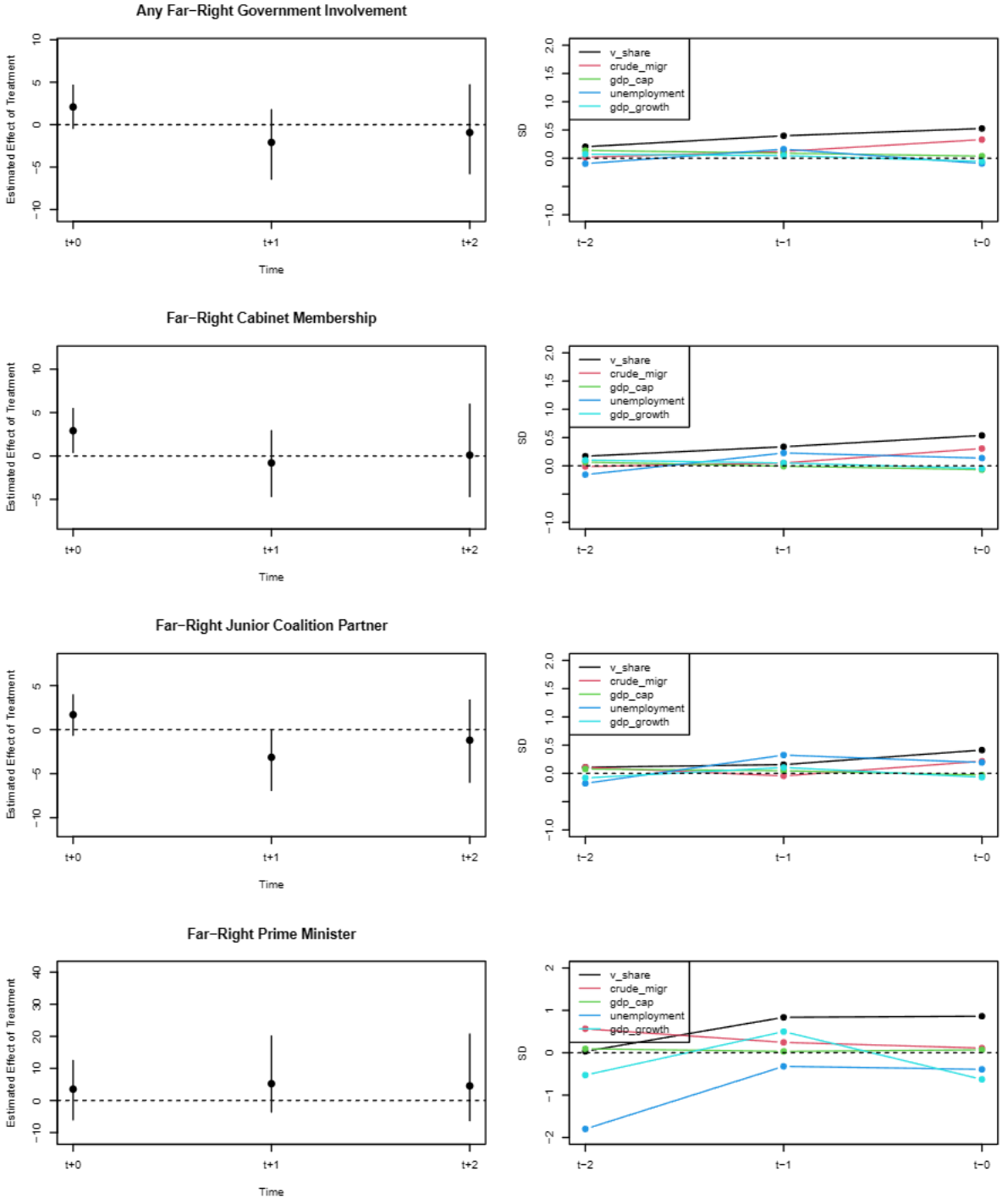


Figure SM10: Effects of government involvement on far-right party electoral support. Left-hand plots show ATTs estimated using the PanelMatch approach. Right-hand plots show covariate balance for each model. Matched sets refined using propensity score weighting. Models estimated using 2 lags and 2 leads. Covariates: Lagged DV, unemployment, GDP per capita, crude migration, GDP growth.

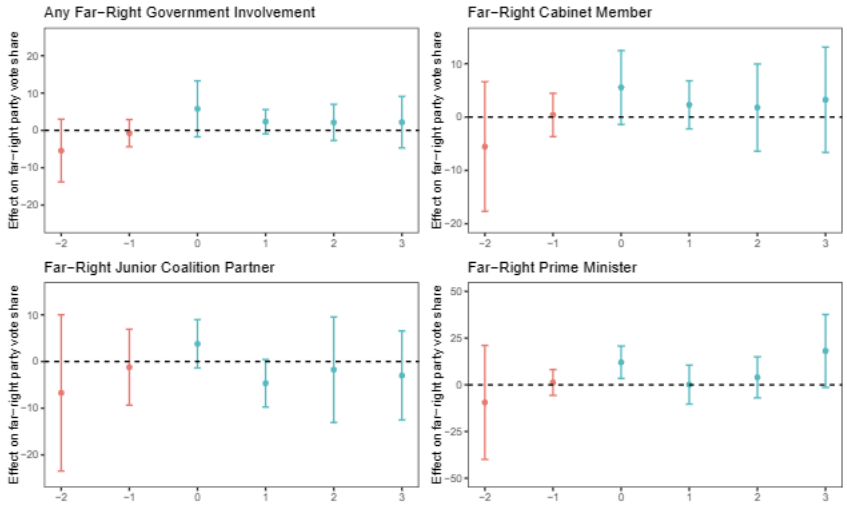


Figure SM11: Effects of government involvement on far-right party electoral support. Staggered Difference-in-Differences without treatment reversal using the estimator by Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021), using inverse probability weighting estimands. Covariates: GDP per capita, unemployment, crude migration, GDP growth.

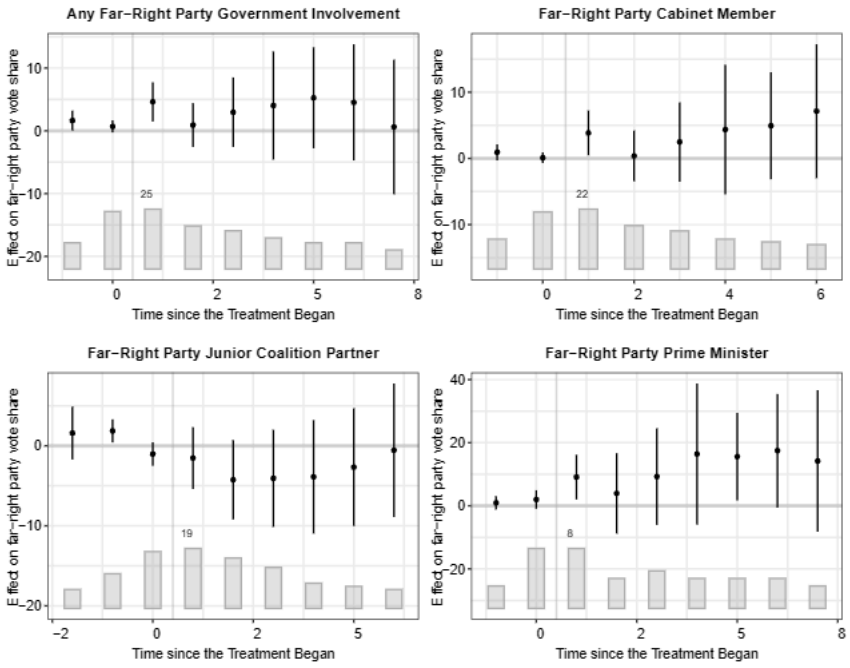


Figure SM12: Effects of government involvement on far-right party electoral support, no treatment reversals. FEct estimates. Covariates: GDP per capita, unemployment, crude migration, GDP growth.

C.1.6 Heterogeneous Effects

Heterogeneous effects - Geographic heterogeneity To examine whether the effect of far-right government participation varies across geographic contexts, we estimate separate models for different regions. The models are illustrated in Figure SM13. The global sample (see model 1 in SM6) yields an average treatment effect of 4.44 percentage points ($SE = 1.35$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that far-right parties experience a significant increase in vote share following government participation. The Europe-only sample shows a similar effect of 4.65 percentage points ($SE = 1.57$, $p = 0.003$). When disaggregating by European subregion, we observe some heterogeneity in both effect size and precision. Eastern Europe exhibits the largest point estimate at 8.88 percentage points, though this is imprecisely estimated and not statistically significant ($SE = 6.06$, $p = 0.143$), likely due to the smaller sample size ($n = 107$ observations across 7 countries). Northern Europe shows a comparable effect size

of 4.31 percentage points but with considerable uncertainty ($SE = 3.52$, $p = 0.220$). Southern Europe has a statistically significant effect of 4.14 percentage points ($SE = 1.62$, $p = 0.010$), based on 132 observations from 8 countries. In contrast, Western Europe shows the smallest and most uncertain estimate at 2.27 percentage points ($SE = 3.46$, $p = 0.512$). Models for non-European regions (Americas, Asia, Africa, and Oceania) could not be reliably estimated due to insufficient observations, with sample sizes ranging from only 4 observations in Africa to 48 in Asia. These regional analyses suggest that the positive effect of government participation on far-right vote share appears relatively consistent across European subregions, though the magnitude and statistical significance vary with regional context and sample size.

Heterogeneous effects - Temporal heterogeneity We also check for temporal differences in Figure SM14. We find positive effects in the periods before 2000 and after 2010. For the period between 2000 and 2010 we find no significant effects due to a low number of treated observations.

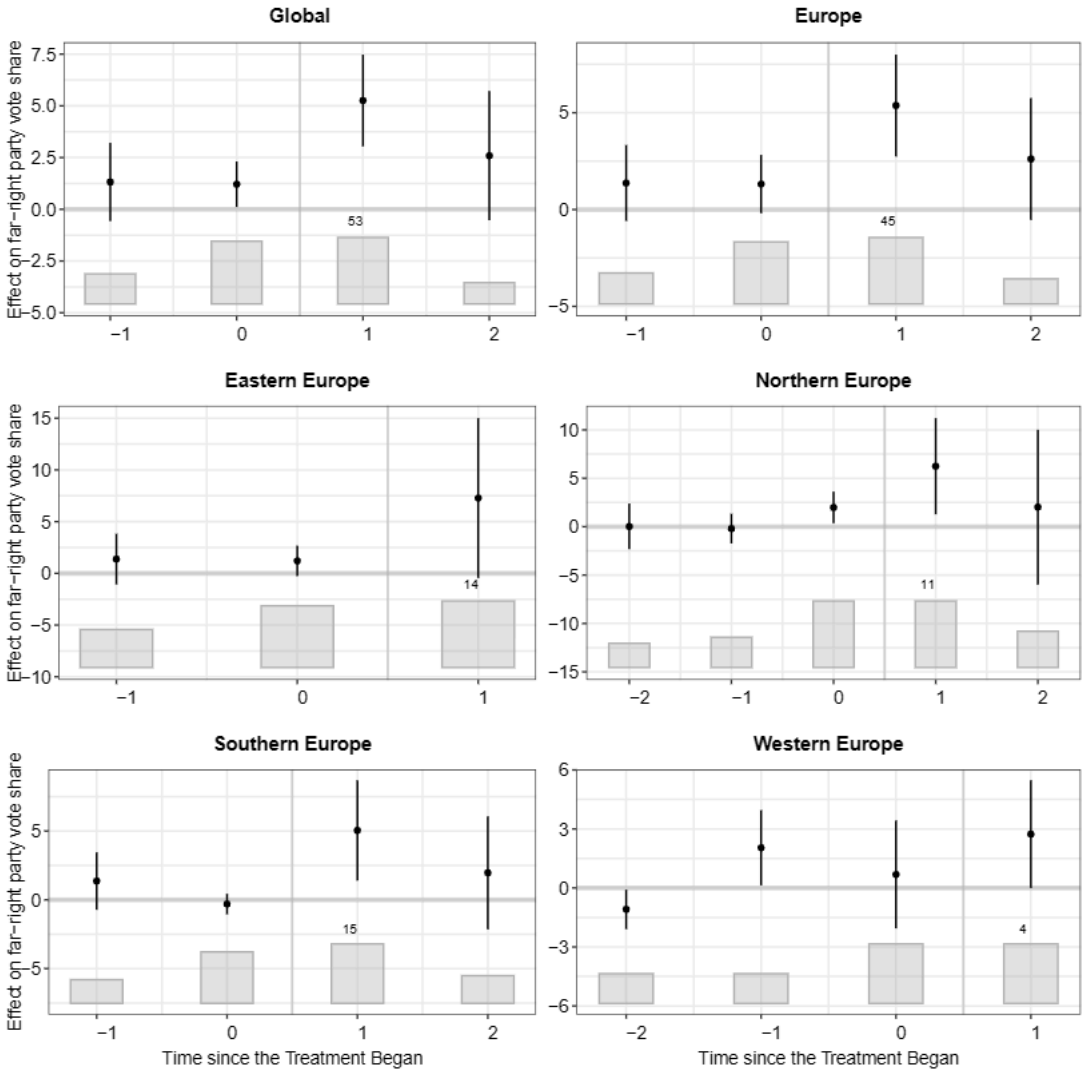


Figure SM13: Heterogeneous treatment effects of far-right government involvement on electoral support of the far-right party - geographic variation. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) with 95% confidence intervals. Time units correspond to election numbers.

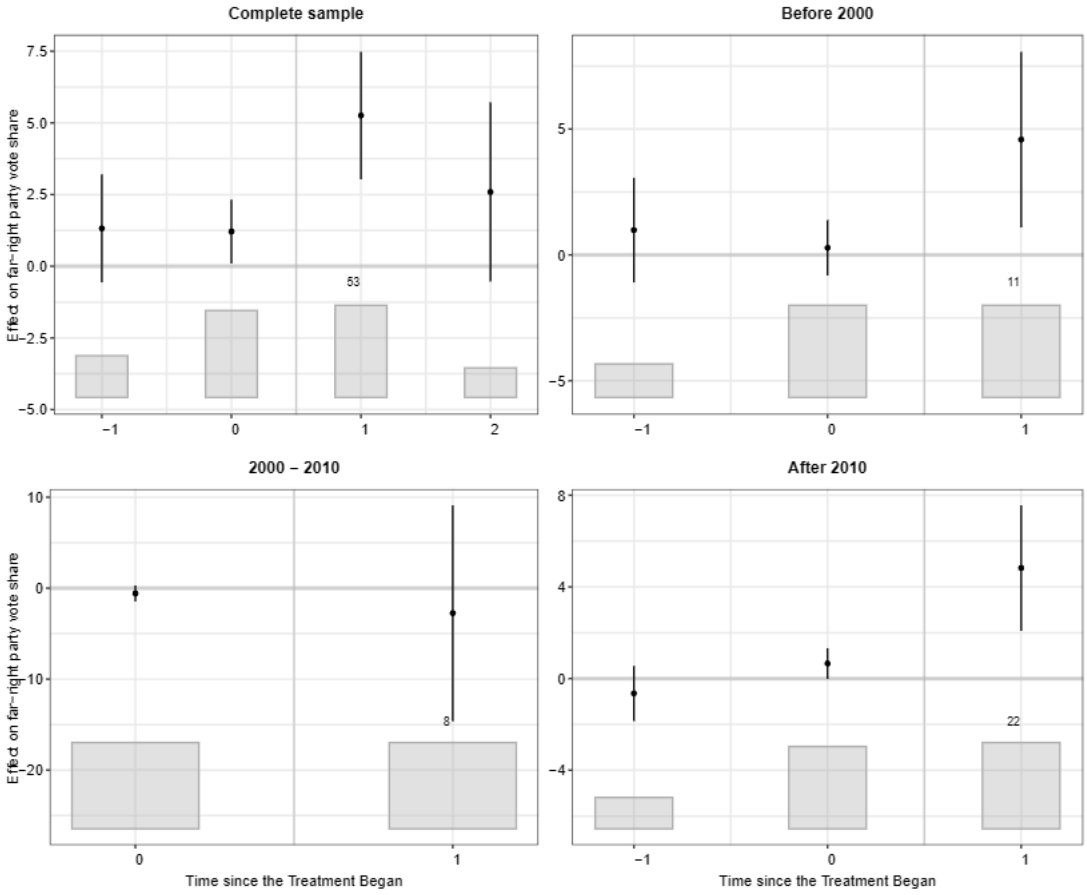


Figure SM14: Heterogeneous treatment effects of far-right government involvement on electoral support of the far-right party - temporal variation. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) with 95% confidence intervals. Time units correspond to election numbers.

Causal forest To further explore potential sources of treatment effect heterogeneity, we employ a causal forest approach, which uses machine learning to identify which covariates are most predictive of heterogeneous treatment effects. The results are reported in Figure SM15. The analysis identifies migration rates as the most important predictor of treatment effect variation (29.2% variable importance), followed by unemployment rates (18.7%), year (17.0%), and GDP growth (15.0%). The best linear projection of the conditional average treatment effect reveals that higher migration rates are associated with significantly larger treatment effects (coefficient = 0.89, p = 0.002), and that effects are particularly pronounced in European contexts (coefficient = 14.15, p = 0.022). However, the calibration test indicates that the detected heterogeneity is not statistically significant (p = 0.30), suggesting that while certain covariates appear to moderate treatment effects, the variation may not be robust. These findings complement our fixed effects counterfactual analysis by highlighting migration context and geographic location as potential moderators, though we interpret them cautiously given the non-significant calibration test. The causal forest estimates an average treatment effect of 10.60 percentage points (SE = 1.26), which is larger than our primary FEct estimate, likely reflecting the causal forest's inability to control for time-invariant confounding through fixed effects.

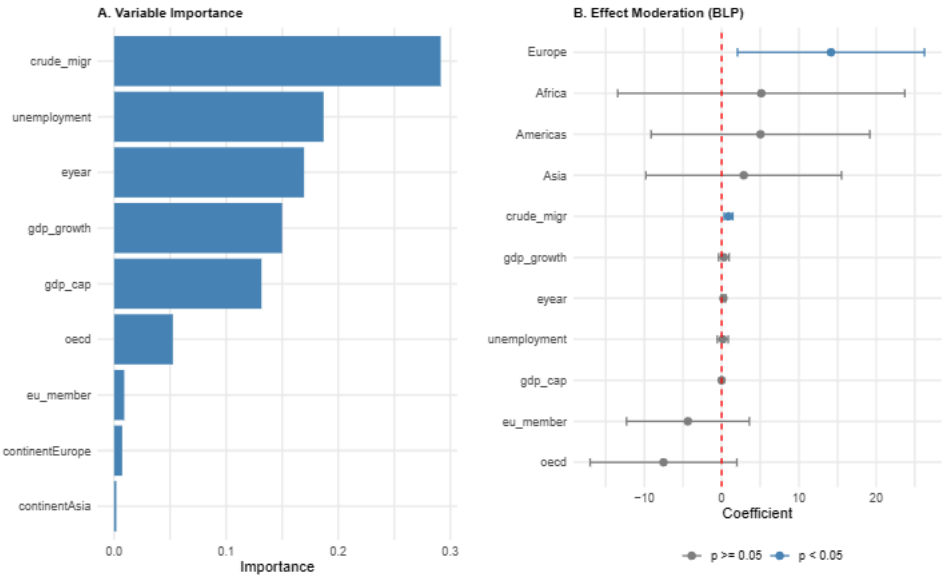


Figure SM15: Causal forest results. Lefthand panel displays variable importance scores indicating that migration and unemployment most strongly drive treatment effect heterogeneity. Righthand panel shows BLP estimates suggesting that the incumbency advantage is significantly stronger in contexts with higher migration rates and in Europe.

C.1.7 Robustness: Alternative Sample (ParlGov)

In addition to our analyses of electoral outcomes using the sample based on the PPEG data (see C) we run the analyses on the effect of government inclusion on electoral support on a smaller sample which is based on ParlGov data. ParlGov covers only EU and OECD countries, providing a much smaller sample. We report the main results in Figure SM16. These results do not differ substantively from the results using the main sample based on PPEG data.

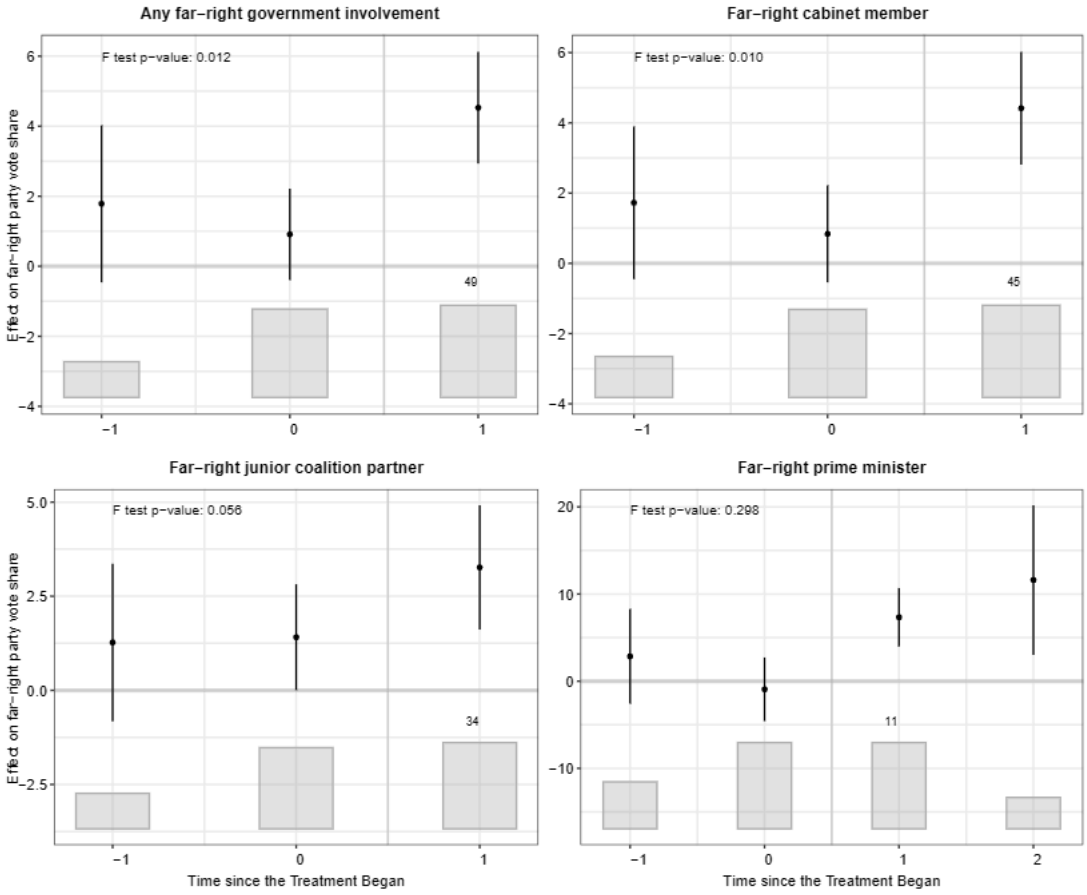


Figure SM16: ATTs of far-right government involvement on electoral support of the far-right party, using the smaller ParlGov sample. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct). Estimated effects are shown 1 election before and 1 (2) election after a far-right party's government involvement started with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. Including p-values for F-tests for no pre-trend. Only the model using far-right junior coalition partner as treatment passes the no pre-trend tests.

C.2 Country-Level Analysis

Figure SM17 shows the available data for the country-level analyses.

Figure SM18 reports the ATTs for all treatment specifications using the FEct and MC estimators, as well as the results of the diagnostic tests. The only model in which all pre-trend tests are passed is the MC estimand of the effect of far-right party cabinet members. The other models fail the F-test (Any far-right party government involvement MC), the equivalence test (Far-right junior coalition partner FEct & MC, far-right prime minister FEct & MC), or even both (Any far-right party government involvement FEct, Far-right cabinet member FEct).

The model that passes all pre-trend tests (Figure SM18a row 4) shows that far-right party cabinet membership *does not* result in decreases in far-right vote share. Instead, it shows that far-right cabinet membership increases far-right vote share. The other models in Figure SM18 show the same finding.

The models using the PanelMatch estimator (Figure SM22) and the models assuming no treatment reversals (Figures SM23, SM24) also show that inclusion in government does not decrease electoral support for the far right and may even increase it.

C.2.1 Treatment Distribution

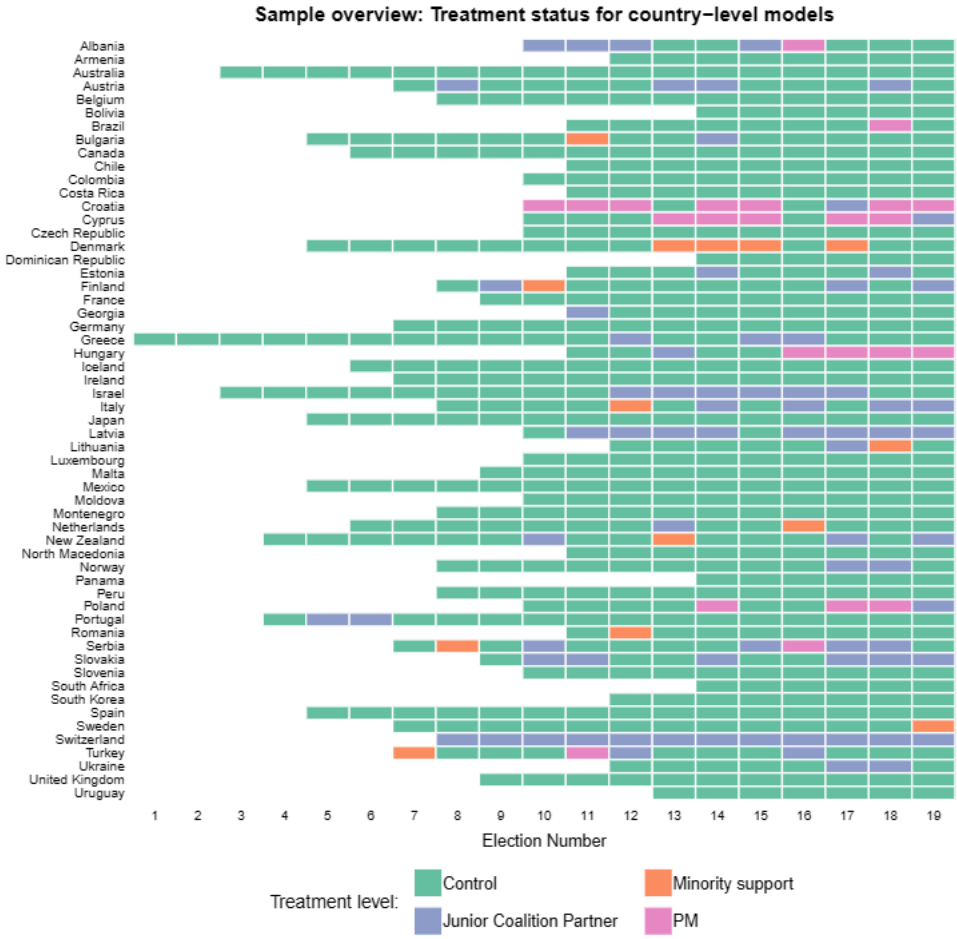
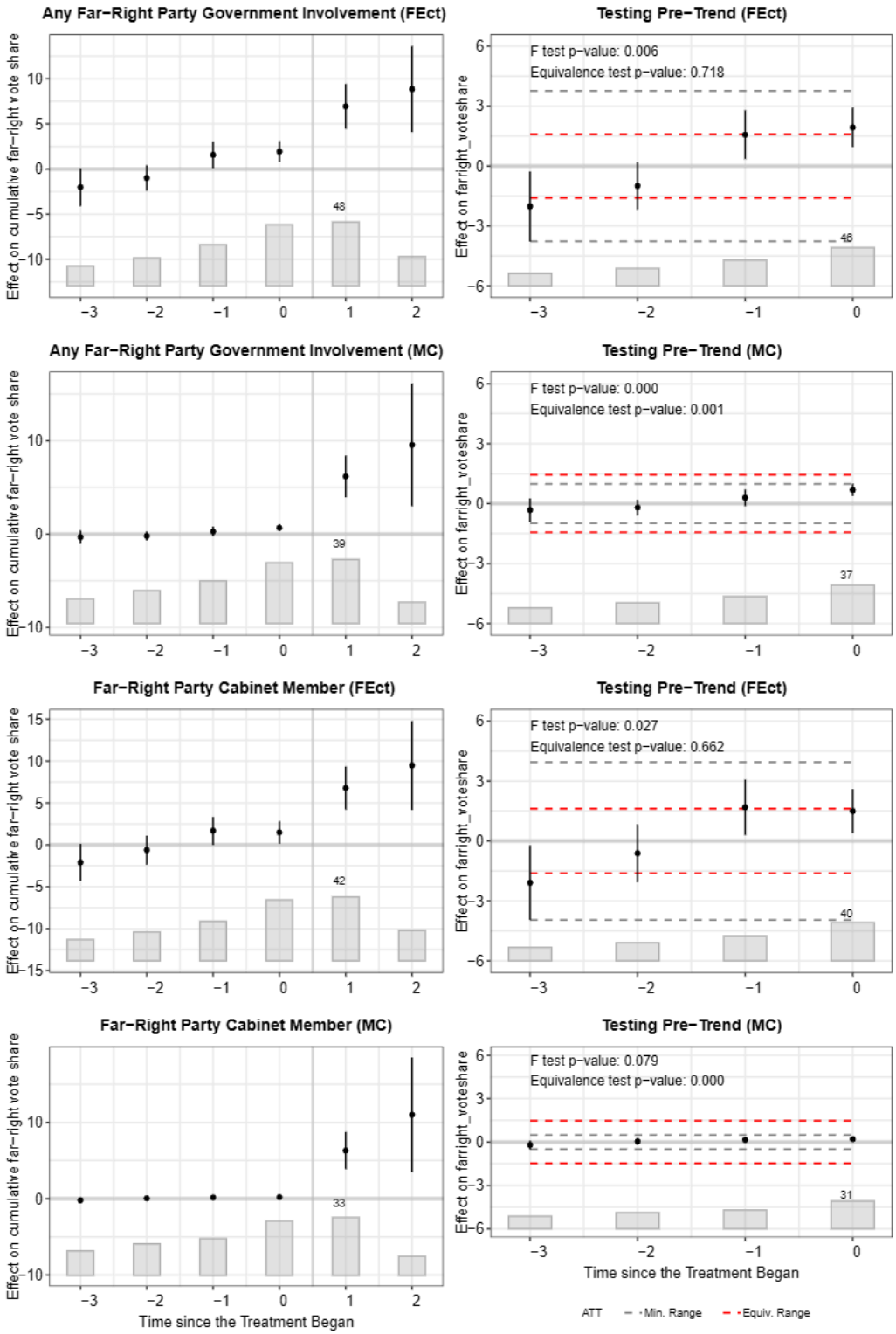


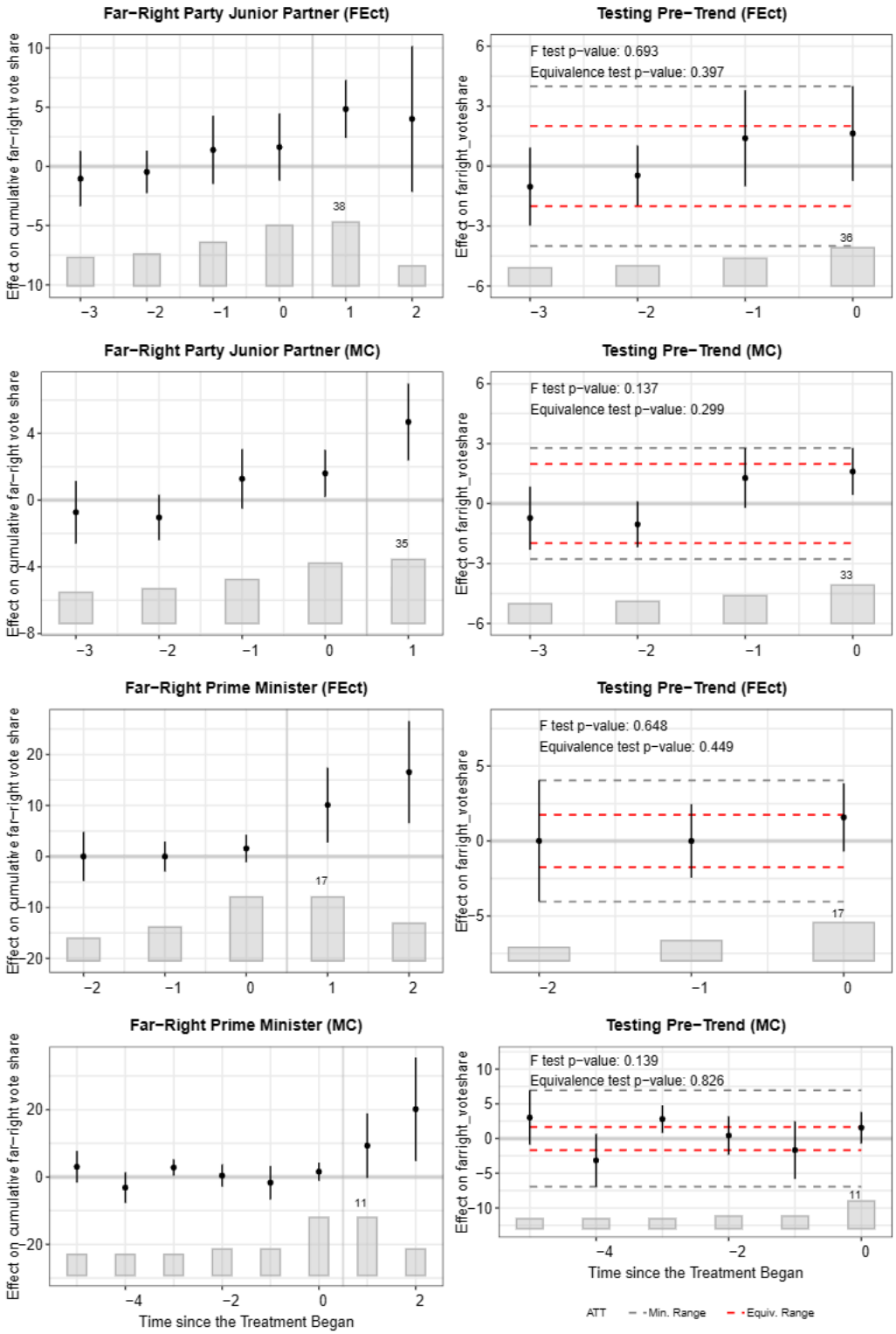
Figure SM17: Effects of government involvement on electoral support. Distribution of treatment status over time for country-level models.

C.2.2 Main Results: All Treatment Specifications



(a) ATTs of any far-right government involvement (rows 1-2) and far-right cabinet membership (rows 3-4) on cumulative electoral support for the far-right (left-hand plots) and diagnostic tests (right-hand plots).

Figure SM18: ATTs for country-level models (part 1 of 2). Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) and the matrix completion estimator (MC), with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level.



(b) ATTs of far-right junior coalition partners (rows 1-2) and far-right prime ministers (rows 3-4) on cumulative electoral support for the far-right (left-hand plots) and diagnostic tests (right-hand plots).

Figure SM18: ATTs for country-level models (part 2 of 2). Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) and the matrix completion estimator (MC), with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level.

C.2.3 Robustness: Jackknife Analysis

Table SM3: Five most influential countries in jackknife analysis. Country-level models. Treatment: any government participation.

Country	Elections	Mean Far-Right Vote Share	ATT Change	Influence
HUN	9	42.922	-1.248	1.248
POL	10	23.693	-0.587	0.587
ISR	17	1.175	0.476	0.476
SRB	13	24.515	-0.471	0.471
AUT	13	17.561	0.462	0.462

Note: ATT Change shows how the average treatment effect changes when that country is excluded. Influence is the absolute value of the change. Original ATT: 7.56.

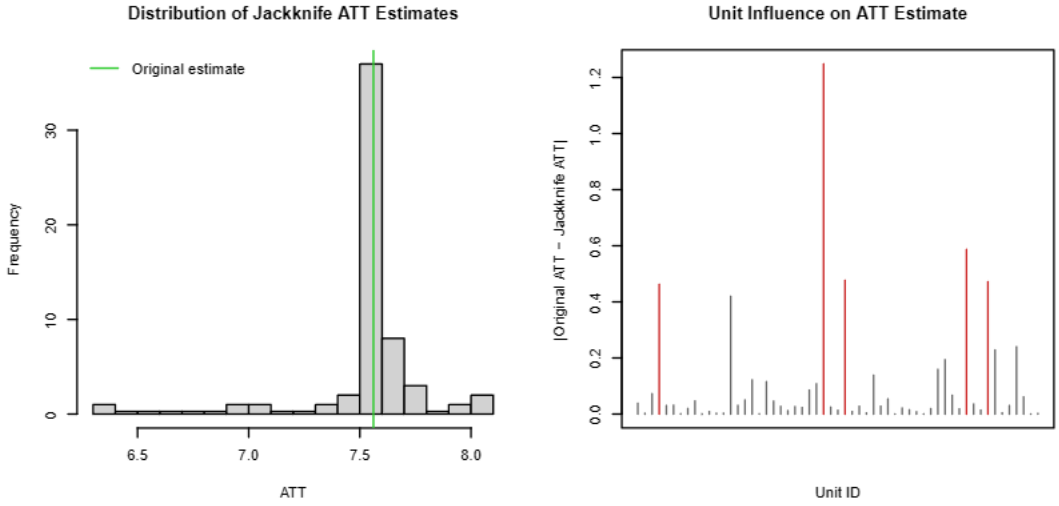


Figure SM19: Distribution of jackknife ATT estimates (left) and unit influence on ATT (right). The green line (left) indicates the original estimate. The red lines (right) indicate influential units. Each estimate is computed by excluding one party from the analysis.

To assess the robustness of our country-level results to the inclusion of specific countries, we conducted a leave-one-out jackknife analysis. We sequentially excluded each of the 57 countries in our sample and re-estimated our main FEct model for cumulative far-right vote share (Model 1 from Figure SM18).

Table SM3 presents the five most influential countries. The most influential case is Hungary, which shifts the ATT by 1.2 percentage points when removed – reducing the estimated effect from 7.56 to 6.31. This is unsurprising given Hungary's high far-right vote share and extensive experience with far-right governance. However, even this most extreme case does not fundamentally alter our conclusions.

Notably, two countries (Israel and Austria) have the opposite effect: removing them slightly increases the estimated treatment effect. This suggests that these countries, despite having far-right parties in government, exhibit somewhat lower increases in far-right support than the overall pattern, thus moderating the average effect.

Figure SM19 shows the distribution of jackknife ATT estimates. The mean jackknife ATT (7.56) is virtually identical to the original estimate (7.56), with a jackknife standard error of 1.72. The distribution is tightly concentrated around the original estimate, indicating that no single country drives our results.

C.2.4 Heterogeneous Effects

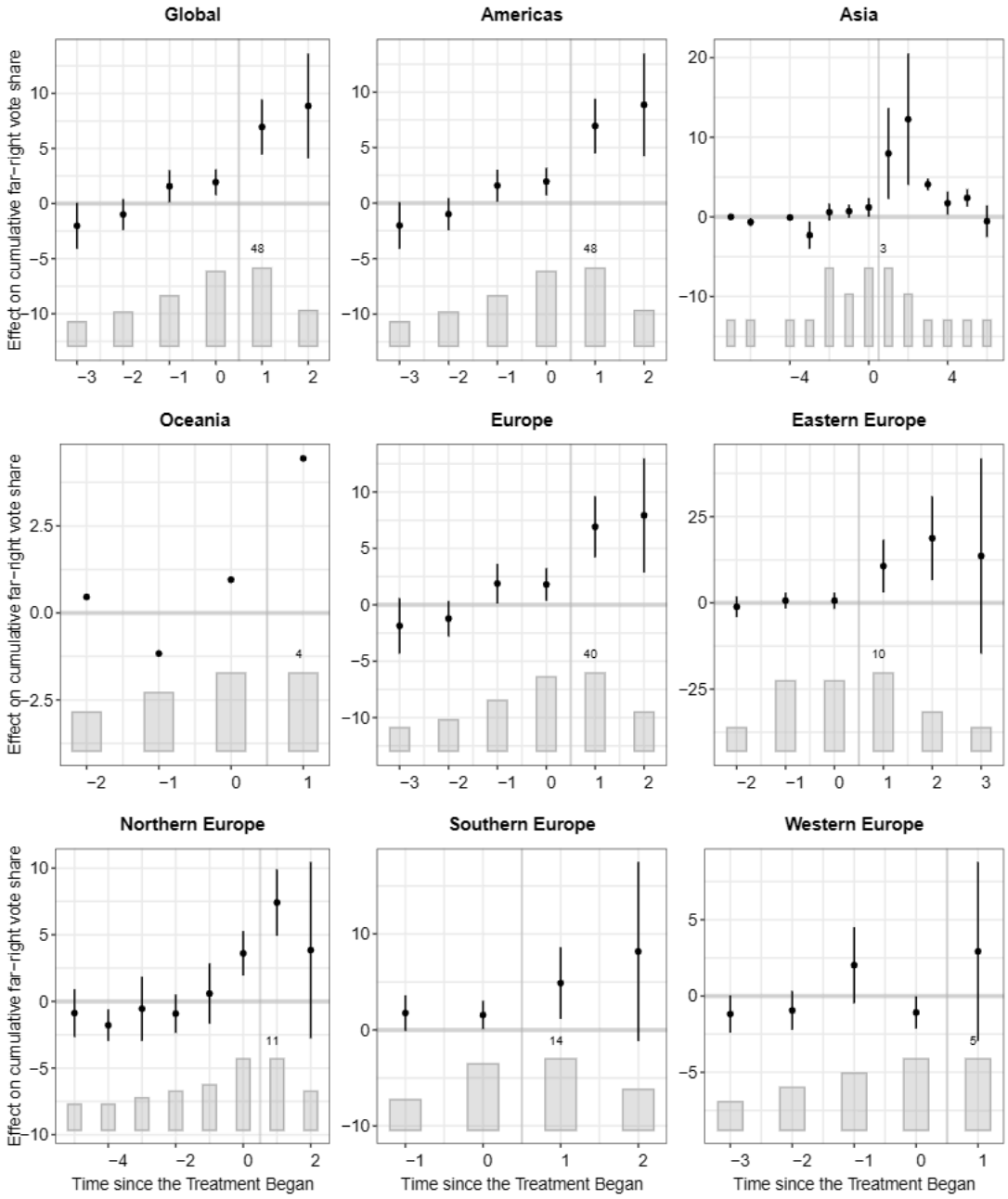


Figure SM20: Heterogeneous treatment effects of far-right government involvement on cumulative electoral support of the far-right - geographic variation. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) with 95% confidence intervals. Time units correspond to election numbers.

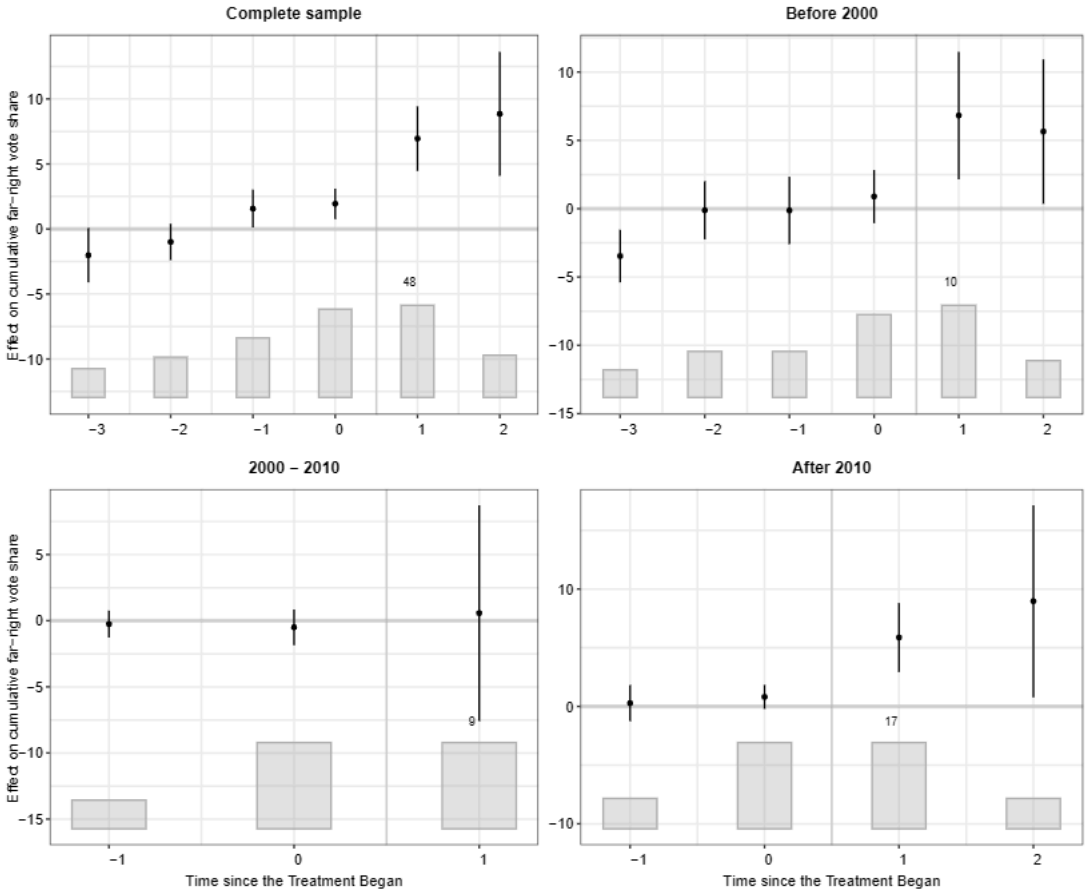


Figure SM21: Heterogeneous treatment effects of far-right government involvement on cumulative electoral support of the far-right - temporal variation. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) with 95% confidence intervals. Time units correspond to election numbers.

C.2.5 Robustness: Alternative Estimators

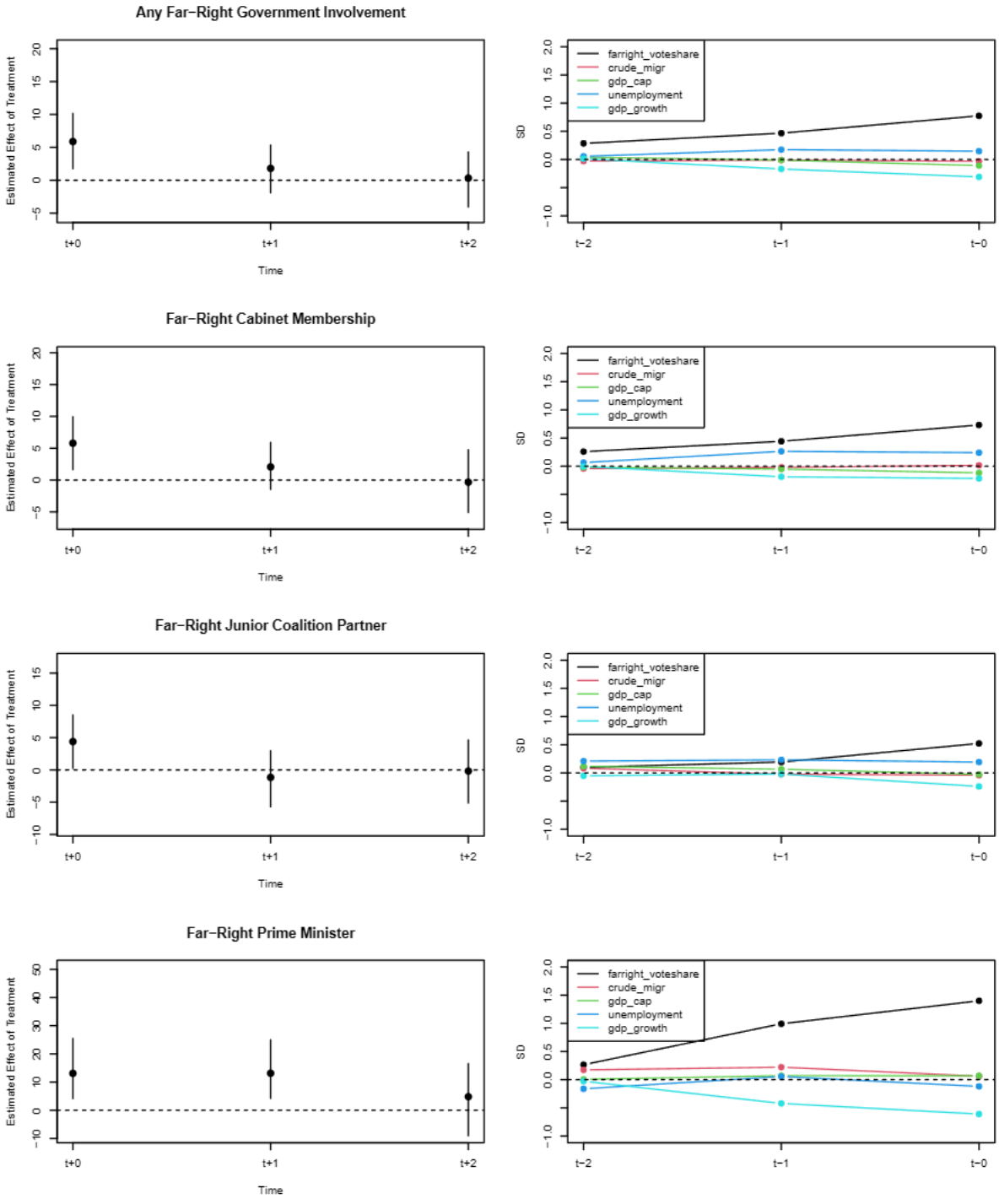


Figure SM22: Effects of far-right government involvement on cumulative far-right electoral support. Left-hand plots show ATTs estimated using the PanelMatch approach. Right-hand plots show covariate balance for each model. Matched sets refined using propensity score weighting. Models estimated using 2 lags and 2 leads. Covariates: Lagged DV, unemployment, GDP per capita, crude migration, GDP growth.

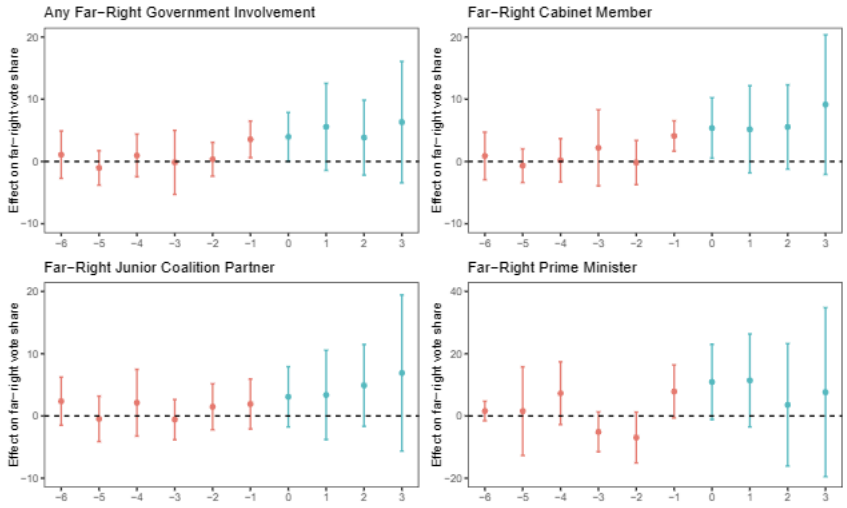


Figure SM23: Effects of far-right government involvement on cumulative far-right electoral support. Staggered Difference-in-Differences without treatment reversal using the estimator by Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021), using inverse probability weighting estimands. Covariates: GDP per capita, unemployment, crude migration, GDP growth.

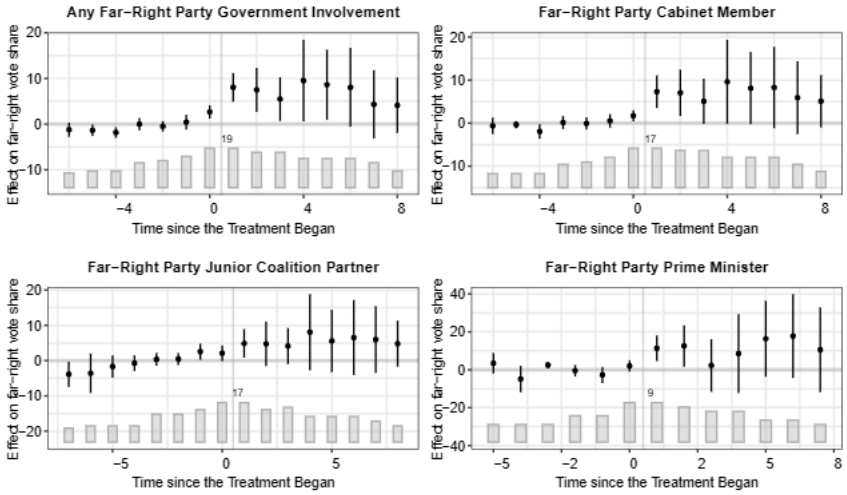


Figure SM24: Effects of far-right government involvement on far-right electoral support, no treatment reversals. FEct estimates. Covariates: GDP per capita, unemployment, crude migration, GDP growth.

C.2.6 Robustness: Alternative Sample (ParlGov)

In addition to our analyses of electoral outcomes using the sample based on the PPEG data (see C) we run the analyses on the effect of government inclusion on electoral support on a smaller sample which is based on ParlGov data. ParlGov covers only EU and OECD countries, providing a much smaller sample. We report the main results in Figure SM25. These results do not differ substantively from the results using the main sample based on PPEG data.

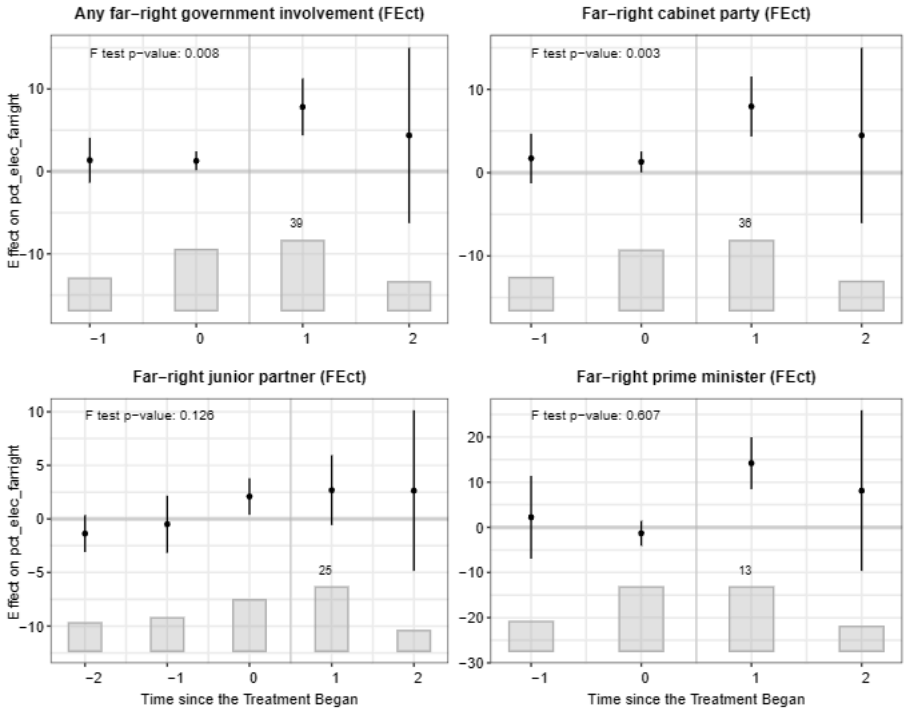


Figure SM25: ATTs of far-right government involvement on cumulative electoral support for far-right parties. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct). Estimated effects are shown 1-2 elections before and 2 elections after a far-right party's government involvement started with 95% confidence intervals. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. Including p-values for F-tests for no pre-trend. Only the model using far-right junior coalition partner as treatment passes the no pre-trend tests.

D Polling Support

D.1 Main Results: All Treatment Specifications

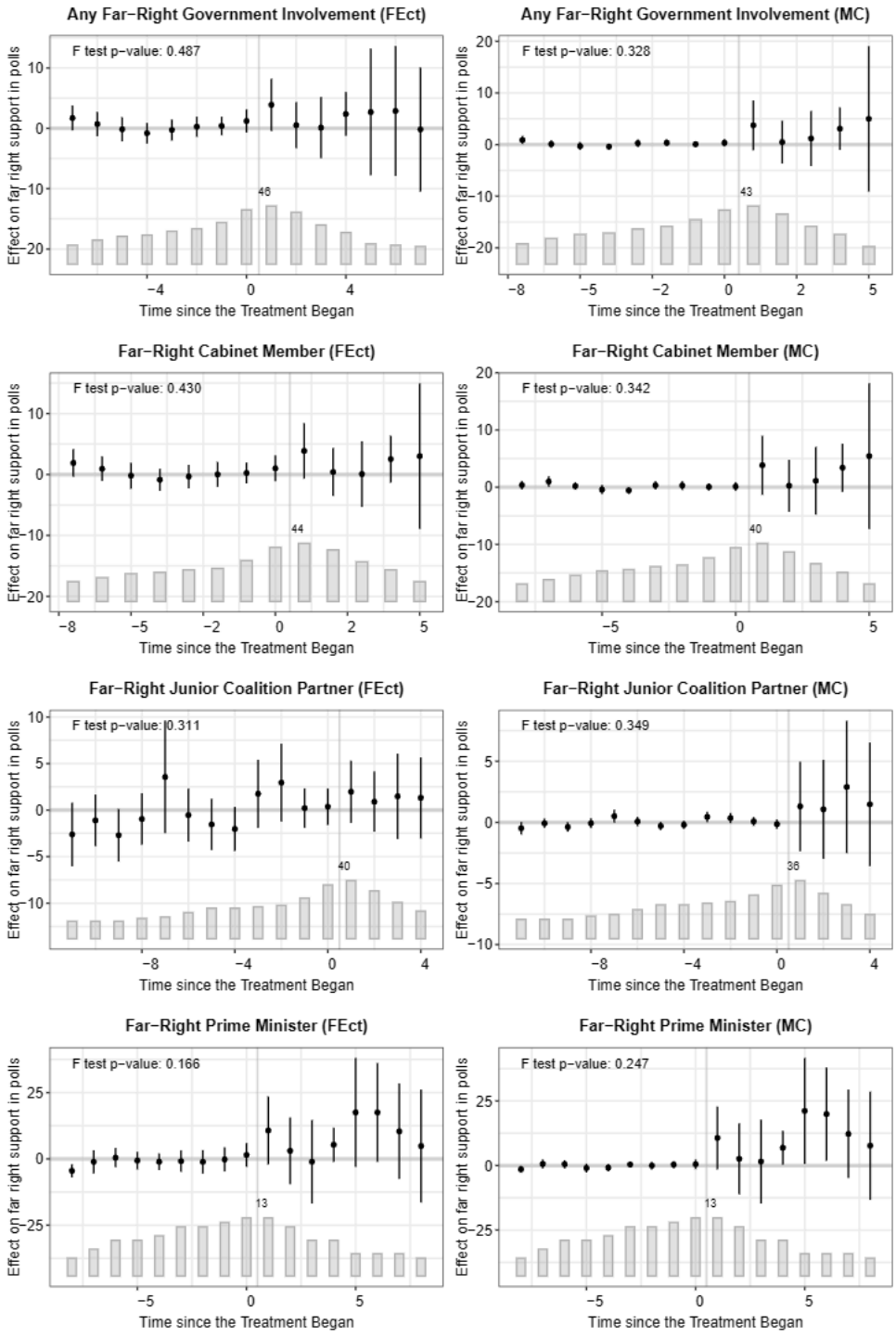


Figure SM26: ATTs of far-right government involvement on cumulative support for far-right parties in the polls. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) as well as the the matrix completion (MC) estimator. IFect estimates reduce to FEct estimates and are thus not reported here. Including p-values for F-tests for no pre-trend. All models pass the no pre-trend tests.

D.2 Diagnostic Tests

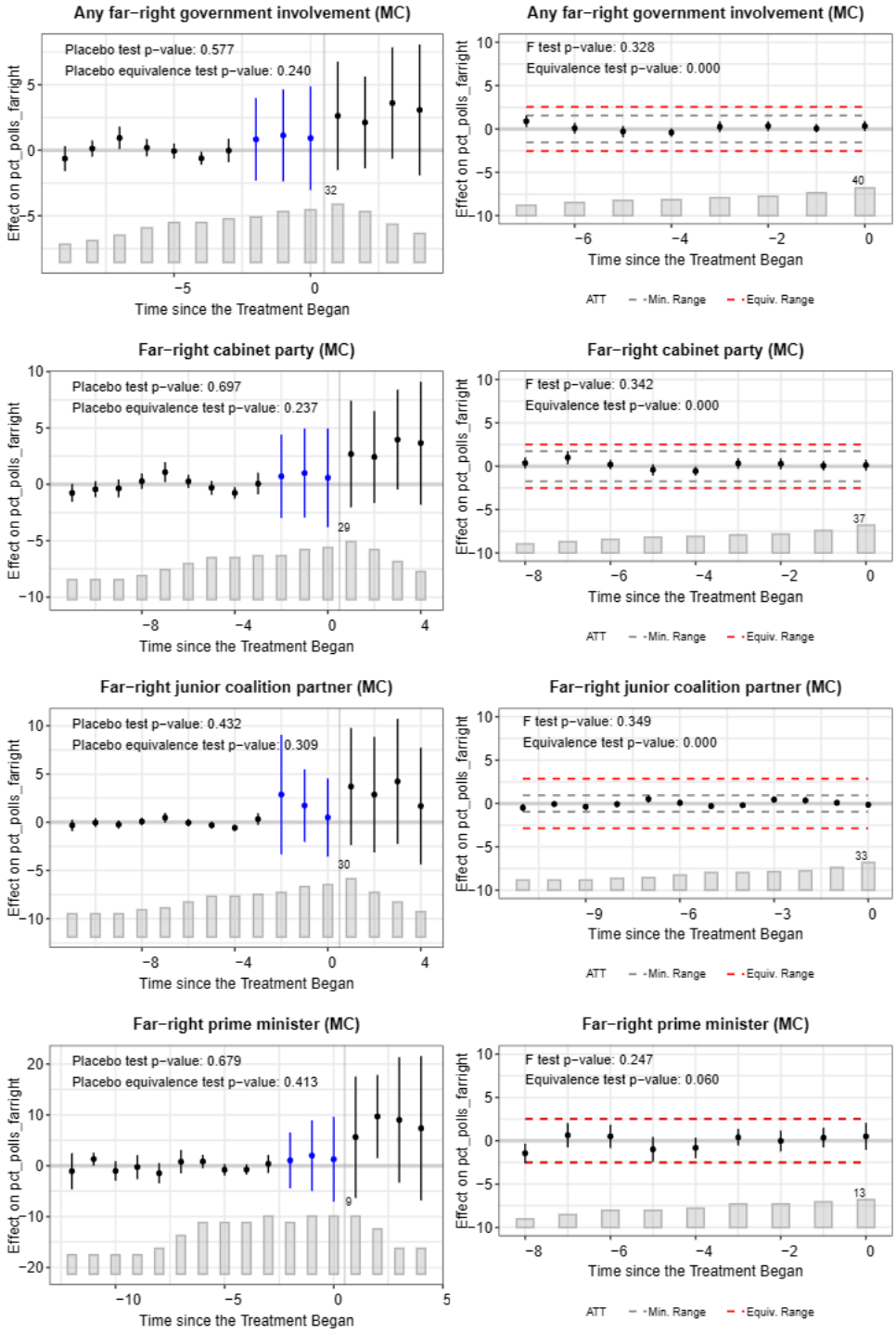


Figure SM27: Results of placebo tests (left-hand side figures) and no pre-trend tests (right-hand side figures) for MC models estimating ATTs of far-right government involvement on cumulative support for far-right parties in the polls (Figure SM26). All models pass the placebo t-test ($p \geq .05$) but fail the placebo equivalence TOST test ($p < .05$). All models pass the t-test for no pre-trends ($p \geq .05$) and all models but the one using prime ministership as treatment pass the no pre-trend equivalence TOST test ($p < .05$).

D.3 Robustness: Alternative Estimators

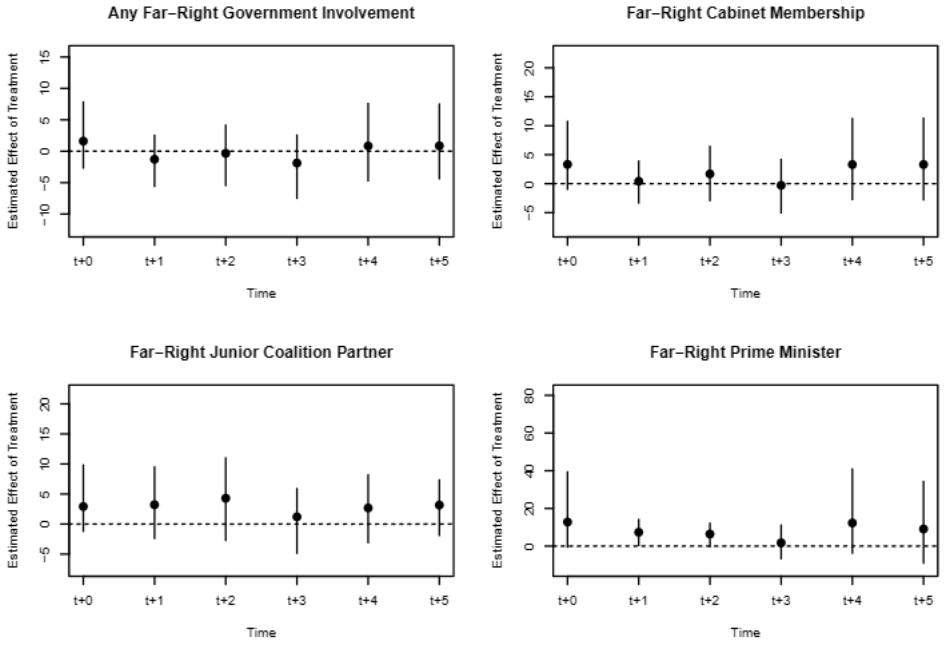


Figure SM28: Effects of government involvement on poll support for the far right. ATTs estimated using the PanelMatch approach. Matched sets refined using propensity score weighting and exact matching on post-communist country. Models estimated using 4 lags and 5 leads. Covariates: Lagged DV, unemployment, GDP, migration, immigration attitudes. NB: Time units here are election numbers.

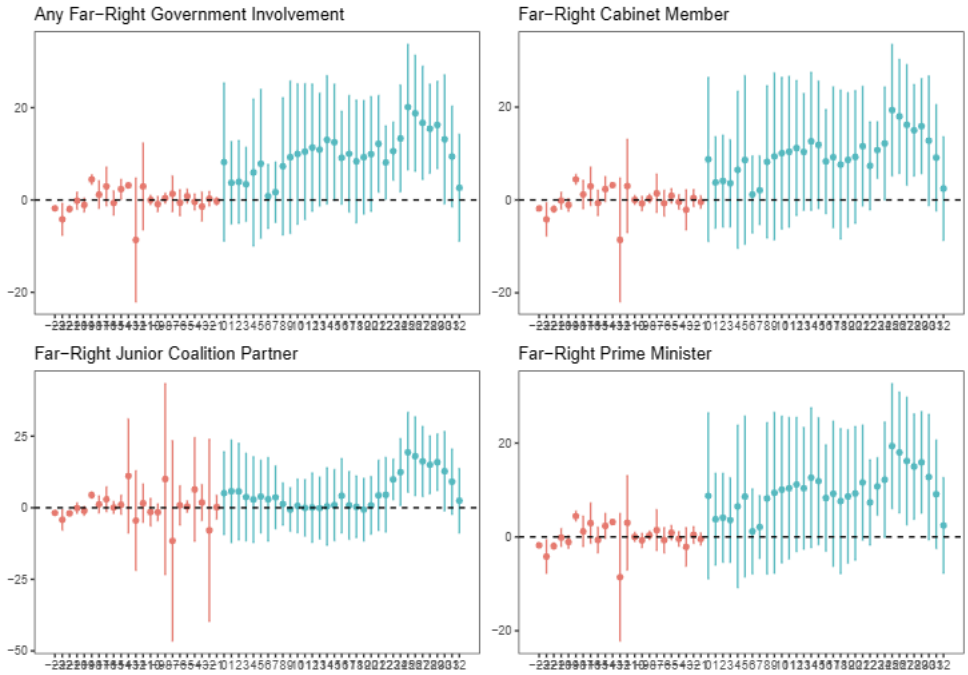


Figure SM29: Effects of government involvement on poll support for the far-right. Staggered DiD without treatment reversal using the estimator by Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021). No covariates.

D.4 Election Month Analysis

Our results for far-right support in polls differ from the results for far-right support in elections. While we find that far-right government involvement is usually associated with increases in far right support in the following election, we find that far right government involvement has no effect on far-support in the polls in subsequent years. Yet, if far-right government participation increases far-right support, we would expect to see these effects in polls as well as in election results. To investigate this further, we re-run our analyses of the effects on polling support while limiting our poll data to include only the results of polls conducted in the same month as the election. This way, we can evaluate whether the differences in results are due to the different time frames of the models (comparing yearly support vs. support in elections which usually happen only every three to five years. We report the results in SM30. Our results show that indeed, if we focus only on polling results in election months, we find the same effects as when considering election results. This is despite our sample being significantly smaller than the original sample used in analysis of the electoral data, as election poll results are not as widely available as election results.

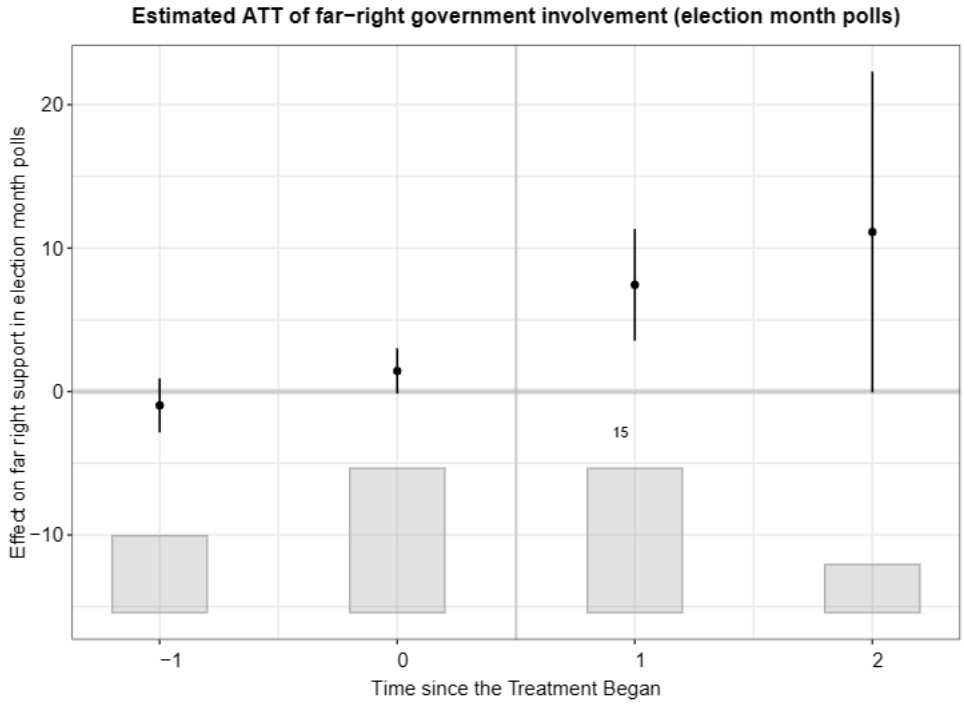


Figure SM30: Effects of government involvement on poll support for the far-right in election months. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct). Covariates: unemployment, GDP, migration, turnout.

E Mechanisms

E.1 Ideological Moderation

We do not find that participation in government decreases support for the far-right. One proposed mechanism in the discussion about far-right parties in government is *ideological moderation* (Tepe, 2019; Akkerman and Rooduijn, 2015; Haugsgjerd, 2019): The argument goes that when far-right parties enter government, they face constraints (coalition discipline, responsibility, policy compromise). This might lead them to moderate their rhetoric or manifestos, moving closer to the mainstream. The ideological moderation, in turn, then might lead to decreases in far-right support.

To analyze this mechanism, we examine whether far-right parties moderate their ideological positions after entering government. Combining the party-election-level dataset with data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al., 2025), we compute changes in manifesto positions between consecutive elections on several ideological dimensions. Specifically, we use the RILE index and several frequently used issue-specific measures

Table SM4: Ideological Moderation Models (Δ between elections), using the log-ratio approach

	Δ RILE log	Δ Immigration log	Δ Multiculturalism log	Δ Society log
Government participation	−0.248	−0.129	−0.162	−0.457*
	(0.243)	(0.246)	(0.266)	(0.204)
Crude migration	0.024	−0.018	−0.003	−0.015
	(0.019)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.034)
GDP per capita	0.000	0.000	0.000+	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Unemployment	0.012	−0.003	0.044	−0.018
	(0.021)	(0.056)	(0.048)	(0.049)
GDP growth	−0.003	−0.040+	−0.045+	0.001
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.030)
Num.Obs.	207	207	207	207
R2	0.215	0.236	0.147	0.212
R2 Within	0.016	0.025	0.031	0.025
RMSE	0.71	1.05	1.02	0.98
Std.Errors	by: party	by: party	by: party	by: party
FE: party	X	X	X	X
FE: election.number	X	X	X	X

+ p <0.1, * p <0.05, ** p <0.01, *** p <0.001

on immigration, multiculturalism, and societal liberalism:

- The immigration measure is composed of the items *per601* (National way of life: positive), *per602* (National way of life: negative), *per607* (Multiculturalism: positive) and *per608* (Multiculturalism: negative) (see Abou-Chadi et al., 2022).
- The multiculturalism measure is composed of *per608* (Multiculturalism: Negative) and *per607* (Multiculturalism: positive) (see Abou-Chadi, 2016).
- The indicator for societal liberalism is defined by the Manifesto Project and contains the following items: *per104* (Military: Positive) + *per109* ((Internationalism: Negative) + *per601* (National Way of Life: Positive) + *per603* (Traditional Morality: Positive) + *per605* (Law and Order: Positive) + *per608* (Multiculturalism: Negative)) - (*per105* (Military: Negative) + *per106* (Peace) + *per107* (Internationalism: Positive) + *per501* (Environmental Protection) + *per503* (Equality: Positive) + *per602* (National Way of Life: Negative) + *per604* (Traditional Morality: Negative) + *per607* (Multiculturalism: Positive) + *per705* (Underprivileged Minority Groups)).
- The RILE measure is the standard RILE indicator calculated by the Comparative Manifesto Project.

As suggested by Lowe et al. (2011) we construct logit scales for these party position measures.

We then estimate a series of party- and election-fixed effects models where the dependent variable is the change in manifesto position between consecutive elections (Δ). The key explanatory variable, *government participation*, indicates whether a party participated in government in any way after election t. This setup allows us to assess whether governing status at t predicts ideological shifts in the subsequent election ($t + 1$). The models take the form:

$$\Delta Ideology_{it} = \beta\, Government_{it} + \gamma X_{ct} + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it},$$

where α_i and λ_t denote party and election fixed effects, respectively, and X_{ct} includes country-level controls (migration inflows, GDP per capita, unemployment, and GDP growth). Standard errors are clustered by party. This specification captures within-party changes over time while accounting for election-specific shocks, providing a conservative test of whether governing experience systematically precedes ideological moderation.

The results in Table SM4 show little evidence that participation in government leads to systematic moderation in far-right parties' ideological positions. Across most issue dimensions, the coefficients for government participation are small and not statistically significant. The only exception is the *Society* dimension, where the estimate is negative and significant, suggesting that far-right parties that enter government adopt somewhat less authoritarian

or traditionalist stances in subsequent elections. However, this effect does not extend to their overall economic or immigration-related positions, which remain largely unchanged.

Substantively, these results indicate that entering government does not lead far-right parties to consistently moderate their core ideological positions. While minor shifts on specific societal issues may occur, the broader ideological platforms remain largely unchanged. The lack of electoral costs of governing for the far right are not driven by changes in party positions.

E.2 Government Performance

If including a far-right party in government does not lower support for the far right, one possible reason could be that voters' evaluations of the government's performance mediate the effect. In other words, the inclusion might only reduce far-right support if voters blame the far right for poor government performance, or reward it for good performance (e.g., Powell and Whitten, 1993; Anderson, 2000). This is especially relevant as, on average, far-right parties in government have rather negative track records (Funke et al., 2023). However, if voters don't attribute government outcomes to the far-right party, or if they evaluate the government's performance independently of the far right, then inclusion will have little effect on support for that party.

We use the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) (World Bank, 2024), specifically their *Government Effectiveness* indicator. As this indicator is available yearly, we compute the average government effectiveness score in the time between election t and election $t + 1$. While this is a useful aggregate measure, we cannot use citizens' direct evaluations of the government's performance, as survey data capturing such evaluations (e.g., CSES) is only available for very few elections. We combine the WGI data with the main country-election-level sample.

We examine this mechanism in two complementary ways. First, we test whether government effectiveness *moderates* the effect of far-right inclusion – that is, whether inclusion has different effects depending on the level of government performance. Second, we test whether government effectiveness *mediates* the relationship – that is, whether inclusion affects performance, which in turn affects subsequent electoral support.

Moderation Analysis. Figure 4 shows the effect of average government effectiveness between elections on the next far-right vote share, conditional on whether a far-right party was in government during the previous term. The plot is based on an interaction model with controls for GDP per capita, GDP growth, unemployment, and crude migration rates. The results show that the marginal effect of government effectiveness is small and statistically insignificant for both groups. However, the fitted values suggest that when the far-right is in government, subsequent far-right vote shares tend to be somewhat higher across the range of government effectiveness. This pattern is consistent with the idea that government participation is associated with sustained or even increased support, regardless of performance levels.

Mediation Analysis. To more directly test the causal pathway, we examine whether changes in government performance mediate the relationship between far-right inclusion and subsequent support. Using two-way fixed effects models that account for time-invariant country characteristics and common time trends, we estimate both the effect of far-right participation on government effectiveness and the effect of government effectiveness on subsequent vote share.

We find no evidence for this mechanism. Far-right government participation does not significantly affect government effectiveness ($\beta = 0.022$, $p = 0.297$), and government effectiveness does not predict subsequent far-right vote share ($\beta = 4.68$, $p = 0.137$). The estimated indirect effect is near zero (0.10 percentage points, 95% CI $[-0.13, 0.34]$). Together with the moderation results, these null findings suggest that government performance – whether as a moderator or mediator – does not explain the relationship between far-right inclusion and electoral outcomes. The persistence of far-right support appears to operate through mechanisms other than objective government performance.

E.3 Political Attitudes

We examine whether far-right participation in government triggers a liberal backlash by examining whether we see a shift in *political attitudes* – particularly on issues central to far-right platforms. Given the inconsistency in survey questions and limited frequency across countries and time, we rely on estimates from Caughey et al. (2019), who use item response theory models to generate biennial measures of ideological attitudes across 27 European

countries from 1981 to 2016. Their dataset, based on 2.7 million responses to 109 unique survey items, provides estimates across four domains: economic conservatism, relative economic conservatism, social conservatism, and immigration conservatism. We focus on the two attitudinal dimensions most relevant to the far right: social conservatism and immigration conservatism. Social conservatism includes issues such as gender equality, abortion, gay rights, environmentalism, and the libertarian–authoritarian divide (Caughey et al., 2019, 678). Immigration conservatism captures attitudes toward immigration, nationalism, and national identity. We interpolate the biennial data to obtain annual country-level estimates, treating the country-year as the unit of analysis. We use linear interpolation. An overview of the interpolation results is presented in SM A.3, Figures SM3, SM4.

E.3.1 Immigration Conservatism

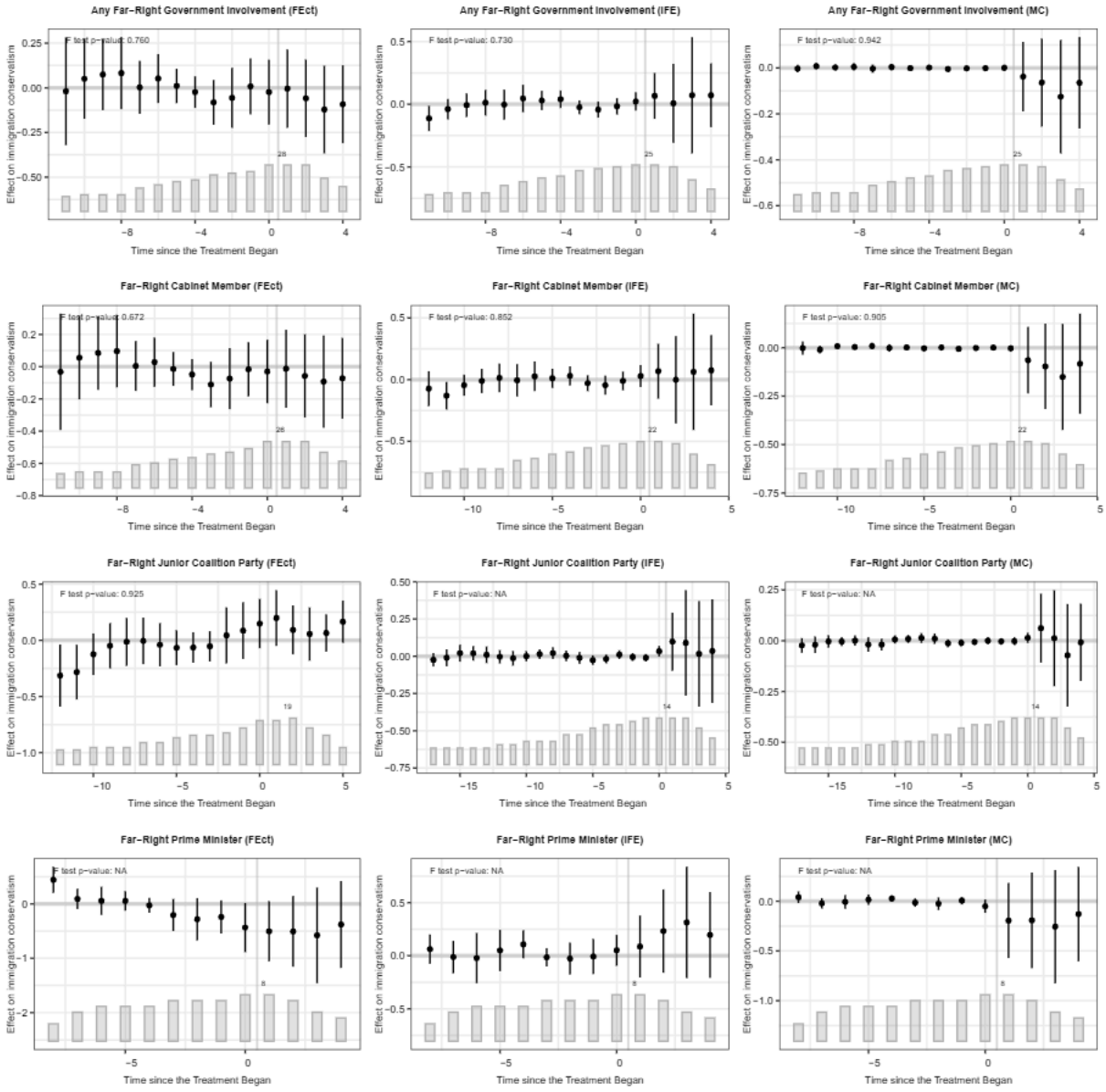


Figure SM31: ATTs of far-right government involvement on immigration conservatism. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) as well as the interactive fixed effects counterfactual estimator (IFE) and the matrix completion (MC) estimator. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. Including p-values for F-tests for no pre-trend. All models pass the no pre-trend tests.

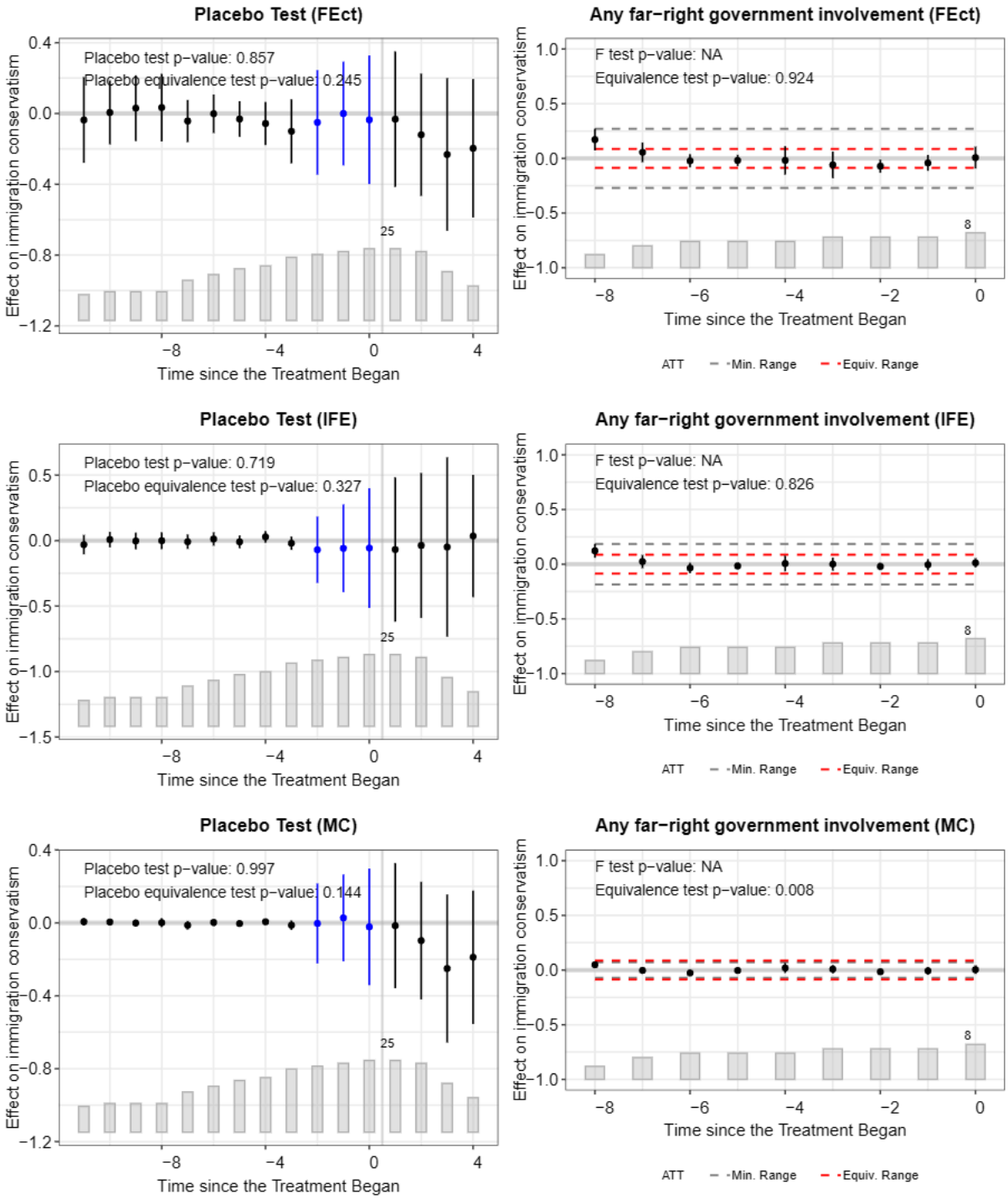


Figure SM32: Results of placebo tests (left-hand side figures) and no pre-trend tests (right-hand side figures) for FEct, IFEct and MC models estimating ATTs of any far-right government involvement on immigration conservatism (Original models: Figure SM31, row 1). All models pass the placebo t-test ($p \geq .05$) but fail the placebo equivalence TOST test ($p < .05$). All models pass the t-test for no pre-trends ($p \geq .05$) but only the MC estimator passes the no pre-trend equivalence TOST test ($p < .05$). Diagnostics not reported for other outcomes in Figure SM31.

E.3.2 Social Conservatism

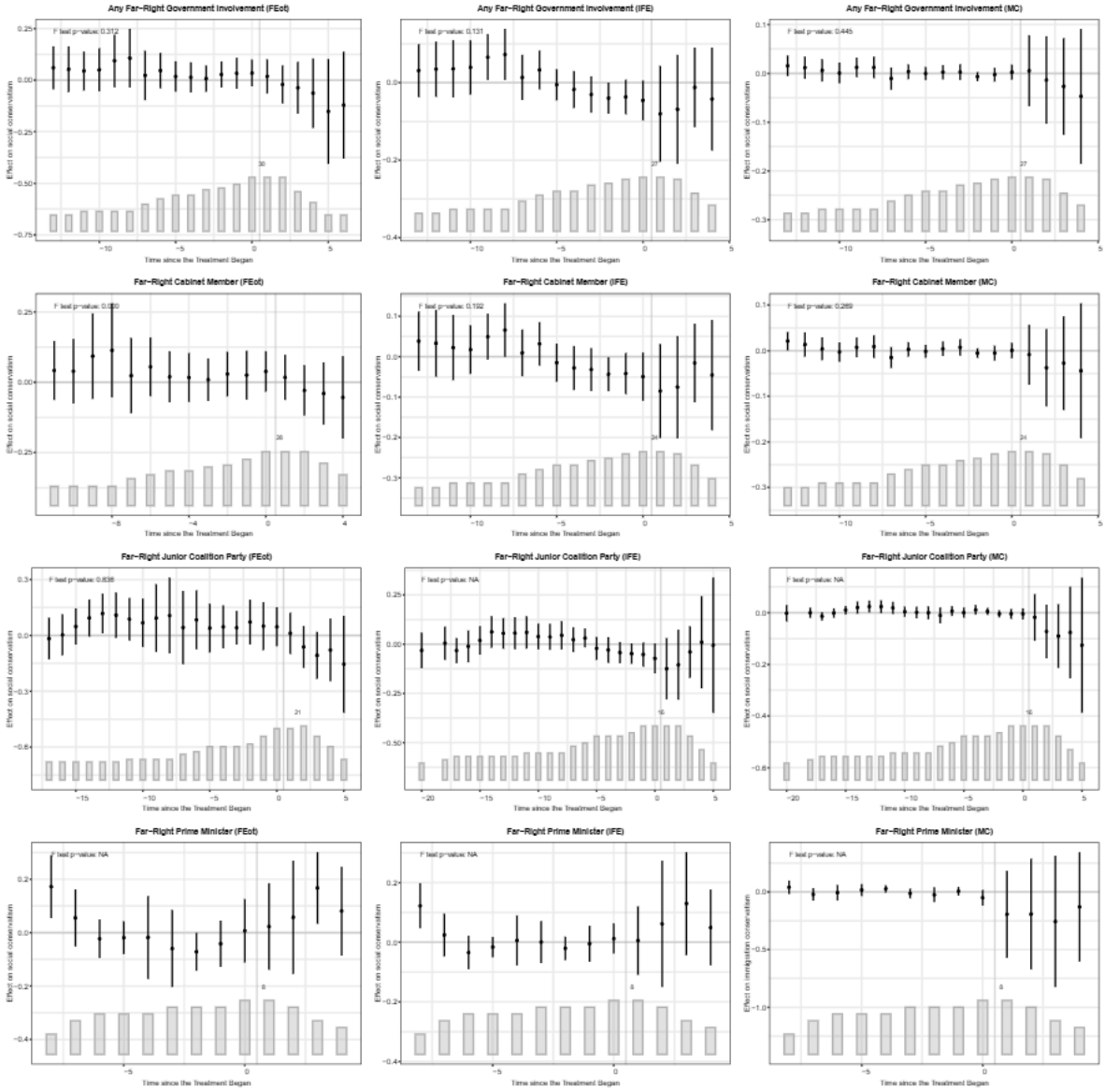


Figure SM33: ATTs of far-right government involvement on social conservatism. Estimates derived using the fixed effect counterfactual estimator (FEct) as well as the interactive fixed effects counterfactual estimator (IFE) and the matrix completion (MC) estimator. Uncertainty estimates derived with 1,000 nonparametric block bootstrap runs clustered at the unit level. Including p-values for F-tests for no pre-trend. Only the FEct model using far-right cabinet parties as treatment doesn't pass the no pre-trend tests.

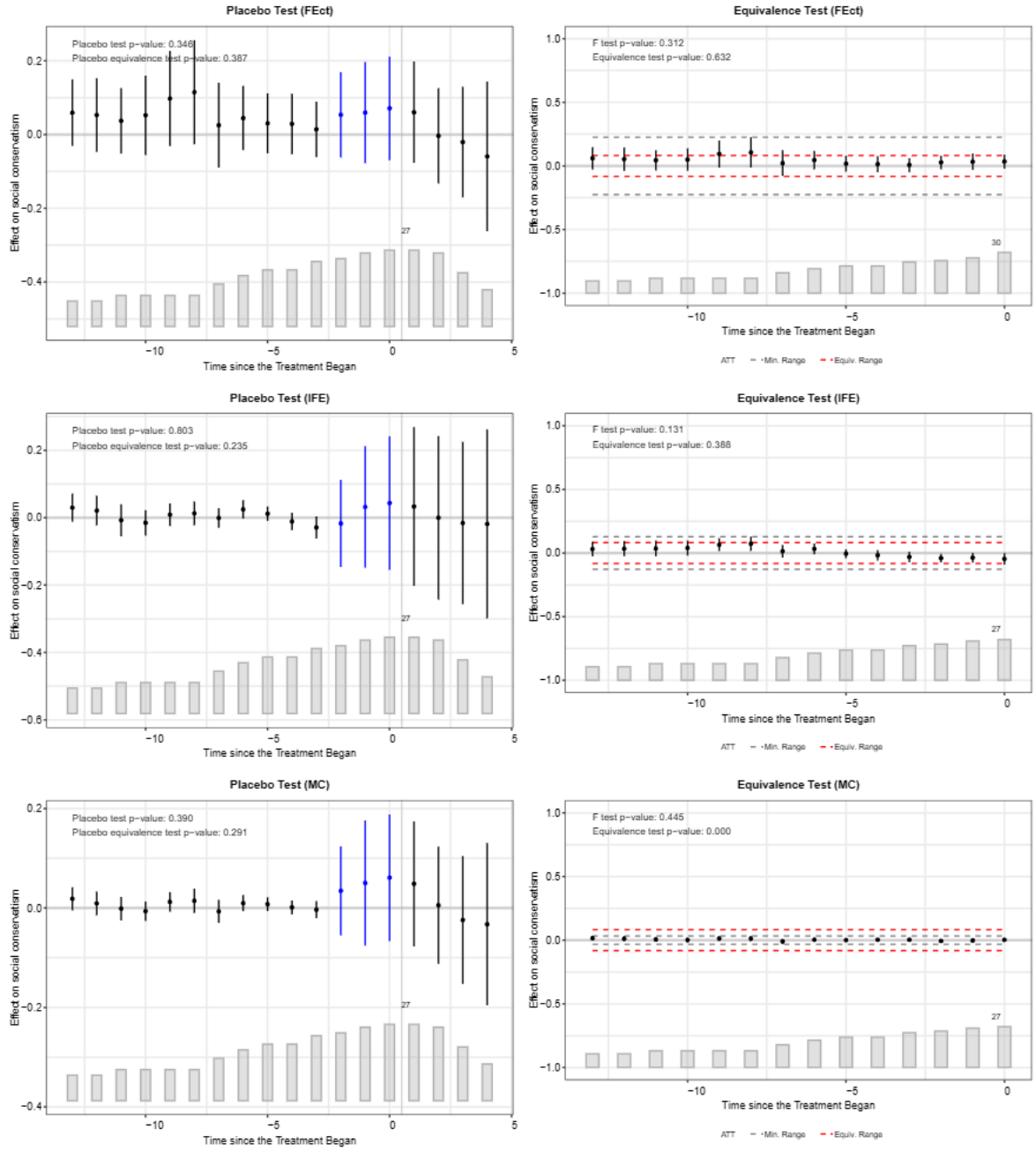


Figure SM34: Results of placebo tests (left-hand side figures) and no pre-trend tests (right-hand side figures) for FEct, IFEct and MC models estimating ATTs of any far-right government involvement on social conservatism (Original models: Figure SM33, row 1). All models pass the placebo t-test ($p \geq .05$) but fail the placebo equivalence TOST test ($p < .05$). All models pass the t-test for no pre-trends ($p \geq .05$) but only the MC estimator passes the no pre-trend equivalence TOST test ($p < .05$). Diagnostics not reported for other outcomes in Figure SM33.